

A STUDY OF ADJUSTMENT  
PROBLEMS OF FIRST YEAR  
STUDENTS AT MEMORIAL  
UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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A STUDY OF ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS  
AT MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND

by

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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education

Department of Educational Psychology  
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July 1977

St. John's

Newfoundland

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this investigation was to discover whether there were differences in the adjustment of freshmen to Memorial University of Newfoundland during the first semester of studies in terms of overall adjustment, specific problem areas and differences in adjustment between rural and urban students.

One hundred and thirty-six urban, and 137 rural students were tested in this investigation. These students were randomly enrolled in an Introductory Psychology course during the 1973-74 academic year at Memorial University. Once a week for each of the twelve weeks of the first semester, a different class was administered the Mooney Problem Check List (MPCL) in order to discover the problems which the freshmen experienced throughout the semester.

The results of the MPCL were then analyzed in an attempt to answer each research question. To determine whether there were differences in adjustment over the semester, the total number of problems indicated was plotted on a graph and discussed. In order to discover whether there were some specific areas giving more problems than most, the scores for each area were plotted and those which appeared higher than the majority were discussed. Finally, to determine whether there were differences in adjustment

between urban and rural students, a T-test was performed on the scores for each subscale of the MPCL for each week.

The results obtained indicated there were differences in adjustment over the semester with weeks 1 through 4 showing an increasing number of problems, weeks 5 through 8 a relatively stable number of problems, week 9 showing a drop, and weeks 10 through 12 showing an increase, with week 12 showing the largest number of problems. At different times throughout the semester a number of problem areas were more predominant than others, the most notable being (1) Social and Recreational Activities, and (2) Adjustment to College Work. When urban and rural students were compared, a relatively large number of significant differences were found; however, the only consistent finding which appeared was that urban students almost always indicated more problems than rural students.

The conclusion was that there were differences in adjustment throughout the semester generally and in specific areas; and, where significant differences existed, urban students scored higher.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer expresses his sincere thanks and goodwill to Dr. David Watts, Chairman of his thesis committee, for his invaluable help and direction in the development and completion of this thesis. Appreciation is also gratefully extended to Dr. William Spain and Dr. Norman Garlie for their kind assistance.

Also, for their participation and cooperation in this investigation, many thanks are due to Dr. A.M. Sullivan, then Dean of Junior Studies, and the instructors who allowed me to utilize their time and students to collect the data: Fred French, Emir Andrews, John Jarvis, Robert Rose, Cathy Noseworthy, Richard Maddigan, Clarence Patten and Trudy Conway.

And, finally, a very special thanks to my wife, Sandra, and all my family whose constant encouragement and cooperation made this thesis possible.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE.
Abstract . . . . .	ii
Acknowledgments . . . . .	iv
List of Tables . . . . .	viii
List of Figures . . . . .	x
CHAPTER	
I. THE PROBLEM . . . . .	1
The Transition . . . . .	3
Purposes of the Study . . . . .	4
Significance . . . . .	5
Research Questions . . . . .	6
Operational Definitions . . . . .	7
Limitations . . . . .	7
Organization of the Remainder of the Report . . . . .	8
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE . . . . .	9
Adjustment Problems of Freshmen . . . . .	9
Relationship Between Adjustment and Both Attrition and Achievement . . . . .	14
Changes in Adjustment During the First Semester . . . . .	19

CHAPTER	PAGE
Rural-Urban Differences in Adjustment . . . . .	20
Summary of Literature Review . . . . .	23
Adjustment . . . . .	23
Achievement and Attrition . . . . .	24
Rural-Urban Differences . . . . .	25
Organization of the Remainder of the Report . . . . .	26
III. METHODOLOGY . . . . .	27
The Setting . . . . .	27
The Sample . . . . .	28
Instrumentation . . . . .	28
Administration and Scoring of the Instrument . . . . .	31
Reliability and Validity . . . . .	31
Analysis of the Data . . . . .	32
Procedure for the Remainder of the Study . . . . .	33
IV. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY . . . . .	34
Summary . . . . .	56
V. DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY . . . . .	58
Restatement of the Problem . . . . .	58
Method of Data Analysis . . . . .	59
Research Questions and Discussion . . . . .	60
Interpretations and Implications of Study Findings . . . . .	65

CHAPTER	PAGE
Interpretation in Terms of Previous Research . . . . .	65
Implications for Junior Division Student Personnel Administration . . . . .	66
Implications for Further Research . . . . .	68
Recommendations for Further Research . . . . .	69
REFERENCES . . . . .	71
APPENDIX A . . . . .	75

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Means and T-Values for Students from Urban and Rural Communities on the MPCL for the Entire Semester . . . . .	40
2. Means and T-Values for Students from Urban and Rural Communities on the MPCL for Week 1 . . . . .	42
3. Means and T-Values for Students from Urban and Rural Communities on the MPCL for Week 2 . . . . .	43
4. Means and T-Values for Students from Urban and Rural Communities on the MPCL for Week 3 . . . . .	44
5. Means and T-Values for Students from Urban and Rural Communities on the MPCL for Week 4 . . . . .	45
6. Means and T-Values for Students from Urban and Rural Communities on the MPCL for Week 5 . . . . .	46
7. Means and T-Values for Students from Urban and Rural Communities on the MPCL for Week 6 . . . . .	48

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		PAGE
1.	Total Number of Problems Indicated by Students over the Entire Semester . . . . .	35
2.	Number of Problems Indicated by Students in the Various Areas over the Semester . . . . .	37

TABLE

PAGE

8. Means and T-Values for Students from Urban and Rural Communities on the MPCL for Week 7 . . . . .	49
9. Means and T-Values for Students from Urban and Rural Communities on the MPCL for Week 8 . . . . .	50
10. Means and T-Values for Students from Urban and Rural Communities on the MPCL for Week 9 . . . . .	51
11. Means and T-Values for Students from Urban and Rural Communities on the MPCL for Week 10 . . . . .	52
12. Means and T-Values for Students from Urban and Rural Communities on the MPCL for Week 11 . . . . .	54
13. Means and T-Values for Students from Urban and Rural Communities on the MPCL for Week 12 . . . . .	55

## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

Over the years, better prediction of academic achievement and performance has been one of the goals of educational researchers (Brooks, 1972; Hackett, 1960; Sanders et al., 1955; Watley, 1965). University and college administrators are continually looking for ways of increasing the retention rate. The ability to predict academic performance accurately would enable administrators to predict which students would succeed and which would not with the aim of assisting those most unlikely to succeed.

The statistics on student retention and withdrawal indicate a need for prediction research. Iffert (1958), in a study of 12,000 students in 149 institutions of the United States, found these institutions lost approximately one-half their students in the four years after their entrance, with only 39.5 per cent graduating in four years. Iffert estimated only 59 per cent of the students eventually graduate.

Although Iffert's (1958) investigation is somewhat outdated and may be thought of as not being applicable at the present time, a number of similar but less extensive investigations have revealed similar results. For example, Suczek (1966) in an investigation of the personality

characteristics of college dropouts at the Berkeley Campus of the University of California states that:

During the four year period following their initial admission, a total of approximately 59% of the original group interrupt their stay at Berkeley. During this same period about 9% return. Thus, in all only about 50% of the original group entering the University are still registered at the end of the fourth year.

At Memorial University of Newfoundland, the statistics did not differ to any great extent from comparable institutions. Dr. A.M. Sullivan (1973), in a report to the Senate of Memorial University of Newfoundland on the work of the Junior Division, stated that 42 per cent of students who entered in 1968 completed the degree by April, 1973, with another 25 per cent of the 1968 freshman class still attending Memorial. This indicates that at least 33 per cent of the freshmen who entered in 1968 have left Memorial University of Newfoundland for one reason or another.

These statistics indicate a definite need for research into the reasons why there are such high rates of attrition. This rate of attrition in colleges and universities is something which administrators and faculty need to be concerned about. Students who do not finish cost themselves and the administration both time and money, which would appear to the writer to be a waste of material and effort in many cases.

Due to the nature of the prediction of academic performance, research in this area has usually been conducted after the fact using descriptive techniques. Generally, the



student's academic performance has been correlated with various variables determined prior to or very shortly after entrance, with the hope that any combinations of these variables would give a sizeable correlation, which would result in more accurate prediction.

#### The Transition

Each year approximately 1,500 students enter Memorial University of Newfoundland as Junior Studies freshmen. Many of these students have come from communities as small as 200-300 people, and enter the University--an institution with a population of more than 6,000 full-time students in 1973-74.

Enrollment figures for Memorial indicate an attrition rate of some significance. For example, of the 1,497 students enrolled in the freshman year of 1973-74, only 1,252 or 84 per cent returned for their second year.

At entrance, these freshmen students seem to have been thrust into an environment which was, in most cases, almost totally different from anything which they had previously experienced. They appear to have been in the midst of many different kinds of personalities and totally different kinds of teaching and learning environments. The university requires fewer hours of class time than students are accustomed to and, as a consequence, students have more responsibility for their own achievement. This may have resulted in

a more impersonal environment and a totally different social milieu. The accumulation of all these new and different stimuli impinging upon the freshman in a very short period of time was almost certain to cause him difficulties. The way of life for the students must of necessity have changed in this new environment.

Did problems in making this transition contribute to the 16 per cent attrition rate reported at Memorial? It would seem that one factor might be poor academic performance or early termination from Memorial which would be the result of a difficult transition or adjustment period. Whatever the end result, the clarification of this problem would possibly benefit some percentage of freshmen at Memorial University.

#### Purposes of the Study

The major purposes of this study were:

1. To investigate whether there was a period of adjustment during the first semester of studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland.
2. To determine in what areas of adjustment students had the most problems.
3. To investigate whether there were any differences in the adjustment of students from urban and rural communities.

### Significance

The identification of a period of adjustment has implications for the teaching faculty and staff of the Junior Division at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Awareness of the difficulty of this period may make the faculty somewhat more sensitive and cognizant of what freshmen are feeling during the early part of their university career. Furthermore, it may motivate faculty to give freshmen any assistance they are able to to get them through the transition.

The identification of adjustment problems could be used as a basis for the implementation of some form of a Freshman Orientation Program. Hopefully, such a program would help students with their adjustment and other problems early in the semester so as to enable them to turn their full attention to their course work. This program could also help to identify students who have severe difficulties in other areas of university life so they could be given necessary guidance.

If it were also determined freshmen were having more problems in some specific areas of adjustment than in others, an orientation program could be established with an emphasis on the areas where there appeared to be the most problems.

In addition, the identification of any differences in adjustment for urban and rural students would enable the faculty involved in an orientation program to provide

assistance appropriate to each groups' problems. If there were differences of any magnitude, there could be different orientation programs designed to approach the problems of each group.

Such a program, if found to be necessary, may also give students a person or persons whom they could approach with problems at any time during their university career.

At present an "Orientation Week" is held at Memorial which is more of a socialization process including events such as dances, concerts, etc., and therefore, focuses only indirectly on the adjustment problems experienced by freshmen.

#### Research Questions

The questions to be answered in this investigation were as follows:

1. Were there any differences in the mean weekly adjustment scores of entering Junior Studies freshmen at Memorial University of Newfoundland?
2. Were there any differences in mean scores for each week on the various areas of adjustment on the Mooney Problem Check List (MPCL) of entering Junior Studies freshman?
3. Were there any differences in mean adjustment scores of students from urban and rural communities across the first twelve weeks of the first semester?

### Operational Definitions

Adjustment:--In this investigation, adjustment was defined as the number of problems indicated by students on the MPCL, with high score indicating poor adjustment and a low score indicating better adjustment. The mean number of problems checked according to Mooney and Gordon (1950) is approximately twenty-five.

Urban Students:--These were students who completed their high school education in the following centers: St. John's, Gander, Grand Falls, Corner Brook and Labrador City. These centers have a population of 7,500 or more.

Rural Students:--These were students who completed their high school education in communities in Newfoundland other than those listed under "Urban Students" above. These centers have a population of less than 7,500.

### Limitations

Any interpretation of the results of this investigation must be seen in the light of the following limitations:

1. The sample may not be representative of the entire Junior Studies freshmen population.
2. There may be other variables not considered or encountered in this study which have an effect upon students in their freshman year of university.

3. The results of the study may be generalized beyond the population only to the extent that Junior Studies freshmen of future years are similar to those tested in this particular investigation.

#### Organization of the Remainder of the Report

Chapter II is a review of the literature related to each of the research questions listed in Chapter I. Chapter III contains the procedures followed in collecting the data and conducting the research. Chapter IV contains the analysis of the data collected as well as a discussion of the results. Chapter V includes the conclusions drawn from the results, as well as a discussion of the implications of these conclusions and recommendations of how they can be used.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is concerned with a review of the research on the various aspects of initial adjustment to higher education. It should be noted that for some of the variables under consideration in this investigation, the previous literature has ranged from sparse to non-existent while for other areas there has been an abundance.

The first section presents the literature related to the problems which freshmen face when first entering the university community. Section two reports the research conducted on the relationship between adjustment as compared to both attrition and achievement. Section three presents a summary of the research which studied changes in adjustment which may have occurred during the first semester. The fourth section contains the research related to adjustment of rural and urban students. This is followed by a summary of the review of the literature.

#### Adjustment Problems of Freshmen

Hunter and Morgan (1949) constructed and administered a Personal Interview Form, in order to make a comparison of the problems of freshmen of 1946 and students beyond the

freshman year at the Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College. The Personal Interview Form was constructed by using problems expressed to the writers by students. The Form covered seven major problem areas--Academic Education; General Education; Vocation; Personal and Social Adjustment; Family; Health; and Finance. For fifteen specific problems in six of these areas, significant differences between freshman men and other college men were found. Twelve of these problems occurred more frequently for freshmen than others. The freshman women were significantly higher on four problems and lower on two than the other women students. Hunter and Morgan reported freshman men had more difficulty getting into the pattern of college life than other men, while the freshman women were more self-conscious than the other women.

Holbeche (1969) received replies to a questionnaire survey from 150 undergraduates in a wide variety of schools in several parts of England in which they expressed the variety of problems encountered in the transition from school to university. The replies indicated a number of problems related to adjustment and adaptation to their new role as university students. They found it difficult to organize the academic work and lacked the experience to adapt to the freer conditions which they faced. Furthermore, there was a sense of bewilderment caused by the complexity of courses and the allotment of time to specific subjects. These undergraduates also reported that the transition from school to



university represented a major crisis in their lives as it involved moving away from the traditional school and home background with its consequent major adjustment to independence and first challenge of self-reliance.

Carroll and Jones (1944) reported on an investigation carried out at the University of New Hampshire psychological clinic which was opened to help students enrolled at the university. Sixty-two (11%) freshmen, thirty-one (8%) sophomores, fourteen (4%) juniors, and twelve (4%) seniors visited the clinic. When compared to any other class, there were more than twice as many freshmen with problems. Although the authors make no mention of attrition over the four years, these results would indicate freshmen have a difficult time adapting to the new problems which they face.

Baker (1963) conducted a study at Clark University psychological clinic over a period of six academic years. He reported requests for the services of the clinic were significantly higher during the first semester than the second, especially in the first half of the first semester. Baker also reported freshmen were by far the most frequent clients at the beginning of the year and this may reflect the difficulties of initial adjustment of freshmen to the university situation.

A further investigation by Baker and Nidorf (1964) corroborated and expanded upon the results of the previous Baker (1963) investigation. They found 9.6 per cent of the

freshmen class were known to the clinic as compared with 6.2 per cent for the sophomores, 5.5 per cent juniors, and 3.8 per cent seniors. The results also indicated freshmen were much more numerous (46.21%) than any of the other classes (sophomores--40.91%, juniors--40.26%, and seniors--29.27%) during the first quarter. Based on the results of these two investigations, it would appear that adjustment problems of many freshmen students occur during the first half of the first semester.

Collier and Nugent (1965) conducted a study designed to discover the differences between self-referred, staff-referred and non-counselled college students. In their review of the literature they cited a number of studies which indicated a greater proportion of freshmen and sophomores seek counselling services than would be expected from class enrollment figures (Abrahamson, 1954; McKinney, 1945; Raphael, 1936; Schneider & Berdie, 1942; Williamson et al., 1935).

Monks and Heath (1954) in a study of Harvard students reported that of all the students who saw a psychiatrist during their four years of college, one-third of them did so in their freshman year.

In addition to the type of research described above there have been numerous personal statements made by both freshmen and others concerning the problems encountered during the first year. For example, Bartlett (1969), in a

newspaper article reporting on the responses to letters to students about the place to bring problems over the Christmas holidays, quoted one student as saying, "After an initial period of adjustment, I am now quite happy and settled both with my lodgings and with my courses."

Bloom (1971) described Cohort, a freshman preventive intervention program designed to develop greater emotional maturity, more successful adaptation to the college community, less psychological disability and fewer dropouts, at the University of Colorado. In his article he quoted a number of students who indicated problems occurred during the first year. For example, "Cohort '72 helped me in that I saw that I was not alone in my problems in my freshman year." Another said, "The Cohort had been helpful to me personally as a means to see and realize that I wasn't the only one having a rough freshman year." Still another added, "Cohort made me feel as if I were part of a group in this huge, impersonal campus. It is an overwhelming campus for a naive freshman." And, finally, "In short, I feel Cohort '72 gave me the extra support to go out and find friends and adjust to college life at C.U." (pp. 240-1).

Katz et al. (1963) in reviewing the findings of his studies with Stanford and Berkeley undergraduates comments:

Our study has impressed us with the importance of the freshman year, particularly its early phases. The entering student faces many sudden challenges and threats: separation from home, sudden exposure to

large groups of strangers who may seem threatening or superior, new academic demands . . . . .  
(pp. 432-33)

In summary, it appears from the literature reviewed that the entering freshman has to cope with many problems when he arrives on the campus. Research conducted by Hunter and Morgan (1949), and Holbeche (1969) indicates the problems that occur during the freshman year. In addition, a number of investigations have discovered that freshmen do have more problems than other students (Abrahamson, 1954; Baker, 1963; Baker and Nidorf, 1964; Carroll and Jones, 1944; Collier and Nugent, 1965; McKinney, 1945; Monks and Heath, 1954; Raphael, 1936; Schneidler and Berdie, 1942; Williamson et al., 1935). Evidence is also given for the adjustment problems of freshmen in the form of testimonials given by students to various researchers (Bartlett, 1969; Bloom, 1971; Katz et al., 1968).

#### Relationship Between Adjustment and Both Attrition and Achievement

There are a number of researchers who have studied the relationship between the problems of the entering freshmen and the attrition rate. Chase (1965) conducted an investigation to attempt to make comparisons between students who drop out of college in the first semester and students who complete the semester's work. He sent a questionnaire to all Indiana University freshmen who had dropped out during their initial semester in 1961. Of the fifty who replied to

the questionnaire, 52 per cent of the dropouts indicated adjustment to college was one of the factors contributing to their dropping out.

In a similar study, Yoshino (1958) interviewed 93 students assigned to him at The State College of Washington. Of his 93 advisees, 45 dropped out at the end of the freshman year and of these, 16 per cent gave "unhappy personal adjustment" as one of the main reasons for dropping out. He discovered that "unhappy personal adjustment" usually meant one or the other of the following: difficulty in feeling at ease with fellow students, conflict with a professor, or the coldness of a large classroom.

Demos (1968) interviewed most of the students who were withdrawing from college during a single semester. The purpose of this investigation was to discover if the reasons given by the students were the same as those determined by their counsellor's judgment. In the course of this investigation he discovered that psychological problems were one of the major reasons for withdrawing.

Rose and Elton (1966) conducted a study at the University of Kentucky designed to investigate personality differences between defaulters (withdrawing within semester freshmen), successful persisters (two semesters with C or above average), probation persisters (two semesters with less than C average) and dropouts (students in good standing who did not return after two semesters). They administered

the Omnibus Personality Inventory and Rotter Incomplete Sentences Blank to these students and, among other findings, the results indicated the dropouts were the most maladjusted group of the four.

A number of studies have been conducted to discover if a relationship exists between adjustment problems of freshmen and their academic performance. However, to date the results of research have been inconclusive. For example, in a research review conducted by Kent Houston (1971) there were a number of references to studies dealing with adjustment and achievement. In his review, he cited Stone and Ganung (1956) who formed a normal and potentially maladjusted group of freshmen women on the basis of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) scores and found upon graduation, the normal group had a significantly higher grade average, which may mean that maladjustment may effect the grade average. Vaughan (1968) found significantly more students who were later dismissed for academic reasons had elevated MMPI scales as freshmen than a control group of students who persisted in college. Houston also cites Anderson and Spencer (1963) who categorized Arts and Science freshmen on the basis of their MMPI scores on adjustment and found maladjusted freshmen had lower year end averages than others although the differences were not statistically significant.

Similarly, at the Colorado State College of Education, Nora Congdon (1943) administered the MPCL to 190 freshmen

during the fall quarter. The results indicated there was a slight tendency for the poorer students to have more problems in adjusting to college work.

Contrary to the findings of the previous studies, Coombs and Davies (1967) found little correlation between adjustment and achievement. In their investigation, they had student leaders rate 136 freshmen whom they knew on the basis of sociability and emotional adjustment. On the basis of these ratings they discovered there was very little relationship between the ratings given on these two variables and the freshman's grade point average.

As well, Gibbs (1965) administered the California Test of Personality to sixty-four full-time Australian university students in an attempt to discover whether unsuccessful students show an inadequate personal social orientation. His findings indicated failing students could be classified as having the following overlapping characteristics: extraverted over-reactivity, low study motivation and social maladjustment.

Contrary to the Gibbs (1965) investigation, Gittinger and Kramer (1939) administered the Bell Adjustment Inventory to freshmen at the University of Oklahoma in an attempt to discover whether the Inventory could be used as a predictor of college success. The results of the investigation indicated there was no appreciable relationship between adjustment and college success during the first semester as

measured by grade averages.

In addition, Watley (1965) conducted an investigation at the University of Minnesota designed to investigate the relationship between personal adjustment and predictability of academic achievement. He administered the Guilford Zimmerman Temperment Survey to 188 freshmen male business students. On the basis of their scores, students were classified into "positive," "average," and "negative" adjustment groups. His results indicated that although the adjustment groups did not differ significantly in terms of academic predictability, a definite relationship did exist between the groups on levels of achievement and adjustment.

In summary, the research suggests a relationship does exist between adjustment and attrition, and adjustment and achievement. Chase (1965), Demos (1968), Rose and Elton (1966), and Yoshino (1958), researched the relationship between adjustment and attrition and all found dropouts attributed poor adjustment as one of the reasons for their dropping out. Summerskill (1962) in his review of the literature, also indicated poor adjustment contributed to dropping out.

The relationship between adjustment and achievement is not as clearly defined. However, the weight of the evidence is in favor of a relationship between the two variables. Houston (1971) cited a number of investigators (Anderson & Spencer, 1963; Stone & Ganung, 1956; Vaughan,



1968) who found a relationship exists between adjustment and achievement. These results have been corroborated by a number of other researchers (Congdon, 1942; Gibbs, 1965; Watley, 1965). However, Coombs and Davis (1967) and Gittinger and Kramer (1939) conducted investigations which contradicted the previous findings.

#### Changes in Adjustment During the First Semester

In the literature little was to be found on any changes in adjustment which occur during the first semester. The writer was able to uncover only three related studies.

In a study by Congdon (1943) at Colorado State College of Education, the MPCL was administered in early October and again ten weeks later in December. The results of this investigation indicated that in ten of the eleven areas of the MPCL, the problems decreased and only in one area (Curriculum and Teaching Procedures) did the problems increase. However, this increase was to be expected since at the time of the first administration, the students had had very little contact with classes and curriculum. Congdon reported there was a decrease of 24 per cent on the whole scale in the number of problems checked. This seemed to indicate that students become better adjusted during the first semester of college.

Gordon (1949) conducted an investigation at Ohio State University designed to determine the ability of the

MPCL to measure changes over a period of time. He administered the MPCL to five sections of Introductory Psychology at the end of the fourth week of the winter quarter and again nine days later. At the second administration he also passed around a form on which he asked students to state any problem changes which had occurred over the nine days. His results indicated that over the nine day interval there had been a change in the problems of students, and these were picked up by the MPCL.

In another study, Caldwell (1959) administered the California Test of Personality (CTP) to 1,300 freshman students at the University of Florida during the fall orientation. Six weeks later, he again administered the CTP to determine whether administering the CTP at orientation week was better than at a later time. The results of this investigation showed a significant difference between the second administration and the orientation administration in that the orientation administration resulted in less stable scores than the later administration.

In summary, although the investigations were few in number (Caldwell, 1959; Congdon, 1943; Gordon, 1949), results indicated students become better adjusted during the initial semester as time passes.

#### Rural-Urban Differences in Adjustment

The question of rural-urban differences in adjustment begins with a problem in defining rural and urban. Various

definitions have been used in previous investigations. Some researchers define urban as a population of 2,500 or more (Osborne et al., 1952; Sanders et al., 1955); and one selected certain specific communities within a province or state (Sodhi, 1970).

Sodhi (1970) conducted a study at post-secondary institutions in St. John's, Newfoundland, in which he examined the differences in adjustment of rural and urban students. He administered the Borows College Inventory of Academic Adjustment to students at Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. Bride's College, and St. Clare's Hospital School of Nursing. The main conclusions were that rural students were higher on personal efficiency but lower on mental health than urban students.

Charette, Bedard, and Hamel (1969) described a group of underachieving university students at the University of Montreal in terms of personal history and the mode of context of the counselling relationship. They found under-achievers were mostly men; were from outside the Montreal metropolitan area; and the majority were in the first year. These men required a greater number of counselling interviews, visits and tests. The needs reported by these students concerned vocational and educational choices; however, upon closer inspection, it was found these students had many difficulties, confusions and inconsistencies in their psychological lives.

Osborne, Green and Sanders (1952) conducted an investigation at the University of Georgia in which they administered the Bell Adjustment Inventory to 583 freshmen classified as either pure rural-farm (living on a farm all their lives), pure urban (living in a city of 2,500 or more all their lives), or mixed (students who could not be classified as either pure urban or pure rural-farm). The significant findings in the study were: (1) Men of mixed backgrounds were more submissive and retiring in social contacts than men of urban backgrounds; and (2) rural women were better adjusted to home surroundings than urban women.

O'Donnell (1958) conducted a study at the University of Alabama in which he compared urban and rural students on the basis of personality, scholastic achievement and aptitude, and academic success in college. He administered the MMPI to 679 students of the entering freshman class of 1956. His results on the MMPI indicated that the scores of rural subjects tended to be more "normal" than those of urban subjects with significant differences found between rural and urban groups on three scales: Hypochondriasis; Masculinity-Femininity; and, Social Introversion-Extroversion.

A number of studies have related size of graduating high school to attrition and achievement. For example, DeVecchio (1972) investigated whether or not certain scholastic aptitudes, academic motivation and personality and biographical characteristics could be used to distinguish between

returning and non-returning community college freshmen. One of his findings was that non-returning community college freshmen attended high schools with an enrollment of 500 or less.

Furthermore, O'Donnell (1958) compared academic success of urban and rural students, as measured by the grade point average and standing at the end of the semester. In his investigation he found there were no significant differences in the degree of success during the first semester for urban and rural students.

DeVecchio (1972) and Smith (1965) both conducted investigations which looked at the relationship of background and achievement and both found a relationship between background and achievement. However, O'Donnell (1958) in a similar investigation found no significant differences in achievement between urban and rural students.

In summary, it appears there is a relationship between adjustment, home background and size of high school attended. Charette, Bedard and Hamel (1969); Sodhi (1970) all indicated a difference in adjustment between urban and rural students although the difference was not large.

#### Summary of Literature Review

Adjustment:--From the literature reviewed there appears to be a basis for conducting a study to investigate adjustment problems of freshmen. A number of studies (Baker, 1963;

Baker & Nidorf, 1964; Carroll & Jones, 1944; Collier & Nugent, 1965; Holbeche, 1969; Hunter & Morgan, 1949; Monks & Heath, 1954) have indicated freshmen have more problems than other students and these problems are related to adjustment.

Other investigators (Bartlett, 1969; Bloom, 1971; Katz, 1963) have given indications in the form of testimonials from freshmen that the first year is certainly a period of uncertainty.

Chase (1965), Demos (1968), and Yoshino (1958) obtained responses as to reasons for withdrawing from university and they found adjustment was one of the problems which the students related to dropping out. Also, Summer-skill (1962) in his extensive review of the literature found the same results.

The question of an improvement in adjustment during the first semester of studies was studied by Caldwell (1959), Congdon (1943), and Gordon (1949) and the results indicate students were better adjusted late in the first semester than in the early part of the semester.

Achievement and Attrition:--A number of investigations (Anderson & Spencer, 1963; Rose & Elton, 1966; Stone & Ganung, 1956; Vaughan, 1968) have, in various ways, looked at the problem of attrition as it relates to adjustment. Their results have indicated poorly adjusted students generally have a higher attrition rate than better adjusted

students.

The findings as to whether a relationship exists between adjustment and achievement are not as conclusive. Congdon (1943), Gibbs (1965), and Watley (1965) all found that there was some degree of relationship between these two variables while Coombs and Davies (1967) and Gittinger and Kramer (1939) found no relationship between them.

Rural-Urban Differences:--Results on rural-urban differences in adjustment have been inconclusive. According to a research review, Sodhi (1970) found the only differences between urban and rural students were on personal efficiency and mental health. Charette et al. (1969) found under-achievers were from outside the metropolitan area, were mostly men and the majority were in their first year. Osborne, Greene and Sanders (1952) also found there were very few differences between urban, rural and mixed populations. O'Donnell (1958) found there were differences between urban and rural students on three scales of the MMPI--Hypochondriases, Masculinity-Femininity and Social Introversion-Extroversion.

With regard to rural-urban differences and achievement, DeVecchio (1972) found non-returning community college freshmen graduated from high schools with an enrollment of 500 or less. However, O'Donnell (1958) found there was no relationship between size of the hometown and achievement.

Organization of the Remainder of  
the Study

Chapter III describes the procedures followed in collecting the data and conducting the research. Chapter IV contains the analysis of the data collected as well as the results obtained and a discussion of them. Chapter V includes a statement of the conclusions which can be drawn from the results, as well as the implications of these conclusions and recommendations of how they can be used.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes the setting, a description of the sample, the administration and scoring of the instrument, instrumentation and the method of analysis.

#### The Setting

The research was conducted at Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada. This is the only degree granting institution in the Province of Newfoundland. It was established as a university in 1949 and had a freshman enrollment for the 1973-74 academic year of 1,497 students.

Students entering Memorial University of Newfoundland as freshmen are enrolled in the Junior Division. This was set up in 1968 in an attempt to alleviate the relatively high failure rate among freshmen. The major features of the Junior Division are: (1) It begins to bridge the gap between secondary school and university; (2) it performs at the secondary school level by providing advice to prospective students; (3) it continues this counselling service after students enter Memorial; and (4) it acts to keep class sizes to a maximum of forty students.

### The Sample

The sample was comprised of 136 urban students and 137 rural students, all from Newfoundland, who were randomly enrolled in twelve Introductory Psychology classes during the first semester of 1973-74 and all of whom completed the Mooney Problem Check List (MPCL).

Distinctions in terms of age or sex were not made as these were not factors in this investigation.

### Instrumentation

The Mooney Problem Check List (MPCL) was first published in 1941 and 1942 out of the desire of Ross L. Mooney to systematize his methods of discovering the problems of young people. The pre-1950 editions were developed from a list of 5,000 items from various sources and the 1950 edition was developed from the results obtained on the pre-1950 editions (Mooney & Gordon, 1950).

The MPCL (1950 revision) is designed to measure degree of personal adjustment by the listing of problems which are of concern to students. The Check List is composed of eleven areas with thirty items in each area. The eleven areas covered are: Health and Physical Development (HPD); Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE); Social and Recreational Activities (SRA); Social-Psychological Relations (SPR); Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR); Courtship, Sex and

Marriage (CSM); Home and Family (HF); Morals and Religion (MR); Adjustment to College Work (ACW); The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE); and Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CTP).

In completing the MPCL, the student begins reading the problem statements and as he comes across a problem which is bothering him, he underlines that statement. When he has completed the 330 items and underlined those problems of concern to him, he goes through the underlined problems and circles the problems which are most bothersome to him. Once this has been completed, the student is asked to answer four questions concerning the questionnaire. This testing procedure usually takes from 30-50 minutes (Mooney & Gordon, 1950).

Scoring of the MPCL is simply a matter of counting the number of problems indicated by the students and recording them. Mooney and Gordon (1950) report that the mean number of problems checked is twenty-five.

The question of whether the MPCL can be used as a measure of adjustment has been investigated by various researchers. In a study by Goldman (1968) at a northeastern state university, 301 undergraduates were administered the MPCL and the California Test of Personality (CTP). In the conclusion of the study Goldman states:

The relationships were primarily negative, i.e., those who demonstrated a high degree of adjustment

(high scores on the CTP) checked fewer problems on the MPCL than those who demonstrated poor adjustment (low score on the CTP). On the basis of this study which is in agreement with similar work by an earlier researcher (Pflieger, 1947), the present writer asserts that the MPCL may permit an assessment of the person's adjustment status.

(p. 310)

In 1943, Nora Congdon administered the MPCL and the Bell Adjustment Inventory to the freshman orientation classes at Colorado State College of Education. A correlation was calculated between the equivalent subscales of the Bell and the Mooney. Congdon reports that on the six equivalent subscales of the Bell and the Mooney, four have a correlation of .5 or greater, with the other two correlating above .35.

Another important question relevant to the use of the MPCL in this investigation is the ability of the Mooney to measure any change in adjustment over a short period of time. As reported in Chapter II, Gordon (1949) administered the MPCL to a cross-section of the undergraduate students at Ohio State University. Nine days after the first administration he readministered the Check List to the same students. After the MPCL had been collected he passed out a questionnaire asking if any of the problems had been solved or if any new problems had arisen over the nine day period. His results on the questionnaire indicated that forty-six changes were indicated by thirty-five students. Upon checking these changes with the Mooney, he found that the MPCL was highly sensitive to these changes.

### Administration and Scoring of the Instrument

To avoid the consequences of repeated testing of one group, the MPCL was administered to a different class each week on the same day for the twelve weeks of the fall semester.

The MPCL College Form (Appendix A) was used in this investigation. The non-reusable form was distributed to the students in each class and they were asked to read the directions given on the front cover to themselves as the researcher read them aloud.

After this had been completed, the students were asked to fill in the information requested on the top of the Check List. To insure anonymity and thereby increase the openness of the number of problems checked, students were asked to record their student number instead of their name on the form. In order to classify the students into the urban and rural categories, they were also asked to place their hometowns immediately following their student number. In addition, the students were told that answering the summarizing questions at the end of the MPCL was optional.

### Reliability and Validity

Due to the nature of the MPCL, it is difficult to determine the reliability of the instrument. It is designed to measure changes and unlike other standardized tests, the results could very well change on each administration because

the variables being measured are dynamic and changing for most people. However, this study seems to establish some evidence of the MPCL's reliability in that it did measure independently reported changes over the two measures.

On the bases of this, it seems the MPCL is a valid and reliable measure of student adjustment.

#### Analysis of the Data

The degree of student adjustment was measured by the use of the MPCL. Following administration to the students, the scores were obtained by counting the number of problems marked.

The method used to answer each question was as follows:

Question #1: Were there any differences in the mean weekly scores of entering Junior Studies freshmen at Memorial University of Newfoundland?

The graph of the total number of problems indicated by students, in each week, was presented and the variation in problems over the semester was described.

Question #2: Were there any differences in the mean scores for each week on the various areas of adjustment of entering Junior Studies freshmen?

The number of problems marked by students in each week for each problem area was plotted on a graph. The scores which appeared higher than the majority of the problem areas

over the semester were then outlined.

Question #3: Were there any differences in mean adjustment scores of students from urban and rural communities across the first twelve weeks of the first semester?

A mean score was obtained for urban students and rural students for each week of the semester. A T-test was then performed to discover whether the differences between urban and rural students' scores were significant at the .05 or .01 level of significance.

#### Procedure for the Remainder of the Study

Chapter IV contains an analysis of the data gathered in this investigation with respect to the above stated questions. Chapter V contains a summary of the study, interpretations and recommendations.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purposes of this investigation were to determine whether students go through a period of adjustment during the first semester of studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland; in what areas of adjustment students have the most problems and whether there were any differences in the adjustment of students from urban and rural communities.

This chapter is a presentation of the data collected in this study.

The data consisted of the number of problems indicated by 273 Junior Studies freshmen on the Mooney Problem Check List (MPCL) administered during the first semester of the 1973-74 academic year.

The analyses of the data are presented by restating each question as presented in Chapter I and then answering each question by the analyses.

1. Were there any differences in the mean weekly adjustment scores of entering Junior Studies freshmen at Memorial University of Newfoundland?

The number of problems checked over the semester in each week is presented graphically in Figure 1. The graph shows the number of problems increased at a stable rate for



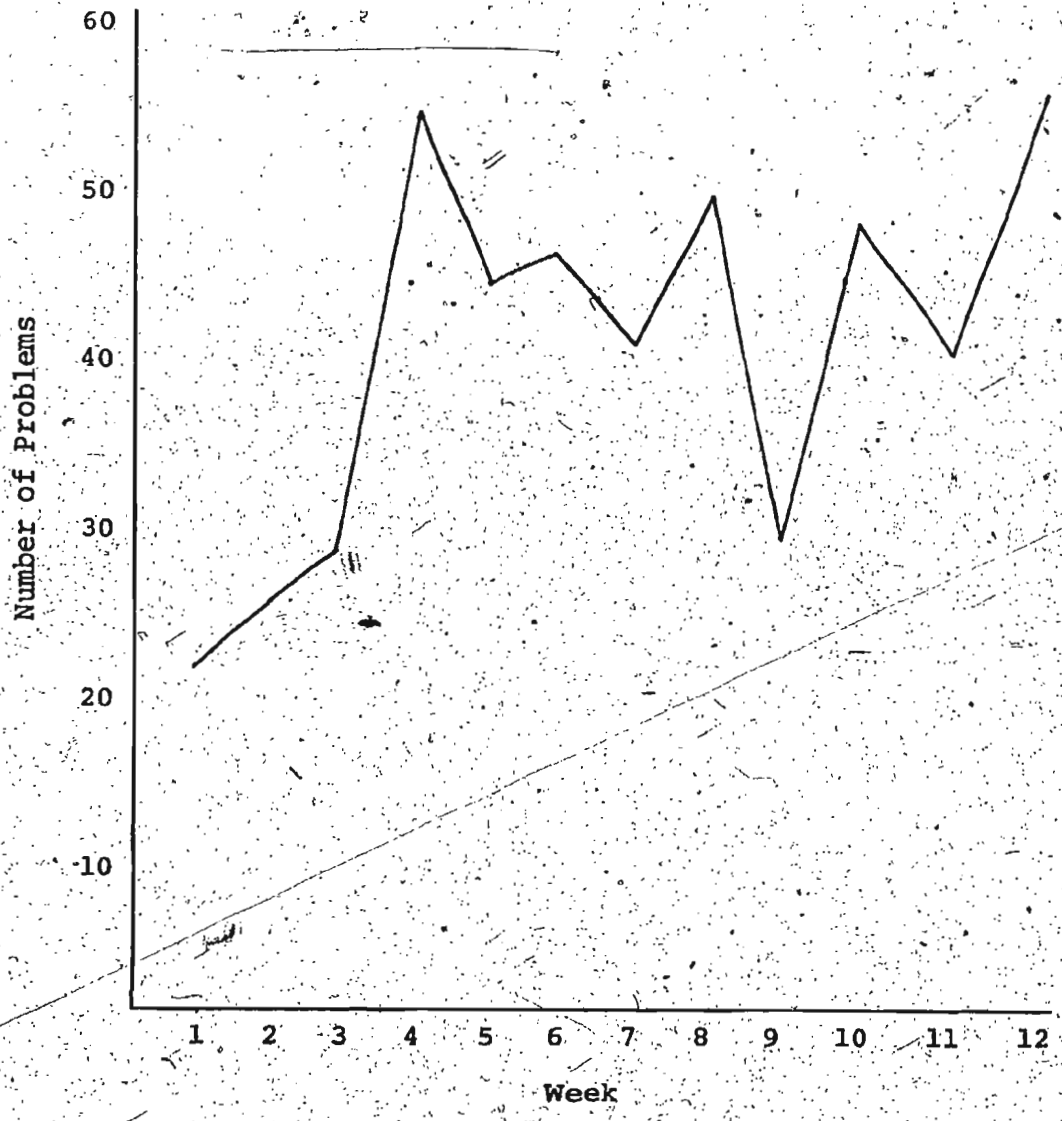


Figure 1. Total number of problems indicated by students over the entire semester.

the first three weeks: 21.73 for week 1, 25.64 for week 2; and 28.59 for week 3. During week 4, the number of problems increased sharply to 53.97, and during weeks 5, 6, 7 and 8, remained relatively stable at 43.95, 46.05, 40.99 and 49.29, respectively. Week 9 shows a sharp decrease to its lowest level of 28.92 problems checked; weeks 10 and 11 increased to 47.70 and 40.21 problems checked, respectively, and students in week 12 indicated the largest number of problems at 55.18.

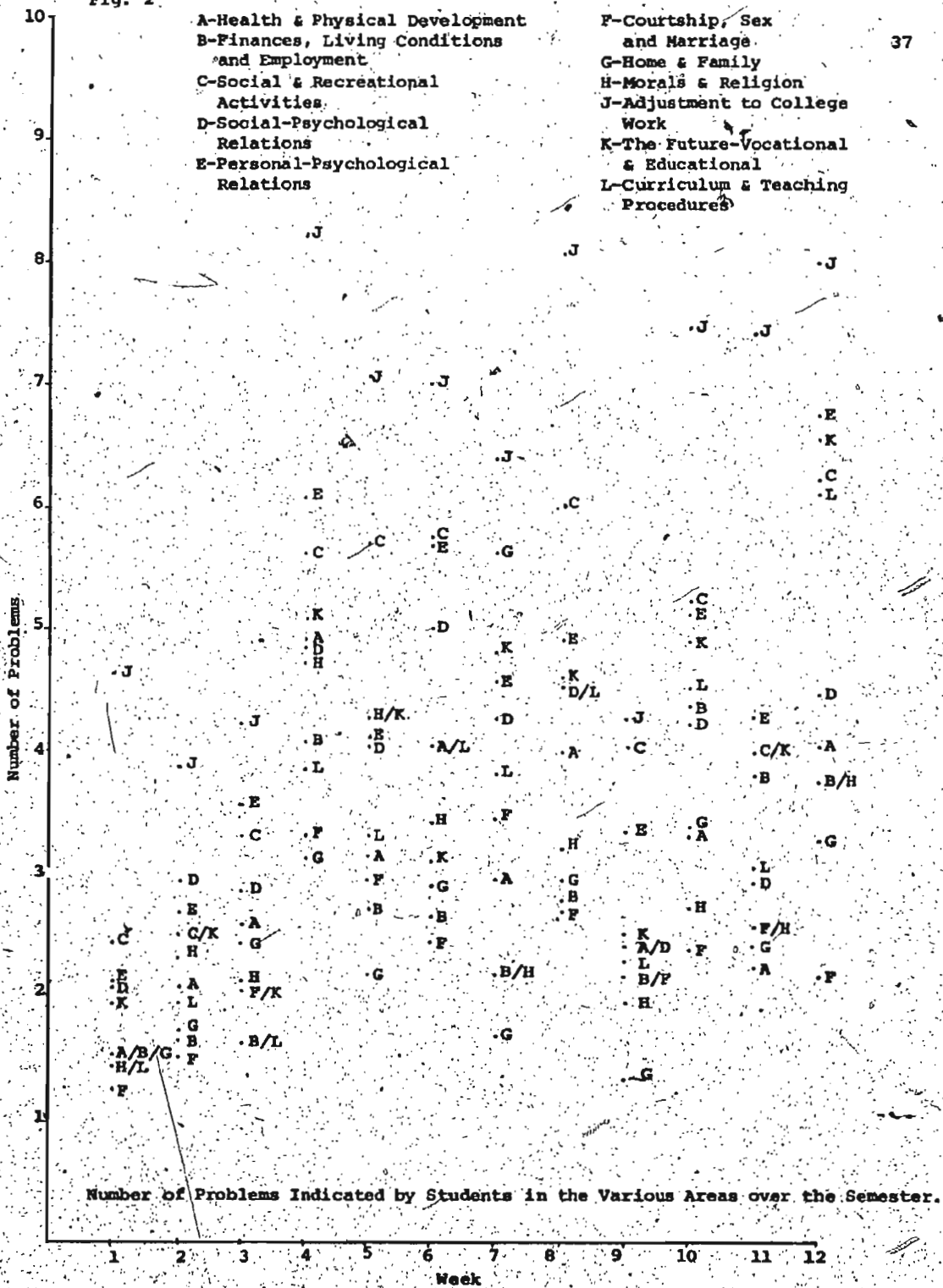
In summary, the number of overall problems increased gradually over the first three weeks; rose sharply during week 4; dropped a little and stayed approximately the same for weeks 5 through 8; fell drastically during week 9; rose at week 10 and stayed at the previous level during week 11; and then finally rose to its highest point during week 12.

2. Were there any differences in the mean scores for each week on the various areas of adjustment for entering Junior Studies freshmen?

An outline of the problem areas of the MPCL is illustrated in Figure 2. From this, it can be seen that the majority of scores for each week and in each area fell between 1 and 5, with only a small number of scores over 5.

During weeks 1, 2 and 3, no students received scores of 5 or more on any of the problem areas.

Fig. 2



During week 4 there were five or more problems indicated on: The Future; Vocational and Educational; Social and Recreational Activities; Personal-Psychological Relations; and Adjustment to College Work.

Scores of five or more were indicated on the following areas during week 5: Social and Recreational Activities; and Adjustment to College Work.

Students in week 6 indicated five or more problems in the following areas: Social-Psychological Relations; Personal-Psychological Relations; Social and Recreational Activities; and Adjustment to College Work.

During week 7, scores of five or more were indicated on: Social and Recreational Activities and Adjustment to College Work.

Week 8 students indicated five or more problems in: Personal-Psychological Relations; Social and Recreational Activities; and Adjustment to College Work.

Students in week 9 indicated no scores above 5 on any of the problem areas of the MPCL.

During week 10, students indicated five or more problems in the following areas: Personal-Psychological Relations; Social and Recreational Activities; and Adjustment to College Work.

Adjustment to College Work was the only problem area with a score of five or greater during week 11.

Week 12 students indicated scores of five or more problems on: Curriculum and Teaching Procedures; Social and Recreational Activities; The Future: Vocational and Educational; Personal-Psychological Relations; and Adjustment to College Work.

In summary, it appears the major problem areas in terms of frequency of occurrence are: Adjustment to College Work; Social and Recreational Activities; Personal-Psychological Relations; The Future: Vocational and Educational; Social-Psychological Relations; and Curriculum and Teaching Procedures. As well, the most problematic times of the semester are weeks 12, 6, 4, 8, 10, 5, 7 and 11 in descending order of the most problem areas per week. In weeks 1, 2, 3 and 9 none of the areas scored above five.

3. Were there any differences in the adjustment scores of students from urban and rural communities across the first twelve weeks of the first semester?

The results of the T-test for problems indicated by urban and rural students over the entire semester are reported in Table 1. The results show the urban students indicated significantly more problems on Social and Recreational Activities; Social-Psychological Relations; Personal-Psychological Relations; and Courtship, Sex and Marriage. No significant differences were found on any of the other subtests or on the total number of problems checked.

TABLE 1

MEANS AND T-VALUES FOR STUDENTS FROM URBAN  
AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MPCL  
FOR THE ENTIRE SEMESTER

Problem Areas	Mean		T-Values
	Urban	Rural	
Health and Physical Development (HPD)	3.08	2.99	0.28
Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)	2.48	2.85	-1.02
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)	5.08	4.06	2.26*
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)	4.15	3.15	2.36*
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)	4.52	4.23	0.61
Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM)	2.90	1.85	3.14**
Home and Family (HF)	2.70	1.98	1.97
Morals and Religion (MR)	3.23	2.44	2.11*
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)	6.07	6.34	0.51
The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)	3.89	3.42	1.12
Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CIP)	3.51	2.95	1.37
TOTAL	41.60	36.25	1.68

\*Significant at the .05 level.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level.

The results of the T-test for problems indicated by urban and rural students during week 1 are reported in Table 2. The results show the urban students indicate a significantly higher number of problems in the areas of Social-Psychological Relations and Personal-Psychological Relations. No significant differences were found on any other subtest or the total number of problems checked.

The results of the T-test for problems marked by urban and rural students during week 2 are reported in Table 3. The results show the urban students were significantly higher on Courtship, Sex and Marriage. No significant differences were found on any other subtest or the total number of problems checked.

The results of the T-test for problems indicated by urban and rural students during week 3 are reported in Table 4. No significant differences were found on any of the subtests or the total problems checked.

The results of the T-test for problems indicated by urban and rural students during week 4 are reported in Table 5. The results show the urban students were significantly higher on Health and Physical Development; Social and Recreational Activities; and Finances, Living Conditions and Employment. No significant differences were found on any other subtest or the total number of problems checked.

The results of the T-test for problems indicated by urban and rural students during week 5 are report in Table 6.

TABLE 2  
 MEANS AND T-VALUES FOR STUDENTS FROM URBAN  
 AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MPCL  
 FOR WEEK 1

Problem Areas	Mean		T-Values
	Urban	Rural	
Health and Physical Development (HPD)	1.40	1.56	-0.26
Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)	1.40	1.56	-0.20
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)	2.90	2.13	0.94
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)	3.10	1.44	2.22*
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)	3.20	1.44	2.07*
Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM)	1.80	0.88	2.01
Home and Family (HF)	1.90	1.19	0.68
Morals and Religion (MR)	2.50	0.75	2.03
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)	4.00	5.00	-0.62
The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)	2.50	1.56	1.54
Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CIP)	1.80	1.25	0.96
TOTAL	26.50	18.75	1.41

\*Significant at the .05 level.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level.



TABLE 3  
 MEANS AND T-VALUES FOR STUDENTS FROM URBAN  
 AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MPCL  
 FOR WEEK 2

Problem Areas	Mean		T-Values
	Urban	Rural	
Health and Physical Development (HPD)	2.50	1.78	0.89
Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)	1.42	1.78	-0.57
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)	3.58	1.78	1.48
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)	4.17	2.11	1.04
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)	3.08	2.39	0.60
Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM)	2.42	0.89	2.06*
Home and Family (HF)	2.58	1.06	1.42
Morals and Religion (MR)	2.83	1.94	0.82
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)	4.58	3.39	-0.99
The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)	2.58	2.56	0.03
Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CTP)	1.75	2.06	-0.39
TOTAL	31.50	21.72	1.15

\*Significant at the .05 level.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 4  
 MEANS AND T-VALUES FOR STUDENTS FROM URBAN  
 AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MPCL  
 FOR WEEK 3

Problem Areas	Mean		T-Values
	Urban	Rural	
Health and Physical Development (HPD)	3.36	2.00	1.32
Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)	1.63	1.60	0.04
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)	3.91	2.87	0.79
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)	3.82	2.13	1.63
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)	4.27	3.07	0.84
Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM)	2.82	1.47	1.03
Home and Family (HF)	3.00	2.00	0.69
Morals and Religion (MR)	3.27	1.40	1.66
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)	4.18	4.27	-0.07
The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)	2.36	1.93	0.42
Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CTP)	2.27	1.20	1.09
TOTAL	34.91	23.93	1.15

\*Significant at the .05 level.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 5

MEANS AND T-VALUES FOR STUDENTS FROM URBAN  
AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MPCL  
FOR WEEK 4

Problem Areas	Mean		T-Values
	Urban	Rural	
Health and Physical Development (HPD)	3.22	6.00	-2.45*
Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)	1.22	5.93	-3.42**
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)	3.89	6.71	-2.27*
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)	5.11	4.71	0.24
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)	6.00	6.14	-0.08
Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM)	3.11	3.42	-0.20
Home and Family (HF)	2.89	3.29	-0.32
Morals and Religion (MR)	3.56	5.57	-1.25
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)	6.56	9.29	-1.37
The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)	4.22	5.64	-0.85
Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CTP)	2.56	4.71	-1.38
TOTAL	42.33	61.43	-1.49

\*Significant at the .05 level.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 6  
 MEANS AND T-VALUES FOR STUDENTS FROM URBAN  
 AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MPCL  
 FOR WEEK 5

Problem Areas	Mean		T-Values
	Urban	Rural	
Health and Physical Development (HPD)	2.55	3.73	-1.22
Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)	2.36	3.09	-0.78
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)	7.45	4.09	2.11*
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)	4.73	3.36	0.92
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)	4.18	4.00	0.13
Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM)	3.36	2.55	0.63
Home and Family (HF)	2.45	1.91	0.60
Morals and Religion (MR)	5.45	3.09	1.43
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)	7.09	7.27	-0.09
The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)	4.73	3.91	0.54
Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CTP)	3.82	2.73	0.76
TOTAL	48.18	39.73	0.82

\*Significant at the .05 level.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level.

The results show the urban students had significantly more problems on Social and Recreational Activities. No significant differences were found on any other subtest or the total number of problems checked.

The results of the T-test for problems marked by urban and rural students during week 6 are reported in Table 7. No significant differences were found on any of the subtests or the total problems checked.

The results of the T-test for scores obtained by urban and rural students during week 7 are reported in Table 8. No significant differences on any of the subtests or the total problems checked.

The results of the T-test for scores obtained by urban and rural students during week 8 are reported in Table 9. No significant differences were found on any of the subtests or the total problems checked.

The results of the T-test for problems indicated by urban and rural students during week 9 are reported in Table 10. The results show the urban students were significantly higher on Courtship, Sex and Marriage. No significant differences were found on any other subtests or the total number of problems checked.

The results of the T-test for problems indicated by urban and rural students during week 10 are reported in Table 11. No significant differences were found on any of the subtests or the total problems checked.

TABLE 7  
 MEANS AND T-VALUES FOR STUDENTS FROM URBAN  
 AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MPCL  
 FOR WEEK 6

Problem Areas	Mean		T-Values
	Urban	Rural	
Health and Physical Development (HPD)	4.10	4.00	0.06
Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)	2.70	2.60	0.07
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)	4.80	6.70	-1.26
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)	5.20	4.80	0.22
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)	4.20	7.20	-1.70
Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM)	2.50	2.40	0.10
Home and Family (HF)	2.50	3.30	-0.56
Morals and Religion (MR)	3.20	3.60	-0.29
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)	6.20	7.20	-0.26
The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)	2.90	3.30	-0.44
Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CIP)	3.70	4.40	-0.64
TOTAL	42.60	49.50	-0.70

\* Significant at the .05 level.

\*\* Significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 8  
 MEANS AND T-VALUES FOR STUDENTS FROM URBAN  
 AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MPCL  
 FOR WEEK 7

Problem Areas	Mean		T-Values
	Urban	Rural	
Health and Physical Development (HPD)	3.78	2.38	1.32
Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)	2.89	1.69	1.34
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)	6.56	5.00	0.79
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)	4.56	4.08	0.35
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)	4.89	4.38	0.40
Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM)	4.67	2.61	1.67
Home and Family (HF)	1.67	1.69	-0.04
Morals and Religion (MR)	2.67	1.85	0.71
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)	7.00	6.00	0.74
The Future: Vocational and Education (FVE)	4.44	3.38	1.03
Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CTP)	4.00	3.69	0.21
TOTAL	47.11	36.77	1.21

\*Significant at the .05 level.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 9  
 MEANS AND T-VALUES FOR STUDENTS FROM URBAN  
 AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MPCL  
 FOR WEEK 8

Problem Areas	Mean		T-Values
	Urban	Rural	
Health and Physical Development (HPD)	3.67	4.56	-0.82
Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)	2.60	3.11	-0.35
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)	5.53	6.78	-0.62
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)	4.00	5.44	-0.91
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)	5.13	7.22	-1.13
Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM)	2.87	2.44	0.30
Home and Family (HF)	3.13	2.67	0.34
Morals and Religion (MR)	3.13	3.33	-0.21
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)	7.27	9.44	-1.18
The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)	4.07	5.44	-0.81
Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CIP)	4.07	5.22	-0.69
TOTAL	45.47	55.67	-0.89

\*Significant at the .05 level.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level.



TABLE 10  
 MEANS AND T-VALUES FOR STUDENTS FROM URBAN  
 AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MPCL  
 FOR WEEK 9

Problem Areas	Mean		T-Values
	Urban	Rural	
Health and Physical Development (HPD)	2.67	2.00	0.97
Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)	1.67	2.90	-1.64
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)	4.60	3.20	1.09
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)	2.60	2.10	0.46
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)	3.53	3.10	0.41
Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM)	3.07	0.90	2.43*
Home and Family (HF)	1.73	0.70	1.46
Morals and Religion (MR)	2.13	1.70	0.54
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)	3.67	5.20	-1.22
The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)	2.73	2.20	0.43
Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CTP)	2.80	1.50	1.40
TOTAL	31.20	25.50	0.85

\*Significant at the .05 level.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 11  
 MEANS AND T-VALUES FOR STUDENTS FROM URBAN  
 AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MPCL  
 FOR WEEK 10

Problem Areas	Mean		T-Values
	Urban	Rural	
Health and Physical Development (HPD)	3.27	3.40	-0.11
Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)	4.36	4.40	-0.03
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)	6.00	4.40	1.26
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)	4.91	3.50	0.85
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)	5.09	5.20	-0.05
Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM)	2.91	1.80	0.87
Home and Family (HF)	3.91	2.80	0.54
Morals and Religion (MR)	3.09	2.30	0.57
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)	6.45	8.60	-1.23
The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)	4.91	4.90	0.00
Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CTP)	5.81	3.10	1.83
TOTAL	50.72	44.40	0.54

\*Significant at the .05 level.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level.

The results of the T-test for problems marked by urban and rural students during week 11 are reported in Table 12. The results show the urban students were significantly higher on Home and Family; Morals and Religion; Social and Recreational Activities; The Future: Vocational and Educational; and total problems checked. No significant differences were found on any other subtest.

The results of the T-test for problems indicated by urban and rural students during week 12 are reported in Table 13. No significant differences were found on any of the subtests or the total problems checked.

In summary, the results of the T-test indicate significant differences at either the .05 level or the .01 level in some of the adjustment scores of students from urban and rural communities across the first twelve weeks of the first semester.

For the total number of problems checked over the entire semester significant differences were found on Courtship, Sex and Marriage; Social and Recreational Activities; Social-Psychological Relations; and Morals and Religion.

For the number of problems indicated in each area for week 1, significant differences were found on Social and Recreational Activities and Personal-Psychological Relations.

For the number of problems indicated in each area for week 2, significant differences were found on Courtship, Sex and Marriage.

TABLE 12  
 MEANS AND T-VALUES FOR STUDENTS FROM URBAN  
 AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MPCL  
 FOR WEEK 11

Problem Areas	Mean		T-Values
	Urban	Rural	
Health and Physical Development (HPD)	2.54	1.25	1.11
Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)	4.69	1.00	1.35
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)	5.08	0.50	3.68**
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)	3.61	0.75	1.73
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)	5.23	1.25	1.82
Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM)	3.00	1.25	0.89
Home and Family (HF)	3.00	0.50	1.73*
Morals and Religion (MR)	3.31	0.25	2.32*
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)	8.46	4.00	1.16
The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)	5.15	0.50	3.60**
Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CTP)	3.77	0.75	1.75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47.85</b>	<b>12.00</b>	<b>3.18**</b>

\*Significant at the .05 level.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 13  
 MEANS AND T-VALUES FOR STUDENTS FROM URBAN  
 AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ON THE MPCL  
 FOR WEEK 12

Problem Areas	Mean		T-Values
	Urban	Rural	
Health and Physical Development (HPD)	4.20	3.86	0.31
Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE)	2.50	5.57	-1.70
Social and Recreational Activities (SRA)	6.80	5.43	0.58
Social-Psychological Relations (SPR)	5.00	3.71	0.70
Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR)	5.90	8.00	-0.82
Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM)	2.40	1.86	0.52
Home and Family (HF)	3.60	2.86	0.56
Morals and Religion (MR)	4.00	3.29	0.43
Adjustment to College Work (ACW)	7.20	9.14	-1.16
The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE)	6.50	6.71	-0.08
Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CTP)	5.90	6.43	-0.20
TOTAL	54.00	56.35	-0.18

\*Significant at the .05 level.

\*\*Significant at the .01 level.

For the number of problems indicated in each area for week 4, significant differences were found on Social and Recreational Activities.

For the number of problems indicated in each area for week 5, significant differences were found on Social and Recreational Activities.

For the number of problems indicated in each area for week 9, significant differences were found on Courtship, Sex and Marriage.

For the number of problems indicated in each area for week 11, significant differences were found on Home and Family; Morals and Religion; Social-Recreational Activities; The Future: Vocational and Educational; and total problems checked.

For the number of problems indicated in each area for weeks 3, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 12, no significant differences were found.

#### Summary

Chapter IV presented an analysis of the data collected in the study. The data consisted of the number of problems indicated by 273 freshmen tested once over weekly time periods for the twelve weeks of their first semester on the Mooney Problem Check List.

Three research questions were restated and were presented on the bases of the analysis of the data.

Question 1 asked whether there were any differences in the mean weekly adjustment scores of entering Junior Studies freshmen at Memorial University of Newfoundland. The results indicated that there were differences in these scores.

Question 2 asked whether there were differences on the mean scores for each week on the various areas of adjustment of entering Junior Studies freshmen. The results indicated that there were problem areas that were more problematic at varying times during the semester.

Question 3 asked whether there were differences in the mean adjustment scores of students from urban and rural communities across the first twelve weeks of the first semester. Results of the T-test showed that there were significant differences in some areas.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

In Chapter V, a summary of the complete study is presented. This chapter contains a restatement of the research questions and specific findings and recommendations for further research.

#### Restatement of the Problem

The success or failure of a freshman may be determined by his adaptation or adjustment to the institution. If a freshman encounters difficulties in this process, some other problems may arise at a later date.

The main purpose of this investigation was to determine whether freshmen have a period of adjustment which they go through during the first semester at Memorial University of Newfoundland. In this study, adjustment was based upon the number of problems indicated on the Mooney Problem Check List (MPCL) in a number of specific areas: Health and Physical Development (HPD); Finances, Living Conditions and Employment (FLE); Social and Recreational Activities (SRA); Social-Psychological Relations (SPR); Personal-Psychological Relations (PPR); Courtship, Sex and Marriage (CSM); Home and Family (HF); Morals and Religion (MR); Adjustment to College Work (ACW); The Future: Vocational and Educational (FVE);



Curriculum and Teaching Procedures (CTP); and total problems checked.

Specifically, the investigation attempted to answer three questions:

1. Were there any differences in the mean weekly adjustment scores of entering Junior Studies freshmen at Memorial University of Newfoundland?
2. Were there any differences in the mean scores for each week on the various areas of adjustment of entering Junior Studies freshmen?
3. Were there any differences in the adjustment scores of students from urban and rural communities across the first twelve weeks of the first semester?

#### Method of Data Analysis

For Question 1, analysis of the data was completed by plotting a graph of the total number of problems indicated and describing this graph.

For Question 2, analysis was completed by plotting the number of problems indicated in each problem area for the twelve weeks of the semester and describing the problem area periods for the semester.

Question 3 was answered by performing a T-test to determine whether significant differences existed between the scores obtained by urban and rural students on the various problem areas and the total scores. The .05 level

of significance was employed for this T-test.

### Research Questions and Discussion

This investigation attempted to answer three questions. Each question is restated below and a discussion presented.

Question 1:--Were there any differences in the mean weekly adjustment scores of entering Junior Studies freshmen at Memorial University of Newfoundland?

Analysis of Figure 1 showed there were differences in the mean weekly adjustment scores. The first three weeks showed a gradual increase and week 4, a sharp increase. Week 5 dropped slightly, and from then to week 8 there was little variability. During week 9, the number of problems dropped rather dramatically, then rose to the previous level for weeks 10 and 11, and finally rose to the highest level of the semester during week 12.

There are a number of interpretations which could be made of these results. It may be that during the first few weeks, students were becoming accustomed to the University and beginning to feel the effects of this new and different environment. There was a levelling off after week 4 through to week 8 which may indicate they reached a relatively stable level of adjustment. Week 9 showed a sharp drop in the number of problems. This may partially be explained by the fact this was immediately after the mid-semester break,

during which time students tend to take some time off and relax. The following week, week 10, the number of problems increased to the level of the four weeks prior to week 9, with week 11 showing a small drop, and the final week 12 showing the highest number of problems. Week 12 was also exam week and the high number of problems may have been a result of the anxiety and tension which examinations tend to elicit.

Question 2:--Were there any differences in the mean scores for each week on the various areas of adjustment of entering Junior Studies freshmen?

The outline of scores on each subtest over the twelve weeks (Figure 2) showed there were some areas where there were more problems than others during each week. The major problem areas were: Adjustment to College Work; Social and Recreational Activities; Personal-Psychological Relations; The Future: Vocational and Educational; Social-Psychological Relations; and Curriculum and Teaching Procedures.

From weeks 1 to 3 there appeared to be no serious problem areas. Week 4 showed problems with: The Future: Vocational and Educational; Social and Recreational Activities; Personal-Psychological Relations; and Adjustment to College Work. It may be that after three to four weeks, these new students were getting accustomed to the University environment and were able to sort out in their own minds where they

were going and also the main problem areas began coming to the surface.

Problem areas which were most predominant during week 5 were: Social and Recreational Activities; and Adjustment to College Work. These problem areas appeared to continue from the previous week.

Two additional problem areas appeared during week 6 in addition to those of week 5: Social-Psychological Relations; and Personal-Psychological Relations.

Week 7 students indicated problems mostly in: Adjustment to College Work; and Social and Recreational Activities, the same as week 5.

Personal-Psychological Relations, as well as the problem areas of week 7 were the main difficulties in week 8.

Week 9 showed no problem areas of particular concern.

The problem areas in week 10 were the same as those during week 8: Personal-Psychological Relations; Adjustment to College Work; and Social and Recreational Activities.

Adjustment to College Work was the main problem area during week 11.

Week 12 showed problems in more areas than any other week: Curriculum and Teaching Procedures; Social and Recreational Activities; The Future: Vocational and Educational; Personal-Psychological Relations; and Adjustment to College Work.

There are a number of observations and interpretations which can be made from these results. Throughout the semester, two main problem areas were predominant: Adjustment to College Work; and Social and Recreational Activities. This would indicate that throughout the semester students may have been having problems with the new institutional environment in terms of the increased pressure on themselves for academic performance and the level of the work involved. In addition, students seemed to have been having difficulties in their Social and Recreational activities.

Personal-Psychological Relations was the other notable problem area. This may indicate students were having intra-personal problems.

Generally, it appeared the major adjustment problem areas can be grouped into two broad areas: Adjustment to College Work, which has been discussed, and a category which might be labelled Social-Personal Development. This latter category includes the other major problem areas which appeared to deal with the self and its development from a number of different viewpoints, i.e., relating to other people and students; relating to and satisfaction with themselves; what they plan to do with their lives both immediately in terms of social and recreational, and their plans for the future.

Finally, it was interesting to note that Curriculum and Teaching Procedures appeared to become a problem during week 12, which was immediately prior to exams. This may

indicate that students tended to place the onus of their performance in the examinations on the material covered or the instructors who taught them this material.

Question 3:--Were there any differences in the adjustment scores of students from urban and rural communities across the first twelve weeks of the first semester?

From the analysis presented in the previous chapter, it can be seen there are differences in the adjustment scores of students from urban and rural communities.

However, these differences were not consistent in any way. One observation which can be made is that in all of the significant differences reported, the students from urban communities indicated more problems than those from the rural communities, with the exception of the differences in week 4 on: Health and Physical Development; Finances, Living Conditions and Employment; and Social and Recreational Activities. In these areas, the rural students indicated more problems.

The fact urban students indicated more problems than rural students was interesting. One would expect urban students to have less problems than rural students because they came from a background which was more similar to their new environment than the background of the rural students. This, one would expect, would result in fewer difficulties in coping with this new environment.

However, it may be that urban students are constantly facing more complex problems than rural students or that, due to the less complicated upbringing of rural students, they find themselves equipped with the necessary faculties to cope with most problems in a calm and rational manner.

#### Interpretations and Implications of Study Findings

The results of this investigation were examined in terms of previous research on the adjustment problems of college students, implications for Junior Division student personnel administration and in terms of implications for further research.

#### Interpretation in Terms of Previous Research

The findings of this investigation generally did not support the results of previous research. In terms of differences in adjustment over a semester, Congdon (1943) reported there was improvement in adjustment during the first semester of College. In addition, Caldwell (1959) found there was an improvement in adjustment over two six-week administrations of the California Test of Personality. Gordon (1949) administered the MPCL twice to five classes during a nine day interval and found a difference in the number of problems indicated.

Sodhi (1970) and Charette et al. (1969) both found some differences in the adjustment problems of students from

urban and rural communities. This investigation obtained the same results, i.e., there were some differences but they were not large or numerous.

In summary, the findings of the present study did not support the previous findings in that there were differences in adjustment over the first semester. However, differences in adjustment were found between urban and rural students.

#### Implications for Junior Division Student Personnel Administration

The fact there were differences in adjustment both over the entire semester and in terms of the home community (urban and rural) has implications for the Junior Division student personnel administration. These differences indicate students need additional help with adjustment when first entering Memorial; they need this help in different areas of adjustment and at different times during the semester; and that urban and rural students need help in different areas and at different times.

The results of this investigation established there were some problems with adjustment over the semester. It appears from the results that the number of problems increased slowly for the first three weeks, jumped drastically at 4, dropped a little and levelled off from weeks 5 through 8, dropped drastically during week 9, increased to the level of the weeks before during weeks 10 and 11, and increased to its highest level at week 12. The Junior Division administration



needs to be aware of these differences and a planned program should be implemented in order to help students deal with these adjustment difficulties.

A solid orientation program should be established at the beginning of the semester to tell students about survival at Memorial. This orientation program should be designed to deal with problems such as dealing with new and different people and groups; handling social, personal and psychological problems as they arise; thinking of the future in terms of a career; and other issues which appear to be relevant and of concern to these new, and often unaware, freshmen.

In addition, it would seem that if each freshmen were offered a concerned instructor as an advisor at the beginning of the first semester, the student would have someone to whom he could bring any problems which occurred in any of the areas.

Differences involved in terms of size of hometown should also be taken into consideration when the Junior Division administration is planning an orientation program. In different areas and at different times during the semester, significant differences were found to exist between urban and rural students. This indicates a need to have this orientation program as flexible as it can possibly be in order to allow students with problems in specific areas to come to grips with these when they arise.

### Implications for Further Research

The programs previously mentioned lead to this final section, which will discuss possible areas for further research.

An attempt should be made to discover what specifically is causing the adjustment problems Junior Division freshmen have during the first semester. This would enable the administration to tackle these problems as they occur.

In order to discover the effects which "urbanness" and "ruralness" have on adjustment, the relationship between size of hometown and the distance from large centers should be investigated in more depth.

Students could be pre-tested before entering Memorial as Junior Division freshmen in order to determine their state of adjustment. From this base point, it would become easier to determine what effect the first weeks at Memorial has on them.

An extension of this study into the second semester and/or the second year would enable the administration to determine whether or not students become adjusted to Memorial over time or whether they remain at the same level of adjustment.

A study of the relationship between the state of adjustment of the Junior Division freshman and his academic performance at the end of the first semester might enable the administration to determine the effects which poor

adjustment has on academic performance. If a relationship were found, an intense orientation program focussed at the identified students might enable students to be happier at Memorial and perform better academically. Students who drop out of Memorial could be contacted to discover whether problems with adjustment contributed to their decision to leave Memorial.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendations are made for further research:

1. In order to increase the generalizability of this investigation this study should be repeated at other post-secondary institutions in different geographical locations throughout the Province.
2. This investigation should be repeated regularly and continuously so up-to-date information is available on the degree of adjustment of each new entering class of Junior Division. This would enable the administration to recognize and provide programs for students who appear to be having much greater problems with adjustment than is usual.
3. This investigation should be repeated and the degree of urbanness and ruralness be taken into consideration in terms of adjustment. This would give the administration a stronger basis for a flexible orientation program which could be oriented toward students from different size

communities or students from communities which are at various distances from larger communities and cities.

4. An extension of this investigation should be conducted to determine how adjustment relates to academic performance. Do students who are poorly adjusted during their first semester perform more poorly than their better adjusted peers? Do more poorly adjusted students voluntarily terminate during their university career? Are more of them academically dismissed? Do less of them eventually graduate? Answers to all these questions would have very strong implications for the Junior Division administration.

5. Due to a large number of difficulties which were encountered with attempting to discover a method of conducting a meaningful statistical analysis, it is recommended that this study be re-designed and conducted in a method which would enable a strong statistical analysis to be carried out.

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APPENDIX A

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Printed in U.S.A.



CENTRE FOR Nfld. STUDIES  
MAY 18 1978  
MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY  
OF NEWFOUNDLAND

