REPORT OF AN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP AT COLLEGE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC INCLUDING A RESEARCH REPORT ON THE TRANSITION EXPERIENCE OF REENTRY VERSUS EARLY ENTRY FIRST YEAR FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Report of an Educational Psychology Internship at College of the North Atlantic Including a Research Report on the Transition Experience of Reentry Versus Early Entry First Year Female College Students

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ABSTRACT

This report provides an overview of an educational psychology internship at the College of the North Atlantic. The placement component includes a description of the internship setting, specific goals and objectives, a description of the internship activities, as well as the intern's personal reflections on the internship experiences. The research component focuses on the transition experience of older, "reentry" female college students as compared to more traditional age, "early entry" female college students as they complete the first year of their program. Anticipated differences between reentry and early entry students in their reasons for entering college, the personal and institutional barriers they experienced in making the transition, and the supports they received throughout the transition, were not supported by the research findings. However, concerns were raised regarding the high numbers of students in both groups that had considered dropping out of their college program, as well as the high numbers that worried about competition with other students. Recommendations and suggestions for future research are included.

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Counselling Centre. This practicum gave the intern insight into the value of supervised practical experience allowing her to apply and further develop the skills acquired in the theoretical component of the program. The intern became aware of her strengths and competencies as a novice counsellor, and identified areas needing further development. It was thought that the best way to develop these skills was under the supervision of an experienced counsellor in an internship setting.

The formal component of the Educational Psychology program places greater emphasis on counselling in a "K to 12" school system; therefore, an internship in an adult setting was chosen to provide a more balanced training experience and to be more compatible with the intern's interests and career plans. The College of the North Atlantic was chosen as the placement site for two reasons. First, as a public college, counselling services are offered to the community, not solely to registered students, leading to a greater diversity in clientelle. Secondly, it would allow the intern to pursue a research area of interest: reentry women in post-secondary education.

The Internship Setting

The College of the North Atlantic is Newfoundland and Labrador's public college system serving students of various ages and interests, promoting formal and informal adult learning in the regional community. With 18 campuses province-wide and its headquarters in Stephenville, the College is an institution whose mandate is to develop and operate all facets of non-university post-secondary, continuing education, and vocational programs throughout the province. The College offers a wide variety of programs, many of which are nationally accredited, including programs in Applied Arts, Business Studies, Health

Sciences, Information Technology, Natural Resources, Engineering Technology, and Certificate Programs. Under its Academic/Access programs the College also offers Adult Basic Education, a college transfer year, as well as a variety of Special Services programs (College of the North Atlantic, 1998).

The 18 campuses are divided into districts. District 7 is made up of four main campuses: Prince Philip Drive (PPD), the Engineering Technology Centre-Ridge Road (ETC), Seal Cove (SC), and Topsail Road (TR). In addition District 7 offers a Textile Studies Program at the Anna Templeton Centre (ATC)- Duckworth Street. During the internship the student was primarily associated with the two larger campuses, Prince Philip Drive and the Engineering Technology Centre. The intern's daily schedule was essentially determined by the availability of office space. Tuesdays and Wednesdays were spent at the ETC campus and Thursdays and Fridays were spent at the PPD campus. Mondays were reserved as research days as well as for scheduled appointments with the Faculty Supervisor. Dr. Mildred Cahill.

Counselling Services at the College are encompassed under the Division of Student Services, together with Admissions and Registration, the Audio-Visual Centre, Campus Libraries, Health Services, Liaison and Employability, Sports and Recreation, and Student Affairs and Employment. The Division of Student Services' main role is to support the student in his/her educational pursuits, by assisting student growth and development on a variety of levels including: personal, social, emotional, and intellectual. The goal is to enhance the quality of student life and ensure that the experience of all students is positive and rewarding. As a part of the Student Services Division, Counselling Services offer personal and career counselling, academic advising and referral. Other services: include

the coordination of the peer-tutoring program, special needs requests, and may also include testing and assessment (College of the North Atlantic, n.d.). The intern felt that a placement with the College of the North Atlantic would provide an excellent variety of professional practical experiences.

Internship Goals

The ultimate goal for the internship was to gain practical experience and further develop the skills and competencies necessary for proficient performance in the counselling profession. To achieve this goal, the intern identified the following specific objectives:

1. to become familiar with the programs and services provided by the College, as well as the role of the counsellor in a post-secondary institution.
2. to conduct individual counselling sessions in the areas of personal and career counselling with students at the College.
3. to practice a variety of counselling skills and further develop knowledge of counselling theories and techniques.
4. to attend weekly meetings with on-site supervisors to discuss specific cases and progress of the internship.
5. to administer and interpret a variety of assessment instruments used at the post-secondary level.
6. to develop collaborative relationships and consult where appropriate with other professionals in the field, in addition to instructors and administrators at the College.

7. to participate in available workshops, in-services, conferences or professional development meetings throughout the internship, as well as participate in any outreach or group activities offered by Counselling Services.
8. to develop further knowledge of specific counselling issues by pursuing additional information/literature, mutually beneficial to the intern and the college students.
9. to complete a research study of the transition experience of female students at the College as a function of early or reentry (late entry).

Research Component

As part of the internship, graduate students are required to conduct a research study suitable to the field placement. This intern chose to complete a research study on the transition experience of reentry women at the College. This is an area of personal interest to the intern and it was also felt that such information would be quite useful to Counselling Services at the College.

Faculty and Field Supervision

The responsibility for supervision of the intern was shared by a Faculty of Education Supervisor, Dr. Mildred Cahill, as well as two Field Supervisors, Mr. John Harnett, B.A., M.Ed. (at the ETC campus), and Ms. Brenda Newhook, B.Ed., M.Ed. (at the PPD campus). The two Field Supervisors shared the primary responsibility for the ongoing supervision of the intern's counselling activities at the College and facilitated access to appropriate professional opportunities throughout the internship. As well, both Field Supervisors assisted the intern by giving feedback on the questionnaire and offering

suggestions to facilitate data collection at the College. The Field Supervisors met with the intern and the Faculty Supervisor midway through the placement to ensure that the internship was progressing smoothly and that the intern's goals were being met.

The Faculty Supervisor, Dr. Mildred Cahill, assisted in the arrangement of the internship, and advised and guided the intern in the preparation and refinement of the research proposal as well as the final internship report. The Faculty Supervisor held regular meetings with the intern to discuss the progress of the internship and the research component, met with the Field Supervisors and the intern prior to and midway through the internship, and was available for consultation with the Field Supervisors throughout the placement.

The majority of the intern's time was spent in individual counselling sessions addressing academic, personal or career concerns with students and potential students. At the College, counselling is frequently an "on-demand" service as many clients drop-in to see a counsellor without a scheduled appointment. PPD campus, in particular, services a large number of clients from the general public (i.e. non-students) seeking program information, educational counselling or career counselling. This does not typically happen at the other campuses, perhaps because of PPD's location or its recognition in the community as the public college.

At the College the focus is on short-term counselling for students experiencing difficulties that are interfering with their academic pursuits. Sessions typically last 60 minutes but vary considerably depending on the client's concerns. In addition to individual counselling, counsellors are involved in standardized testing, arranging peer tutors, and assistance with special needs requests or accommodations. Counselling is available to all students and is usually offered on a one-on-one or small group basis (College of the North Atlantic, 1999a). In addition to individual counselling sessions, the intern co-facilitated a job search skills seminar, gave a group presentation to transfer students and a "student success strategies" seminar to several groups of high school students.

Assessment also falls under the college counsellor's domain. The intern administered, scored, and interpreted the Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT) to a group of mature applicants and frequently used interest inventories, such as the Self-Directed Search, to assist clients in career planning. The intern was also involved in a variety of professional development activities including workshops on True Colors, Grief

Counselling/Grief Therapy and the director's meeting with the counselling team and read extensively throughout the internship on a variety of counselling topics.

The intern was also involved in a number of staff planning meetings with other student services staff, administrators, and instructors at the College on a variety of issues including: retention strategies, planning orientation activities for September, and admission/accommodation of students with special needs.

Many other activities were performed by the intern throughout the placement including: administering oral exams to students with learning disabilities, assisting with graduation ceremonies, assisting Textile Studies graduates set up for their exhibition, organizing college/university calendars in the career centre and recommending supplies to be purchased, journalling/self-reflection, recording of client tracking notes, and answering student inquiries about student loans, housing, supplementary exams and program change forms.

Review of Internship Objectives

The internship provided many opportunities to practice the skills of counselling and provided experiences directly related to the intern's career goals. Each of the intern's objectives was accomplished throughout the placement and are described below:

Objective 1: to become familiar with the programs and services provided by the College, as well as the role of the counsellor in a post-secondary institution.

Accomplishing this objective was ongoing throughout the internship. During the first few weeks an orientation to the College, its programs and policies were provided by

Mr. Harnett and Ms. Newhook. Mr. Touchings also gave the intern an orientation to the Seal Cove campus and introduced the intern to various faculty members at the Topsail Road campus. Learning resulted from discussions with instructors and from touring the various classrooms/labs. This information was invaluable to the intern, since giving program information to students and prospective students is a major function of the college counsellor.

The role of the college counsellor was learned experientially through observation and participation in all professional activities with Mr. Harnett and Ms. Newhook throughout the internship. As well, the intern spent a great deal of time during the first few weeks studying the College Calendar, as well as various brochures/pamphlets and documents produced by the College in order to familiarize herself with programs and services. A great deal of information was gained by reading pamphlets on student services, counselling services, the college transfer program, peer tutoring, prior learning assessment, the mature student policy, and such documents as the Academic Advising Guide, the Student Handbook, and the Profiles and Perspectives research on recent College graduates. The intern also reviewed the internship reports of Brenda Newhook (1995), John Fowler (1997), and Andrew Smith (1999), who completed their placements at the College of the North Atlantic, to learn from their internship experiences.

Objective 2: to conduct individual counselling sessions in the areas of personal and career counselling with students at the College.

In arranging the placement, it was recognized that there are fewer students on campus during the intersession semester leading to lower numbers of clients than could be expected in the busier fall and winter semesters. Nevertheless, the intern felt that an adequate number of clients were seen throughout the internship, a total of 37 clients over 43 sessions. This number does not include the many telephone contacts with students or potential students. Counselling sessions averaged 60 minutes, but varied from 20 minutes to 2 hours in duration, the vast majority of them taking place at the PPD campus. As noted earlier, ETC campus gets very few walk-in clients from the general public.

Counselling session topics ranged from requests for program information, employment outlook and salary expectation information, assistance with career exploration, career planning and job search, arranging peer tutors, test results interpretation, study skills training, assistance with program planning, student loans and program changes as well as many personal issues including stress management, family issues and self-esteem. Though most of the clients seen were concerned with "career-related" issues, the intern hesitates to classify clients as primarily personal, career, or academic as it is the intern's belief that few issues are purely career. In fact, many researchers strongly believe in the interconnectedness of career and personal issues and recognize that they should not be treated as isolated issues in the counselling process (Kromboltz, 1993; Betz & Corning, 1993; Super, 1993; Davidson & Gilbert, 1993; Herr, 1997; Pope, Cheng & Leong, 1998). Davidson & Gilbert (1993) contend that career is very highly related to personal identity and development and a significant source of personal meaning in our Western culture. They

argue that, in reality, what is being assembled in the career counselling process is personal identity and meaning that are of primary importance to an individual's survival, well-being, and family lifestyle.

Many career-related issues are heavily emotionally-laden. Loss of, or failure in career, frequently connotes some threat to personal self-esteem, life satisfaction and psychological well-being as does the transition to retirement, or the relocation of family in pursuit of a career or to follow the career of a spouse. Career matters affect our personal lives and vice versa (Betz & Corning, 1993). Briefly described below are two case examples that illustrate the interconnectedness of career and personal issues.

Case Example A

"Greg" is in his mid-thirties and has worked as a carpenter since age 16. Two years ago an accident on the job caused him to severely injure his left thumb. Since then he has not worked. Though his thumb has healed and is now only minimally impaired, his doctor has advised him not to go back to carpentry because the long-term prognosis is unclear. He has come for counselling because Worker's Compensation offered to retrain him for a new occupation. They are steering him toward an occupation in the technology or computer fields. Greg says that his counsellor at Worker's Compensation thinks he should get a "suit and tie" job, that he says "is just not me". Greg feels he would go crazy with a desk job.

Greg sees this as a wonderful opportunity to get an education because he never finished high school, but can't really see himself as anything other than a carpenter. He always dreamed that one day he would open up his own home construction company.

Greg's identity, future plans, and self-esteem are very much tied to his life as a carpenter. It is not a simple "career" issue.

Counselling focused on exploring Greg's feelings of loss, reinforcing his positive feelings about his self-worth and abilities and assisting him in self-assessment and analysis. By isolating the aspects of carpentry that appealed most to him, Greg was able to see that his injury would not prevent him from other occupations that may fulfill the same interests that carpentry had in the past. The final stage of counselling involved providing program information and assisting Greg in decision-making.

Case Example B

"Paula" and her husband have been living away from Newfoundland for the past 6 years. Though they were both working and making good money in Ontario, they recently quit and moved back home because their daughter will be starting school in September. They feel it is very important for her to grow up around friends and family. At present they are living with Paula's parents. Both Paula and her husband hope to be sponsored through their employment insurance to go back to school. Without some kind of training, Paula does not expect to find a decent job to support her family. She feels pressured to start a program in September because by next year her employment insurance will have run out and she will no longer be eligible for sponsorship. She will not be able to afford to go to school without financial assistance.

Unlike many "career" clients, finding an occupation to match her interests is not high on her list of priorities; her family and situational factors are more important. Right now, Paula's primary concern is to keep her family in Newfoundland and get into a

training program in September that will have excellent employment prospects here in Newfoundland and a good salary so she can support her family comfortably. Unfortunately, by late June when Paula came to the College many of the more employable and higher salary programs, such as IT, were already tentatively full for September with long waiting lists as well.

Counselling included some practical aspects, such as discussing employment prospects, graduates' salary information, and availability of seats in particular programs for the coming fall. Personal issues such as balancing the multiple roles of wife, mother and student, and the financial hardship of returning to school were discussed at length. Paula has enlisted the support of her parents. We also discussed trying to find a program that she will have some interest in and noted the importance of being happy in one's career. Waiting for a program that interests her is not really an option for Paula at this time.

General Reflections

Throughout the internship, the intern kept a detailed journal of the various professional activities engaged in at the College as well as the intern's own thoughts on these experiences. Reflecting on the client counselling sessions, the intern made the following observations:

- *Clients tend to be good educational consumers.*

The intern was impressed that a very large percentage of the clients seeking program information or career exploration assistance had many questions about the employment prospects and earnings of recent graduates of particular programs in which they were

interested. As well, clients had many questions about the reputation of the College, the quality of its programs as compared to private colleges, and employers' views on distributed learning (distance learning) versus classroom learning. Perhaps this is a reflection of the times we live in: high unemployment, rising tuition costs and student debt. Students must make sure they are making a good investment. The intern relied heavily on the College's Profiles and Perspectives (College of the North Atlantic, 1999b) document to give clients current information on employment statistics of recent graduates. It was often suggested to clients that they contact potential employers to inquire about the educational training they look for in new employees. The intern also encouraged clients to do their own research, often referring them to the Job Futures website for information on employment trends and the new Career Search website for an additional source of employment statistics on recent college and university graduates.

- *Clients do not always reveal the real reason for their visit up front.*

The intern became aware that often clients will present with one issue and will disclose the real reason for their visit after they have established a certain level of comfort with the intern. For example, one client began the session stating that the reason for his visit was that he very much wanted to do a computer course at the College. After spending an hour reviewing the Programmer Analyst and Computer Support Specialist programs and the respective entrance requirements of each program, the intern outlined several options to the client. He could apply under the Mature Student Policy, or do some upgrading first and apply later. It was also noted that the client could possibly get into the program faster if he applied to the campus nearest his home.

The intern became aware that the client's nonverbal behavior was not consistent with his professed interest in the computer field. After some probing the client revealed that he was not at all interested in the computer field but was being pushed by his family in that direction. What started out as primarily program information giving turned into a personal counselling session. The client revealed that his true interests were in anthropology and linguistics and that he wanted guidance in handling his family's pressure. The session then turned to focus on his family relationships, their expectations of him, and his need to fulfill his own dreams and interests.

- *Many of the clients who use counselling services at the College are more mature than the "traditional" student.*

The intern observed that almost half of all her clients identified themselves as mature applicants/students, many of whom were returning to retrain after a significant absence from school. This was in sharp contrast to the typically younger clients seen during the practicum placement at the University Counselling Centre who frequently wanted assistance in choosing an occupation or selecting a major. Many of these mature students were considering going back to school because they had recently lost their jobs, could not find work in their present field, were unhappy in their present field, wanted to retrain to get a more financially secure job or needed to retrain because they had been injured on the job. Having done a considerable amount of research into the counselling needs of reentry women and transition issues of mature students, the intern was quite familiar with many of the issues of this client population. The intern did some additional reading on this topic as well described below in Objective #8.

Objective 3: to practice a variety of counselling skills and further develop knowledge of counselling theories and techniques.

Becoming a fully trained professional counsellor is an ongoing process, not intended to be accomplished in a ten-week internship. According to Egan (1998), becoming an effective counsellor requires both working knowledge and skills. "Working knowledge" is the ability to transfer theory and research into applied understanding that enables a counsellor to work with clients. "Skill" refers to the counsellor's actual ability to deliver these services. The intern continued to acquire both theoretical and practical knowledge throughout the placement period through extensive additional readings on counselling theory, exchanges of professional knowledge with supervisors, attending all available professional development workshops, and refinement of personal style in actual counselling sessions.

The intern used Egan's Problem-Management Approach to Helping in counselling sessions with clients at the College. This helping model is based on problem-solving and has three stages:

Stage 1: The Current State of Affairs – Clarification of the key issues calling for change

Stage 2: The Preferred Scenario – Helping clients determine what they need and want

Stage 3: Strategies for Action – Helping clients discover how to get what they need and want (Egan, 1998).

This practical model worked very well with the College's focus on short-term counselling and the intern's problem-solving approach to helping.

The intern believes that learning is, indeed, a lifelong process and that to be an effective counsellor she must continue to develop her working knowledge of current

theories and research as well as refine her counselling skills and style through continued practice.

Objective 4: to attend weekly meetings with on-site supervisors to discuss specific cases and progress of the internship.

Meetings with field supervisors were usually arranged informally as needed by the intern, rather than scheduled at a set time each week. Supervision time averaged approximately one hour per week. Typically, the intern would meet with Mr. Harnett or Ms. Newhook as questions or concerns arose about particular cases; however, both supervisors were available throughout the day, when not with a client, to answer the intern's frequent questions.

There were also numerous discussions between the intern and the supervisors on a variety of topics such as:

-making recommendations to administration on "special needs" admissions;

-content of course work covered in the Educational Psychology program;

-gender differences in expression of feelings and the importance of the counsellor's role in giving clients allowance to express their feelings;

-the importance of extracurricular activities and self-care to the professional counsellor;

-the validity of such assessment tools as the CAAT (Canadian Adult Achievement Test) to predict student achievement and the GATB (General Aptitude Test Battery) to identify abilities and assist in making educational and career decisions;

-using Brief Therapy and the "miracle question" with clients at the College;

-the Prior Learning Assessment process at the College; and

-strategies to increase student retention.

There were also several discussions with both Mr. Harnett and Ms. Newhook about choosing the research participants and arranging for data collection for the research component.

Objective 5: to administer and interpret a variety of assessment instruments used at the post-secondary level.

A variety of assessment tools are used by counsellors at the College. During the placement the intern had an opportunity to become familiar with many of these instruments. The College frequently uses tools in career guidance to assist students in individual decision-making. Interest inventories assess an individual's interests and are used to provide a catalyst to career exploration (Herr & Cramer, 1996). The Self-Directed Search (SDS) is the most frequently used interest inventory at the College and therefore, the intern chose to administer and interpret this instrument throughout the internship to many clients who were lacking direction in their career goals. The intern chose to familiarize herself with three additional interest inventories available at the College including the Interest Determination, Exploration, and Assessment System (IDEAS), the Campbell Interest and Skill Survey (CISS), and the Career Assessment Inventory (CAI). This involved completing the interest inventories and reviewing the results and reference manuals. The intern also observed an administration of IDEAS by a counsellor at the PPD campus.

Two other instruments are also used for career guidance at the College but much less frequently than those listed above. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the Sixteen PF Personal Career Development Profile (PCDP) were also self-administered and reviewed by the intern. The MBTI is based on Jung's personality types, and is sometimes used in career counselling (Herr & Cramer, 1996). PCDP is a career profile based on responses to 16 personality dimensions (Herr & Cramer, 1996).

Assessment instruments are also used at the College for admission purposes. The Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT) is administered under the Mature Student Policy to applicants who do not meet the educational prerequisites for the program they wish to enter to determine their level of educational achievement. The CAAT is administered at the College every two weeks. The intern assisted Ms. Newhook in administering and scoring the CAAT on one occasion and independently administered the CAAT on another occasion. This also involved scoring the tests, interpreting the results to applicants, discussing their options and making recommendations to the Registrar's office regarding admissions.

Another instrument also used for admission purposes is the Computer Programmer Aptitude Battery – Form A (CPAB). The CPAB is occasionally administered to applicants of the Applied Business Information Technology Program who did not obtain the required 70 percent average in their undergraduate university or college degree. The intern observed an administration of the CPAB by a college counsellor and independently reviewed the test as well.

The intern also attended a one-day workshop on Accuplacer during the director's meeting with the counselling team in Gander. Accuplacer is a software program

designed to ensure accurate placement and assessment of college readiness. The College is contemplating using this program as a placement tool. This was a very interesting and informative workshop. The intern also attended a short presentation on the Freshman Integration and Tracking System (FITS). The FITS is a program designed to increase student retention and success by promoting the efficient and effective use of college resources as well as understanding the factors which determine success and retention in first term students. This tool was piloted at ETC campus last fall so the intern was able to review both the questionnaires and the data collected from the pilot study.

Objective 6: to develop collaborative relationships and consult where appropriate with other professionals in the field, as well as instructors and administrators at the College.

Throughout the placement the intern collaborated and consulted with a variety of individuals both within and outside the College. Student Services staff at the College work together to support the student in his/her educational pursuits. The intern was in constant contact with other student services staff regarding waitlists, program/course offerings, sponsorship from outside organizations, special needs applicant admissions, assessment of mature students, and student loan inquiries.

In addition to Student Services staff, counsellors work with students, administrators, instructors, and outside agencies. The intern frequently met with the other counsellors at the College about specific clients or applicants, and consulted with counsellors from other campuses on program offerings and availability at various community campuses. The intern also participated in a monthly conference call with all the college counsellors from the

different campuses. The counselling team attempts to maintain contact among members through monthly conference call meetings.

The intern met with instructors at the College to arrange classroom tours for prospective students, to discuss progress and accommodation of a student with special needs, to discuss the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition process, and to arrange for the administration of the intern's research questionnaire to students.

The intern also attended several staff planning meetings at the College with other counsellors, instructors, and administrators, regarding admission and accommodation of special needs applicants, planning retention strategies, planning orientation activities for fall, and administration of the intern's questionnaire to first year female college students.

The intern also deemed contact with other professionals in the community important. The intern attended a network luncheon where she met other counsellors from various community agencies such as, WISE, the Prep Program, Ability Works, the Ready Centre, HRDC, Employment Skills Ltd., and the Brother T. I. Murphy Centre. This was an excellent opportunity to learn about the services available within the community and to make contacts at these various agencies for referral purposes. The intern also consulted with a high school guidance counsellor regarding the special needs accommodations required by a new student entering the College this fall.

Objective 7: to participate in available in-services, workshops, conferences or professional development meetings throughout the internship, as well as participate in any outreach or group activities offered by Counselling Services.

The intern was very fortunate to participate in a variety of activities throughout the placement including workshops, outreach and group sessions both on and off campus. These activities provided very valuable learning experiences. An overview of these activities is provided below.

Workshops

The workshops attended included True Colors, Grief Counselling and Grief Therapy, and the director's meeting with the counselling team.

True colors.

The True Colors introductory workshop was a half-day session offered by Memorial University's Career Development Centre (CDC) and the Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers (CACEE). True Colors is a tool for understanding and appreciating the four basic human temperament types. These four types interact with each other both within individuals and between individuals in society creating the social and personal dynamics that make us who we are. This tool is designed to provide understanding and motivation that can lead to improvements in a number of areas including self awareness, application of counselling skills, team building skills, career planning, leadership, conflict resolution, and human resources management. This workshop was both interesting and enjoyable.

Grief counselling and grief therapy.

The two-day workshop on Grief Counselling and Grief Therapy was offered by the Association of Newfoundland Psychologists. J. William Worden, Ph.D., an internationally renowned expert in the area of bereavement, presented a model for understanding the process of mourning and the experience of grief. Participants learned how to recognize and treat complicated bereavement and how to organize and facilitate bereavement groups. Additionally, participants learned to better understand how children mourn and how the child's age and gender, as well as the gender of the deceased parent influence how the child responds. Risk factors for poor adaptation to the loss of a parent were also identified and participants were trained in the use of a screening instrument to identify children at risk for complicated grief reactions. Intervention training strategies for these children and their families were also provided. The intern was pleased to participate in this exciting training opportunity, as she has little training or experience in this area.

Director's meeting with the counselling team.

The intern also attended the director's meeting with the counselling team, a two-day workshop involving all College counsellors from the various campuses throughout Newfoundland and Labrador held at the College's Gander campus and the Hotel Gander. The workshop focussed on assessment and the role of the counsellor at the College of the North Atlantic, and was designed to promote access and success of students at the College. A one-day session on Accuplacer was presented by Suzanne Murphy from the College Board in New York. Accuplacer is a computerized placement test, offered over the Internet, designed to ensure accurate placement and assessment of college readiness.

The College is considering using Accuplacer to correctly place students into programs/courses and suggest remediation courses in areas needing improvement. The goal is to increase retention rates and increase access at the College. All counsellors had an opportunity to try out the program.

The intern also attended a session by Ellen Picco, Manager/Instructor of the Spell Read Canada Learning Centre in Marystown. Spell Read has developed a program called Phonological Auditory Training (P.A.T.), an integrated and comprehensive program combining the essential elements of phonemics, phonetics, and language-based reading and writing instruction. The program is intended for both children and adults experiencing learning difficulties caused by auditory processing problems.

A central goal of the director's meeting was to develop a Client Assessment Portfolio, so that counsellors at all campuses would be using the same assessment tools in all areas of the province. Presentations were made on the merits of the Canadian Adult Achievement Test (C.A.A.T.), a battery of tests designed to measure educational achievement, as well as the Freshman Integration and Tracking System (F.I.T.S.), a program designed to increase student retention and success through efficient and effective use of college resources. Through this workshop, the intern learned a great deal about the College itself and about the use of assessment tools to promote student success rather than create barriers to access.

Outreach Activities

The intern also had an opportunity to participate in the College's annual recruitment and program promotion activities visiting six local high schools. Coordinated

by the College's liaison and employability officer, presentations focus on the programs and services available at the College as well as information on graduate employment. The intern developed and delivered a presentation on student success strategies, time management and study skills as well as an outline of available counselling services and peer tutoring at the College.

Group Activities

At the PPD campus, the intern researched and co-facilitated a two-session job search seminar to a group of graduating students in the Information Technology for Office Administration program. This presentation covered such topics as job leads, the hidden job market, writing cover letters, resume styles, scannable resumes, posting electronic resumes, interview skills/tips, and employability skills. The intern also conducted a "mock interview" with a student in the class, and later reviewed and edited resumes and cover letters for the students.

The intern also participated in an orientation with students transferring to the College from other campuses for the intersession semester. The intern explained the role of the counsellor at the College, available counselling services, the peer tutoring program, and the location of Counselling Services at that particular campus.

Objective 8: to develop further knowledge of specific counselling issues by pursuing additional information/literature, mutually beneficial to the intern and the college students.

Development of knowledge should be an important goal of the novice counsellor as no Master's program can possibly expose students to all aspects of counselling theory. The intern read extensively not only to expand her knowledge of particular subject areas but also to begin developing a library of resources that the intern can use throughout her counselling career. Many of the readings were selected in response to student issues or concerns, while others were selected primarily due to the intern's interest in the particular subject area. Appendix A contains a complete list of the books and articles read during the internship as well as a brief description of the material.

Objective 9: to complete a research study of the transition experience of female students at the College as a function of early or late entry.

This objective was accomplished through extensive research and the development and administration of a questionnaire to selected first-year female college students. Data was then analyzed, interpreted, and compiled in a final research report with recommendations and submitted to the School of Graduate Studies.

Conclusion

The 10-week internship with the College of the North Atlantic was a very valuable learning experience for the graduate student. The intern was provided the opportunity to gain much needed experience in working with an adult population providing a more

balanced training experience, very much in line with the intern's career goals. Working with an adult population required the intern to become familiar with the personal and career issues specific to this group as well as the assessment tools used in a college setting. The workshops attended throughout the placement were especially rewarding providing the intern with worthwhile theoretical and practical knowledge. Each of the nine internship objectives was accomplished. Overall, the internship experience was both challenging and rewarding.

considered a reentry student. "Early entry" college students are the traditional students, usually age 18 to 24, most of whom entered college/university immediately or shortly after completing high-school (Novak & Thacker, 1991).

The demographics of the typical college/university student are changing rapidly. Today, more and more middle-aged and older women return to formal schooling. Adult learners over age 25 enrolled in part-time courses have become the new majority. They now outnumber traditional (18 to 24 year old) full-time students. Sixty-one percent of the part-time Canadian university undergraduate student population in 1984 to 1985 was women (Novak & Thacker, 1991). By the mid-1990s almost one-half of all post-secondary students were 25 and over, including graduate and part-time students, up from one-third only 20 years previous. This trend is expected to continue and as the population as a whole ages, so too will the population of universities and colleges (Foote, 1996). Based on these trends it is predicted that the number of mature female students will continue to increase (Novak & Thacker, 1991; Padula, 1994).

Studies have shown that older, female students (termed reentry) are less satisfied with the counseling services in educational settings than are other groups. This attests to the need for improvement in these areas (Padula, 1994). "To succeed in adapting to the new world of life long education, educational institutions will have to understand that their new clientele is not the same as the youthful full-time students they are used to" (Foote, 1996). College and university counseling centers need to acknowledge this shift as well and adjust their programs accordingly.

Recent research at the College of the North Atlantic emphasizes the need for further study in this area. Smith (1999), in a study on counselling service usage and student

satisfaction, found that older students were more likely to use counselling services than younger students were. He recommends further study at the College of the North Atlantic to better gauge the needs of older students and prevent attrition and academic difficulties in this population. Newhook (1995), assessing the career counselling needs of students at the College, found that females, as a group, scored significantly lower than males on measures of career planning. She recommends that further research needs to be conducted regarding the needs of mature female post-secondary students.

Research Questions

1. What do female college students state as their reasons for entering post-secondary education? And, are these reasons primarily personal, financial, or career related?
2. What are the personal and institutional barriers faced by female students at the college?
3. What supports do female students identify as important in making the transition to college?
4. What differences exist between reentry female college students and traditional early-entry female college students?

Summary of Relevant Literature

Introduction

The face of the typical college or university student is changing, as more and more middle-aged and older women return to formal schooling. Demographic trends have resulted in a shortage of conventional 18 year old students to enter full-time post-secondary programs, a shortage that is expected to continue for quite some time. Educational

institutions are now looking to nontraditional sources to fill their vacant classrooms (Edwards, 1993). In both the United States and Canada, mature women make up a large proportion of adult learners (Novak & Thacker, 1991). In fact, women aged 25 and older accounted for 48.6% of the total college enrollment growth of the 80's (Padula, 1994). Adult learners over age 25, enrolled in part-time courses, have become the "new majority", now outnumbering traditional (18 to 24 year old) full-time students. Most of the part-time Canadian university undergraduate student population in 1984 to 1985 (61%) was women (Novak & Thacker, 1991). By the mid-1990s almost half of the total post-secondary enrollment was 25 years and older (Foote, 1996). Projections show that as the population ages, the number of mature female students will increase. It is projected that by the year 2000 about 70% of the college population aged 35 years and older will be female (Crimmins & Riddler, 1985).

In Newfoundland, the average age of public college enrollment peaked in 1993/94 at 26.5 and dipped slightly to 25.4 in 1995/96. Difference in age among university undergraduates is primarily related to attendance status. The average age of full-time students has ranged from 20.5 – 20.9 over the past few years, while part-time student average age has remained steady at 30. There is a clear trend toward increasingly older students in Newfoundland's public college system. "Students who enrolled in 1995/96 were, on average, nearly three years older than students who had enrolled ten years earlier" (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Education, 1998).

Due to this demographic shift, current information about reentry women and their concerns is essential to meet their counseling and program needs effectively (Padula,

1994). College and university counselling centres in particular need to acknowledge this demographic shift and adjust their programs accordingly. Research shows that reentry women are less satisfied with the counseling services in educational institutions than other groups. This may be due to the fact that these services were probably designed with younger students in mind, attesting to the need for improvement in these areas (Padula, 1994). Lifelong learning is now the norm and to succeed educational institutions must adapt to their new clientele (Foote, 1996). Many post-secondary institutions have failed to recognize and address the needs of reentry women, frequently making their traditional programs more accessible to this non-traditional population while ignoring the complex factors that directly affect their ability to succeed (Greenwood, 1990).

A Profile of Reentry Women

Profiling the characteristics of the "typical" reentry woman is somewhat difficult because the reality is that the population is not a homogeneous group. Lewis (1988a) states that the most commonly accepted definition of a reentry woman is one who has left school to take a job or assume family responsibilities and who is now looking to return to school or work. Since the traditional college or university student age is 18 to 24, students age 25 and older are considered reentry (Novak & Thacker, 1991). Reentry women are a very diverse group, varying in their socioeconomic background, and their educational and career history. The majority of them are between twenty-five and fifty years of age. They may be married, divorced, widowed or single, with or without children. Once considered to be only a middle-class phenomenon, it is now recognized that reentry women may be working class, economically disadvantaged, upwardly mobile, or upper class. Within reentry women there

are also special needs groups including minorities, older women, women with disabilities, displaced homemakers, single parents, rural women, and lower-income women (Lewis, 1988a).

This reentry group is not a new phenomenon. Even as far back as 1957, Super (1957, cited in Herr & Cramer, 1996) identified four different career patterns for women: the *conventional career pattern*, the *double-track career pattern*, the *interrupted career pattern* and the *unstable career pattern*. In a *conventional career pattern* the woman leaves school or college to begin working. After working for several months or years the woman marries and becomes a full-time homemaker. In the *double-track career pattern* the woman goes to work after completing her education, gets married and continues with the double role of working and homemaking. She may occasionally take short amounts of time off for childbearing. This pattern is most commonly seen at the upper and lower ends of the occupational scale. The *interrupted career pattern* sees the young woman working for some time, leaving work to marry and have children, and then returning to work because a) her children are old enough for her to leave them, b) for financial problems perhaps from being widowed or divorced, or c) her interest in work becomes dominant. The *unstable career pattern* involves alternating from working to homemaking and back to working and so on. This pattern most often occurs at the lower socioeconomic levels and is often the result of irregular financial pressures which force the woman outside of the home to earn extra money, or poor health which causes the woman to give up employment at various times. Most reentry women follow an *interrupted career pattern*.

Shapiro & Fitzsimmons (1991) argue that there is no "typical" reentry woman and that the population is made up of subgroups that should not be grouped together. They

studied three different groups of reentry women whom they labeled: Adapters, Explorers, and Change Seekers. Adapters were reentry women attending post-secondary education. This group was primarily married with children, with 37% having incomes over $52,000/year. The Explorers were a group of women registered with the Options for Women Agency, who were considering whether or not to return to work. This middle group had equal numbers of widowed, divorced, married, and separated women, and the majority of them earned less than $12,000/year. The third group, called Change Seekers, consisted of women on social assistance who had applied to the Job Re-entry Program. The majority of this group were divorced, widowed or separated with 86% having annual incomes less than $12,000/year, and having lower educational levels than the first group. The study found that these groups differed significantly in their personality characteristics, level of stress, and work values. These differences attest to the diversity of reentry women, and may imply the need for very different responses on the part of institutions and continuing education programs (Lewis, 1988a).

Despite their diversity, reentry women as a group share many characteristics. Researchers have reported that the life experiences of reentry women are broader and more complex because of their multiple responsibilities at home, in society, and at work (Padula, 1994). For women with a family, returning to school involves a radical change in the way they have lived their lives and may entail particular stresses that traditional students do not experience (Edwards, 1993). Unlike males or younger women, reentry women often experience many unique challenges while attending post-secondary education: generally they shoulder the primary responsibility for child rearing and other family matters (Rodriguez, 1996); they typically feel guilty, anxious, or uncomfortable about the time,

money, or other family resources spent on their education (Rodriguez, 1996; Taylor & Marienau, 1995); often their success is dependent on both behavioral and emotional support from spouses or other family members; and at some post-secondary institutions there is little support to help these women overcome the barriers they face to further their education (Rodriguez, 1996). Because of the financial hardship of a college education on top of having to make ends meet at home, 95% of reentry women are part-time rather than full-time students, take much longer to complete their degrees, and frequently interrupt their studies along the way (Dillon, 1990, cited in Rodriguez, 1996).

For all reentry women education represents a major shift in the way they have lived their lives, a shift in who they have been and who they may potentially become in the future. Not surprisingly, they enter post-secondary institutions with some trepidation, questioning whether they can really do it or wondering whether they even deserve it. Despite their abilities, at times impressive professional accomplishments, and obvious enthusiasm, these women are plagued by doubt (Taylor & Marienau, 1995).

Reasons for Reentry

Many studies have investigated women's motives for reentering post-secondary training. These reasons are as diverse as the population themselves (Padula, 1994) and range from the pragmatic to the philosophical (Greenwood, 1990). Each reentry woman has unique traits, assets, and problems that she brings with her to the educational institution. The extensive list of reasons women give emphasize how difficult it is to profile returning women and illustrates to educational providers the necessity of developing a variety of

programs to meet the unique and diverse needs of the reentry population (Lewis, 1988a).

Deciding to return to school is a difficult decision for any adult woman to make, influenced by many factors. A return to post-secondary education may be the result of a reevaluation of the self, brought on by separation or divorce (Glass & Rose, 1987), family difficulties (Padula, 1994), the maturing of her family, boredom, or any number of factors. Women often think of themselves in terms of their relationships with others. They define themselves as someone's wife, mother, or daughter. Because of societal expectations, women have grown accustomed to ignoring their own needs in favor of others, including husbands, children, or parents (Glass & Rose, 1987). Having defined her identity predominantly in terms of significant others in her life, a woman eventually needs to discover her own identity (Sheehy, 1976). A significant occurrence in a woman's life will often cause her to reexamine who she is, that may encourage her to pursue an education and an identity separate from others in her life. A return to college may assist her in establishing her intellectual worth and individuality (Glass & Rose, 1987). Reflecting this theme, women have reported reasons for reentry such as the desire to "become someone" and to "find out who I am" (Taylor & Marienau, 1995).

Many women return to college or university motivated by vocational reasons. They may desire a new or more fulfilling career (Padula, 1994; Glass & Rose, 1987), they may want to advance or upgrade in their present place of employment (Greenwood, 1990; Glass & Rose, 1987), or perhaps enhance job security (Greenwood, 1990). Others are motivated by a desire for new responsibilities (Taylor & Marienau, 1995), or see college as a chance to improve employability skills (Clayton & Smith, 1987). Many women become dissatisfied

with their present job and view a college education as a chance to leave their often low-paying, low-prestige job for better employment (Padula, 1994; Glass & Rose, 1987).

Another common motive for reentry is the maturing of one's family. Children entering school or growing up and leaving home allows the woman free time and energy to devote to her own interests and needs (Padula, 1994; Glass & Rose, 1987). The declining birthrate has also increased the numbers of returning women. Women are now spending less time having and raising children and thus housekeeping duties are lessened. For some women this can lead to feelings of boredom, frustration, and low self-worth. For many women the empty-nest syndrome is a stage of crisis when they must search for something to fill the void left by this loss of role (Herr & Cramer, 1996). Other reasons related to role and family expectations include a desire to gain a new perspective on one's marital role/responsibilities, a desire to be "less absorbed" by home demands, and a desire to contribute to family resources both intellectually and financially (Clayton & Smith, 1987).

Economic necessity has been reported as the most important reason for reentry (Herr & Cramer, 1996; Rice & Meyer, 1989). With inflation rates increasing, no longer can most families maintain their standard of living on a single income. High unemployment rates often mean the wife is working while the husband is not. Loss of a spouse from divorce or widowhood may also necessitate reentry due to financial difficulties, and the need to be self-supporting. Financial problems are a major motivator for reentry women (Herr & Cramer, 1996; Padula, 1994; Clayton & Smith, 1987; Glass & Rose, 1987) and returning to post-secondary education for training is often a necessary first step before joining the workforce (Herr & Cramer, 1996).

Some women report wanting to return to school to fulfill intellectual needs such as a desire for self-development or intellectual challenge (Novak & Thacker, 1991). Similar motives reported include a desire to grow and develop, to learn about life and the world, and to take pride in their accomplishments. Other more socially motivated or humanitarian reasons include wanting to meet social expectations, wanting to make others proud, to meet new people, to share knowledge, or to benefit others (Clayton & Smith, 1987).

Perhaps underlying all these reasons is the reentry woman's strong need for a feeling of self-worth (Glass & Rose, 1987). Many women report reentering school to increase their self-esteem (Clayton & Smith, 1987). Deciding to reenter is often a period of introspection and self-examination in which these women become very aware of their feelings and attitudes (Glass & Rose, 1987).

The reasons women enter college/university in later years underlie the need for expanded counseling and educational services (Padula, 1994). Despite the multitude of reasons women may enter post-secondary institutions, it is important to realize that the timing for her return is not solely a function of motivation but very much affected by the state of relationships and occurrences in her everyday life. What actually prompts her to enroll in an educational program is indeed a complex interaction of life events, goals, and motivation (Mohney & Anderson, 1988).

Barriers to Reentry

Once a reentry woman has decided to return to college, implementing her plan is not always an easy task. Women returning to school or work face a multitude of obstacles (Spanard, 1990). The characteristics and concerns unique to reentry women also mean a unique set of problems for both the reentry woman and the institution she selects to attend. Barriers to reentry can best be described as either personal (which includes both psychosocial and situational) or institutional (Spanard, 1990; Wheaton & Robinson, 1983).

Personal barriers.

Women wanting to return to formal education confront a number of barriers relating to their personal circumstances, situation, self-image, and self-imposed demands (Lewis, 1988a). Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles faced by reentry women is juggling the multiple roles of adulthood. Unlike the traditional student whose primary role is that of student, the reentry woman must combine student status with that of wife, mother, significant other, community member, or wage-earner, shouldering the responsibilities incumbent with each role (Glass & Rose, 1987; Lewis, 1988a). Where normally the traditional student is establishing her independence and preparing to separate from her family of origin, reentry women are struggling to balance and integrate these roles (Redding & Dowling, 1992). Both family and university are "greedy institutions" demanding constant availability, high flexibility, and exclusive loyalty. Unlike a job with fixed hours and tasks, family and school demands are "never ending" and many reentry women have difficulty anticipating the impact of these combined roles (Edwards, 1993).

Striving to "do it all" she may feel she needs to carry out all these roles with equal efficiency, leading to tremendous feelings of guilt about the sacrifices her family must make to allow pursuit of her dream (Greenwood, 1990; Lewis, 1988a; Glass & Rose, 1987). Pulled in several conflicting directions by endless demands from school, work, family, friends, and community, these women experience strain, anxiety, stress (Novak & Thacker, 1991; Lewis, 1988a), role conflict, emotional distress, and major values conflicts (Padula, 1994). The stress caused by trying to balance multiple roles unfortunately often leads women to abandon their studies (Merdinger, 1991 cited in Home, 1998).

Role strain among women has three dimensions: *role conflict* from simultaneous demands that are incompatible, *role overload* in which there is simply not enough time to meet all demands, and *role contagion* in which the woman is preoccupied with one role while engaged in another (Coverman, 1989). Interestingly, it is the student's perception of these demands, rather than the actual demands placed on them that influence the degree of strain they experience. Reentry women with children under age 13 feel considerably more overloaded and report greater strain, likely because younger children are less autonomous and less flexible in their needs (Home, 1998). Research has shown that the younger the age of the youngest child, the greater the strain faced by women reentering university (Novak & Thacker, 1991).

Because there are simply not enough hours in the day to accommodate the multiple roles reentry women must fulfill, their success is very much dependent on both behavioral and emotional support from family members and friends (Rodriguez, 1996; Edwards, 1993; Greenwood, 1990). Many women, having meticulously planned for their reentry, preparing family and friends for the changes to come, and delegating certain household chores to

other family members, are, nevertheless, constantly worried that their support will collapse. Not surprisingly, the reentry experience places tremendous stress on family relationships (Greenwood, 1990). Lewis (1988a) states that it is not unusual for spouses, significant others, family members, employers or coworkers to be opposed to or feel threatened by a reentry woman's career or educational aspirations. Many husbands fear that a wife's reentry will affect the relationship and cause them to grow apart. Often reentry women report that gaining an education has caused conflict in their relationships with partners and was indeed perceived as a threat by their spouses (Edwards, 1993).

Other personal (or psychosocial) barriers may include the reentry woman's attitudes, beliefs and values, her self-esteem, and her prior experiences as a student (Spanard, 1990). Many reentry women are driven by a sense of urgency, keenly aware that they are not "getting any younger" (Greenwood, 1990), and recognizing that they have a finite amount of time in which to fulfill their goals (Lewis, 1988a). They have a strong fear of failure (Greenwood, 1990) and experience tremendous self-doubt, insecurity, and anxiety about their "rusty" academic skills, which can be a major stumbling block (Novak & Thacker, 1991: Lewis, 1988a; Glass & Rose, 1987). They often have problems in self-concept and self-perception, and frequently underrate their actual abilities (Padula, 1994). Low self-confidence is common (Taylor, 1995; Rees, 1992), as many reentry women worry about their ability to compete with much younger classmates, who they see as having more recent classroom experience. Feelings of intimidation, alienation, inadequacy, self-consciousness (Wilkie & Thompson, 1993) and inferiority are often reported (Wilkie & Thompson, 1993; Greenwood, 1990). For some, reluctance may stem from the fear of losing herself or the relationships to which she has grown accustomed (Taylor, 1995). Many also worry about

their physical appearance; afraid they will look "out of place", different, or improperly dressed and fear they will not fit into the "college scene" (Greenwood, 1990; Lewis, 1988a; Glass & Rose, 1987).

Additional personal barriers focus on the reentry woman's situation and include lack of childcare, job commitments, lack of money, and transportation problems (Spanard, 1990). Concern about continuing childcare is a major issue (especially when pre-school children are involved) (Rees, 1992; Lewis, 1988a), and lack of childcare is often the determining factor when women are forced to drop out of training programs. A large number of reentry women in their twenties and thirties are competing for childcare services because neighbors and others who cared for children in the past have themselves returned to school or the workforce (Lewis, 1988a). Women need access to childcare if they are to reenter education or the workforce (Rees, 1992).

Lack of resources to pay for tuition and childcare is also a barrier to these women, some of who are single parents, widowed or divorced (Coats, 1989; Lewis, 1988a). Training programs need to take into consideration that women have very poor access to resources that they can use for themselves, restricting their ability to pay for training, or for that matter, even get there (Rees, 1992). Lower-income students experience increased role-conflict perhaps because they must expend additional energy scraping together the money to attend college. As well, these women often can not afford such services as summer day camp, that would permit them to continue their studies throughout the summer months (Home, 1998). Reentering an educational setting is a transitional period, often more difficult for single parents who have added financial burdens (Lewis, 1988a). Reentry women who are poor or who belong to minority groups may face additional problems or

limitations not faced by those who are of a higher financial standing or who belong to the majority group (Glass & Rose, 1987).

Institutional barriers.

Institutional barriers also prevent many women from returning to school (Home, 1998; Greenwood, 1990; Lewis, 1988a; Glass & Rose, 1987; Wheaton & Robinson, 1983). These obstacles can include such barriers as location, schedules, cost, campus friendliness (Spanard, 1990), and course availability (Tittle & Denker, 1980). Admission policies, that are typically geared toward post-high school adolescents, can also hinder reentry. The validity of old transcripts is questionable and examinations such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the Miller Analogies Test, and the Graduate Record Examination are intimidating to women who have been away from the school system for many years and whose academic skills are rusty (Lewis, 1988a; Glass & Rose, 1987). Credits are sometimes too old to transfer, requiring women to repeat courses, and appropriate references are long forgotten, or moved on. Often programs are limited to full-time students only, have residency requirements, and time limits for completing degrees, that also put women at a disadvantage. Some institutions have only daytime class schedules, and insensitive school policies, such as grades dependent on class attendance, that hinder women with children (Lewis, 1988a; Tittle & Denker, 1980). The reward structure of universities, that gives highest priority to research and lowest to service, does not encourage faculty to devote much time to adapting programs or teaching methods (Home, 1993). Credit for prior learning and life experiences has been a positive step, but is far from a widespread practice at this point (Lewis, 1988a).

Mature students are much more likely to be part-time, and, in fact, part-time students now outnumber full-time students (Novak & Thacker, 1991). Institutions, however, still seem to prefer full-time students (Tittle & Denker, 1980). Despite predictions to the contrary, recent research shows that undergraduate enrollment in Canadian universities has actually declined in the last five years, due entirely to a sharp drop in part-time students, especially those in older age brackets. From 1992/93 to 1997/98 enrollment for women aged 25 – 44 dropped an alarming 31.2%. Studies have suggested that cutbacks to university funding may be a major factor, as universities seem to be concentrating their resources on full-time programs offering fewer part-time courses ("University enrollment", 1998). As well, community college policies often discriminate against part-time students by making degree completion, financial aid eligibility, job placement, and access to campus childcare available only to students who are full-time (Osterkamp & Hullett, 1983, cited in Rodriguez, 1996). Similarly, parking restrictions often limit permits and spaces to full-time students only. Part-time students need access to facilities such as learning resources, study skill centres, registration offices, counselling, bookstores, employment, placement, and cafeteria services. Often these services are only open during weekday hours (scheduled for staff convenience rather than for students) making it impossible for reentry women who are employed to avail of the services. Many campuses do not offer weekend or evening courses, nor do they offer childcare services on campus. Others may offer childcare services, but hours are limited to the "traditional" workday, making them of little use to many part-time reentry students (Lewis, 1988a; Tittle & Denker, 1980). Transportation can also be a problem for reentry women if off-campus or outreach services are not available (Spanard, 1990; Lewis, 1988a). Additionally, reentry women may face intimidation from

instructors and institutions that do not view them as serious students (Glass & Rose, 1987). Many report negative feelings as a result of instructional practices that are competitive and impersonal (Wilkie & Thompson, 1993). A lack of female role models on college and university campuses is also a frequently cited barrier (Tittle & Denker, 1980).

Financial aid policies are particularly discriminatory towards reentry women who may only have enough money to attend part-time, yet, are ineligible for funding because of their part-time status (Lewis, 1988a; Glass & Rose, 1987; Tittle & Denker, 1980). Recently, the federal government placed yet another hurdle in front of reentry women by mandating credit checks on student loan applications. As of August 1, 1999, first-time loan applicants aged 22 and older will be subject to credit checks in an effort to reduce the loan default rate (despite the fact that 93% of students eventually repay their federal loans). This new policy is expected to affect 38,000 mature students each year and may eventually mean lower and middle-income Canadians will no longer qualify for student loans because of their heavy financial burdens (Vallis, 1999). Frequently, married students whose husbands work are also discriminated against as his salary is taken into account whether or not he is contributing (Glass & Rose, 1987; Gilbert, et al., 1980).

Even if educational institutions do offer services to reentry women, many women do not avail of services. Many reentry women feel that student services are only for younger students, or feel that they should handle things themselves. Reentry women, who are primarily part-time, may also be "outside" of the usual informal networks through which traditional students communicate (Baddenhoop & Johansen, 1980). Some express difficulty in knowing what university and financial resources are available, as well as generally knowing where and how to access such resources (Harrington, 1993; Fleishman, 1992).

Publicity and information about services for part-time or reentry students often do not reach their target audience (Lewis, 1988a; Glass & Rose, 1987). Insufficient funds, absence of literature on returning women, and lack of a designated person to assist reentry women can lead to lack of awareness of available support services and, therefore, underuse (Lewis, 1988a). Rarely are reentry or part-time students given any kind of orientation to introduce them to the university and its services (Glass & Rose, 1987).

The Need for Support for the Reentry Woman

The success of reentry women is very much dependent on behavioral and emotional support from family members and friends (Rodriguez, 1996; Edwards, 1993; Home, 1993; Greenwood, 1990). Women who take on a full-time commitment to higher education in addition to a full-time home life, including children, face real challenges. Those who make this commitment without the support of family and friends face considerable risk (Greenwood, 1990). Absence of such support leads to psychological strain and increases stress (Lovell, 1980; Scott, 1980). In fact, the presence or absence of personal and institutional support can often mean the difference between persisting and dropping out (Lewis, 1988a), as adequate support can actually mitigate the effects of role strain caused by intense demands (Dyk, 1987). Women report less stress when their spouses provide emotional, attitudinal, financial, and behavioral support (Berkove, 1979). Educational supports assist women in better evaluating their commitments, managing their multiple roles, and affirming the validity of their educational pursuits (Lewis, 1988a).

Reentry women regard emotional support and encouragement from their partner as very important. This support can be in more material ways, such as helping with housework, or may be indicated in more psychological ways such as a partner's pride in or commitment to the importance of her studies (Edwards, 1993). Some women are fortunate and receive considerable support from family and friends as they make the transition to school. Others make the transition in isolation, encountering passive nonsupport, resistance, or even negative feedback and open hostility. As well, initial support may later be replaced with resistance, as the reality of long-distance commuting, long hours of study, and little free time take their toll (Lewis, 1988a). A partner's attitude toward a woman's return to school is a critical factor in her success and satisfaction in the student role (Avery, 1996; Lewis, 1988a).

Lewis (1988b) contends that support has three categories, emotional, attitudinal, and functional, each highlighting a unique aspect of the term "support". Emotional support refers to the degree of approval or disapproval of the reentry woman's educational goals by others, including spouses, children, friends, classmates or employers. Attitudinal support reflects the perspectives of others (whether traditional or nontraditional) on the appropriate roles for women. Such support can be measured in the extent to which others agree or disagree with the roles the reentry woman chooses to adopt or abandon. Functional support refers to the division of labor and household chores, and the extent to which others take on and share in these responsibilities.

Interestingly, younger, traditional-aged women enrolled in educational programs report gaining most of their support from friends, while the support of significant others is seen as more important for reentry women (Roehl & Okun, 1984). Considering the

impact that reentry has on the woman's family, educational institutions should help reentry women expand their social network and identify resources outside of the family to eliminate the sole reliance on significant others for support (Lewis, 1988b). Greenwood (1990) suggests that only personal resolve, strengthened by discoveries of their ability to learn and an increasing sense of self-worth, make it possible for reentry women to succeed in post-secondary education. Discovery of a new support group made up of concerned faculty and other reentry women also contributes significantly to the success of these women.

Many other studies have investigated factors affecting the satisfaction and strain of reentry women in the student role. Support from both family and institutions are consistently reported as major factors. Kirk & Dorfman (1983) found that helpfulness of professors was the best predictor of student satisfaction, as well as, the psychological support of friends, the helpfulness of counselling, and the psychological support of their children. Novak & Thacker (1991) found the best predictor of reentry women's satisfaction in their student role was psychological support of their children. Avery (1996) found that the reentry women in her study indicated their most important support came from their spouse, without which many doubted they would have accomplished their goals. They also identified support from family, friends, support groups, the community, and strongly recommended involvement in a career and personal development group. For some reentry women, satisfaction in the student role and their ultimate success was very much dependent on having a sense of belonging on campus, being treated with a sense of dignity and respect by faculty and staff, and their ability to establish meaningful relationships on campus with members of faculty who validated and affirmed their role as student (Fleishman, 1992). Other studies have stressed the importance of social supports to women in general. Social

support is one of the most important resources women have to cope with stress (Hobfoll, 1986). Both Katz (1976) and Markus (1977) report that women in general receive psychological support from both spouses and children and that this support is very important. Reentry women view this spousal support as critical to achieving their educational goals (Berkove, 1979; Markus, 1977). Support from both family and institutions. whether emotional, attitudinal, or functional continues to be a major issue for many reentry women (Lewis, 1988b).

Unfortunately, many times the reentry woman does not ask for the support she may desperately need, perhaps due to her traditional role as a nurturer or caregiver. Many women may not even recognize that they have a need, or often feel undeserving of assistance, especially from authority figures. Reentry women are often too insecure, and too busy for that matter, to ask for support, especially when they need it most, during the early period of reentry (Taylor, 1995).

Institutional Response to Women Reentering Education

Many of the unique problems of reentry women can be overcome by institutional insight (Glass & Rose, 1987). Perhaps in recognition of the recruitment possibilities of this fast growing population, some colleges/universities have developed programs to assist reentry women make the transition to the educational setting, offering free services to current students and those considering reentry. These programs often decrease the barriers of time (through evening and weekend class scheduling), place (through distance learning and independent study) and cost (by lowering educational costs for nontraditional students)

(Spanard, 1990). Some of the special services offered include orientation, advising, counselling, informal workshops/seminars, childcare, support groups, housing, student groups/organizations, and special awards or honors (Copland, 1988).

Academic programs, specifically designed for returning women, range from weekend colleges and extended degree programs to competency based curricula. Many universities are flexible and allow students to work at their own pace and offer internships and tutorials to enhance practical experience. Several of these institutions offer orientation sessions with adult students, offering guidance to newcomers in both evening and weekend sessions to fit the schedules of returning women (Copland, 1988). Another offers a campus mentoring program for reentry students, which includes personal, academic, and career mentors (Fullerton College, 1998). Some universities offer credit courses to returning adult students, in which a professional counsellor helps students choose a major, offers career planning and vocational testing, and teaches study skills and time management techniques (Copland, 1988). Other services include helpful registration information, and assistance in applying for scholarships and financial aid (University of Washington, 1998).

As well, many colleges and universities are beginning to offer counseling programs geared towards this older female group offering both individual and group counselling. Childcare services for reentry women are available on many campuses (Moraine Park Technical College, 1998; Copland, 1988), as more institutions are now realizing that to compete for this growing nontraditional population they must offer services. On-site childcare facilities are becoming the norm, some run by parent volunteers, and serving a dual role as a classroom for students studying Early Childhood Education. One college

has turned unused dormitory space into four-unit residence halls for single mothers and their children to address the problem of housing, at the same time offering childcare services on campus (Copland, 1988). Other counselling services include support/referrals (Moraine Park Technical College, 1998; University of Washington, 1998), intake and assessment, outgoing case management, transportation and tuition support, training in job readiness skills, job placement assistance, instructional opportunities and follow-up (Moraine Park Technical College, 1998).

Workshops and seminars on topics of interest to the older female student are also offered at many colleges/universities (Moraine Park Technical College, 1998; California State University, 1996; Copland, 1988). Such seminars offer not only valuable information to the returning student, but also a chance to network with other returning students as well as faculty (Glass & Rose, 1987). Topics run the gamut from handling money, women and the law, increasing self-confidence, aging parents, addictive relationships, procrastination (Copland, 1988), study skills renewal, stress management, test taking, job-hunting skills (Glass & Rose, 1987), career exploration/career planning (California State University, 1996; Herr & Cramer, 1996), self-development, success skills, adventure-based career challenge (Moraine Park Technical College, 1998), and assertiveness training (Herr & Cramer, 1996). Whatever the topic, the goal is to assist reentry women in dealing with some of the burdens and anxieties with which they are faced (Copland, 1988).

Conclusion: Ingredients of Successful Programming

The need for educational reform to ease the transition of reentry women to post-secondary education has been emphasized in much of the literature written about reentry women. That need becomes even more urgent as the number of non-traditional age students increases. Recommendations to facilitate reentry have included ways to ease the transition and facilitate reentry, as well as ways to enhance reentry women's ability to persist in their studies (Rodriguez, 1996). Heavier emphasis needs to be placed on helping reentry students adjust to the campus environment (Fleishman, 1992).

Greater awareness of services.

Actively recruiting potential reentry women (LaPaglia, 1995, cited in Rodriguez, 1996; Coats, 1989; Lewis, 1988a) as well as greater and easier access to information on available services to currently registered reentry women is strongly recommended (Harrington, 1993; Coats, 1989; Lewis, 1988a). Such efforts can demystify the whole process of applying to college or university, that can be quite intimidating for reentry women. Suggestions include: (1) outreach efforts extended to the poor, older, working class, academically under-prepared, non-aspiring potential reentry women (Sidel, 1994; Coats, 1989), as well as single parents, displaced homemakers, and minorities; (2) strategies and materials developed to reach potential women students and special needs populations; (3) published handbooks, newsletters, or newspapers containing tips from other reentry women (Lewis, 1988a; Wheaton & Robinson, 1983); and (4) distribution of such literature within the community to places frequented by potential reentry women such as doctor's offices, childcare centres, churches, laundromats, public assistance offices, and

supermarkets (Lewis, 1988a). Special orientation sessions offered at a variety of times to suit the schedules of reentry women could be offered (Harrington, 1993; Lewis, 1988a; Wheaton & Robinson, 1983), and would be an excellent time to review financial aid procedures, available support services, and answer any questions they may have (Lewis, 1988a). Outreach programs can be set up with adult education agencies in the local area to bridge the transition to college or university (Rice & Meyer, 1989). Other ideas include publishing ads in local newspapers or developing spots for radio/television advertising. Conferences and special days can be organized for women considering reentry and include current reentry women to act as recruiters and peer counsellors. A directory of reentry liaisons can also be published and distributed to newly enrolled and potential reentry women (Lewis, 1988a).

Accessibility: time considerations.

Accommodations in recognition of the limited time of reentry women are also recommended. These include: flexible class scheduling to include once a week classes, evening classes, late afternoon classes (Lewis, 1988a), distance education (Home, 1998), modular courses, internships, external degree programs or weekend offerings; allowing residency requirements to be fulfilled through part-time study, internships, or independent study; encouraging faculty to be available to meet with students outside regularly scheduled times, as well as telephone hours for those unable to meet in person; and, extended hours for administrative offices, support services, and registration procedures, as well as "after hours" telephone lines for information on courses and enrollment (Lewis, 1988a). Instructors should recognize that reentry women have limited time due to their multiple

roles, and plan productive, student-centered activities within class time, to minimize outside class time obligations (Greenwood, 1990).

Counselling services.

Individual counselling (Harrington, 1993; Coats, 1989) as well as group counselling, specific to the needs of reentry women, is strongly recommended (Coats, 1989). Pre-admission and career counselling (Harrington, 1993; Lewis, 1988a) should be offered to all potential returning women to assist in decision-making and to help them realistically evaluate their options, personal growth, life plans, and career development. Support services should also be developed to alleviate the developmental stress for reentry women at different stages in the adjustment process, as well as in their own personal lives (Lewis, 1988a). Counsellors should also encourage the formation of support groups on campus to discuss personal issues and form study groups (Fleishman, 1992; Rice & Meyer, 1989; Lewis, 1988a), and assure older adults access to any professional associations on campus (Fleishman, 1992). Receptions or open houses to introduce returning women to reentry peers, women's networks, and career opportunities is also a good idea (Lewis, 1988a). Harrington (1993) recommends a central support agency such as a women's resource centre, that would distribute information on both campus and community resources, including information on legal aid, food stamp programs, and housing. A woman's resource centre would serve as an information clearinghouse and coordinate support groups for women experiencing difficulty in the reentry process as well as problems in their own personal lives. Referral services for childcare, health services, academic support services, and developmental mentoring would all be located on one site.

Financial assistance.

To help combat the financial hardships reentry women experience, institutions should set aside scholarships for reentry women who do not meet the criteria for federal aid, and maintain a list of private organizations or corporate sponsors who are willing to offer financial assistance. Tuition incentive programs, along with reduced rates for those who have family members enrolled at the same institution are helpful, as are flexible payment plans and policies for increasing or reducing fees (Lewis, 1988a). Institutions should ensure that admission and financial aid policies do not discriminate against reentry women by making scholarship awards solely dependent on class rank, SAT scores, or previous high school marks or courses (Betz, 1994).

College/university staff development.

Researchers also recommend that institutions develop training to sensitize faculty and staff to the unique needs of reentry women, since these needs are likely to impact upon their academic performance (Cardenas & Warren, 1991; Lewis, 1988a). Programs should include training in communication and listening skills, human relation skills, as well as the needs of adult learners (Fleishman, 1992). Reentry women should be treated with consideration and recognition of the complex network of factors influencing their performance. Instructors, sensitive to the reentry woman's new role as student, should focus their instruction on creating experiences to help women attain long and short range goals, including increasing their self-esteem. An atmosphere of trust and supportive interaction should be immediately established in recognition of the fear that characterizes most reentry women. Additionally, instructors should base their approach on cooperation,

encourage the expansion and expression of student's thinking, construct new knowledge with students through collaboration, and establish a trusting environment of limited risk to reentry women so that they may develop and test their abilities (Greenwood, 1990). All college staff should provide excellent customer service to all students, but it is particularly important for vulnerable reentry women whose fragility may be squashed by a disrespectful staff member (Rotkis & McDaniel, 1993). Betz (1994) recommends that more women faculty be hired, especially in traditionally male-dominated fields, to act as mentors for reentry women. As well, Student Affairs Divisions should be sensitive to older students by having counsellors who are closer in age and developmental stage of reentry women (Fleishman, 1992).

Academic considerations.

Educational institutions should reassess entrance requirements based on artificial criteria that create barriers for returning women, and give credit for prior learning such as: volunteer experience, portfolios of past experience, committee membership, autobiographical statements, self-report and self-evaluation (Lewis, 1988a). Institutions should waive standardized admissions test requirements for reentry women (Wheaton & Robinson, 1983). Options such as noncredit courses, conditional admission, and pass/fail marking schemes are also attractive to reentry women (Lewis, 1988a). An institution's philosophy should emphasize lifelong learning (Fleishman, 1992). A wide range of basic skill refresher courses, relevant to reentry women should be offered at convenient times and locations, as well as instructional programs on study skills (Coats, 1989; Lewis, 1988a). Tutorial help should also be available to returning students who have been away from the

academic environment for a considerable time (Cardenas & Warren, 1991). Institutions also need to reexamine old policies, application forms, and traditions to see if they are biased against reentry women. This would include policies on campus housing, financial aid, availability of scholarships, content of mission statements (Fleishman, 1992), and content and style of questions on information forms (Lewis, 1988a). Policies and procedures should reflect the voice of adult students as well as any other contingent group on the college campus (Fleishman, 1992).

Additional services.

Adequate, inexpensive, flexible childcare facilities should be available on campus (Cardenas & Warren, 1991; Lewis, 1988a), or through cooperative arrangements with outside businesses or other schools, and should be available evenings and weekends (Lewis, 1988a). Women who prefer to leave their children in a familiar setting should be given financial assistance instead (Coats, 1989). Institutions should also provide short-term and emergency housing for reentry women who travel long distances to class, centrally located parking for part-time students, lounges/meeting places for reentry women and other commuters (Lewis, 1988a) and, transportation (Cardenas & Warren, 1991). Part-time campus employment should also be readily available to this group of students, capitalizing on their past work experience (Fleishman, 1992; Lewis, 1988a).

Conclusion.

While it may not be possible for institutions to implement all of these ideas, the increasing numbers of older students on college campuses demand that educators be alert

and sensitive to the needs of this population. Institutions should periodically assess the needs of their student body and cater their services to meet the changing needs. Educators, in helping reentry women adjust to academic life, are enriching the lives of these women, whose motivation and maturity have much to contribute to institutions of higher learning (Glass & Rose, 1987).

questionnaire were generated from the review of the literature. Respondents were also given the opportunity to suggest reasons not listed, and were asked to rate their top three reasons. The function of part two was to identify the degree to which respondents experienced the barriers to college entry identified in the literature review. The sixteen items included personal (psychosocial and situational) and institutional barriers in a five-point Likert scale format. Part three consisted of twelve questions of varied type (choice of available responses, open-ended, and forced choice: yes or no). This section collected information on the nature of support received by the respondents prior to entry and throughout the first year of college, whether or not they had used counselling services at the college and their degree of satisfaction with those services, as well as several open-ended questions regarding advice to future students and suggestions to improve college services. The final section of the questionnaire, part four, gathered demographic information from respondents regarding their age, marital status, number of children and population of home community. This data was used primarily to separate the early entry students (under age 25) from the reentry students (aged 25 and older), and describe the sample.

Once developed, the questionnaire was reviewed by the faculty supervisor, Dr. Mildred Cahill, and the field supervisor, Mr. John Harnett, and administered to several of the intern's colleagues, who were students at Memorial University, to test for overall design, item clarity, and format, as well as administration time. Minor revisions to the wording of some items, as well as the Likert Scale were suggested, and changes were made by the intern. The administration time varied from 15 to 20 minutes.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to female students, enrolled in daytime classes, at the end of the first year of their college program. The rationale for selecting this group was based on the premise that: (a) having just completed their first year, issues of adjusting to college life would still be fresh in their minds, (b) students from a variety of programs from one to three years could be included in the study, and (c) additionally, limiting the sample to those just completing their first year would ensure the project was manageable. Alternatively, it was felt that administering the questionnaire to second or third year classes would be an inaccurate sample as many students would have already been lost due to attrition.

As previously noted, during the intersession semester registration drops from roughly 3000 to 1400 students in District 7, and many programs either do not hold classes during intersession, or place students on work-terms during that period. To sample a wide variety of programs and reach an acceptable number of reentry students, it was necessary to administer half of the questionnaires to students during class time on campus (51%), and the other half (49%) of the questionnaires by telephone to reach students not on campus during this semester.

For the on-campus administration, registration lists were used to identify classes having adequate numbers of reentry women. The instructors allowed 15 to 20 minutes of class time for participants to complete the survey. For the telephone administration an effort was made to survey as many reentry students as possible, and a comparable number of early entry students in each of the programs were randomly selected from the remaining students on the registration lists. In both cases, students were told that participation was

voluntary, and that responses would remain anonymous. A permission letter explaining the purpose of the research and ensuring confidentiality was attached to each survey, and signed by each of the participants (see Appendix D). Those administered the questionnaire by telephone gave verbal permission and were sent the permission letter along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to be signed and returned.

Data Analysis

The questionnaire data was collected and coded using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was primarily reported using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, and chi-square analyses to determine if there were significant differences between the two groups: early entry and reentry. The significance level was preset at $p<0.05$. Responses to the open-ended questions were examined for underlying themes.

Limitations of the Study

The research study presents certain limitations that warrant consideration at this time. As the sample consisted of only students attending daytime classes, those attending part-time evening programs are excluded. Since many reentry women attend evening classes, findings from this study may not be generalizable to this part-time evening group. As well, by sampling students after their first year of study, those students who were forced to drop out early on, or who were unable to attend precisely due to the barriers under study in the research are excluded as well. Due to low enrollment numbers during the intersession semester the intern found it necessary to contact and administer the questionnaire to half of the students by telephone. It is difficult to predict what effect, if any, this variation in

methodology had on the results. Additionally, the questionnaire attempts to identify the issues and stresses of female college students for which they may seek, require, or benefit from services offered by Counselling Services on campus. It cannot predict whether or not these students would use such services if they were offered.

Sample

The sample consisted of 104 female students, 54.8% were under age 25 and therefore considered early entry students. The remaining 45.2% were 25 years of age and older and deemed reentry students. Table 1 illustrates the age distribution of the sample.

Table 1

Age Distribution of Sample

		Sample	
	Age	f	%
Early Entry	<25	57	54.8
Reentry	25 to 29	28	26.9
	30 to 34	10	9.6
	35 to 39	5	4.8
	40 to 44	3	2.9
	45+	1	1.0
Total		104	100

Participants attended three different campuses: 71 students or 68.3% attended the main campus at Prince Phillip Drive, 11 students or 10.6% attended the Engineering Technology Centre, and 22 students or 21.2% attended the Topsail Road campus. They also represented a wide variety of programs as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Program Distribution of Sample

	Sample Size	
Program Name	f	%
Early Childhood Education	17	16.3
Office Administration	17	16.3
Medical Sciences	22	21.2
Applied Business Information Technology	10	9.6
Computer Support Specialist	16	15.4
Common First Year Engineering	11	10.6
Business Management	11	10.6

Students in the study were made up of those in one-year, two-year, and three-year programs. There were 10 students in one-year programs making up 9.6% of the sample, 50 students or 48.1% registered in two-year programs, and 44 students or 42.3% enrolled in three-year programs.

The questionnaire was administered to female students attending daytime classes at the college and, was therefore intended to include both full and part-time students. However, all students sampled indicated they were attending the college on a full-time basis. This was unexpected as mature students are much more likely to be part-time (Novak & Thacker, 1991), in fact 95% of reentry women are part-time rather than full-time students (Dillon, 1990 cited in Rodriguez, 1996). This may be due, in part, to the college's system of "block programming" in which students are enrolled in the prescribed number of full-time courses each semester and normally proceed through the program at the same pace as their classmates. According to the college calendar, students applying for part-time status are "considered only if a vacancy exists after full-time students have been accommodated" (College of the North Atlantic, 1998). Reentry women who wanted to attend part-time, therefore, may not have been admitted or may not have applied because it was unlikely they could attend on a part-time basis. The College does offer courses for some programs in the evenings for part-time students, however, this study was limited to students attending daytime classes only.

Students sampled represented a variety of communities of varying size. Home communities of less than 500 people were reported by 11 students or 10.6% of the sample. The majority, 42 students or 40.4%, came from communities of 500 to 5,000 people, while 11 students or 10.6% came from communities of 5,001 to 20,000 people, and 38 students or 36.5% came from communities of greater than 20,000 people. There was a missing value of 1.9% as 2 respondents left this question blank.

The two groups, early entry and reentry, were significantly different ($p < 0.05$) with respect to marital status and number of children. Early entry participants were almost

exclusively single with no children. The majority of reentry participants were married, however surprisingly, most did not have children. Of those participants with children (both early entry and reentry), 84% of those children required daycare.

Table 3

Marital Status of Sample

	Early Entry		Reentry	
Marital status	f	%	f	%
Single	53	93.0	19	40.4
Married	4	7.0	22	46.8
Divorced/Separated	---	---	6	12.8

Table 4

Number of Children of Early Entry and Reentry Participants

	Early Entry		Reentry	
# of Children	f	%	f	%
0	53	93.0	26	55.3
1	4	7.0	6	12.8
2	---	---	10	21.3
3	---	---	5	10.6

Results and Discussion

Part 1

Part one of the questionnaire gathered information about the educational background of respondents, the length of time they have been away from formal study, and their reasons for entering post-secondary education at this time. As expected, results showed that more reentry students (29.8%) had been admitted to the College under the "mature student policy" than early entry students (17.5%). However, the number of reentry students admitted as mature students was lower than expected. It is unclear whether this may be because most reentry applicants met the entrance requirements and did not need to apply under the "mature student policy", or whether only a small number are successful in the standardized testing required of such applicants before admission is granted.

Educational background of sample.

Most early entry participants (47.4%) indicated a high school diploma as their highest level of education, and the majority of them (56.1%) had been out of school for less than a year. As expected, reentry participants were much more varied in their educational experience. Reentry participants had more education than anticipated with 83% of them having at least some college. Most, 36.2%, had a college diploma or certificate prior to starting their current program, and 14.9% already had a university degree. Their absence from formal schooling ranged from less than 1 year to greater than 20 years, with most (40.4%) indicating they had been out of school for 6 to 10 years.

Table 5

Highest Level of Education Achieved Prior to College Entry

	Early Entry		Reentry	
Level of Education	f	%	f	%
High School Diploma	27	47.4	7	14.9
Some College	2	3.5	5	10.6
College Diploma or Certificate	4	7.0	17	36.2
Some University	21	36.8	10	21.3
University Degree	3	5.3	7	14.9
Other (GED)	---	---	1	2.1

Table 6

Length of Time Absent From Formal Education

	Early Entry		Reentry	
Length of Absence	f	%	f	%
< 1 year	32	56.1	6	12.8
1 to 5 years	25	43.9	16	34.0
6 to 10 years	---	---	19	40.4
11 to 15 years	---	---	3	6.4
16 to 20 years	---	---	3	6.4

Reasons for college entry.

Women enter post-secondary education for a variety of reasons and understanding their motives may help us identify their needs. Respondents were asked to indicate their reasons for entering post-secondary education from a list of available responses. Reasons for college entry included career, financial and personal motives. It was anticipated that early entry and reentry women may differ in their reasons for attending college. Occupational reasons were chosen frequently by both groups. Reentry women selected more personal reasons than early entry students and were more likely to indicate financial problems as a reason for college entry. Significantly more reentry women than early entry women, indicated they had returned to college due to job dissatisfaction, their children entering school, financial problems, to improve employability skills and increase job opportunities, a desire to change careers, single parenthood, and boredom. Early entry women were significantly more likely to enter college due to a desire to work, to learn about life and the world, and to take pride in their accomplishments, than were reentry women. Reentry women chose an average of 7.77 reasons for entering college, significantly more than early entry women, who chose an average of 6.25 reasons. Lewis (1988a) identifies an extensive list of reasons reentry women return to school, emphasizing how difficult it is to meet the needs of this diverse population.

Table 7

Reasons for College Entry

Reasons for College Entry		Early Entry f	Early Entry %	Reentry f	Reentry %
job dissatisfaction, better employment	*	20	35.1	36	76.6
Children older (entering school)	*	1	1.8	12	25.5
Children grown, left home		1	1.8	0	---
Job loss		1	1.8	4	8.5
Financial problems	*	3	5.3	15	31.9
Improve employability skills, increase job opportunities	*	49	86.0	46	97.9
Desire to change careers	*	10	17.5	32	68.1
to increase self-esteem		32	56.1	24	51.1
to meet social expectations		16	28.1	15	31.9
desire to work	*	51	89.5	30	63.8
desire to become self-supporting		45	78.9	35	74.5
self improvement, to grow and develop		41	71.9	39	83.0
family difficulties		1	1.8	2	4.3
Divorce	**	0	---	3	6.4
single parenthood	*	3	5.3	9	19.1
need to re-examine marriage and family roles		0	---	2	4.3
Boredom	*	1	1.8	11	23.4
to learn about life and the world	*	27	47.4	9	19.1
to take pride in my accomplishments	*	50	87.7	33	70.2
other		4	7.0	8	17.0

* $p < .05$. ** $p = .053$

Participants were also given the opportunity to give other reasons not listed. Four early entry participants listed reasons that primarily focused on individual needs such as getting a job, getting more education, and fulfilling an interest. Eight reentry participants also listed other reasons. While half of them reflected similar themes to the early entry participants such as wanting more education and interest in the program, others reflected more social/humanitarian motives such as those below:

- "I needed to be involved. I wanted to do something important." – Reentry

- "I needed to find a good job to support my family but I also wanted to teach my children that education is important…they need to see me as succeeding, as working, as an example. I am trying to instill a work ethic in both school and career." – Reentry

- "to become more independent." – Reentry

The number of reentry participants who selected other reasons did not significantly differ from the number of early entry participants who gave other reasons.

Top three reasons for college entry.

Participants were also asked to select their top three reasons for returning to school. For all the women in the survey, occupational reasons were ranked as the top two important

motivators for college entry. The number one reason selected for reentry women's college attendance was job dissatisfaction and a desire for better employment. Early entry women indicated their number one reason for college entry was to improve their employability skills and increase their job opportunities. Though reentry women's choices for the number one reason for college entry were significantly different than early entry women's choices, both were career-related. Most reentry women said their number two reason for college entry was to improve employability skills and increase job opportunities. This was significantly different from early entry respondents who chose a desire to work as their second most important reason for college entry. Again, both groups focused on occupational motives. Choices for third most important reason for college entry did not differ significantly between the two groups.

Table 8

Top 3 Reasons for College Entry of Early Entry Participants

	#1		#2		#3	
Reasons for College Entry	f	%	f	%	f	%
Job dissatisfaction, better employment	7	12.3	2	3.5	3	5.3
Children older (entering school)	---	---	---	---	---	---
Children grown, left home	---	---	---	---	---	---
Job loss	---	---	---	---	---	---
Financial problems	---	---	---	---	1	1.8
Improve employability skills, increase job opportunities	24	42.1	13	22.8	4	7.0
Desire to change careers	---	---	---	---	1	1.8
To increase self-esteem	1	1.8	3	5.3	3	5.3
To meet social expectations	---	---	---	---	---	---
Desire to work	8	14.0	14	24.6	5	8.8
Desire to become self-supporting	6	10.5	9	15.8	13	22.8
Self improvement, to grow and develop	1	1.8	2	3.5	6	10.5
Family difficulties	---	---	1	1.8	---	---
Divorce	---	---	---	---	---	---
Single parenthood	1	1.8	---	---	---	---
Need to re-examine marriage & family roles	---	---	---	---	---	---
Boredom	---	---	---	---	---	---
To learn about life and the world	1	1.8	1	1.8	---	---
To take pride in my accomplishments	5	8.8	8	14.0	14	24.6
Other	3	5.3	3	5.3	5	8.8
Missing Value	---	---	1	1.8	2	3.5

Table 9

Top 3 Reasons for College Entry of Reentry Participants

	#1		#2		#3	
Reasons for College Entry	f	%	f	%	f	%
Job dissatisfaction, better employment	13	27.7	5	10.6	6	12.8
Children older (entering school)	1	2.1	2	4.3	1	2.1
Children grown, left home	---	---	---	---	---	---
Job loss	1	2.1	---	---	---	---
Financial problems	1	2.1	3	6.4	---	---
Improve employability skills, increase job opportunities	10	21.3	11	23.4	9	19.1
Desire to change careers	5	10.6	6	12.8	4	8.5
to increase self-esteem	1	2.1	---	---	3	6.4
to meet social expectations	---	---	1	2.1	---	---
Desire to work	3	6.4	2	4.3	1	2.1
Desire to become self-supporting	6	12.8	4	8.5	5	10.6
self improvement, to grow and develop	1	2.1	6	12.8	4	8.5
Family difficulties	---	---	---	---	---	---
Divorce	---	---	---	---	---	---
Single parenthood	1	2.1	2	4.3	1	2.1
Need to re-examine marriage & family roles	---	---	---	---	---	---
Boredom	---	---	---	---	3	6.4
to learn about life and the world	---	---	1	2.1	---	---
to take pride in my accomplishments	---	---	1	2.1	7	14.9
Other	3	6.4	2	4.3	1	2.1
Missing Value	1	2.1	1	2.1	2	4.3

Summary.

The reentry women in the study had more formal education than the early entry group. In fact, 83% of reentry participants had at least some post-secondary education experience prior to entering their current program. Though the majority of them have been absent from 6 to 10 years, this is not a group of students who are making the transition for the first time.

Overall, occupational reasons were the major motivating factors for both the early entry and reentry groups. Reentry women, however, often had multiple reasons for returning to school and were much more likely to be motivated by their personal or financial situation. Success or failure in college for these women, therefore, may affect their personal and financial lives just as much as their occupational goals or aspirations.

Part 2

Part two of the questionnaire aimed to identify the degree to which respondents experienced the barriers to college entry identified in the literature review. The sixteen items included personal (psychosocial and situational) and institutional barriers in a five-point Likert scale format. Respondents were asked to read the sixteen statements and indicate whether they strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with each statement.

Personal barriers.

Psychosocial barriers refer to a woman's self-image, self-imposed demands (Lewis, 1988a), attitudes, beliefs and values (Spanard, 1990) that may interfere with her ability to

Table 10

Barriers to College Entry Experienced by Early Entry Participants

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I am certain that I will obtain a college certificate/diploma.	---	---	---	---	9	15.8	48	84.2
Admission policies made it easy for me to get into my program.	6	10.7	8	14.3	33	58.9	9	16.1
[a] My job interferes with my ability to study and/or attend classes.	10	45.5	9	40.9	2	9.1	1	4.5
I worried about my ability to compete with other students.	8	14.0	25	43.9	15	26.3	9	15.8
I feel the college has supportive services for students.	1	1.8	9	15.8	36	63.2	11	19.3
I find it difficult to balance home responsibilities / school work.	7	12.3	31	54.4	17	29.8	2	3.5
I felt my abilities were about the same as most students.	1	1.8	3	5.3	41	71.9	12	21.1
Cost of tuition and books has made it difficult for me to attend.	5	8.8	28	49.1	17	29.8	7	12.3
Transportation to and from classes was difficult for me.	13	22.8	28	49.1	13	22.8	3	5.3
I worried that I would look out of place in college.	31	54.4	24	42.1	2	3.5	---	---
I feel like I "fit in" at the college.	---	---	---	---	39	69.6	17	30.4
[b] Lack of childcare hindered my ability to attend classes and/or study.	---	---	3	75.0	1	25.0	---	---
I consider myself a confident person.	1	1.8	2	3.5	41	71.9	13	22.8
Scheduling of class time slots was convenient for me.	1	1.8	4	7.1	41	73.2	10	17.9
Financially it has been difficult attending college.	4	7.0	26	45.6	16	28.1	11	19.3
I considered dropping out of my program at least once this semester.	21	36.8	18	31.6	14	24.6	4	7.0

[a]Percentages are derived only from those students who indicated they are currently employed.

[b]Percentages are derived only from those students who indicated that they have children.

Table 11

Barriers to College Entry Experienced by Reentry Participants

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
I am certain that I will obtain a college certificate/diploma.	3	6.4	---	---	11	23.4	33	70.2
Admission policies made it easy for me to get into my program.	5	10.9	7	15.2	24	52.2	10	21.7
[a]My job interferes with my ability to study and/or attend classes.	5	25.0	9	45.0	3	15.0	3	15.0
I worried about my ability to compete with other students.	10	21.3	16	34.0	11	23.4	10	21.3
I feel the college has supportive services for students.	7	14.9	12	25.5	22	46.8	6	12.8
I find it difficult to balance home responsibilities / school work.	6	12.8	18	38.3	16	34.0	7	14.9
I felt my abilities were about the same as most students.	---	---	8	17.0	29	61.7	10	21.3
Cost of tuition & books has made it difficult for me to attend.	7	15.6	18	40.0	15	33.3	5	11.1
Transportation to and from classes was difficult for me.	17	37.0	23	50.0	3	6.5	3	6.5
I worried that I would look out of place in college.	18	38.3	21	44.7	5	10.6	3	6.4
I feel like I "fit in" at the college.	---	---	2	4.3	36	76.6	9	19.1
[b]Lack of childcare hindered my ability to attend classes and/or study.	9	45.0	8	40.0	3	15.0	---	---
I consider myself a confident person.	---	---	3	6.4	33	70.2	11	23.4
Scheduling of class time slots was convenient for me.	1	2.1	6	12.8	35	74.5	5	10.6
Financially it has been difficult attending college.	2	4.3	17	36.2	15	31.9	13	27.7
I considered dropping out of my program at least once this semester.	12	26.1	17	37.0	11	23.9	6	13.0

[a]Percentages are derived only from those students who indicated they are currently employed.

[b]Percentages are derived only from those students who indicated that they have children.

succeed in post-secondary education. Reentry women typically have a strong fear of failure (Greenwood, 1990), experience tremendous self-doubt, insecurity, and anxiety about their rusty academic skills (Novak & Thacker, 1991; Lewis, 1988a; Glass & Rose, 1987), and frequently have low self-confidence (Taylor, 1995; Rees, 1992). It was expected that the reentry group would experience more personal barriers than the early entry group.

All of the early entry participants in this study felt confident that they would obtain a college certificate or diploma from their program. While 93.6% of reentry women agreed or strongly agreed that they would obtain a college diploma, 6.4% felt certain that they would not. This difference was not significant at the preset $p<0.05$ level. Participants were asked to rate whether they worried about their ability to compete with other students. Early entry and reentry students did not differ significantly in response to this item, however many students in both groups indicated that they did worry about competition. Of the early entry participants 42.1% agreed or strongly agreed that they worried about competition, while 44.7% of reentry participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Worry about competition with other students was particularly high in certain college programs, as illustrated in Table 12.

Table 12

Students Who Worried About Competition By Program

Program	Worried About Competition f	%
Early Childhood Education	8	47.1
Office Administration	5	29.4
Medical Sciences	11	50.0
Applied Business Information Technology	2	20.0
Computer Support Specialist	10	62.5
Common First Year Engineering	5	45.5
Business Management	4	36.4

Both groups seemed to have confidence in their academic abilities. Ninety-three percent of early entry participants agreed or strongly agreed that academically their abilities were about the same as most students at the college. Only slightly lower (and not significantly different), 83% of reentry women agreed or strongly agreed that their abilities were the same as other students. Both groups also considered themselves confident people, with 94.7% of early entry and 93.6% of reentry women agreeing or strongly agreeing that they considered themselves a confident person. Early entry women did not worry that they would look out of place in college as only 3.5% of participants agreed with this statement. Though not significant at the $p<0.05$ level, considerably more reentry women (17%) worried about looking out of place in college.

Almost one third of both groups had considered dropping out of their program at least once throughout the semester as 31.6% of early entry and 36.9% of reentry students

agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Though no significant differences were found between the two groups on this item, high numbers of students considering drop-out is important information for counselling services at the College. Numbers considering drop-out were particularly high in certain programs, as illustrated in Table 13.

Table 13

Students Considering Drop-Out By Program

Program	Considering Drop-Out	
	f	%
Early Childhood Education	5	31.3
Office Administration	6	35.3
Medical Sciences	6	27.3
Applied Business Information Technology	3	30.0
Computer Support Specialist	9	56.3
Common First Year Engineering	2	18.2
Business Management	4	34.0

Other personal barriers are related to the individual's personal circumstances or situation (Lewis, 1988a). Unlike traditional early entry students, reentry students often have difficulty juggling the multiple roles and responsibilities of adulthood (Lewis, 1988a; Glass & Rose, 1987). Thirty percent of the reentry women in the study agreed or strongly agreed that their job interferes with their ability to study and or attend classes. Early entry

women did not differ significantly in their response to this item with 13.6% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their job interferes with going to school. Again, no significant difference was found between early and reentry participants in balancing their multiple responsibilities. Both groups had many students who found it difficult juggling multiple roles at school and at home. Thirty-three point three percent of early entry participants and 48.9% of reentry participants agreed or strongly agreed that they found it difficult balancing home responsibilities and school work.

Transportation to and from classes did not seem to be a problem for either the early or reentry group. Only 13% of reentry and 28.1% of early entry students agreed or strongly agreed that transportation to and from classes was difficult for them. Childcare was also not a major problem for either early or reentry students. Only 15% of reentry and 25% of early entry students agreed that lack of childcare hindered their ability to attend classes and/or study. Both groups found attending college to be a financial burden, as 47.4% of early entry and 59.6% of reentry agreed or strongly agreed that attending college has been difficult financially.

Institutional barriers.

The institution itself often creates barriers for mature students entering college. These obstacles include class scheduling, location, cost, campus friendliness (Spanard, 1990), course availability, admission policies (Lewis, 1988a; Glass & Rose, 1987), and insensitive school policies (Lewis 1988a; Tittle & Denker, 1980). The majority of students surveyed did not find admission policies at the College a barrier to college entry. Seventy-five percent of early entry students and 73.9% of reentry students agreed or strongly agreed

that the admission policies at the College made it easy to get into their program. Of course, those students who were not admitted to the College due to institutional barriers were not included in the survey. The cost of tuition and books was also not a barrier to college entry for the majority of students surveyed. Fifty-seven point nine percent of early entry students and 55.6% of reentry students disagreed or strongly disagreed that the cost of tuition and books has made it difficult to attend college.

Significantly more reentry students than early entry students were dissatisfied with support services for students at the College. More than 40 % percent of reentry students disagreed or strongly disagreed that the College has supportive services for students as compared to only 17.6% of early entry students. All early entry students and the vast majority of reentry students (95.7%) agreed/strongly agreed that they felt as though they "fit in" at the College. As well, the vast majority of both groups found the class scheduling to be convenient. Agreement was 91.1% for early entry and 85.1% for reentry students.

Summary.

Overall, the early and reentry students in the study did not differ in the personal and institutional barriers they experienced in attending College. It should be noted, however, that this study includes only those students who have prevailed over such obstacles and remained in school for approximately one year in their current program, and not those who could not overcome such challenges. In addition, the intern speculates that many of the personal barriers, especially relating to self-confidence, self-doubt, insecurity, and fear of failure may have changed throughout the first year of their program in response to feedback or academic successes and praise.

The only significant difference found between the early and reentry groups was that more reentry women felt the College lacked supportive services for students. The majority of both groups, however, did feel that the College had such services. Interestingly, a large number of students in both groups considered dropping out of their program at least once during the semester and competition between students, especially in particular programs was a cause of concern for many of the participants. Such findings may indicate higher attrition rates for particular programs and may warrant further research.

Part 3

The success of reentry women is very much dependent on behavioral and emotional support from family members and friends (Rodriguez, 1996; Edwards, 1993; Home, 1993; Greenwood, 1990). In fact, the presence or absence of personal and institutional support throughout their training can often mean the difference between persisting and dropping out of school (Lewis, 1988a). Part three of the questionnaire collected information on the nature of support received by the respondents prior to entry and throughout the first year of college, whether or not they had used counselling services at the College, and their degree of satisfaction with those services. Also included were several open-ended questions regarding advice to future students and suggestions to improve College services.

Support prior to college entry.

Participants were asked to choose from a list of possible sources who provided them with support and encouragement prior to applying to college. Early entry students most often chose parents, then friends, followed by other family members, as sources of support.

Early entry women received support from their parents and their high school counsellor significantly more often than reentry participants. Reentry students most often chose friends, followed by parents, then other family members. Significantly more reentry women received support from their spouses, children, and community organizations prior to college entry than early entry women. Of course, more reentry women had spouses and children from which to gain support. Of the women who were married, 75% of early entry and 90.9% of reentry women indicated their spouses provided support and encouragement and positively influenced their decision to attend college. Children were not a major source of support for those participants who did have children. Only 25% of early entry and 28.6% of reentry women indicated their children had been supportive prior to college entry. Early entry and reentry women who had spouses and children did not differ in the amount of support they received from them. The number of supports participants received prior to college entry did not differ significantly between the two groups.

Table 14

Support Received Prior to Applying to College and Throughout the First Year

	Prior To College				Throughout 1st Year			
	Early		Reentry		Early		Reeentry	
Support Person	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Spouse	5	8.8	23	48.9*	5	8.8	22	46.8*
Course instructor	5	8.8	2	4.3	27	47.4	24	51.1
Children	1	1.8	6	12.8*	2	3.5	10	21.3*
Parent	51	89.5	34	72.3*	53	93.0	38	80.9
Other family member	40	70.2	33	70.2	35	61.4	32	68.1
College Counsellor	5	8.8	5	10.6	8	14.0	6	12.8
Role model	18	31.6	16	34.0	14	24.6	10	21.3
Community Organ.	1	1.8	9	19.1*	---	---	4	8.5*
High school counsellor	12	21.1	2	4.3 *	2	3.5	1	2.1
Friends	49	86.0	39	83.0	50	87.7	42	89.4
Other(s)	18	31.6	9	19.1	17	29.8	9	19.1

*$p < .05$

Support throughout the first year.

The questionnaire also asked respondents to choose from a list of available responses who had provided them with support and encouragement throughout their first year at the College. Reentry women most often chose friends, parents and then other family members and were significantly more likely to choose a community organization, spouse, and children as sources of support than were their early entry counterparts. Early entry

respondents most often chose parents, friends, and other family members. Of all the respondents who do have children, 50% of early entry and 47.6% of reentry women said their children provided them with support throughout their first year. Seventy-five percent of married early entry women had supportive spouses as compared to 86.4% of reentry women. Of the early entry and reentry women who had spouses and children, there was no significant difference in the amount of support they received from them. The number of supports indicated by early entry and reentry participants did not differ significantly.

Top three sources of support prior to college entry.

Participants were asked to choose their top three sources of support and encouragement prior to entering college. Early entry participants indicated their primary source of support came from their parents, significantly different from reentry participants who rated their spouse as the primary source of support. Reentry women regard emotional support and encouragement from their partner as very important (Edwards, 1993). In fact, a partner's attitude toward a reentry woman's return to school is a critical factor in her success and satisfaction in the student role (Avery, 1996; Lewis, 1988a). Friends were ranked as the most frequent second and third sources of support by early entry participants. Reentry participants rated parents and friends as their second and third most important sources of support respectively. Choice of second and third most important sources of support did not differ significantly between early and reentry participants.

Table 15

Top Three Sources Of Support For Early Entry Prior To College Entry

Source of Support	Early Entry Rank					
	#1		#2		#3	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Spouse	3	5.3	2	3.5	---	---
Course instructor	---	---	1	1.8	3	5.3
Children	1	1.8	---	---	---	---
Parent	37	64.9	13	22.8	3	5.3
Other family member	2	3.5	10	17.5	16	28.1
Counsellor at the college	---	---	2	3.5	1	1.8
Role model	1	1.8	1	1.8	2	3.5
Community organization	---	---	1	1.8	---	---
High school counsellor	1	1.8	---	---	1	1.8
Friends	2	3.5	18	31.6	20	35.1
Other(S)	9	15.8	6	10.5	4	7.0
Missing value	1	1.8	3	5.3	7	12.3

Table 16

Top Three Sources of Support for Reentry Prior To College Entry

Source of Support	Reentry Rank #1		#2		#3	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Spouse	18	38.3	5	10.6	---	---
Course instructor	---	---	---	---	1	2.1
Children	1	2.1	1	2.1	2	4.3
Parent	11	23.4	16	34.0	3	6.4
Other family member	3	6.4	10	21.3	6	12.8
Counsellor at the college	---	---	1	2.1	2	4.3
Role model	2	4.3	1	2.1	3	6.4
Community organization	---	---	2	4.3	---	---
High school counsellor	---	---	---	---	---	---
Friends	8	17	6	12.8	16	34.0
Other(s)	3	6.4	2	4.3	4	8.5
Missing value	1	2.1	3	6.4	10	21.3

Top three sources of support throughout the first year at the college.

Primary source of support throughout the first year at the College was also significantly different for the two groups. Throughout their first year at the College early entry participants again rated their parents as their primary source of support while reentry participants chose their spouse as their number one supporter. This is consistent with Avery (1996) who found that reentry women chose their spouse as their most important source of

support and critical to their being able to accomplish their goals. Parents were also chosen as the second most important source of support followed by friends as the third most important source of support by early entry participants. Reentry participants chose friends as their second and third most important source of support throughout their first year at the College. Choice of second and third most important sources of support did not differ significantly between early and reentry participants.

Table 17

Top Three Sources of Support for Early Entry Throughout the First Year of College

Source of Support	Early Entry Rank					
	#1		#2		#3	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Spouse	5	8.8	---	---	1	1.8
Course instructor	3	5.3	9	15.8	6	10.5
Children	2	3.5	---	---	---	---
Parent	33	57.9	16	28.1	4	7.0
Other family member	---	---	10	17.5	14	24.6
Counsellor at the college	1	1.8	3	5.3	2	3.5
Role model	---	---	---	---	1	1.8
Community organization	---	---	---	---	---	---
High school counsellor	---	---	---	---	---	---
Friends	6	10.5	11	19.3	17	29.8
Other(s)	7	12.3	7	12.3	3	5.3
Missing Value	---	---	1	1.8	9	15.8

Table 18

Top Three Sources of Support for Reentry Throughout the First Year of College

Source of Support	Reentry Rank #1		#2		#3	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Spouse	16	34.0	3	6.4	1	2.1
Course instructor	3	6.4	4	8.5	6	12.8
Children	1	2.1	2	4.3	2	4.3
Parent	15	31.9	11	23.4	4	8.5
Other family member	3	6.4	8	17.0	9	19.1
Counsellor at the college	1	2.1	---	---	---	---
Role model	1	2.1	---	---	1	2.1
Community organization	---	---	---	---	---	---
High school counsellor	---	---	---	---	1	2.1
Friends	3	6.4	13	27.7	13	27.7
Other(s)	2	4.3	3	6.4	3	6.4
Missing Value	2	4.3	3	6.4	7	14.9

Unsupportive sources.

Participants were asked whether lack of support from someone made it particularly difficult for them to attend college. Both groups responded similarly with 78.9% of early entry and 80.9% of reentry students indicating that they had not been hindered by lack of support from someone in their life. The small number of students who had found it difficult due to lack of support from others indicated that this lack of support came from either their

spouse / boyfriend, children, parents, other family members, instructors, or the institution overall. Table 19 illustrates the frequencies of these responses.

Table 19

Unsupportive Sources

	Early Entry		Reentry	
Source	f	%	f	%
Spouse/boyfriend	4	7.0	3	6.4
Children	1	1.8	1	2.1
Parents	2	3.5	---	---
Other family members	2	3.5	1	2.1
Instructors	3	5.3	3	6.4
Institution	---	---	1	2.1
Total	12	21.1	9	19.1

Career / personal development group.

The questionnaire asked participants if they had been involved in any type of career or personal development group prior to deciding to attend college. This type of group was strongly recommended by the reentry women in Avery's (1996) study as a means of support and encouragement. Of the early entry participants 9 of them indicated that they had been involved in a career or personal development group prior to deciding to attend college. Eleven members of the reentry group indicated involvement in such a group. However, this question seemed to have been misinterpreted by many of the respondents as most of them

when asked to specify which group they were involved in, indicated where they had been working prior to college entry. For example, one early entry participant, having indicated that she had been involved in a career or personal development group, went on to specify that she had worked at Ches's Fish and Chips. Of the early entry participants only 3 out of the 9 responded appropriately. These women had been involved in such groups as 4-H, the Linkages program through WISE (Women Interested in Successful Employment), a high school enterprise group and a co-op enterprise group. Five of the 11 reentry women responded appropriately having been involved in such groups as Brighter Futures, the Youth Experience Program, YMCA – career exploration, WISE, and a program called Training for Tomorrow. As only a very small number of women from both groups were involved in a career or personal development group, support from this source played only a very minor role in the population surveyed.

Counselling service usage.

In a recent study at the College, Smith (1999) found that older students were more likely to use counselling services than were younger students. The present questionnaire found similar results. When asked if they had used in the past or were currently using counselling services at the College 10 early entry students (17.5%) said yes. Of those who said yes, 9 (90%) of them felt that counselling services had met their needs. Of the reentry respondents 13 (27.7%) had used counselling services at the College and all 13 (100%) said they felt that counselling services had met their needs.

Advice to future students.

There were several open-ended questions on the survey as well, included to explore more deeply the women's experience at the College. Respondents were asked "Looking back, what advice would you give someone in your position who is considering applying to college?" Almost all of the participants (95.7% of reentry and 98.2% of early entry) responded to this question with a variety of themes emerging. The majority of early entry and reentry responses reflected similar themes (see Table 20).

The most common advice given by both the groups were words of encouragement and support, such as:

"It's not easy but don't give up because you can do it." – Reentry

"Go for it!" – Early Entry

Making wise choices was an important theme in both reentry and early entry responses. Many respondents, especially in the early entry group, stressed the importance of making the right decision and choosing a career to match one's interests and goals. Similarly, a smaller number of respondents in both groups recommended seeking further information or doing research on the college itself or the career field they were interested in pursuing.

Table 20

Advice To Others Considering Applying To College

	Early Entry		Reentry	
Theme	f	%	f	%
1. difficult / hard work	12	21.1	11	23.4
2. words of encouragement	22	38.6	20	42.6
3. demands a great deal of time	5	8.8	4	8.5
4. juggling multiple roles/responsibilities is difficult	---	---	4	8.5
5. seek more information/do research on college and career you're interested in	5	8.8	6	12.8
6. stressed importance of making right career choice to match interests and goals	18	31.6	10	21.3
7. very expensive/financially difficult	3	5.3	2	4.3
8. positive comments on college/instructors/program/ their experiences	7	12.3	3	6.4
9. don't be discouraged by others	3	5.3	3	6.4
10. consider upgrading your skills	---	---	2	4.3
11. don't underestimate your abilities	---	---	1	2.1
12. going to school and working is difficult	---	---	2	4.3
13. apply early	3	5.3	1	2.1
14. experience is worthwhile/satisfying	2	3.5	6	12.8
15. it boosts your self-esteem/self-confidence	1	1.8	1	2.1
16. do general studies at University	---	---	1	2.1
17. you should finish high school	1	1.8	---	---
18. negative comments about the college/instructors	2	3.5	3	6.4

"I think you should do some kind of career investigation to make sure it's what you want. If you get into it and it's not what you want don't hesitate to change and do something else...find something that interests you." – Reentry

"Find out as much as you can about the field to make sure you'll like it and make sure that it's really what you want to work at...don't waste your money and time. Make sure it's your decision and not someone else's." – Early entry

Another theme common to both reentry and early entry responses emphasized that college was difficult and a lot of hard work. Comments included:

"Be prepared to work hard." – Reentry

"Study...it's not as easy as you think." – Early entry

Though not major themes, there were also a few comments by reentry participants that reflected the uniqueness of their own experience of returning to college and offered some insight into the kind of difficulties they experienced. For example:

"Make sure you've got all your home responsibilities covered if you have a spouse and kids. Make sure you can handle it financially, and make sure it's something you really want to do...and if so, go for it without fear." – Reentry

"I would go ahead and encourage them to do so. It's been a positive experience for me. Sometimes you doubt your ability...sometimes you don't give yourself enough credit." – Reentry

"Definitely go for it! But it is very, very challenging with kids and working on weekends, both emotionally and financially challenging. So, be prepared, it's not easy." – Reentry

"Do research before returning. Have a support system in place. Make sure your family knows how difficult it will be." – Reentry

"It doesn't matter what anyone else thinks – if you want to do it and you feel you can, go for it. It will give you a tremendous boost to your confidence, self-esteem and a great feeling of independence!" – Reentry

Overall, respondents' advice to future students was positive and encouraging. Though there were many comments about the difficulties endured in entering college not one of the responses discouraged future women from attending.

College services.

Another open-ended question on the survey asked respondents if there were any services not being offered by the College that they would like to see offered. Response rate for this question was much lower than the previous question at 42.6% for reentry

participants and 33.3% for early entry participants. There were many interesting suggestions from the respondents, however, the reentry group suggested a greater variety of services than the early entry group, at 21 different services for reentry versus 13 different services for early entry (see Table 21).

Responses tended to be scattered amongst the 28 suggested services with no dominant themes emerging. The most frequently suggested service for both the reentry and early entry groups was an ATM or bank machine. Early entry participants suggested cafeteria services as the second most common response and medical insurance and daycare services tied for third most common response. The second most common response for the reentry group was a tie between a single parent's group and medical insurance. All other responses for the reentry group were chosen equally as often. It should be noted that participants attended three different campuses and therefore their suggestions reflected what was available to them at their own particular campus. Some services may have been offered at one campus and not others, for example daycare and cafeteria services.

Suggested pre-entry college services.

Survey participants were asked in an open-ended format if there was anything that the College could have done prior to their entry into the College to be more supportive. Response rate was relatively low at 36.2% for reentry women and 28.1% for the early entry group. A variety of themes emerged from the responses (see Table 22).

Table 21

Services Respondents Would Like to See Offered on Campus

Suggested Services	Early Entry		Reentry	
	f	%	f	%
1. Job search skills workshops	---	---	1	2.1
2. Meetings with potential employers	---	---	1	2.1
3. Better funding	1	1.8	---	---
4. ATM / Bank machine	5	8.8	4	8.5
5. Postal services	1	1.8	---	---
6. Single parents group	1	1.8	2	4.3
7. Student rate for campus daycare	---	---	1	2.1
8. Cafeteria / canteen services	4	7.0	1	2.1
9. Newer building / better facility	---	---	1	2.1
10. More peer tutoring – greater availability	---	---	1	2.1
11. Medical insurance / Health insurance	2	3.5	2	4.3
12. No increases in tuition	---	---	1	2.1
13. Transportation services to C.B.S.	---	---	1	2.1
14. Daycare	2	3.5	1	2.1
15. sexual harassment awareness training for students & instructors	1	1.8	---	---
16. Instructor led tutorial / review sessions	---	---	1	2.1
17. Support group for mature students	---	---	1	2.1
18. Job employment centre	1	1.8	---	---
19. Doctor / pharmacy	1	1.8	---	---
20. Sports groups / fitness programs	1	1.8	1	2.1
21. Continuous in-service and mandatory courses for faculty	---	---	1	2.1
22. Peer monitoring of staff by staff	---	---	1	2.1
23. Study-skills training	---	---	1	2.1
24. Objective person to handle complaints about instructors	1	1.8	---	---
25. Counselling services	1	1.8	---	---
26. common first year to allow more time to decide on specialization	---	---	1	2.1
27. more information to women entering technology/engineering programs re:funding	---	---	1	2.1
28. Pepsi products available on campus	---	---	1	2.1

Table 22

Suggested Supports Prior to College Entry

	Early Entry		Reentry	
Theme	f	%	f	%
1. should have been more informed about additional money required for supplies	---	---	1	2.1
2. should have been informed about competition within program	4	7.0	4	8.5
3. should have been informed about exemption process	1	1.8	1	2.1
4. should have been informed about support services for mature students	---	---	1	2.1
5. should have been more informed on the program itself including course loads & difficulty level	6	10.5	1	2.1
6. academic advisement	---	---	1	2.1
7. stricter qualifications of instructors	---	---	2	4.3
8. daycare for children under 2 years of age	1	1.8	---	---
9. weekly group meetings for mature students	---	---	1	2.1
10. positive comments on college entry process	1	1.8	1	2.1
11. waitlists too long, should accommodate more students	1	1.8	---	---
12. not enough notice of acceptance to program	---	---	3	6.4
13. should have been given campus tour	1	1.8	---	---
14. contact with instructors to discuss program & ask questions	2	3.5	1	2.1
15. college needs to be more organized, better prepared for students	1	1.8	2	4.3
16. more sensitive to the needs of students	---	---	1	2.1
17. greater availability of evening courses to complete full-time programs	---	---	1	2.1
18. eliminate barriers such as the CAAT	---	---	1	2.1
19. chance to sit-in on the program for a day, prior to entry	1	1.8	---	---

While no dominant themes emerged, the majority of complaints from both groups seemed to reflect a lack of communication between the college and the students. For the

early entry participants who responded, the most common complaint was that they should have been more informed about the program itself including the course load and difficulty level of the program. Early entry respondents also felt that the college should have informed them about competition for seats within their program. The reentry respondents most often stated that they should have been informed about the competition within the program and also complained that they were not given enough notice of acceptance to their program.

Suggested supports throughout the program.

Participants were asked in an open-ended format if there was anything the College could have done throughout the program to be more supportive. Only 36.2% of reentry and 35.1% of early entry participants responded to this question. Many of the same themes emerged as in the previous question regarding lack of communication between the College and the students (see Table 23); however, responses tended to be scattered with 16 different themes emerging from the early entry responses and 15 emerging from the reentry responses. The most common response of early entry participants indicated satisfaction with the support they had received from the College. For reentry participants the most common response called for the College to set up a procedure or process for handling complaints of students about instructors. A smaller number of early entry respondents also wanted a complaint process set up.

Table 23

Suggested Supports Throughout the Program

	Early Entry		Reentry	
Theme	f	%	f	%
1. stricter qualifications of instructors	1	1.8	1	2.1
2. supply fees should include materials for projects	---	---	1	2.1
3. more lab time within and outside of classes	---	---	1	2.1
4. pleased with support received from college	4	7.0	2	4.3
5. shouldn't take in so many students, only a small # get through	1	1.8	1	2.1
6. instructors/admin. should be more supportive/understanding	---	---	2	4.3
7. should have provided tutoring	1	1.8	1	2.1
8. switching btw manual & computerized accounting too difficult	1	1.8	---	---
9. make mature students more aware of available services –advertise	---	---	1	2.1
10. make students more aware of counselling & peer tutoring	1	1.8	---	---
11. make students more aware/prepared for difficulty in Intersession	1	1.8	---	---
12. process to address complaints/concerns of students re: instructors	2	3.5	4	8.5
13. program changes too much, hard to know what to expect	1	1.8	---	---
14. lower cost of books	1	1.8	---	---
15. could have been more considerate/empathic	1	1.8	1	2.1
16. not take sides of certain students	1	1.8	---	---
17. give progress reports	1	1.8	---	---
18. limit study material – too much cramming	1	1.8	---	---
19. changed structure of program to be less stressful	1	1.8	---	---
20. instructors should show respect to students	---	---	1	2.1
21. check-in with students monthly to see if there are problems	1	1.8	---	---
22. instructors should behave professionally	---	---	2	4.3
23. respect student confidentiality	---	---	1	2.1
24. keep classes closer together	---	---	1	2.1
25. assign labs to a particular class exclusively	---	---	1	2.1

Additional comments.

As a final question, respondents were asked to write any additional comments in the space provided. Response rate for early entry participants was very low at 8.8% as compared to 31.9% for reentry participants. Table 24 illustrates the themes that emerged from the participants' comments.

Table 24

Additional Comments

	Early Entry		Reentry	
Theme	f	%	f	%
1. reentry students should take advantage of available services	---	---	1	2.1
2. I have enjoyed program / had a good experience	3	5.3	3	6.4
3. college/instructors were great/supportive	2	3.5	4	8.5
4. great way to meet friends	---	---	1	2.1
5. should have better registration process-less wait	1	1.8	---	---
6. very hard financially	---	---	2	4.3
7. heavy workload was very stressful	---	---	4	8.5
8. competition is very stressful	---	---	1	2.1
9. improve communication with students & other campuses	1	1.8	---	---
10. should be more support at end with finding a job	---	---	1	2.1
11. future courses after graduation to upgrade would be great	---	---	1	2.1
12. instructors have been unsupportive & very unprofessional	1	1.8	3	6.4
13. staff were ill-prepared	---	---	1	2.1
14. would be hesitant to recommend college to others	---	---	2	4.3
15. intro to WordPerfect for mature students w/ no computer experience	---	---	1	2.1
16. class had problem with instructor- not handled well by college	---	---	1	2.1
17. Intersession is a "weeding out" process	---	---	1	2.1
18. program is well structured	1	1.8	---	---
19. smaller classes are more supportive than MUN	1	1.8	---	---

Responses tended to be scattered with no dominant themes emerging from the data. Though response rate was very low for early entry participants, most of those that did respond expressed that they enjoyed the program and had a good experience at the College. The most common responses for the reentry group stated that the College or instructors had been great and that they found the workload to be very heavy and stressful.

Summary.

Social support is one of the most important resources women have to cope with stress (Hobfoll, 1986). The intern was interested in what supports were received and which were designated as important by reentry women and early entry women. Early entry and reentry women did not differ in the number of supports they received. The early entry women in the study most often received support from their parents, friends, and other family members both prior to entering and throughout College. Support from their parents was also ranked as most important for this group.

The reentry group most often received support from friends, parents, and other family members both prior to and throughout college. Interestingly, they rated support from their spouse as the most important both prior to and throughout college. While their friends were the most likely to provide support, the support received from their spouse was more highly valued perhaps because of the nature of the support each provided. Neither group experienced difficulty due to lack of support from others.

With respect to College services, reentry women were more likely to use counselling services than early entry women and almost all students who did avail of this service were pleased with the results. A variety of services were suggested by both groups with no

dominant themes emerging. The most frequently suggested service for both groups was an ATM or bank machine, but this service was suggested by only a small number of students.

Respondents were also asked how the College might have been more supportive both prior to and throughout their first year at the College. While no dominant themes emerged the majority of complaints that did arise from both groups seemed to reflect a lack of communication between the College and the students regarding several aspects of the program and College policies prior to their entry into the College. However, the number of students who made such complaints were few; therefore, it is difficult to draw any conclusions.

Regarding support throughout the program, again no dominant themes emerged. The most common response of early entry students was that they were pleased with the support received. The most common response of reentry students recommended setting up a process to address complaints/concerns of students about instructors. In both cases however, the number of students who made such complaints were few and no conclusions can be drawn.

Advice offered to future students was similar with the majority of both groups offering words of encouragement, stressing the importance of making the right career choice, and cautioning others that College is hard work.

lack of support from others. The supports received by early and reentry students and their relative importance very much reflected the students' current stage of life. For the early entry students, who were younger and likely still dependent on their parents, support most often came from their parents and was also rated as most important. For the reentry group, support was most likely to come from their friends and their spouse was rated as the most important source of support. Though the source of their support was different, early and reentry students did not differ in the number of supports each received both prior to entry and throughout their first year, and neither group had been hindered by lack of support from someone in their life.

There are three key factors that may contribute to the lack of significant difference between the two groups. One possible explanation is that the reentry group in the study is not representative of the reentry women reviewed in the research. All of the reentry women in this study were attending college full-time, whereas reentry women are typically part-time. The intern speculates that because the daytime programs are geared towards full-time students, only those reentry women with few other responsibilities who could attend full-time and commit themselves fully even applied to the college. The majority of reentry women in this study did not have children and only slightly more were married than single so most did not have the same commitments that many returning women have. As well, though reentry women are diverse in their educational background, this group was very educated with 83% of them having attended college previously, therefore making the transition to college not a new experience for them.

Another factor that may contribute to the insignificant findings is that the study takes place after one full year of college, after the students have successfully made the

transition. The personal barriers they may have been experiencing initially such as, feeling out of place, anxious, insecure, low self-confidence and self-doubt may have dissipated after a year of academic success and positive reinforcements.

The intern also speculates that perhaps personal barriers, institutional barriers and inadequate support were not major problems because those students included in the study are the successes, those that have overcome their obstacles and successfully made the transition. Women for whom the stresses and barriers were too great and those who really lacked the support they needed to be successful may have already dropped out in the previous year, or may not have even entered college precisely due to the barriers under study in the research.

Following are some recommendations with discussion ensuing from this research study:

1. **Perhaps a more accurate measure of the barriers faced by reentry women might be found in an examination of applicants of the College rather than those already in College. Future research is recommended in this area.**

2. **As the make-up of the College population will likely change over time, the intern also recommends that counselling services at the College do periodic needs assessments to ensure that their services are targeting the current College population.**

Despite the fact that anticipated differences in the early and reentry groups were not found, there were some interesting findings worth mentioning. In the questionnaire, students were asked to indicate whether they had considered dropping out of their program at least once in the current semester. Though there was no significant difference between the two groups, there were high numbers of students in both groups who had considered dropping out of college. The number was even higher for certain programs such as the Computer Support Specialist program in which 56% of respondents had considered dropping out of college. Retention of students is a matter of concern to both counselling services and college administration.

3. **Further research is recommended to investigate possible reasons why these students are considering dropping out, why this problem is greater in certain programs, and to design possible intervention strategies to retain such students.**

Participants in the study were also asked if they worried about competition with other students. Again, there was no significant difference between the responses of early and reentry students; however, a high number of students in both groups worried about competition. Worry about competition was particularly high in certain programs such as Computer Support Specialist at 62.5% and Medical Sciences at 50.0%. Yet, both the early and reentry groups seemed to have confidence in their academic abilities with 93% of early entry and 83% of reentry students agreeing that their abilities were the same as other students. Both groups also overwhelmingly agreed that they consider themselves confident people (94.7% of early entry and 93.6% of reentry). Competition also emerged

as a theme in the open-ended questions with small numbers of students in both groups complaining that they should have been informed about the competition in their program, that the College should not take in so many students when only a small number get through the program, and that the intersession semester is a weeding-out process. Competition appears to cause considerable stress to early and reentry students alike and may in fact be related to high numbers of students considering drop-out.

4. **The intern recommends that the College reexamine the competitive nature of some of its programs, or at the very least, ensure that new applicants to these programs are fully aware of the competition for seats because of the high degree of stress it causes to students.**

The questionnaire also asked participants if there was anything the College could have done prior to college entry and throughout the first year to be more supportive. While no dominant themes emerged, a number of complaints seemed to reflect a lack of communication between the College and the students especially prior to college entry. Respondents complained that they should have been informed about the difficulty level of the program, the heavy course load, the competition in the program, as well as the exemption process.

5. **The intern recommends that new applicants of the College undergo a pre-admission academic advisement interview so that they are more fully aware of the program they are entering as well as College policies, processes and services.**

All of the women involved in this study have successfully made the transition to college. The vast majority of them did not face personal or institutional barriers to college entry nor was their journey made more difficult because they did not receive support from others in their life. Those that had used counselling services at the College were overwhelmingly satisfied with the service they received. Perhaps, the most definitive statement of their experience is in their advice to future students. Overall, respondents' advice to future students was positive and encouraging. Though there were many comments about the difficulties endured in making the transition to college, not one of the responses discouraged future women from attending.

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APPENDIX A

List of Books and Articles Reviewed During the Internship

Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development. (1992). Changing Course Midstream: A workbook on change and transitions. Alberta: Author.

In workbook format, this book is about career decisions and is intended for people faced with both voluntary and involuntary career transitions in their life. It identifies the stages people go through as well as the skills, strategies, and support needed to help them make changes that are satisfying and successful. Many clients seen at the college are making career transitions so this is an important resource for the college counsellor as well as the clients themselves.

Alberta Career Development and Employment. (1984). Changing Course Midstream: Making a Midlife Career Change. Alberta: Author.

This booklet (similar to the one above) discusses midlife career changes, what they are and why we make them. It outlines the stages of midlife career change, offers practical things to consider and do, and tips for easing the midlife career transition experience. It is another useful resource for the college counsellor.

Cade, B., & Hudson O'Hanlon, W. (1993). A Brief Guide to Brief Therapy. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

This book offers an overview of the history and theory of brief therapy from its origins to its current status. Summarizing the main elements, principles, ideas, attitudes and techniques associated with the theory, it is a very useful book for the novice counsellor offering many 'how-to' tips and examples. There is also a very interesting chapter on the ethics of brief therapy.

College of the North Atlantic: Student Services Division. (1999, January). Profiles and Perspectives. NF: Author.

This document summarizes the findings of three research studies recently conducted at the College of the North Atlantic. These studies examined student satisfaction, attrition and graduation rates, and results of the 1998 Graduate Employment Follow-up Survey. The information contained in these studies is very relevant to the college counsellor. The intern found this document extremely useful, particularly the information on graduate employment, as clients frequently asked questions about the employment prospects of particular programs as well as the expected salary range.

Ellis, D. (1991). Becoming a Master Student (6th ed.). Rapid City, SD: College Survival Inc.

Intended for the college student, this book offers many survival tips on such topics as time management, memory techniques, reading, note-taking, tests, writing, relationships, health, managing money and resources, as well as career planning. The intern found it a very useful resource in preparing a presentation on Student Success Strategies for the college's annual recruitment and program promotion activities to local high schools.

Farr, J. M., Gaither, R., & Pickrell, R. M. (1983). The Work Book: Getting the job you want. Peoria, IL: Bennett & Mcknight.

This book is a complete job search handbook intended to be a workbook for the job seeker. It is filled with useful information and tips on employer expectations, filling out application forms, making telephone contacts, interview skills, job leads, resume writing, and job search techniques. Though somewhat outdated, the intern found it a very useful resource in preparing a job search presentation to a group of students at the College.

Fraser, L. (1994). Making Your Mark (4th ed.). Ontario: LDF Publishing.

Targeted at college students, this booklet is designed to help them get through and get the most out of college. It offers a variety of ideas and hints on such topics as time management, note taking, study skills, writing papers and reports, preparing for exams, and surviving college life. It is a very good resource for the college counsellor. The intern found it useful in preparing a presentation on Student Success Strategies for the high school recruitment campaign.

Marano, H. E. (1999, April). Depression: Beyond serotonin. Psychology Today, 30-76.

This article offers fascinating up-to-date research findings in the area of depression, challenging the assumption that depression is just a chemical imbalance in the brain. Among the findings are that recurrent depression is a neurodegenerative disorder precipitating cognitive decline, that early life stress can prime people for later depression,

that depression leads to heart disease and magnifies existing cardiac problems, and that these destroyed nerve cell connections caused by depression may possibly be able to be rebuilt.

Provincial Strategy Against Violence. (1998). Understanding Violence Against Women: A Peer Education Manual for Preventing Violence Against Women in Newfoundland and Labrador. St. John's, NF: Author.

This manual is intended to promote community awareness of the problem of violence against women in this province. It is a very useful tool providing background analysis, personal stories, and educational materials such as fact sheets and educational activities which individuals and community groups can use to educate themselves about violence. It also includes an outline for a formal workshop on the topic and a resource list of community organizations, videos, kits, booklets, and available services and groups. The workshop outline is particularly useful to the college counsellor as are the community resource listings for making referrals.

Sandbek, T. J. (1993). The Deadly Diet: Recovering From Anorexia & Bulimia (2nd ed.). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

This book describes a cognitive-behavioral approach to the treatment of eating disorders, offering tools and techniques that can help an individual overcome this problem. It is intended for sufferers of anorexia and bulimia and recommended as an adjunct to therapy to be used by client and therapist together. The intern found it to be an excellent resource to add to her professional library.

Silverman, P. R., Nickman, S., & Worden, J. W. (1992). Detachment revisited: The child's reconstruction of a dead parent. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 62(4), 494-503.

As part of the Child Bereavement Study, this article examines how children conceptualize their dead parent during the year following the parent's death. Children in the study had developed an inner construction of their parent, that seemed to maintain a relationship with the lost loved one. This helped them cope with their loss and adjust to the accompanying changes in their lives.

Silverman, P. R., & Worden, J. W. (1992). Children's reactions in the early months after the death of a parent. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 62(1), 93-104.

Also part of the Child Bereavement Study, this article describes the responses of a group of children four months following the death of a parent. The focus is on understanding the factors that influence children's ability to deal with change such as the interaction among the social context, the family system, and the personal characteristics of those involved. Understanding these factors is important in isolating factors that put children at risk for developing significant adjustment problems.

Sparling, C. W. (1985). Thinking of Going Back?. Toronto: Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, University of Toronto.

This book is intended for older students who are considering returning to school. It covers a variety of topics such as, reasons for returning, barriers to reentry, changes in

relationships that may result, choosing a program, tips for easing back into the classroom, making the transition from school to work, and the psychological stages that accompany any change. Many additional readings/resources are also recommended. Based on my own literature review on the needs of returning women, this book would be very useful to that population.

Worden, J. W. (1985). Bereavement. Seminars in Oncology, 12(4), 472-475.

Stressing the importance of bereavement care in all palliative care programs, this article gives an overview of normal and abnormal grief patterns. Worden describes the tasks of mourning that must be accomplished for the bereavement to be satisfactorily concluded, the determinants of the grief response, and the components of a comprehensive bereavement care program. This is an excellent article for understanding the grief process and the role of the counsellor in assisting clients through it.

Worden, J. W., & Silverman, P. S. (1993). Grief and depression in newly widowed parents with school-age children. Omega, 27(3), 251-261.

Acknowledging that grief and depression share many similar characteristics, the objective of this study was to distinguish between grief reaction and clinical depression in newly widowed parents with school-age children. It was found that though the reactions were similar, the grief response did not produce the same low self-esteem levels as depression. The authors suggest such distinction is critical in planning appropriate interventions to assist bereaved parents in coping with their loss.

The intern found the Internet to be a very valuable resource for counsellors and job seekers as well and reviewed many websites throughout her placement. Some of these websites included:

-Job Futures: www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/JobFutures

-Student Awards: www.studentawards.com

-Information Resource Centre- HRDC: www.nf.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/irc

-Counselling Centre Village: http://ub-counseling.buffalo.edu/ccv.html

-The National Graduate Register: http://ngr.schoolnet.ca

-National Youth Internet Site: http://youth.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/

-Occinfo: Advanced Education and Career Development:
http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca/occinfo/

-Career Explorer: http://careerexplorer.com/

-Electronic Labour Exchange: http://ele.ingenia.com

-Career Search Document: http://www.gov.nf.ca/edu

These websites provided excellent up-to-date information and will be a valuable resource to the intern throughout her counselling career.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

Campus: _____ Program: _____

Length of Program: _____ I am currently: __ full-time __ part-time

PART I: **Please circle the answer that applies to you.**

1. Were you admitted to the College under the "mature student" policy? 1. Yes 2. No

2. What was the **highest** level of education you achieved prior to entry into your college program?

   1. less than high school
   2. high school diploma
   3. adult basic education (ABE) or equivalent
   4. some college
   5. college diploma or certificate
   6. some university
   7. university degree
   8. graduate degree
   9. other (please specify)_____

3. Not including the program you are currently doing, how long has it been since you last attended formal education?

   1. < 1 year
   2. 1 to 5 years
   3. 6 to 10 years
   4. 11 to 15 years
   5. 16 to 20 years
   6. > 20 years

4. The reason(s) I have entered post-secondary education at this time include: (circle all that apply).

   A. job dissatisfaction, better employment
   B. children older (entering school)
   C. children grown, left home
   D. job loss
   E. financial problems
   F. improve employability skills, increase job opportunities
   G. desire to change careers
   H. to increase self-esteem
   I. to meet social expectations
   J. desire to work
   K. desire to become self-supporting
   L. self improvement, to grow and develop
   M. family difficulties
   N. divorce
   O. single parenthood
   P. need to re-examine marriage and family roles
   Q. boredom
   R. to learn about life and the world
   S. to take pride in my accomplishments
   T. other (please specify) _____

5. From the reasons you circled above, please list your top 3 reasons for entering post-secondary education.

   1. _____
   2. _____
   3. _____

PART II: **Please rate the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5 by circling the most appropriate numbers as they apply to you personally.**

1=Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3= Agree 4= Strongly Agree 5= Not Applicable

	SD	D	A	SA	N/A
6. I am certain that I will obtain a college certificate/diploma.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The admission policies here at the College made it easy for me to get into the program.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My job interferes with my ability to study and/or attend classes.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I worried about my ability to compete with other students.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I feel the college has supportive services for students.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I find it difficult to balance home responsibilities and schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Academically, I felt my abilities were about the same as most students at college.	1	2	3	4	5
13. The cost of tuition and books has made it difficult for me to attend college.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Transportation to and from classes was difficult for me.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I worried that I would look out of place in college.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I feel like I "fit in" at the college.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Lack of childcare hindered my ability to attend classes and/or study.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I consider myself a confident person.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Scheduling of class time slots was convenient for me.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Financially, it has been difficult attending college.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I considered dropping out of my program at least once this semester.	1	2	3	4	5

PART III: **Please circle the answer that applies to you.**

22. Prior to applying to the college, did any of the following people positively influence your decision to attend by providing support or encouragement? (circle all that apply)

A. spouse
B. course instructor
C. your children
D. parent
E. other family member
F. counsellor at the college
G. role model
H. community organization (such as WISE)
I. high school counsellor
J. friends
K. other(s) (please specify) _____
_____
_____
_____

23. From the items you circled above, please list your top 3 important sources of support and encouragement **prior** to applying to the college:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

24. Now that you are finished the first year of your program, which, if any, of the following do you feel were an important source of support and encouragement to you throughout this time? (circle all that apply)

A. spouse
B. course instructor
C. your children
D. parent
E. other family member
F. counsellor at the college
G. role model
H. community organization (such as WISE)
I. high school counsellor
J. friends
K. other(s) (please specify) _____
_____
_____
_____

25. From the items you circled above, please list your top 3 important sources of support and encouragement **throughout your first year** at the college:

    1. _____
    2. _____
    3. _____

26. Did lack of support from someone make it particularly difficult for you?

    1. No
    2. Yes, please specify _____

27. Prior to your decision to attend college were you involved in any type of career or personal development group?

    1. No
    2. Yes, please specify _____
       _____
       _____

28. Looking back, what advice would you give someone in your position who is considering applying to college?

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

29. Have you used in the past, or are you currently using Counselling Services at the college?

    1. No
    2. Yes.
       If yes, do you feel Counselling Services met your needs? 1. Yes 2. No

30. Are there any services not being offered at the college that you would like to see offered?

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

31. Is there any thing that the College could have done prior to your entry into the college to be more supportive?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

32. Is there any thing that the College could have done throughout your program to be more supportive?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

33. Is there anything else that you would like to add? Please use the space below to write your comments.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

PART IV: **Please circle the number of the response that applies to you.**

34. On December 31st, 1999 my age will be:

1. < 25 years
2. 25 to 29 years
3. 30 to 34 years
4. 35 to 39 years
5. 40 to 44 years
6. 45 + years

35. Marital Status:

1. single, never married
2. married or common law
3. divorced / separated
4. widowed

36. How many dependent children do you have? _____

37. How many of these children require childcare? _____

38. The population of my home community is:
    1. < 500
    2. 500 to 5,000
    3. 5,001 to 20,000
    4. > 20,000

Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX C

College Consent Form

Dear Mr. Paul Facey:

My name is Kim Lindstrom and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland. In April of 1999 I began an internship at the College of the North Atlantic, District 7, as a partial fulfillment of the Masters of Education Degree. Mr. John Harnett and Ms. Brenda Newhook have agreed to act as my field supervisors and Dr. Mildred Cahill has agreed to supervise on behalf of the Faculty of Education.

During the internship I will be conducting research directly related to my program. The objective of the research is to gather and analyze data specifically related to the counselling needs of mature female students. The survey shall address the following questions:

1. What do female college students state as their reasons for entering post-secondary education? And are these reasons primarily personal, financial, or career related?

2. What are the counselling needs (psychosocial, institutional, and situational stresses) of female students at the college?

3. What supports do female students identify as being important in making the transition to college?

4. What differences exist between reentry female college students and "traditional" early-entry female college students?

5. What differences exist among female college students in different college programs?

I am interested in obtaining some of the students' general background demographic information, their reasons for attending college at this time, and the stresses, strains, and supports they have experienced in the transition to college life. Participants will be requested not to reveal their identity on the survey questionnaire. This is to ensure that all data collected in this study will be strictly anonymous, and at no time will any individual be identified. Only I will have access to these questionnaires and following my study they will be destroyed.

I plan to administer the questionnaire to approximately 100 female students. This study may involve instructor cooperation and may require 20 mins of instructional time to complete.

I am requesting your permission to conduct a survey of selected first year female students at the College during the month of June. This information is very relevant to the college as it will aid Counselling Services in understanding the issues and concerns of this fast growing segment of the student population. It is hoped that through this understanding the counselling team will be better able to identify and address these concerns.

This study has been approved by the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee. Should you have any questions regarding my research you may contact me at 834-3519, my supervisor Dr. Mildred Cahill at 737-6980, or Dr. Bruce Sheppard, Associate Dean Graduate Programs & Research, at 737-8587. The results of this research will be made available to you at your request. If you are in agreement with this request please sign below. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kim Lindstrom

I _____ hereby allow _____ to conduct a survey investigating counselling needs of first year female college students at the College of the North Atlantic – district 7. I understand that all information is strictly confidential and that no individual will be identified.

Signature:_____

Date:_____

APPENDIX D

Student Consent Form

Dear Student:

My name is Kim Lindstrom and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am currently doing my internship with Counselling Services at the College of the North Atlantic, as a partial fulfillment of the Masters of Education Degree.

As part of my internship I am doing research in the area of counselling needs of female students. I am particularly interested in the barriers faced by more mature female students who are reentering college after a significant absence. Your participation in this survey will be of great help to me in understanding your experience here as a student. My findings will be given to Counselling Services here at the college so that they may better understand your needs and hopefully address your concerns.

The survey takes about 20 minutes to complete. Please do not put your name anywhere on the survey. Responses are anonymous and no individual will be identified. Only I will have access to the questionnaires and upon completion of my study these surveys will be destroyed. The results of this survey will be available to you at your request.

This study has been approved by the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee. Should you have any questions regarding this research you may contact my supervisor Dr. Mildred Cahill at 737-6980, or Dr. Bruce Sheppard Associate Dean Graduate Programs and Research, at 737-8587. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Kim Lindstrom

I _____ hereby give consent to take part in a study on counselling needs of female students at the College of the North Atlantic being undertaken by Kim Lindstrom. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that all information is strictly confidential. No individual will be identified.

Date: _____ Signature: _____