

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF NON-SALIENT FACTORS  
IN RE-ENTRY WOMEN'S SELF-EXPLORATION OF  
EARLY LIFE CAREER DEVELOPMENT

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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**A Qualitative Study  
of  
Non-Salient Factors in Re-Entry Women's  
Self-Exploration of Early Life  
Career Development**

**by**

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**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate  
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This thesis is dedicated  
to all of the women re-entering  
today's world of work  
to fulfil their needs and/or dreams

as well as  
the women who wrote (composed)  
this poem

A Tribute to Betty  
A Believer in Women

Ten women, we were mild and wrought,  
A chance in life was what we sought  
Into our lives came Betty, for awhile,  
You taught us skills, you made us smile.  
You showed us strengths, you gave us hope,  
That as a woman, we could cope.  
In our lives you gave us a new start,  
Because you gave us a piece of your heart.

(Always) Believe in Yourself

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify non-salient factors in re-entry women's self-exploration of early life career development of a select group of Newfoundland re-entry women. The study included ten women with ages ranging from twenty to fifty registered at Human Resource Development Canada. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews.

A naturalistic method of data analysis was used following the general outline of Marshall and Rossman, cited in Dyke, 1992. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed for data analysis. The audiotapes were listened to several times before being transcribed. The data were read and reread to identify emerging themes against the original tapes according to the factors in the literature. The narrative excerpts of the individual women's transcripts were related to the factors salient in the career development of women according to the theoretical constructs. During the entire process it was necessary to read the transcripts many times to capture the actual responses of the women without error in interpretation.

The career development theories proposed by Super (1953, cited in Herr & Cramer, 1992), Farmer (1985), Astin (1984), Gottfredson (1981) and Hackett and Betz (1981), formed the basis for the conceptual development framework.

It was evident from the findings that the career development of the women were influenced by a number of different factors. Career development was described to be a process that continues over the life span.

Recommendations for practice focused in the area of more and improved career awareness programs for women and their families in rural areas. Recommendations for research included studies on re-entry men compared to re-entry women, self-concept, discrepancy in the perceptions of women's abilities and actual support for re-entry women on the career development of women.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

#### Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the non-salient factors in re-entry women's self-exploration of early life career development. Qualitative data were used to examine the various life stages, the significant life events and the life perspectives of select women between the ages of 20 to 50 registered with Human Resource Development Canada.

#### Significance of Study

##### Introduction

...Studies of women have respectfully shown disturbing patterns: lack of self-esteem, an inability to feel powerful or in control of one's life, a vulnerability to depression, a tendency to see oneself as less talented, less able than one really is. The myriad studies that have been done over the years give the distinct impression of constriction, a crippling, a sense of being somehow not quite as good, not quite as able, not quite as bright, not quite as valuable as men.... Certainly there are many women who have escaped that blight, who have lived full and happy lives,

but when you leaf through the studies you can sense, floating in the air, ghosts of unborn dreams, unrealized hopes, undiscovered talents. The tragedies are the "might have beens," and they are the most poignant. (Carl Rivers, Rosalind Barnett and Grace Baruch, in Beyond Sugar and Spice, quoted in Sanford & Donovan, 1985, p. xiii)

#### Re-Entry: Then and Now

How and why have so many women come to see themselves as less able, less bright, less valuable than they really are? Farmer (cited in Smith & Leduc, 1992) suggests that the importance of a person's family background and early experiences is what motivates people to seek a career and then achieve in it. Farmer states that women are more sensitive to parental influence because of heavy socialization pressure and that "society doesn't yet expect women to have careers or work, but the support group for boys and men is automatic and internalized early" (Smith & Leduc, 1992, p. 16). Therefore, women get mixed messages. However, it is understandable why women's experiences of retraining as a first step back towards a new career are varied (Rees, 1992).

According to Lewis (1988), essential to any discussion of returning women is defining the term "re-entry." Farmer

and Backer's (1977) definition of "re-entry" states that "women returning to school or work after an interruption for reasons such as child-rearing responsibilities are referred to here as 're-entry women'" (p. 118). Lewis (1988) states that "returning women may differ markedly in the degree to which any contributions of identified attributes is actually characteristic" (p. 5). Also, commonly accepted definitions, "conceive of a re-entry woman as someone who left school to take a job or assume family responsibilities, but who is currently seeking to return to school or work" (Lewis, 1988, p. 5).

According to Lewis (1988), in the 1970s the literature stated numerous reasons about returning women, which included a focus on boredom, self-fulfilment, and career preparation (Astin, 1976; Durcholz & O'Connor, 1976); fulfillment of personal goals, or an interest in finding more stimulating or better-paying jobs (Astin, 1976); and/or empty-nest syndrome (Clayton & Smith, 1987; Maslin, 1978). According to Lewis (1988), the purpose of combining the number of reasons for the women's re-entry is threefold:

1. The extensive list points out how difficult it is to characterize or stereotype returning women. There are no definite statements that can be made about the motives and sociodemographic variables.

2. Whatever her motivation, each re-entry women brings her own unique traits, assets, and problems with her to her educational world.
3. Enumerating the reasons for women's re-entry impresses educational providers with the necessity of developing a variety of programs to satisfy the often unique and diverse needs of this population. (p. 7)

The re-entry women have special developmental needs. Therefore, the developing literature on these re-entry women clearly indicates that they are diverse in terms of their general characteristics, their motives for returning to higher education and their special needs (Badenhoop & Johnson, 1980; Brandenburg, 1974; McCrea, 1979; Slaney, Stafford & Russell, 1981, in Slaney & Lewis, 1986; Rees, 1992; Jackson, in Firth-Cozens & West, 1991; Farmer & Backer, 1977; Lewis, 1988). One need that is clear and frequently mentioned in the research literature is the need for further attention to the career development of women, in particular, for theoretical conceptualizations (Osipow, 1973; Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980, in Hackett & Betz, 1981; Slaney & Lewis, 1986; Jackson, in Firth-Cozens & West, 1991; Farmer & Backer, 1977; Lewis, 1988).

In summary, one would assume, after a lengthy absence from the world of work, the re-entry woman would need time to explore both herself and the diverse opportunities in the world of work before she chooses a particular career (Farmer



& Backer, 1977). Therefore, at the beginning of her re-entry the most important feature of retraining for women would be the rebuilding of self-confidence through counselling (Roscher, 1978, cited in Firth-Cozens & West, 1991).

### National and Provincial Statistics

In the past two decades, it is a well-known fact that women are participating in or returning to work in ever-increasing numbers. The Dodge Report (1985) stated that in Canada, women's participation in the labour force increased from 14.3% in 1958 to 23.3% in 1968 and 34.9% in 1981. The report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment by Anger, McGrath and Pottle (1986) reported that in Newfoundland, women's participation in the work force has increased from 31% in 1975 to 41% in 1985, a 10 percent increase in just 10 years.

Also, according to the Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology (1995), the percentage of women in the work force rose from 42% in 1976 to 52% in 1994. In contrast, the proportion of men with jobs fell sharply in the same period, dropping from 73% in 1976 to 65% in 1994. As a result, women represented 45% of all paid workers in 1994, up from 37% in 1976. One of the most dramatic trends in Canadian society has been the growth in the labour force of women. During that period, the proportion of women who were

either working or looking for work increased from 3.3% to 57.4%. Although women are becoming an ever-increasing proportion of the work force, the majority of them choose among a small number of low-paying, low-status occupations:

Women formed the overwhelming majority in nurses and health-related therapists (86% in 1994) clerical occupations (approximately 80% in 1994) and were significantly represented in service (56%) and sales (46%) occupations. Taken together as a group, clerical sales and services employed the majority of women in 1994 (approximately 70%), while male employment tended to be much more evenly distributed and also more representative in the normally higher-paying occupations. Women do form a strong contingent of professional and administrative employees (approximately 43% in 1994) up from 29% in 1982, but still tend to be over-represented in the more "traditional" fields of teaching and medicine and health (primarily nursing). (Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology, 1995, p. 67)

The earnings for Canadian women who worked full-time in 1993 were 72% those of men up from 68% in 1990 and around 64% in the 1980's (Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology, 1995). According to the Status of Women (1994), the average earnings of women were \$28,300 in 1992, up 4.1% from 1991

compared to \$39,468 for men. In Newfoundland and Labrador for 1990, for every dollar earned by men, women earned only 63.1 cents (Newfoundland Women's Policy Office, 1992). According to the Women's Policy Office (1992), within Newfoundland and Labrador, women made up approximately 44% of the work force in 1991 up from 32% in 1965, but the Women's Unemployment Study Group (1982) found that because fewer women were unionized they received less pay for similar work. Women accounted for 69% of all part-time employment in 1994 in Canada (Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology, 1995) and this group were vulnerable to being the last to be hired and the first fired.

According to the Newfoundland Women's Policy Office (1992), women in the Newfoundland labour force have traditionally been employed in a limited number of occupational areas and statistics for 1991 verify that this trend is continuing. Women seem to be concentrated in the clerical, sales and service areas. In 1991, 57.5% of Newfoundland women were employed in these three areas compared with 62.4% in 1989. The most significant change in the Newfoundland labour force since 1976 has been the dramatic increase in female participation. Between 1976 and 1991 the female population aged 15 years and over increased by just over 22%, while the female labour force increased by almost 83% (Newfoundland Women's Policy Office, 1992).

According to Aylward (1991), it becomes evident that if women are to improve their positions in the work force, they must look for occupations outside of the limited areas traditionally prescribed for women and consider the wider options provided in more non-traditional fields of employment. In order to provide opportunities so that women will be effective in promoting greater non-traditional participation of women, a greater understanding of their processes of career development and decision making is required (Aylward, 1991).

In summary, it is predicted that the numbers of women entering the work force will continue to increase. Thus, as suggested by the theories of Farmer (1985) and Betz and Fitzgerald (1987), in order to understand the cause of the under-representation it is important to look at the multidimensional factors that will influence the career decision making process of the woman (Dyke, 1992).

### **Rationale**

The crucial importance of a positive self-concept to psychological health and optimal functioning has long been a fundamental assumption in psychology. Super's theory postulated that self-concept plays a central role in the process of career choice and development (Herr & Cramer, 1992). Therefore, it is no wonder, that variables related to the self-concept have shown to be of considerable

importance to women's career development, especially those re-entering the world of work (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). The influence of situational determinants, such as family, community, school and employment, as well as personal determinants such as intelligence, specific aptitudes, academic achievement, needs, values, interests, attitudes and self-awareness, contributes to a woman's perception of herself as a person over the life span.

The major theorists in the field of career development acknowledge that the career development of women is different from that of men and that most of the research conducted was on the career development of men and generalized to the career development of women. Most of the conventional research in psychology has been done on men and in most cases generalized to women. Today, research must start to look at information that is pertinent to women so that their experiences are not misrepresented. Qualitative interviews are one possible methodology. According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), interviewing is a data collection technique relied on quite extensively by qualitative researchers, often described as "a conversation with a purpose" (Kahn & Connell, 1957, cited in Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 82). The "intent of such interviewing is to capture the unseen that was, is, will be, or should be; how respondents think or feel about something, and how they explain or account for something" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992,

p. 92). This type of interviewing would allow women to provide accurate and relevant data pertinent to their own actual experiences.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Historically, the roots of career development theory and practice can be traced to Frank Parsons in 1909 'matching men and jobs' approach to career decisions (Brown Brooks & Associates, 1984). However, since then current theorists have developed more theories concerning the career development process that stresses "the importance of biological factors and parental, societal, personality, and life-stage influences on career development" (Borgen, 1991; Gelso & Fassinger, 1992; Osipow, 1990, cited in O'Brien & Fassinger, 1993). Many of these theories were developed on the career development of males because it was assumed that "women didn't work since their place was in the home, and if they did work, theories of career development generated with men in mind would be sufficient for the description of women's vocational behaviour" (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987, cited in Dyke, 1992, p. 21). One of the first major theories applied to women was that of Donald Super, who developed his developmental theory of career choice in the 1950's. His theory stressed the importance of situational and personal determinants, as well as the importance of the self-concept in career decision making. Super was the first

theorist to acknowledge that the career patterns of men and women are different and there was a need to research women's career choices differently from that of men (Sundal-Hansen, 1987, cited in Dyke, 1992, p. 21).

Super's theory, according to Osipow (1982, 1983) is important to consider because of the assumption that one's self-concept becomes more clearly defined with age, and that career choice is a process of matching self-concept with images of the occupational world. Further, developmental approaches can be distinguished from other major career theories in two ways: "the effect of life stages on human development through the life span and how the stages interact with personality, such as Super's notion of self-concept implementation" (Swanson, 1992, p. 104).

"Super gives prominence to individuals' mastery of increasingly complex tasks at different stages of career development" (Herr & Cramer, 1992, p. 212). Super stated that we all go through the stages starting with the growth stage beginning at birth, followed by the exploratory stage which lasts from 15-24, establishment stage (25-44); maintenance stage (45-64) and Decline Stage (65+). Super focused on the exploratory and establishment stages. These were further broken down into substages, within the exploratory stages called tentative, transition and trial with commitment substages. In the establishment stages, he calls them trial with commitment, stabilization and

advancement substages (Super, 1969b, cited in Herr & Cramer, 1992). Within these stages are factors, internal as well as external to the individual, that influence the choices made (Herr & Cramer, 1992). According to Super, "these stages are not determined by age, but rather by an individual's circumstances and perceptions. Thus, an individual can be in any stage at various points in their lives or careers and further, can recycle through the stages when major changes or transitions occur" (Swanson, 1992, pp. 104, 105).

Another concept that is consistent throughout Super's theory is the concept of role. These roles are depicted in Super's life-career rainbow and show how the roles emerge and interact within the lifetime of one person (Sharf, 1992; Herr & Cramer, 1992). These roles are homemaker, worker, citizen, leisurite, student and child. The principal theatres in which these roles are played include home, community, school and the workplace. It is in role shaping that the individual synthesizes personal and situational role determinants (Herr & Cramer, 1992).

Super (1980) contends:

The decision points of a life career reflect encounters with a variety of personal and situational determinants. The former consist of the genetic constitution of the individual modified by his or her experiences (the environment and its situational determinants) in



the womb, the home and the community. The latter are the geographic, historic, social, and economic conditions in which the individual functions from infancy through adulthood and old age. (p. 294)

At different times in a person's life, different determinants may be more dominant than at other times. Super was the first to acknowledge that the career patterns of men and women are different and there was a need to research women's career choices differently from that of men (Sundal-Hansen, 1987, cited in Dyke, 1992). Super was interested in the career patterns of men but eventually he outlined seven career patterns for women which were slightly different than the career patterns for men. They are: Stable homemaking career pattern, Conventional Career pattern, Stable working career pattern, Double-track career pattern, Interrupted career pattern, Unstable career pattern and Multiple-trial career pattern (Zunker, 1981).

However, in addition to the variables that are salient in the career development of both men and women, studies on the career development of women must include variables specific to women. "The variables of marital/familial status, sex role attitudes, and role conflict are the major independent variables considered uniquely pertinent to women's career choices and pursuits" (Betz & Fitzgerald, cited in Dyke, 1992, p. 23).

Within the field of career development of women, the past decade has seen the articulation of a number of important theories attempting to explain the distinctive character of women's career development and choice (O'Brien & Fassinger, 1993). For example, Gottfredson (1981) has proposed what she calls a developmental theory of occupational aspirations which are determined to a large degree by self-concept (defined in terms of gender, social class, intelligence, and interests) and their perceptions of occupations (including sex stereotypes, prestige level and field). According to Gottfredson (1981) people develop perceptions of themselves as compatible or incompatible with occupations based on the degree of fit between their self-concepts and their occupational images (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987).

Gottfredson (1981, cited in Herr & Cramer, 1992) suggests that essential to her theory are four stages of cognitive development that provide a way for viewing oneself in the world. They are as follows: (p. 26).

Stage 1: Orientation to size and power (3-5 years)

Stage 2: Orientation to sex roles (6-8 years)

Stage 3: Orientation to social valuation (9-13 years)

Stage 4: Orientation to the internal, unique self (14+ years) (p. 26)

According to Gottfredson (1981), some aspects of self-concept are more central than others and will take priority

when compromising occupational goals (Herr & Cramer, 1992). "When career choice compromise is needed, one's field of interest is compromised first, followed by prestige. Sex type preference is least likely to be compromised" (Leung, 1993, p. 188).

Hackett and Betz (1981) proposed a self efficacy approach to women's career development based on the Social Learning theory. The model similar to other theories postulates that as a result of socialization experiences, women lack strong expectations of personal efficacy in relationship to many career-related behaviours and hence, they fail to realize their capabilities and talents in career pursuits (Hackett & Betz, 1981; Herr & Cramer, 1992).

According to Hackett and Betz (1981), their "theory" suggests that because of differential socialization, women and girls in this society are either not encouraged or are actively discouraged from engaging in a variety of activities that serve to increase or strengthen expectations of personal efficacy (Betz & Hackett, 1981). However, it should be noted that this model is not intended to describe the socialization experiences of all females, at least some of its elements are most likely characteristics of the experiences of the large majority of girls and women (Hackett & Betz, 1981).

Astin's (1984) primary intent was to construct a theory that would more adequately describe the career-choice

process of women, as well as explain recent changes in women's career aspirations, but the theory is also applicable to men (Brooks, 1990). Astin (1984) proposed a need-based sociopsychological model which has common elements with past theoretical formulations. It incorporates four important constructs: motivation, expectations, sex-role socialization and structure of opportunity. Moreover, it is a "developmental model, intended to explain changes in career choice and work behaviour, changes that can be observed not only in the lives of individuals but also in whole groups (i.e., women over time)" (Astin, 1984, p. 119).

In brief, Astin's (1984) theory comprises four major principles:

1. Work behaviour is motivated activity intended to satisfy three basic needs: survival, pleasure, and contribution.
2. Career choices are based on expectations concerning the accessibility of alternative forms of work and their relative capacity to satisfy the three basic needs.
3. Expectations are shaped in part by early socialization through family, childhood play, school experiences, and early work experiences, and in part by the perceived structure of opportunity.
4. Expectations developed through socialization and through early perceptions of the structure of

opportunity can be modified by changes in the structure of opportunity, and the modification in expectations can lead to changes in career choice and in work behaviour. (p. 119)

Farmer (1985) developed and tested a theory of career development for women based on Bandura's Social Learning theory. It suggests that the importance of a person's family background and early experiences is what motivates people to seek an occupation and then achieve it (Smith & Leduc, 1992).

However, she went beyond these ideas and suggested that "in a multidimensional model, no one influence is expected to account for a large amount of variance; instead, the combined influences of several factors are expected to account for substantial variance" (Farmer, cited in Dyke, 1992, p. 33). According to Farmer (1985), in this conceptional model certain background factors, such as sex, social status, school location, race, age and ability influence a person's self-concept, as well as motivation. The self-concept is further affected by experiences in the home, school, and community. Farmer tested her model on a sample of high school women and men, and found that background factors contributed more to the prediction of career aspirations than environmental or personal factors (O'Brien & Fassinger, 1993).

All or most of these factors including personal and situational determinants can definitely be barriers preventing women from moving forward or reentering the world of work. Women appear not to experience them to the same degree as men entering the work force. Once a woman has decided to re-enter the world of work, there are still other factors that can deter her from continuing. These include sexual discrimination and role conflict. In addition to being aware of the factors that encourage or discourage a woman from re-entering the world of work, it is also important to understand how women with traditional values and beliefs view sexual discrimination--whether they feel it is a factor that can discourage women from re-entering the world of work, especially in so-called "nontraditional" areas.

### **Research Questions**

The study was based on a fundamental disciplinary question asked by the present investigator: Why have so many women come to see themselves as having a discrepancy between ability and perception of ability, aspirations and/or achievements? Also, what were the non-salient factors in re-entry women's self-exploration of early life career development; why now?

The following research questions are based on some of the factors identified in the literature regarding the

career development of women. These questions are adopted from Dyke (1992, pp. 41, 43) and modified for this study on re-entry women. Dyke based the original questions on Super's personal and situational determinants and the factors considered most important in the models of Farmer (1985), as well as Gottfredson (1981) and Astin (1984).

1. Personal Determinants

- (a) From their perception, do the women who have chosen to re-entry the work force at this time have a knowledge of the economy and the labour market? If so, what influence did it have on their career decision to re-entry at this time?
- (b) From their perception, what influence did ability, specific aptitudes or academic success have on career decision? More specifically, how do re-entry women perceive their own abilities and achievements?
- (c) From their perception, have the attitudes of the re-entry women towards marriage and work influenced or determined the women's decision at this time? In particular, what effect has role conflict had on the re-entry women's decision making?
- (d) From their perception, how important have the roles of worker, citizen and leisurite been in the lives of re-entry women? How active and involved

were these re-entry women in the community, and volunteer activities in years prior to entering the work force and presently re-entering?

- (e) From their perception, are the career choices for training chosen by the re-entry women similar to their childhood aspirations?
- (f) From their perception, how important are women's support groups in helping these re-entry women chose a career or deal with problems associated with re-entry into the world of work?

2. Situational Determinants

- (a) From their perception, what influence did family or significant other have on the decision to re-enter the work force at this time?
- (b) From their perception, were the re-entry women responsible for household chores during childhood?
- (c) From their perception, what role did the community play in the decision to re-enter the work force at this time?
- (d) From their perception, were there role models in the community or elsewhere that influenced the career decision? If influenced by a role model, what do the re-entry women consider as the positive or negative effects on their career decision to re-enter the work force?



- (e) From their perception, did school counsellors or other school personnel influence them to further their careers early in life?
- (f) From their perception, to what degree has gender bias been a factor in the career development of these re-entry women? What support has there been for their decisions from family, friends and significant others to re-entry at this time?

### **Definition of Terms**

Re-Entry--Farmer and Backer's (1977) definition of re-entry states that "women returning to school or work after an interruption for reasons such as child-rearing responsibilities are referred to here as 're-entry women'" (p. 118). Lewis (1988) states that "returning women may differ markedly in the degree to which any contributions of identified attributes is actually characteristic" (p. 5).

Self-Concept--refers to "one's view of oneself, one's view of who one is and who one is not" (Gottfredson, 1981, pp. 546-547).

Self-Efficacy--"a person's beliefs concerning his or her ability to successfully perform a given task or behaviour" (Bandura, 1977a, cited in Betz & Hackett, 1981, p. 400).

Personal Determinants--"the genetic constitution of the individual modified by his or her experiences in the womb,

the home, and the community (Super, 1980, cited in Herr & Cramer, 1992, p. 215).

Situational Determinants--"the geographic, historic, social and economic conditions in which the individual functions from infancy through adulthood and old age (Super, 1980, cited in Herr & Cramer, 1992, pp. 215-216).

Aspiration--is the single occupation named as one's best alternative at any given time (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 548).

Sociopsychological--"attends to both psychological variables (personal characteristics), as well as contextual-sociological variables (social forces) and the interaction of the two in shaping human behaviour. It incorporates the influence of the social context on the person because work behaviour is a social behaviour" (Astin, 1984, p. 117).

Socialization--in Borow's terms, "socialization, then, is the intricate birth-to-death process by which one acquires one's view of the human world and its institutions, one's beliefs, loyalties, convictions of right and wrong, and habitual response modes. The learning is both formal and informal, deliberate and incidental, conscious and unconscious" (Herr & Cramer, 1992, p. 154).

Phenomenological--"has a long history in philosophy and sociology and is committed to understanding social phenomena from the actor's own perspective. He or she examines how the world is experienced. The important reality is what

people perceive it to be" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, cited in Patton, 1990, p. 57).

Qualitative Research--"Qualitative designs are naturalistic in that the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the research setting. The research setting is a naturally occurring event, program, community, relationship, or interaction that has no predetermined course established by and for the researcher. It is detailed, thick description; inquiry in depth; direct quotations capturing people's personal perspectives and experiences. Rather, the point of using qualitative methods is to understand naturally occurring phenomena in their naturally occurring states" (Patton, 1990, pp. 39-41).

Constructivism--"A perspective on human behaviour that stresses the 'self-organizing' and 'meaning-making' characteristics of the individual" (Peavy, 1992, p. 119).

Possible Selves--"The future-oriented components of self-schemas are essential for putting the self into action and are the selves we could become, would like to become, or are afraid of becoming" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954).

### **Limitations of the Study**

1. This was a qualitative study of ten re-entry women from different areas of the Province of Newfoundland who were either re-entering for training in a 'nontraditional' or 'traditional' field. The factors

that encouraged these women to re-enter at this time may not be generalizable to other women in rural Newfoundland or elsewhere in the larger world.

2. Because the data were collected through interviews, it may be possible that the interview method did not reveal all the factors salient for each individual experience.
3. The interviewer had to be aware of the possibility that the design of the study could lead to subjectivity rather than objectivity on the part of the interviewer.
4. The interviewer had to be aware of her interviewing skills and strive for improvement over time.
5. The interviewer had to be aware of her biases in responding to different subjects as the women were involved in career and personal development prior to these interviews.
6. The women may have differed in how they responded but it is important to allow the women to express their own views through their own narratives.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

In this chapter, several theories of career development over the past 20 years are presented. It is appropriate that a section on the perspective of Constructivist theory be included in this study as the sole purpose of this study was to examine the significant life events of these women, as they construct their world from their perceptions of their own unique, individual personal experiences. The empirical studies discussing the factors considered salient in the career development of women are included. The steps involved in a qualitative study are also discussed.

#### **Theoretical Framework/Historical Perspectives**

In the wise choice of a vocation there are three broad factors: (1) a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations and their causes; (2) a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work; (3) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of

facts. (cited in Brown, Brookes & Associates, 1984, p. 1)

The conceptualizations of career development and counselling for career development have continued to evolve since the early 1900s (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992). According to McDaniels and Gysbers, both the career development and career counselling fields can look forward to a rich and bright future. Early pioneers in the field such as Frank Parsons, in responding to the needs of individuals and society, developed the first conceptual framework for the field as it exists today (Brown, Brooks & Associates, 1984; McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992).

In the 1920s and 30s, this three-step model evolved because of differential psychologists who were developing tests and inventories of a more scientific approach. The new model became "(1) develop self-awareness of tests, inventories, and various other procedures to identify traits, (2) study occupations to determine which occupations offered a potential match for your traits, and (3) using true reasoning, choose an occupation" (Brown & Brooks, 1991, p. 3). Brown (1984) suggests that this model still dominates thinking about career counselling; however, this perspective seems to be shifting rapidly.

### Career Development of Women

During the past twenty years there has been an increasing interest in the career development of women, as societal changes such as the feminist movement affected our society. The result has been volumes of material such as special issues of journals (Brooks & Haring-Hidore, 1988), new theories of career development focusing on women and the influence of gender on career choice and development (Astin, 1984; Gottfredson, 1981). There has been a vast amount of research focusing on the career counselling and development of women (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987) and sexism in career counselling and counselling materials, including interest inventories and occupational information (Birk, Tappey & Cooper, 1979; Diamond, 1975; Tittle & Zytowski, 1978; Thomas & Stewart, 1971, cited in Brown & Brooks, 1991, p. 186).

Within the field of the career psychology of women, the past two decades has seen the articulation of a number of important theories attempting to explain the distinctive character of women's career development and choice (O'Brien & Fassinger, 1993). It is also essential to add a section on the Constructivist perspective as the women in this study constructed their own narratives from their experiences of life events. Some of these theories include those developed by Super, Gottfredson, Astin, Farmer and Hackett, and Betz which are explained more fully in the following section;

looking first at the life-span theory developed by Super for men but later revised to include career patterns for women.

### Constructivist Theory/Perspective

[The world] is patently not a fixed reality and even less a particular physical environment, but most definitely a world of ever-changing individual constructions, or better ... a world of social co-constructions.

(Hans G. Furth, cited in Mahoney, 1991, p. 95)

Although Giambattista Vico (1486) has been called the father of Constructivism, other historical perspectives are also evident in the writings of Immanuel Kant (1784), Hans Vaihinger (1924), and more recently, Alfred Adler, Franz Brentano, Jean Piaget and George Kelly. Current well-known Constructivist approaches (often termed "cognitive-developmental" by their proponents) can be found in writings of Michael Arbib and Mary Hesse (1986), Bruner (1986), Goodman (1978), Guidano and Liotti (1985), Johnson (1985), Kegan (1982), Joyce Moniz (1985) and Wazlavrick (1986), all the above cited in Mahoney and Lyddon (1988).

The theorists cited above are all working from the Constructivist perspective which is founded on the idea that "humans actively create and construe their personal realities" (Mahoney & Lyddon, 1988, p. 200). Mahoney and Lyddon (1988) write, "The basic assertion of Constructivism



is that each individual creates his or her own representational model of the world ... (which) becomes a framework from which the individual orders and assigns meaning to new experience" (p. 200).

Carlson (1988) describes meeting with her clients first, as when they are lost in their dark wood. She suggests that "therapy is more than a time of standing in the wood--it is a movement from the dark wood to new understandings, new experiences, and new meanings" (p. 3). Carlson (1988) states this as the story of how the individual emerges from the wood to a place on the mountain through a developmental meaning-making process. This is the story, "therefore, of the movement from meaninglessness to meaning" (p. 4). Carlson (1988) calls this developmental therapy "meaning-making" because it "addresses proactive therapeutic passages and honors the evolving definitions of meaning in an individual's life, as well as the cognitive structuring of these meanings" (p. 5).

At the present time, Carlson's (1988) thinking is being stimulated by the research and writings of Kegan, whose "constructive-developmental" theory has built upon the cognitive-developmental framework of Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson and Lawrence Kohlberg. In Carlson (1988), Kegan's work is described as an "organized way of wondering what happens if the evolution of the activity of meaning is taken as fundamental motion in personality" (p. 7). Carlson was

also influenced by the work of George Kelly who wrote A Theory of Personality--Personal Construct Theory (1955). His theory of personality started with the combination of two simple notions:

first, that man might be better understood if he were viewed in the perspective of the centuries rather than in the flicker of passing moments; and second, that each man contemplates in his own personal way the stream of events upon which he finds himself so swiftly born. (Kelly, 1991, p. 3)

The theory is based upon the philosophical position of constructive alternativism, the notion that there are many workable alternative ways for one to construe one's world. The theory itself starts with the basic assumption, or postulates, that a person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events (Kelly, 1991). There are various ways in which the world is construed. "We assume that all our present interpretations of the universe are subject to revision or replacement" (p. 11). We take the stand that there are always some alternative constructions available to choose among in dealing with the world. "No one needs to paint himself into a corner; no one needs to be completely hemmed in by circumstances; no one needs to be the victim of his biography" (p. 11). We call this philosophical position

constructive alternativism (Kelly, 1991). As for personal ways of looking at things: Solomon, in writing about the worried man said, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." And Shelly once wrote, "The mind becomes that which it contemplates" (Kelly, 1991, p. 3).

Mahoney and Lyddon (1988) suggests that central to the constructivist formulations is the idea that, rather than being a sort of template through which ongoing experiences are filtered, the representational model actively creates and constrains new experiences and this determines what the individual will perceive as "reality." At the core of the Constructivist theory is a view of human beings as active agents who, individually and collectively, co-constitute the meaning of their experiential world (Neimeyer, 1993).

Among the earliest developments to follow from Kelly's (1955) theory of personal constructs was its application to the study of vocational exploration (Neimeyer et al., 1992). Kelly (1955) described the "vocational construct system" as an occupational schema, an interrelated matrix of bipolar constructs (e.g., high salary vs. low salary, people oriented vs. paper oriented) of which the focus of convenience is the world of work" (Neimeyer et al., 1992, p. 121). The object of career counselling is to help the individuals to extend and define their system of occupational constructions. As an ongoing process across the lifespan, occupational decision making shares with other

domains the active "effort after meaning" so aptly characterized by Bartlett (1932, cited in Neimeyer, 1992) sixty years ago. In this way, occupational exploration bears on larger, personal processes that span the entire spectrum of the earliest sense of self forward towards the outer reaches of the most distant possible selves (Neimeyer, 1992).

According to Forster (1992), the philosophical rationale offered by Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) has a well-articulated foundation and methodology that encourages career explorers to foster and use their own constructs. Therefore, by using goals articulated from their own constructs, career explorers will understand their goals more fully and be more empowered to work towards those goals, as well as find environments where these goals are more likely to be realized (Forster, 1992). From a constructivist perspective such as PCP, "an occupation involves one's personal construction from the models, constraints and opportunities, among other things, situated in contexts" (p. 196). "Without the personal perspective of an agent, there is no occupation in the full sense of a life story or course of life. Rather, there is only a rough, general chronology like a work history" (Cochran, 1992, p. 196). Research has concentrated on the "idiographic matrix of meanings, or constructs, that individuals bring to bear in making occupational decisions and mending their way

through the world of work and directed processes of exploration tailored to the individual's unique world view" (Kortas, Neimeyer & Prichard, 1992, p. 199).

According to Peavy (1992), career counselling began with Parson's famous dictum that in occupational choice one must ascertain certain facts about oneself, other facts about various types of work and then reason on the relations about these two sets of facts. Research has shown that epistemology in the latter half of the 20th century has shifted from notions of "truth" which depend upon an out-there, God's-eye view of reality to notions of significance or meaning. The obsession with causal laws and value-free, formal explanations are giving way to contextual, "thick-description," explanatory accounts of human behavior in which narrative accounts and interpretive inquiry play a prominent role (Peavy, 1992). As MacIntyre (1984, cited in Peavy, 1992) argues:

It is because we all live out narratives in our lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of the narratives that we live out that the form of the narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others. (p. 217)

Furthermore, career theory and counselling should recognize that "life career histories" are constructed by the individual out of an on-going dialectic of circumstance

and personal desires and abilities. This point has been made by Tyler (1978, cited in Peavy, 1992):

An individual is not limited to one way of dealing with any of life's demands. Through encounters with a very large number of situations and persons exemplifying different possibilities for structuring reality, one puts together **one's own repertoire of possibility processing structures** [emphasis added]. (p. 220)

In summary, Constructivism emphasizes the self-organizing and proactive features of human knowing and their implications for human change. Thus, several divergent scholarly disciplines are converging on a distinctively postmodern conclusion:

What we think we know is anchored only in our assumptions, not in the bed rock of truth itself, and that world we seek to understand remains always on the horizons of our thoughts. (Kelly, 1977, cited in Neimeyer, 1993, p. 221)

### **Individual Theories**

#### **Super's Life-Span Theory**

Super's theory is perhaps one of the most widely accepted developmental approaches of the contemporary theories (Gimenes, cited in Schiro-Geist, 1990; Herr & Cramer, 1992; McDaniel & Gysbers, 1992; Brown, Brooks &

Associates, 1984). Super described his theory not as an integrated, comprehensive, and testable one, but rather a segmental theory, a loosely unified set of theories dealing with specific aspects of career development taken from developmental, differential, social, and phenomenological psychology and held together by self-concept or personal-construct theory. (Super, 1969, cited in Brown, Brooks & Associates, 1984, p. 194)

His segmental model is represented in a new model called the Archway Model, designed to bring out the segmental but unified and developmental nature of career development, to highlight the segments, and to make their origin clear ... It tells the same story as the Rainbow but tells it in a different way (Super, 1990, cited in Herr & Cramer, 1992, p. 217).

In the early 1950s, Super began to formulate the propositions that supported his theory. At that time he had published a set of ten propositions concerning the nature of career development in 1953 which were expanded to 12 in 1957 (Super & Bachrach) and expanded again in the 1970s and 80s (cited in Herr & Cramer, 1992). According to McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), these propositions have been modified and updated by Super in 1990 to include fourteen which are presented here:

1. People differ in their abilities and personalities, needs, values, interests, traits, and self-concepts.
2. People are qualified, by virtue of these characteristics, each for a number of occupations.
3. Each of these occupations requires a characteristics pattern of abilities and personality traits, with tolerances wide enough to allow both some variety of individuals in each occupation.
4. Vocational preferences and competencies, the situations in which people live and work, and hence, their self-concepts change with time and experience, although self-concepts, as products of social learning, are increasingly stable from late adolescence until late maturity, providing some continuity in choice and adjustment.
5. This process of change may be summed up in a series of life stages (a "maxicycle") characterized as a sequence of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline, and these stages may in turn be subdivided into (a) the fantasy, tentative, and realistic phases of the exploratory stage and (b) the trial and stable phases of the establishment stage. A small (mini) cycle takes place in transitions from one stage to the next or each time an individual is destabilized by a reduction in force, changes in type of manpower needs, illness or injury, or other socioeconomic or personal



events. Such wastable or multiple-trial careers involve new growth, reexploration, and reestablishment (recycling).

6. The nature of the career pattern--that is, the occupational level attained and the sequence, frequency, and duration of trial and stable jobs--is determined by the individual's parental socioeconomic level, mental ability, education, skills, personality characteristics (needs, values, interests, traits, and self-concepts), and career maturity and by the opportunities to which he or she is exposed.
7. Success in coping with the demands of the environment and of the organism in that context at any given life-career stage depends on the readiness of the individual to cope with these demands (that is, on his or her career maturity). Career maturity is a constellation of physical, psychological, and social characteristics; psychologically, it is both cognitive and affective. It includes the degree of success in coping with the demands of earlier stages and substages of career development, and especially with the most recent.
8. Career maturity is a hypothetical construct. Its operational definition is perhaps as difficult to formulate as is that of intelligence, but its history is much briefer and its achievements even less definitive. Contrary to the impressions created by

some writers, it does not increase monotonically, and it is not a unitary trait.

9. Development through the life stages can be guided, partly by facilitating the maturing of abilities and interests and partly by aiding in reality testing and in the development of self-concepts.
10. The process of career development is essentially that of developing and implementing occupational self-concepts. It is a synthesizing and compromising process in which the self-concept is a product of the interaction of inherited aptitudes, physical makeup, opportunity to observe and play various roles, and evaluations of the extent to which the results of role playing meet with the approval of superiors and fellows (interactive learning).
11. The process of synthesis of a compromise between individual and social factors, between self-concepts and reality, is one of role playing and of learning from feedback, whether the role is played in fantasy, in the counselling interview, or in such real-life activities as classes, clubs, part-time work, and entry jobs.
12. Work satisfactions and life satisfactions depend on the extent to which the individual finds adequate outlets for abilities, needs, values, interests, personality traits, and self-concepts. They depend on establishment in a type of work, a work situation, and

a way of life in which one can play the kind of role that growth and exploratory experiences have led one to consider congenial and appropriate.

13. The degree of satisfaction people attain from work is proportional to the degree to which they have been able to implement self-concepts.
14. Work and occupation provide a focus for personality organization for most men and women, although for some persons this focus is peripheral, incidental, or even nonexistent. Then other foci, such as leisure activities and homemaking, may be central. (Social traditions, such as sex-role stereotyping and modeling, racial and ethnic biases, and the opportunity structure, as well as individual differences, are important determinants of preferences for such roles as worker, student, leisurite, homemaker, and citizen.)

(pp. 43-48)

Super's theory focuses on four major elements:

vocational life stages, vocational maturity, translating the self-concept into a vocational self-concept and career patterns, all of which reflect Super's multiple approach to career development (Gimenes, cited in Schiro-Geist, 1990). Also, with the self-concept theory playing a vital role in Super's approach to vocational behavior (Zunker, 1981).

Among one of his more recent refinements, Super (1983) suggested that the term for adults should be career

adaptability instead of career maturity. Included in this formulation are the constructs of planfulness (such as autonomy, self-esteem, and reliance on a time perspective), exploration, information, decision making and reality orientation (Herr & Cramer, 1992; McDaniel & Gysbers, 1992). Career adaptability is related to his use of the terms "maxicycle"--to describe the five life stages explored by his theory (Herr & Cramer, 1992). They are as listed in Zunker, 1981, p. 10.

#### Super's Vocational Developmental Stages

1. Growth (birth-age 14 or 15), characterized by development of capacity, attitudes, interests, and needs associated with self-concepts;
2. Exploratory (ages 15-24), characterized by a tentative phase in which choices are narrowed but not finalized;
3. Establishment (ages 25-44), characterized by trial and stabilization through work experiences;
4. Maintenance (ages 45-64), characterized by a continual adjustment process to improve working position and situation; and
5. Decline (ages 65+), characterized by preretirement considerations, work output, and eventual retirement. (p. 10)

These stages of occupational development provide the framework for occupational behavior and attitudes which are evident under the five activities known as occupational developmental tasks which he terms minicycle--to describe the growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline that occur within a maxicycle at points of transition from one stage to the next (Herr & Cramer, 1992; Zunker, 1981). Super further formulated gross developmental tasks such as crystallization, specification, implementation, stabilization and consolidation, which rest on substages. Internal, as well as external, factors influence individual choices.

Essential to Super's life-span theory is the notion of stages and substages associated with various ages. How and when interests and capacities emerge in career decision making is an aspect of career maturity that is a central part of his theory. One may recycle through various stages at any one point in time (Sharf, 1992). Another concept that is consistent throughout Super's theory is the concept of role. These roles are depicted in Super's life-career rainbow and shows how the roles emerge and interact within the lifetime of one person (Sharf, 1992; Herr & Cramer, 1992). Super describes six major roles: "those of homemaker, worker, citizen, leisurite, student and child" (Sharf, 1992, p. 122). Super says that the constellation of interaction, varying roles constitutes the career (1980, p.

284). Super suggests that the principal theatres in which these roles are played include (1) home, (2) the community, (3) the school, and (4) the workplace. However, each role tends to be played in one theatre, although some roles may overlap causing conflict and confusion (e.g., from the home to the workplace) (Herr & Cramer, 1992).

Super indicates "the simultaneous combination of life roles constitutes the life style; their sequential combination structures the life space and constitutes the life cycle. The total structure is the career pattern" (Herr & Cramer, 1992, p. 215). The concept of career patterns was an interest of Super and he was particularly interested in the outcome of career patterns outlined in Davidson and Anderson's (1937) and Miller and Form (1951, cited in Zunker, 1981). He modified the six classifications used by Miller and Form to outline the male career patterns in his theory. They are stable career pattern, conventional career pattern, unstable career pattern and multiple-trial career patterns. Each career pattern has its own unique characteristics and classification of typical career (Zunker, 1981).

Super also classified career patterns for women into seven categories. They are slightly different than the career patterns for men in that they only describe the general characteristics and not the classification of a typical career. They are outlined as follows: stable

homemaking career pattern, conventional career pattern, stable working career pattern, double-track career pattern, interrupted career pattern and multiple-trial career pattern (Zunker, 1981).

In summary, Super's theory, as it applies to career development, concerns the growing and changing ways that an individual deals with career issues over the entire life span. His theory considers individual roles to be important when studying career development, especially in women, across the life span. Developmental tasks and stages are an important aspect of his theory, as well life roles within developmental tasks may vary for individuals at different points during their life depending on individual needs (Sharf, 1992).

#### **Roe's Personality Development Theory**

Roe (1957, cited in Tittle & Denker, 1980) proposed a theory of career development related to an individual's personality. Her theory is referred to as a need theory approach to career development. It is psychologically based with the underlying assumption that individuals select their occupations based on the probability or potentiality for the satisfaction of their psychological needs (Zunker, 1981; Tittle & Denker, 1980; Sharf, 1992). The main focus of Roe's work is the influence of early parent-child relation and their subsequent effects upon career direction (Zunker,

1981; Sharf, 1992; Gimenes, cited in Schiro-Geist, 1990). Roe's theory has evolved from two major theories, one of which was the work of Murphy (1947, cited in Osipow, 1983) which "is implicit in the basic use of the concept of canalization of psychic energy and in the basic assumption that experiences of early childhood are likely to be related to vocational choice" (p. 16). Roe also drew heavily from Maslow's hierarchy of needs in the development of her theory (Osipow, 1983; Zunker, 1981; Sharf, 1992; Herr & Cramer, 1992).

Within the occupational classification structure, Roe contended that the selection of an occupational category was primarily a function of the individual's need structure, but that the level of attainment within the group was more dependent upon the individual's level of ability and socioeconomic background (Zunker, 1981; Gimens, cited in Schiro-Geist, 1990; Brown, Brooks & Associates, 1984). She believed that the climate of the relation between child and parent was the most important force generating needs, interests, and attitudes, which are later reflected in career choice (Zunker, 1981; Gimens, cited in Schiro-Geist, 1990).

The results were translated into a useful field and level classification of occupations, including first fields which consisted of (1) service, (2) business contact, (3) organizations, (4) technology, (5) outdoor, (6) science, (7)



general culture, and (8) arts and entertainment (Roe & Lunneborg, cited in Herr & Cramer, 1982, Brown, Brooks & Associates, 1984).

The six levels in each group are based on the amount of responsibility, capacity, ability and skill that is required in that occupation. Responsibility is important and deals with the difficulty and complexity of the decisions to be made and the many different problems people have to cope with in their work. This structure of classification falls on a continuum with each level including a range of responsibilities (Herr & Cramer, 1992; Brown, Brooks & Associates, 1984; Sharf, 1992).

The six levels are described as follows (Roe & Klos, 1972, cited in Sharf, 1992):

1. Professional and managerial 1: Independent responsibility. This category includes those who have the highest level of responsibility within a group. Their responsibilities tend to be very important and varied. They may make policy decisions that affect many people through government, education, health, or private companies. Those in the sciences and many in the general cultural group often have a doctorate. Others usually have a high level of education for their group.
2. Professional and managerial 2: Similar to level 1, but differs in that the individual may have less

independence or fewer or less important responsibilities. Often individuals in this category have a bachelor's degree, or possibly a master's degree. They may be involved in interpreting policy and making important decisions for themselves and others.

3. Semiprofessional and small business: Only a moderate level of responsibility for others, such as the responsibility of police sergeants for other police officers, or retail business people for their sales clerks. Often only a high school education is required, but many people have degrees from technical schools or four-year institutions.
4. Skilled: Training is required, whether in the form of an apprenticeship or vocational education, at either a technical school or a high school.
5. Semiskilled: On-the-job training and some special schooling may be required. For example, truck drivers may receive training from their union or a special school. Taxi drivers may receive very brief training prior to being given assignments.
6. Unskilled: Little special training is required. Individuals need only to follow basic directions. No specific education is required. (pp. 259-260)

Roe's theory is based on five propositions concerning the origins of interests and needs (Roe & Lunneborg, 1984,

cited in Peterson, Sampson & Reardon, 1991). They are as follows:

1. Genetic inheritance influences the development of interests and abilities.
2. The development of interests is also shaped by one's family and cultural experiences and by one's gender and race.
3. Through the interaction of genetic endowment and early environmental influences, attention and energy become involuntarily and effortlessly focused on certain activities as a way of gratifying fundamental needs (Maslow, 1954).
4. The areas on which these psychic energies are habitually focused on determine one's interests.
5. The degree of motivation to achieve varies according to the intensity of one's needs, the likelihood of their satisfaction, and how well one's energies are organized. (p. 57)

Roe (1972) modified her theory after several studies by Powell (1957) and Green and Parker (1965, cited in Zunker, 1981) refuted her claim that different parent-child interactions resulted in different career choices and as a consequence she now takes the position that the early orientation of an individual is related to later major decisions, especially in occupational choice, but that other variables in her theory that are not accounted for are also

important factors (Zunker, 1981; Gimens, cited in Schiro-Geist, 1990).

The following statements by Roe (1972, cited in Zunker, 1981) express her viewpoint on career development:

1. The life history of any man and many women, written in terms of or around the occupational history, can give the essence of the person more fully than can any other approach.
2. Situations relevant to this history begin with the birth of the individual into a particular family at a particular place and time, and continue throughout life.
3. There may be differences in the relative weights carried by different factors, but the process of vocational decision and behavior do not differ in essence from any others.
4. The extent to which vocational decisions and behaviors are under the voluntary control of the individual is variable, but it could be more than it sometimes seems to be. Deliberate consideration of the factors involved seems to be rare.
5. The occupational life affects all other aspects of the life pattern.
6. An appropriate and satisfying vocation can be a bulwark against neurotic ills or a refuge from them. An

inappropriate or unsatisfying vocation can be sharply deleterious.

7. Since the goodness of life in any social group is compounded of and also determines that of its individual members, the efforts of any society to maintain stability and at the same time advance in desired ways can perhaps be more usefully directed toward developing satisfying vocational situations for its members than any other. But unless the vocation is adequately integrated into the total life pattern, it cannot help much.
8. There is no single specific occupational slot which is a one-and-only perfect one for any individual. Conversely, there is no single person who is the only one for a particular occupational slot. Within any occupation there is a considerable range in a number of variables specifying the requirements. (p. 8)

In summary, Roe is concerned that her occupational classification system does not account for women whose careers are interrupted by caring for a family. She feels there is really no category in her system for homemakers but she does feel that her classification system is quite adequate for those who enter careers and stay in the labor force. Roe has raised the importance of meeting needs through occupational choice and heightened counsellors'

awareness of the role of parenting styles in childhood (Sharf, 1992).

**Gottfredson's (1981) Theory of Circumscription  
and Compromise**

Gottfredson (1981) has proposed what she calls a developmental theory of occupational aspirations, in which she has sought to integrate both the developmental and social systems view about careers (Herr & Cramer, 1992; Osipow, 1983). According to Gottfredson (1981), her theory accepts the fundamental importance of self-concept in vocational development, that people seek jobs compatible with their images of themselves. Social class, intelligence, and sex are seen as important determinants of both self-concept and the types of compromises people must make, thus the theory integrates a social systems perspective with the more psychological approaches. (p. 546)

Gottfredson's theory is a stage theory that, like Ginzberg et al. and Super, "conceives of the self-concept becoming increasingly differential and complex as a child grows" (Herr & Cramer, 1992, p. 225). Occupational preferences are defined as the child and adolescent ages and are viewed as developing in terms of adding continuous self-concept characteristics (Herr & Cramer, 1992; Sharf, 1992; Osipow, 1982; Gottfredson, 1981). Her theory is built on

the assumption that persons create their own cognitive maps based on one's occupational image--the person's view of where he or she is in society (Gottfredson, 1981; Herr & Cramer, 1992; Osipow, 1983).

Various relationships exist among the major theoretical constructs. First, the self-concept comes into play and includes one's gender, social class, intelligence interests and values. From there one looks at occupational images: sextype, prestige level and field. "Like self-concepts, occupational images can be characterized by their complexity and differentiation, and their comprehensiveness and specificity" (Gottfredson, 1981, p. 547). Secondly, people assess the compatibility of occupations with their images of who they would like to be and how much effort they are willing to exert to enter those occupations. Those occupations that are highly compatible with one's sense of self will be highly valued; those that are highly incompatible will be strongly disliked. Therefore, one's perceptions of job accessibility may be compatible with one's self-concept and yet be inaccessible, depending on the opportunities and barriers that exist in the social or economic environment. Thirdly, the range of acceptable occupational alternatives are tempered by one's sense of how realistic those choices are; they are the product of perceptions of both job-self compatibility and accessibility and the need to name one occupational title as a goal. And

lastly, to name an aspiration that is one's best alternative at any given time. As perceptions of compatibility and accessibility change, so, too, may a person's assessment of which alternative is the best (Gottfredson, 1981).

Gottfredson (1981) suggests that essential to her theory are four stages of cognitive development that provide a way for viewing oneself in the world. They appear as follows:

Stage 1: Orientation to size and power

(Ages 3-5 years)

- When youngsters grasp the concept of being an adult.

Stage 2: Orientation to sex roles

(Approximately ages 6-8 years)

- Gender self-concept is consolidated.

Stage 3: Orientation to social valuation

(Around ages 9-13)

- When the more abstract self-concepts of social class and ability become important determinants of social behavior and expectations.
- With an increasing ability to deal with the emotional stresses of adolescence, youngsters become more attuned to their own internal feelings and distinctive capacities.

Stage 4: Orientation to the internal, unique self

(Beginning around age 14)



- Often referred to as the adolescent identity crisis. (pp. 548-549)

Gottfredson provides many interesting principles which govern the compromise process such as: (1) "Some aspects of self-concept are more control than others and will take priority when compromising occupational goals"; (2) "Exploration of job options ends with the implementation of a satisfactory choice, not necessarily the most optimal potential choice"; (3) "People accommodate psychologically to the compromises they make" (Osipow, 1983, p. 247).

In summary, according to O'Brien and Fassinger, 1993, Gottfredson's described "a theory of circumscription and compromise in which people progressively narrow their occupational choices depending on society's expectations of what is appropriate on the basis of gender and socioeconomic status" (p. 456).

#### **Hackett and Betz's (1981) Self-Efficacy Approach to the Career Development of Women**

Hackett and Betz (1981) proposed a "self-efficacy" approach to women's career development based on the Social Learning theory and stressing the role of cognitive mediational factors in behavior, as well, this model postulates that one class of cognitive behavior, self-efficacy, has particular expectations for both the understanding and facilitation of women's career

development. The model postulates that as a result of socialization experiences, women lack strong expectations of personal efficacy in relationship to many career-related behaviors and hence, they fail to realize their capabilities and talents in career pursuits (Hackett & Betz, 1981; Herr & Cramer, 1992).

Also self-efficacy expectations are viewed as particularly useful to the understanding of women's career development because the sex-role socialization of females is less likely than that of males to facilitate the development of strong career-related self-efficacy expectations. In other words, women and girls in this society are either not encouraged or are actively discouraged from engaging in a variety of activities that serve to increase or strengthen expectations of personal efficacy (Betz & Hackett, 1981).

The summarizing of the model depicts the postulated effects of traditional female socialization on career-related self-efficacy expectations; the four sources of efficacy information, examples of how female socialization may influence the acquisition of each type of information and the postulated effects of these on the development of self-efficacy expectations in girls and women.

**Performance accomplishments** for females refers to the experiencing of greater involvement in domestic and nurturance activities, but less involvement in sports, mechanical activities, and other traditionally "masculine"

domains. The effects of these experiences will be higher self-efficacy with regard to domestic activities, lower self-efficacy with regard to domestic activities, lower self-efficacy in most other behavioural domains. Lack of exposure to a wide representation of female role models affect the **vicarious learning** of women. Typically, **female models** largely represent traditional roles and occupations. The effects are then one of higher self-efficacy with regard to traditionally female roles and occupations and lower self-efficacy in nontraditional occupations. When it comes to **emotional arousal**, higher levels of anxiety are reported by feminine sex-typed individuals which further decreases in both generalized and specific self-efficacy. For females, **verbal persuasion** refers to lack of encouragement toward and/or active discouragement from nontraditional pursuits and activities, e.g., Math, Science. The overall result is lowered self-efficacy expectations in relationship to a variety of career options (Backett & Betz, 1981, p. 333).

However, it should be noted that this model is not intended to describe the socialization experiences of all females, at least some of its elements are most likely characteristics of the experiences of the large majority of girls and women. Also, the consistency of the model with available research findings suggests its potential utility for both integrating available knowledge and for stimulating

investigations directed toward further understanding and facilitation of women's career development.

In summary, according to Hackett and Betz, their "theory suggests that because of differential socialization, women lack strong expectations of personal efficacy for a variety of career-related behaviors. Hence they fail to realize their capabilities and talents in work" (Herr & Cramer, 1992, p. 243).

#### **Astin's (1984) Sociopsychological Model of Career Choice and Work Behavior**

Astin provides one of the most thoughtful attempts in recent years to move toward a theory of career development that more adequately encompasses the possibility of differences in degree rather than kind by gender (Herr & Cramer, 1992). Her proposed model attends to both psychological variables as well as contextual sociological variables and the interaction of the two in shaping human behavior (Astin, 1984). Astin (1984) labelled her model a "sociopsychological" model because it incorporates the influence of the social context on the person and because work behavior is a social behavior (p. 117).

Astin's (1984) proposed model is similar to past theoretical formulations. Her model explores how needs drive the individual and how early socialization shapes the differential interests and capacities of men and women, as

well, Roe's theory included the concept of "need" and the importance of early childhood experiences in shaping occupational interests. Her model also incorporates elements of Bandura's Social Learning Theory as explained by Hackett and Betz in that women's occupational expectations are shaped by socialization experiences.

Astin (1984) proposed that her model is a need-based sociopsychological one, which incorporates four important constructs: motivation, expectations, sex-role socialization, and the structure of opportunity. However, it is a developmental model which intends to explain changes in career choice and work behavior that can be observed in both the lives of individuals and groups, as well as in women over time.

The basics of Astin's (1984) model of career choice and work behavior incorporates four constructs. They are as follows:

1. Motivation in the form of three primary needs (for survival, pleasure, and contribution) which are the same for both sexes. Work, which is defined as activity directed to produce or accomplish something, and which can take the form of paid employment, volunteer work, or family work has the capacity to satisfy these needs.
2. Sex-role socialization, whereby social norms and values are inculcated, through play, family, school, and early

work experiences. In the process of satisfying the three needs through these childhood activities, the individual develops certain experiences that directly influence career choice and work behavior.

3. The structure of opportunity, which includes economic conditions, the family structure, the job market, the occupational structure, and other environmental factors that are influenced by scientific discoveries, technological advances, historical events, and social/intellectual movements.
4. Work expectations including perceptions of one's capabilities and strengths, the options available, and the kinds of work that can best satisfy one's needs. The individual's expectations are initially set by the socialization process and by early perceptions of the structure of opportunity. This can be modified, however, as the structure of opportunity changes.  
(pp. 124-125)

According to Astin (1984), the greatest strength of this model lies in its emphasis on self-efficacy as a mediating variable, a notion that advances our understanding both of women's past occupational behavior and of recent changes in their career aspirations and labor force participation.

Another major strength of Astin's model as stated by Kahn (cited in Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987) is the "recognition

that women can meet survival, pleasure, and contribution needs through work, whether it be paid or unpaid ... legitimizing traditional 'women's' work as real may encourage men to do more unpaid work in the home" (p. 88).

In summary, this model assumes that work motivations are the same for women as for men. The only difference in their work expectations, and their work outcomes in the form of career choice and occupational behavior is due to sex-role socialization and because the structure of opportunity for men and women differs. However, the opportunity structure is becoming more equalized for women because of recent trends directly affecting women, giving them greater freedom to choose a wider range of options (Astin, 1984).

#### **Farmer's (1985) Model of Career and Achievement Motivation for Women and Men**

Farmer developed a multidimensional model of what motivates people to seek an occupation and then achieve it (cited in Smith & Leduc, 1992). Farmer attempted to provide a theoretical framework that applied to both male and females (Herr & Cramer, 1992). She developed and tested her model of career development for women based on Bandura's Social Learning theory. In testing her model with a sample of high school women and men, she found that background factors, more than environmental and personal factors, contributed significantly to the prediction of career

aspirations (Farmer, 1985; Smith & Leduc, 1992; Herr & Cramer, 1992; O'Brien & Fassinger, 1993).

Farmer's (1984) conceptual model in which learning and related behavior are viewed as resulting from three sets of interacting factors: background, personal and environmental which are extended to three dimensions of motivation: aspiration, mastery and career. In this conceptual model:

certain background factors, such as sex, social status, school location, race, age, and ability influence motivation. This Background set also influences a person's developing self-concept, the Personal set and the way the environment is perceived. The self-concept of the growing person is further influenced by experiences in the home, school and community--the Environment set--and these in turn affect motivation. The Personal set is also viewed as affecting both the Environment and Motivation sets. What is represented as occurring between the Personal and Environmental sets is a kind of reciprocal interaction effect; as described by Bandura. (Farmer, 1985, pp. 364-365)

The individual variables included in this model represent findings from previous studies (Farmer, 1976, 1980a, 1980b, 1983; Farmer & Fyans, 1980; Farmer, Tohidi, & Weiss, 1982; Rooney, 1982; 1983, cited in Farmer, 1985).



Three of the studies were with high school students and two were with adults.

Farmer (1976, cited in Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980) reviewed the literature on achievement and career motivation in women and suggested that such motivation differs from that of men as a result of the following factors: "(a) reduction in academic self-confidence, (b) fear of success, (c) vicarious achievement motivation, (d) home-career conflict, (e) myths about women and the world of work, (f) lower risk-taking in females, and (g) sex-role orientation" (p. 48). It seems that female achievement motivation is affected by these variables and it is even probable that such motivation is inhibited by these variables.

In summary, according to O'Brien and Fassinger (1993), Farmer developed and tested a model of career development for women based on Bandura's Social Learning theory. In testing the model with a sample of high school women and men, "she found that background factors, more than environmental and personal factors, contributed significantly to the prediction of career aspiration" (p. 456). All or most of these factors definitely can be barriers preventing women from moving forward.

### **Barriers to Re-Entry**

What prevents or hinders a mature woman from re-entering the educational system? According to Tittle and

Denker (1981), the factors to be examined concern how the institution deals with the returning woman (Institutional Barriers), the personal circumstances likely to affect her progress (Situational Barriers), and the returning woman's concept of herself and the world (Psychological Barriers).

Mohney and Anderson (in Herr & Cramer, 1992) concluded that for many women the decision to enroll in college was made in the context of what they perceived as other people's needs--children and spouses. Barriers to earlier enrollment included such variables as parenting demands, multiple roles, lack of spousal support, poor self-image, early marriage and pregnancy, and lack of financial resources. Facilitating factors that later enabled them to enroll in college included their perceptions that their children were "old enough," adequate child care, discretionary time, social support from friends and spouses, and adequate finances, among other influences.

Spaniard (1990) confirmed the results of these previous studies and identified institutional, situational, and psychosocial barriers specifically related to adults returning to higher education. Institutional barriers included: (1) location (place), (2) schedules (time), (3) fee structures (cost), and (4) campus friendliness; Situational barriers included: (1) job commitments, (2) home responsibility, (3) lack of money, (4) lack of child care and (5) transportation problems; and Psychological barriers

included: (1) attitudes, beliefs, and values; (2) self-esteem, (3) opinions of others, and (4) past experiences as a student (pp. 340-341).

Most of the literature focuses on the previous barriers which affect the career choice of re-entry women. In the next sections, the researcher will discuss the importance of self-concept, academic self-concept, role models and the role of mentoring in the career development of women.

### Self-Concept

According to Markus, Crane, Bernstein & Siladi (1982), the self-concept contains representations of our special abilities, achievements and preferences, the unique aspects of our appearance, and the characteristic expressions of our temperament. With social information that becomes organized into cognitive structures. It is by means of these structures that we categorize, explain and evaluate our behavior in various focal domains. Markus (1977) refers to these cognitive structures as self-schemas which are assumed to be summaries and constructions of past behavior that enable individuals to understand their own social experience and to organize a wide range of information about themselves. The overall findings of a study conducted by Markus et al. (1982) suggest that individuals differ markedly in the nature of their knowledge structures about gender and in how gender is integrated into the self-

concept. Another study conducted by Markus and Kunda (1986) on stability and malleability of the self-concept suggests that very general self-descriptive measures are inadequate for revealing how the individual adjusts and calibrates the self-concept in response to challenges from the social environment. People vary from one time to another in their self-relevant thoughts, feelings and behavior. Self-concept research has revealed the great diversity and complexity of self-knowledge and its importance in regulating behavior but Markus and Nurius (1986) suggest that there is one critical domain of knowledge that remains unexplored, the domain of possible selves. This type of knowledge pertains to how individuals think about their potential and about their future. "Possible selves are the ideal selves that we would very much like to become--the good selves, the bad selves, the hoped-for selves, the feared selves, the non-me selves, the ideal selves, the possible selves, the rough selves" (Markus & Kunda, 1986, p. 858). According to Markus and Nurius (1986), an individual's repertoire of possible selves can be viewed as the cognitive manifestation of enduring goals, aspirations, motives, fears and threats. Possible selves provide the specific self-relevant form, meaning, organization and direction to these dynamics. As such, "they provide the essential link between the self-concept and motivation" (p. 954). Therefore, it is suggested by Markus and Wurf (1987) that an individual's behavior is

constrained by many factors other than the self-concept. As a consequence, the influence of the self-concept will not always be directly revealed in one's overt actions. Instead, its impact will often be manifest more subtly, in mood changes, in variations in what aspects of the self-concept are accessible and dominant, in shifts in self-esteem, in social comparison choices, in the nature of self-presentation, in choice of social setting, and in the construction or definition of one's situation. Thus, a significant component of any self-schema is one's beliefs about what is possible in a domain in the future (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Therefore, "perceptions of one's own competence--a sense that 'I am effective' or 'I can do it'--are critical to individual functioning throughout life" (Bandura, 1986, cited in Markus, Cross & Wurf, 1990, p. 205).

The crucial importance of a positive self-concept to psychological health and optimal functioning has long been a fundamental assumption in psychology. Super's theory postulated that self-concept plays a central role in the process of career choice and development (Herr & Cramer, 1992). Therefore, it is no wonder, then, that variables related to the self-concept have been shown to be of considerable importance to women's career development (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). Closely related to Super's self-concept theory is the concept of self-efficacy expectations

developed by Bandura. The notion of self-efficacy expectations refers to one's expectation or belief that one can successfully perform a given task or behavior. Bandura postulated that both behavior and behavior change are mediated primarily by expectations of personal efficacy (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). Hackett and Betz (1981) proposed the theory's particular utility for the understanding of women's underrepresentation in traditionally male-dominated careers. Using the concept of career-related self-efficacy expectations, they contended that low career-related self-efficacy expectations mediated the effects of traditional female sex-role socialization or women's later career choice.

#### Academic Self-Concept

"Although global self-esteem is important to performance, probably more important to women's career development is that dimension of self-concept variously called academic self-concept (Farmer, 1976), confidence in achievement situations (Lenner, 1977; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974), intellectual self-concept (Rand, 1968; Tinsley & Faunce, 1980), and performance self-esteem" (Stake, 1981, all cited in Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987, p. 114). Studies have suggested that because academic self-concept has been consistently shown to influence type and level of academic performance and because females are less confident in this

domain than are males of equal ability, lower levels of academic self-esteem may be a serious barrier to women's career development (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987).

Based on their model of self-efficacy, the research of Betz and Hackett and their colleagues (Betz & Hackett, 1981, 1983; Hackett, 1985; Hackett & Campbell, 1984, cited in Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987) has indicated that females report lower and weaker self-efficacy expectations with respect to their successful completion of male-dominated educational majors and careers with respect to the study and performance of Mathematics.

In summary, variables related to the self-concept are important in relation to women's educational and career development. Females generally seem to report less confidence in their academic and career-related capabilities and since beliefs are related to achievement behavior, females' lower self-concept probably serves as a serious barrier to their educational and career achievements (Tittle & Denker, 1981; Herr & Cramer, 1992; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987).

### Role Models

In recent years literature has emerged focusing on the importance of various types of role models to the career development of women especially in the area of nontraditional career aspirations and choices. The kinds of

models hypothesized to influence women's career development includes professors and teachers, parents and family, spouses and other significant adults (Almquist & Almquist, 1971; Basow & Howe, 1980; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987, cited in Hackett et al., 1989). Thus, if modelling is important to learning and if same-sex models are more attractive, the career development of women would be limited by the lack of adult women representing strong career orientation and varied career pursuits (Douvan, cited in Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). Indeed, the literature strongly suggests that a lack of role models hinders the development of women's educational and occupational potentials (O'Leary, cited in Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). Research has shown lack of role models to be a deterrent to women's pursuit of occupations in Science and other pioneer fields.

Several studies mentioned in Herr and Cramer (1992) have confirmed the importance of role models in the career development of women. For example, Lunneborg and Lunneborg's (1985) research has demonstrated that both male and female role models influence the careers of women who hold a nontraditional work orientation. Another study by Auster and Auster (1981) suggested that in terms of parents, the encouragement and support of both a mother and a father is most important in fostering nontraditional careers. A somewhat more detailed study, by Weishaar, Green and Graighead (1981) was done to determine how college major



choice is influenced by role models who serve as reinforcers for males as well as females. Their major finding was that **no one** was reported most frequently as an influencer of college major.

In summary, according to these studies the suggestion is very strong that for both males and females the developmental support and encouragement of important adult figures is an essential variable in career development (Herr & Cramer, 1992). Also, according to Tittle and Denker (1980), the absence of female professionals in education has been an additional barrier to women in education. The importance of role models as vicarious learning is a major contention of child development and social learning theorists.

#### The Role of Mentoring in the Career Development of Women

According to Fagenson (1992) mentoring occurs when two people choose to engage in this relationship and there is environmental support for the interaction. It is generally assumed that mentoring plays a significant role in professional development (Darton, Thompson & Price, 1977, cited in Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993). For the most part, mentoring research has focused on the effects of mentoring for individuals who have well-established roles within the organization (Kran, 1983, 1985; Kran & Isabella, 1985, cited in Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993). Yet the mentor, as one who

helps a protege "learn the ropes," has the potential to exert a strong influence on newcomers during their earliest experiences in the organization (Burke, 1984; Kran & Hall, 1991, cited in Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993, pp. 170-171), experiences that may be critical to their careers.

Therefore, according to Olian, Carroll, and Siannantonio (1993) and Scandura and Ragins (1993), having a mentor is very important. Mentoring relationships can have a significant impact on career patterns, performance and satisfaction (Fagenson, 1987; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson & McKee, 1978; Riley & Wrench, 1985; Dougherty & Dreher, 1991, in Olian et al., 1993) and in organizing advancement, salary and career satisfaction (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Fagenson, 1989; Scandura, 1992, in Scandura & Ragins, 1993). According to Olian et al., the absence of mentoring has also been related to the "glass ceiling" problem for women. Also, Dipboye (in Scandura & Ragins, 1993) states that mentoring is particularly important for women entering male-dominated occupations since these women are isolated as tokens and face gender-related barriers to advancement.

According to several studies, the idea of mentor in the career development of women has proven useful. "We know that mentor begets mentors in that those who had a mentor become mentors for others; we know that more women are becoming mentors as their numbers increase in top management positions; we know that women experience a mentor

relationship much less seldom than males; and we know that most women are now advised that the route to upper level jobs is through a mentor" (Baruch, Barnett & Rivers, 1993; Clauson, 1980, cited in Herr & Cramer, 1992, p. 247). Several other studies advocate interpersonal mentoring--teaching women to take control of their own job satisfaction, as well as this has been a teaching role for counsellors (Cesari, 1985; Ryan, cited in Herr & Cramer, 1992).

In summary, Kauffman et al. (1986, cited in Herr & Cramer, 1992, p. 247) maintain that counsellors are in a good position to help in the development of mentor relationships:

First, they can provide information to potential mentors and proteges about the advantages of mentorships. Second, they can assist in identifying and matching individuals on the basis of teaching and learning styles, values, and interests. Third, they can establish and monitor mentorship programs in schools and professional organizations. Fourth, they can provide ongoing training in the mentorship process. (p. 247)

#### **Counselling for Re-Entry Women**

Much of the counselling for re-entry women depends on how long the women have been absent from paid employment and

how large a hiatus exists between termination of formal education or training and entry into the labour force (Herr & Cramer, 1992). According to Brooks (1976), viewing the re-entry process as a series of stages has the benefit of providing the counsellor with a framework for both assessment and intervention. The re-entry process will seldom occur in such an orderly progression and awareness of issues involved in each stage will help the counsellor assess unresolved issues, anticipate future stresses, and plan effective interventions. Brooks (1976) suggests that re-entry falls within two broad categories: (a) preparation and (b) decision-making.

McDaniels and Gysbers (1992) also postulate that it is first necessary to establish that there is a process involved in counselling for career development. In an article that reviewed the issues and problems of research in career counselling, Osipow (1982, p. 33) suggested that "the absence of process emphasis in career counselling has made career counselling very different from other kinds of counselling modalities. It has caused career counsellors to focus on outcomes and on methods rather than interactions between client and counsellor." The question is, do counsellors who do counselling for career development neglect the process involved in counselling and concentrate instead on the outcomes and methods? Or do they assume that "the same dynamics and concepts applied to other types of

counselling relationships would seem to hold true"? (Osipow, 1982, p. 32). We assume that the same dynamics and concepts applied to other types of counselling relationships also hold true for career development (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992).

According to McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), clients often become involved in counselling for career development because they are in some sort of transition, either by their own choice or because of conditions over which they have only limited control or no control at all. Their model of counselling for career development consists of three phases, which are (1) the interaction of clients, (2) the counselling process framework, and (3) career theory. Career theory provides us with insights into the possible outcomes of counselling for career development and also helps us understand and respond to clients' problems and goals. Super (1990, p. 254) made this point as follows: "Career development theory makes clear what is to be fostered--occupational self-concept clarification and implementation and handling of the developmental tasks. It is growth in autonomy, time perspective, and self-esteem; exploration in breadth and then in depth for the crystallization, specification, and implementation of occupational self-concepts, interests, and a vocational preference; establishment with trial, stabilization, consolidation, and perhaps advancement; maintenance with

adaptability, which means at least holding but better still keeping up, innovating, and in some cases transferring; and decline, or disengagement, and the shift of role emphasis."

McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), building on the work of Gysbers and Moore, offer a framework for the process of career counselling for career development as having a number of phases and subphases. They address six perspectives but do so from a developmental perspective. They are:

**I. Client Goal or Problem Identification, Clarification, and Specification.**

**A. Opening**

1. Identify the goal or problem.
2. Clarify the client-counsellor relationship.
3. Define the client-counsellor responsibilities.

**B. Gathering Client Information**

1. Who is the client?
  - a. How does the client view self, others, and his or her world?
  - b. What language does the client use to represent these views?
  - c. What themes does the client use to organize and direct his or her behavior?
  - d. How does the client make sense out of and order in his or her world?
2. What are the client's current status and environment like?

- a. How does the client view and make sense out of his or her life roles, settings, and events, past, present, and future?
- b. What personal and environmental barriers or constraints are operating?
- c. What decision (personal) styles are in place? Being used?

C. Testing

D. Understanding Client Information and Behavior

1. Utilize the appropriate career behavior and developmental theories.
2. Make use of counselling theories.
3. Apply the relevant classification systems.

E. Drawing Conclusions or Making Diagnoses

**II. Client Goal or Problem Resolution**

A. Taking Action

1. Engage in the counselling process.
2. Do the appropriate testing.
3. Provide career information.

B. Developing Individual Career Plans

C. Evaluating the Results and Closing the Relationships

1. If the goal or problem is not resolved, recycle.
2. If the goal or problem is resolved, close the relationship. (pp. 69-70)

When using this framework keep in mind that these phases and subphases may take place during one interview or may unfold over two or more interviews with clients. Also, keep in mind that while these phases and subphases logically follow one another on paper, in actual practice they may not. There often is a back-and-forth flow to the process. Finally, understand that not everyone who seeks help wants or needs to go through the full process of career counselling. Some may want only selected amounts of assistance (McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992).

However, for women in their pursuit of careers, women's choices should represent better matching of their individual characteristics to the level and nature of the chosen field. The waste of female talent and ability when women seriously underutilize their abilities in career choices is a significant personal and societal problem and needs to be counteracted. Women's career choices, then, should be utilized rather than waste women's abilities and talents and should represent the full range of occupational possibilities rather than restricted range of female-dominated professions and "pink-collar" jobs. Therefore counselling for women should be dealt with somewhat differently than for men (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Brooks, 1976; Herr & Cramer, 1992; Farmer, 1985).

Keeping in mind, then, the necessity for action on the part of the counselling profession, a number of



recommendations for counselling practice have been made by Betz (1982) and Fitzgerald (1980, 1986, cited in Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). Betz (1982) suggested the following important guideline for career counselling for women. They are as follows:

1. Counsellors should have knowledge in the area of women's career development, including knowledge of research on factors influencing that development and of counsellor and test biases which perpetrate stereotyped roles and limited options for women.
2. Counsellors should avoid sexist assumptions and sex-restrictive vocational interest inventories.
3. Counsellors should actively encourage the development of non-traditional interests and competencies, so that choices will be truly "free."
4. Counsellors should, in particular, encourage continuation in Mathematics, so that career options will not be prematurely and unnecessarily restricted.
5. Counsellors should counteract socialized stereotypes and beliefs which serve to restrict a woman's range of options, for example, "I can't do both," "I can't do Math," and "Highly achieving women lose their femininity."
6. Counsellors should help women deal with realistic issues and fears, for example, "But I'll be the only

woman in that profession--how will I survive?" and "But I didn't think that women could be apprentices."

7. Counsellors should use materials which help to expand rather than restrict a woman's range of options, for example, non-sexist interest inventories, vocational card sorts (Dervey, 1974), and occupational information.
8. Counsellors should encourage women to obtain quality and/or training and to gain needed skills in job-hunting, resume-writing, interviewing, assertion, and information-seeking.
9. Counsellors and educators should support women studying in null (or worse) environments by helping them locate support systems, role models and mentors.
10. Counsellors should help women deal with discrimination, sexual harassment, etc., when necessary. (pp. 252-253)

In summary, according to Eason (cited in Brooks, 1976), the overriding counselling goal may be conceived as choosing a **lifestyle** with various life stages that one must progress through.

A **lifestyle** is an overall way of looking at the world ... it provides a framework for choices throughout a life span ... In using this concept, the counsellor assists each client in learning how to make choices whenever she is confronted with

them rather than selecting a single course of action. (p. 36)

Also, effective counselling for re-entry women should be non-ideological, non-biased in nature, and should be prepared to facilitate the woman at every stage in the re-entry process. Therefore, the counsellor should view her as "in transition," and accordingly offer services focusing on effective decision-making toward choosing a career (Brooks, 1976).

### **Qualitative Methodology**

Patton (1990) states that "qualitative inquiry is not a single thing with a singular subject matter" (p. 65). He characterizes his own approach as "utilization-focuses evaluation," stating that it represents an attempt to move beyond formal models to the practice of evaluation. It is an explicit recognition of the expanded options available ... [It] is not a recipe or even a 'model'--it is a strategy for making evaluation decisions .... The focus is on intended use by intended users" (Patton, cited in LeCompte, Millroy & Preissle, 1992, p. 734). Much has been written about women re-entering the workforce and the amount of literature is more prevalent now than in the seventies and early eighties. However, a greater understanding of the impact of re-entry women into the world of work requires more involvement with women in their own natural setting,

allowing them to express their concerns from their own perspective. A qualitative study would permit this type of in-depth discussion through the use of semi-structured interviews.

Reis (cited in Dyke, 1992), also recognized the need for studies using a qualitative design and stated:

Qualitative research relating to the attributes of women who have achieved is also needed. If we can identify the personality and societal factors that enabled women to become successful, we can share this information with parents and educators and provide advice, guidance, and insights needed for young females to successfully embark upon their road to self-fulfillment. (p. 111)

In a qualitative study, researchers "seek to make sense of personal stories and the ways in which they intersect" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 1):

The people who come to see us bring us their stories. They hope they tell them well enough so that we understand the truth of their lives. They hope we know how to interpret their stories correctly. We have to remember what we hear is their story. (Coles, cited in Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 1)

Learning to listen well is critical for qualitative inquiry, especially when it comes to reading the data and

carefully making decisions as to what data are relevant to the research questions being asked. Tesch (1990) outlined ten principles and practices that are true for ethnomethodological to phenomenological research. They are as follows:

1. Analysis is not the last phase in the research process; it is concurrent with data collection or cyclic.
2. The analysis process is systematic and comprehensive, but not rigid.
3. Attending to data includes a reflective activity that results in a set of analytical notes that guide the process.
4. Data are 'segmented', divided into relevant and meaningful units, yet the connection to the whole is maintained.
5. The data segments are categorized according to an organizing system that is predominantly derived from the data themselves.
6. The main intellectual tool is comparison.
7. Categories for sorting segments are tentative and preliminary in the beginning; they remain flexible.
8. Manipulating qualitative data during analysis is an eclectic activity; there is no one right way.
9. The procedures are neither 'scientific' nor 'mechanistic'; qualitative analysis is 'intellectual craftsmanship'.

10. The result of the analysis is some type of higher-level synthesis. (pp. 95-97)

The data analysis procedure used in this study followed the outline suggested by Marshall and Rossman, cited in Dyke (1992), who stated that analytic procedures fall into five modes summarized as follows:

1. Organizing the Data. Reading, reading, and once more reading through the data forces the researcher to become familiar with those data in intimate ways.
2. Generating categories, themes and patterns. The analytic process demands a heightened awareness of the data, a focused attention to those data, and an openness of the subtle, tacit undercurrents of social life. Identifying salient themes, recurring idea or language, and patterns of belief that link people and settings together is the most intellectually challenging phase of data analysis and one that can integrate the entire endeavour.
3. Testing emergent hypothesis. As categories and patterns between them become apparent in the data, the researcher begins the process of evaluating the plausibility of those developing hypotheses and testing them against the data.
4. Searching for alternative explanations. As categories and patterns between them emerge in the data, the researcher must engage in the critical act of

challenging the very pattern that seems so apparent. The researcher must look for other plausible explanations for these data and the linkage among them.

5. Writing the Report. Writing about qualitative data cannot be separated from the analytic process. In fact, it is central to that process, for in the choice of particular words to summarize and reflect the complexity of the data, the researcher is engaging in the interpretive act, lending shape and form-meaning to massive amounts of raw data. (pp. 113-114)

### **Summary**

Re-entry has different meanings for different individuals and professionals. Women returning to school or work outside the home represent varied personal situations. Many returning women are well educated--most are middle class and economically comfortable, as well, we have the complete reverse of this situation. Regardless of the circumstance, one of the key elements for re-entry women when it comes to the counselling process, is how long the women have been absent from paid employment, formal education and training before entry back in today's labor force.

Also, Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) suggest that there is no comprehensive theory of women's career development but the formulation of several dependent and independent

variables. There has been a focus on unique barriers to women's career development and the development of approaches to the classification of influential factors in that development.

Women are, themselves, one of the key barriers to their own progress and hence may be their own worst enemy. Is it that women allow others to take their self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-concept from them and if so, is this done through the socialization process over the years? As Dorothy Corkille (cited in Sanford & Donovan, 1984) stated:

The process of building self-esteem goes this way:

A new reflection, a new experience, or a bit of new growth leads to a new success or failure, which in turn leads to a new or revised statement about the self. In this fashion, each person's self-concept usually evolves throughout his lifetime. (p. 38)

Depending on one's socialization, one's self-concept could go either way. Therefore, when it comes to choosing an occupation, women need to look at their career development in terms of a life-long process with their roles increasing or decreasing in importance with the life stages and according to the developmental tasks that are encountered with advancing age (Herr & Cramer, 1992). A theme that seems to emerge through the research literature is one of "lack of belief in self" which probably needs



further evaluation and how to deal with it. A second theme that seems to emerge throughout the literature is one of more career counselling for women stemming from their developmental stage at the time. Also, there needs to be further research done in the area of theories of career development for women, especially in some of the theories previously mentioned in this paper.

This chapter has presented theoretical considerations relating to the non-salient factors in re-entry's self-exploration of early life career development. Also included is a brief outline of the methodology involved in a qualitative study. In the following chapter, the qualitative methodology will be explained in more detail as it pertains to this study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

In this chapter, the overall methodology of the study is discussed. The focus is on providing a description of the sample population, the development of the interview process, interview questionnaire, data analysis and issues of reliability and validity in qualitative research.

#### **Research Design**

The basic purpose of the design was to obtain a sample of women who have chosen to re-enter the world of work after a period of absence and to discuss the situational and personal factors that influenced their career development. The women had to be from different age groups and had to be absent from the work force for a period of time.

The data were gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews directed by the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 and the literature review in Chapter 2. The questions were designed to be open-ended so that the women could express their opinions and concerns freely without any constraints.

### Selection of Participants

There were ten women included in this study and they were selected in accordance with the following criteria: (1) The women had to be re-entering the work force after a lengthy period of absence; (2) the women had to be from rural communities; (3) the women had to be representative of the different stages of the life span; and (4) the women had to be able to commit at least two hours of their time, allowing for audio-taped interviews. All ten women were interviewed by this researcher in the Eastern Region of Newfoundland, Bonavista Peninsula and the Avalon Peninsula.

The women were all recruited through an employment counsellor with the (HRD) Human Resources Department. Initially, the women were contacted in person through a Career and Personnel Development Group that was being delivered for re-entry women at Eastern College. The women were also contacted by telephone to confirm that they would still participate in the study. All of the women were willing and anxious to participate in the study.

As well, all of the women were sent a consent form prior to the study, allowing them to give their permission to participate in the study prior to start of the study. To protect the subjects' identity and ensure confidentiality, fictitious names were used.

### Development of Interview Questions

The questions were adapted from a study by Dyke (1992) involving non-traditional careers. The researcher modified the questions to meet the requirements of this study. Sub-titles were modified as well as the questions so that they would be applicable to this study on re-entry women.

### **Interview Process**

The essential components of the interview followed the format outlined by Gay (1987). A semi-structured approach involving the asking of structured questions followed by clarifying unstructured, or open-ended, questions with additional prompting or probing when needed. Gay (1987) states that "in order to obtain standardized, comparable data from each subject, all interviews must be conducted in essentially the same manner" (p. 224).

1. The questions were developed using the theoretical framework of women's career development which allowed the researcher to stay focused.
2. The interviews were approximately one hour to one and a half hours in length and were conducted at the interviewee's convenience at their home.
3. All interviewees were informed of the purpose of the interview in person and again in a telephone conversation. This was repeated again at the beginning of the interview.

4. Interviewees were informed that they had the right to omit any question that they felt uncomfortable about answering. Also, they were informed that they could have any question repeated or explained further, if needed.
5. The interviewer established good rapport and the women knew how to contact the researcher if needed.
6. The interviewees were informed of the potential use of the data and that it would be used to look at factors preventing women from re-entering the world of work.
7. All the women felt good about being involved in the study and was enthusiastic about participating in it as well.

The ten interviews were conducted in July 1995. The women were called the day prior to the interview to remind them of the appointment. The interviews were scheduled two a day which gave participants as much time as possible and allowed time for both the participant and the interviewer to listen to the tape at their home.

Participants were asked some general questions about their age, how many children, home town, how many years out of the work force and their marital status. It was felt that this type of questioning would put the participants at ease and would help the researcher develop rapport with the participants. The interviewer had an interview guide which "is a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in

the course of the interview" (Patton, 1990, p. 283). The interviewer was able to depart freely from the initial question asked, when necessary, to probe further for more information but with the focus on the particular subject that has been determined.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative and fascinating experience. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data; it builds grounded theory. (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, cited in Dyke, 1992, p. 123)

The data were analyzed following the guidelines outlined by Marshall and Rossman (1989, cited in Dyke, 1992) as stated in the previous chapter.

### **Organizing the Data**

Careful transcription of the tapes resulted in the researcher becoming very familiar with the data. The first step was to view the original transcripts, checking them against the audio tapes to ensure accuracy. This process was beneficial in that it helped the researcher identify

with the experiences of each woman and what they considered significant in their life. Themes and ideas started to emerge in this stage but were more pronounced in the next stage. The audio tapes were transcribed by someone experienced in dictaphone transcriptions to make sure of the accuracy of the transcriptions. Then the hard copy was scrutinized against the original tapes by the researcher to make sure of the accuracy of the transcription. It was essential that the transcription of the tapes be exactly as the women had told their own personal narratives. If there were any errors or mistakes, it was corrected on the hard copy and sent back to the transcriber for corrections and then back to the researcher for further examination. It was a long process but very beneficial because it allowed for accuracy in translating the women's stories in their own words.

#### Generating Categories, Themes and Patterns

The analytic process demanded a heightened awareness of the data, a focused attention to those data, and an openness of the subtle, tacit undercurrents of social life. Identifying salient themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief that link people and settings together was the most intellectually challenging phase of

data analysis. (Marshall & Rossman, cited in Dyke, 1992, p. 124)

Salient themes were identified during this stage of analysis and similarities among the women's responses were grouped together, to form the basis for data files.

#### Testing Emergent Hypotheses/Searching for Alternative Explanation

As categories and patterns between them emerged in the data, the researcher must engage in the critical act of challenging the very pattern that seems so apparent. The researcher must look for other plausible explanations for these data and the linkage among them. (Marshall & Rossman, cited in Dyke, 1992, p. 125)

As categories and patterns emerge in the data, the researcher must begin the process of evaluating the plausibility of those developing hypotheses and testing them against the data (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). At this time, the researcher had to choose and isolate segments that related to a particular emerging theme, as well as comparing general statements and deleting redundancies.



### Writing the Report

Writing about qualitative data could not be separated from the analytic process. In fact, it was central to that process. In the choice of particular words to summarize and reflect the complexity of the data, the researcher was engaging in the interpretative act, lending shape and form--meaning--to massive amounts of raw data. (Dyke, 1992, p. 126)

At this point, the researcher reduced the statements, eliminated redundancies, while ensuring that the women's statements were as close as possible to the original statements. In the written report the aim was to identify the emerging themes from the data and to present those themes in a descriptive manner that would not lose the voice of the women involved.

Several models for report writing exists. Taylor and Bogdan (1984, cited in Marshall & Rossman, 1989, cited in Dyke, 1992) suggested five different approaches.

First, the purely descriptive life history....  
 Second, presentation of data gathered through in-depth interviews and participant observation, where the participants' perspectives are presented, their world views forming the structural framework for the report. The third approach attempts to relate practice (the reality

of social phenomena) to theory. Here descriptive data are summarized, then linked to more general theoretical constructs. Taylor and Bogdan's fourth approach is the most theoretical while their fifth approach is the attempt to build theory by drawing on data gathered from several types of institutions and under various research conditions. (pp. 126-127)

This research used the third approach suggested by Taylor and Bogdan which was the attempt to relate practices to theory. The descriptive data were summarized, then linked to the theoretical constructs considered salient in the career development of women by the use of narrative excerpts from individual samplings (Dyke, 1992).

### **Reliability and Validity Concerns**

Qualitative researchers seek to make sense of personal stories and the ways in which they interact (Glesne & Peskin, 1988). Coles (1987, cited in Glesne & Peskin, 1988) stated that:

The people who come to see us bring us their stories. They hope they tell them well enough so that we understand the truth of their lives. They hope we know how to interpret their stories correctly. We have to remember that what we hear is the story. (p. 1)

Qualitative studies should not be evaluated using the conventional method of reliability and validity so well suited to quantitative studies. According to Goetz and LeCompte (1984, cited in Eisenhart & Howe, 1992). They wrote:

Establishing validity requires (1) determining the extent to which conclusions effectively represent empirical reality and (2) assessing whether constructs devised by researchers represent or measure the categories of human experience that occur ... Internal validity refers to the extent to which scientific observations and measurements are authentic representations of some reality; external validity refers to the degree to which such representations can be compared legitimately across groups. (p. 647)

However, Patton (1990) argued that the validity and reliability of qualitative data "depend to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity of the researcher" (p. 11). Patton goes on to suggest that:

Systematic and rigorous observation involves far more than just being present and looking around. Skillful interviewing involves much more than just asking questions. Content analysis requires considerably more than just reading to see what is there. Generating useful and credible qualitative

findings through observation, interviewing and content analysis requires discipline, knowledge, training, practice, creativity, and hard work.

(p. 11)

Therefore, as was suggested by Patton (1990) and argued by Eisenhart and Howe (1992), the researcher must measure validity not in the quantitative sense but to consider the four kinds of trustworthiness, discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Eisenhart and Howe, 1992, p. 651). They are (1) truth value, (2) applicability, (3) consistency and (4) neutrality.

Lincoln and Guba stated:

"Truth value" and "applicability" are analogous to internal validity and external validity, respectively. Truth value refers to the accuracy (or "truth") of the findings for those beings studied. Applicability refers to the likelihood that the findings will pertain to other groups in other situations. (p. 651)

By allowing the participants in this study to respond to open-ended questions in a semi-structured format, the participants took the lead and reflected at will as to what they considered important. Therefore, truth was subject oriented, not researcher defined. Data analysis was also facilitated during the interview stage by the use of questions posed by the researcher to help clarify

participants' viewpoint and to ensure understanding on the part of the researcher.

Patton (1990) shuns/abstains from/avoids any concern with truth as a singular, absolute goal of qualitative research. He argues that what is true depends on one's perspective, and that evaluators should seek "pragmatic validation" of results, based on their relevance to and use by the intended audience, rather than some illusory certainty. For Patton (1990), providing an audience with a report that has practical utility and credibility--which includes accuracy, validity and even truthfulness in the common-sense meaning of this term--is the goal of qualitative evaluation. He emphasises that the credibility of results requires the empathic neutrality of the researcher toward the phenomenon studied, that the researcher does not set out to reach some particular conclusion. Credibility was maintained throughout this study by keeping a journal of personal reflections, questions about interview style, feelings toward each participant and jotting down emergent themes as they surfaced in the interview (Patton, 1990).

With regard to external validity, or the generalizability of findings to other populations, Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Eisenhart & Howe, 1992) argue that the establishment of external validity is an empirical matter and must be determined by those

who wish to apply the findings somewhere else. Potential audiences for research findings must themselves determine whether the context in which they are interested is sufficiently similar to the context from which research findings derive to make their transfer possible and reasonable. (p. 651)

The other two kinds of trustworthiness suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Eisenhart & Howe, 1992, p. 651) are consistency (reliability) and neutrality (objectivity). Reliability "refers to the extent to which studies can be replicated" (LeCompte, Millroy & Preissle, 1992, p. 332). According to LeCompte et al. (1992), this poses an impossible task for any researcher studying qualitative behavior or unique phenomena. Unique situations cannot be reconstructed precisely because even the most exact replication of research methods may fail to produce identical results. Qualitative research occurs in natural settings and often is undertaken to record processes of change, so replication is only approximated, never achieved. Therefore, it is more important that the findings be understood by other researchers rather than repeated because of the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of the experience. The same open-ended questions asked at a later date may result in a different response depending on the individual circumstances (LeCompte et al., 1992).

The fourth fact of conformability refers to the findings themselves and "is achieved when auditability, truth value and applicability are established" (Sandelowski, 1986, cited in Dyke, 1992, p. 132). In conclusion, Erickson (1988) points out:

The [story] persuades the reader that things were in the setting as the author claims they were, because the tense of immediate presence captures the reader's attention, and because the concrete particulars of the events reported in the [story] substantiate the general analytic concepts (patterns of culture and social organizations) the author is using to organize the research report.... In sum, richness of detail in and of itself does not make a [story] ethnographically valid. Rather, it is the combination of richness and interpretive perspective that makes the account valid. Such a valid account is not simply a description; it is an analysis. Within the details of the story, selected carefully, is contained a statement of a theory of organization and meaning of the events described. (p. 150)

This chapter has presented the overall methodology of the study. The following chapter will discuss the research findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents the research findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews. Each of the factors considered important in the career development of re-entry women that were researched in the literature are discussed and presented using quotes from the participants. The women were able to construct their own unique individual narratives from their own perceptions of their abilities and experiences. Commentary is minimized in this chapter, so as not to take away from the emphasis of the women's actual stories and the freedom to express their opinions and concerns openly and honestly.

The women, in this study, represent different age groups. The purpose was to discuss each factor that was important in their career development throughout the life span. With respect to the life span the following factors are discussed: importance of parental support, community influences, role models, leisurite, career aspirations and attitudes.

The data presented in this chapter are the results of the data analysis process. The process began by listening to the audio-tape interviews. The careful analysis of the transcribed audio-tapes were made and were scrutinized



against the original tapes to ensure accuracy. The transcripts were photocopied to allow the researcher to code and record on each file. The originals were kept to allow for continuous referral.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the introductory questions in the interview guide provided an introduction to the re-entry women. The remainder of this chapter presents the research findings, obtained from questions that pursued each of the factors related to the career development of women. The women will be identified by fictitious names only.

### **Family**

The majority of the women in this study came from family backgrounds where their fathers were employed as fishermen and labourers. Three of the fathers and one mother were employed in blue-collar and/or technical occupations. Six out of the ten mothers were employed, either in the fishing industry or traditionally female occupations (mostly as waitresses), while the remaining three were homemakers. The number of siblings varied from family to family with the majority of the women having families with at least one or more offspring. None of the women were only children; however, a couple of the women felt that they were raised more by their grandparents, while another was raised in a family that consisted of five different extended families.

### Household Chores

All of the women interviewed consider their 'immediate' family to have been significant in their career/non-career development. All the women, with the exception of the one who was raised by her grandmother, reported being responsible for traditional chores within the household and this does appear to have changed some over the years in some of the households. As one woman, Mandy, stated:

The work around the house and the yard, all of us do. There isn't one that does over the other. If one's inside cooking today, the other one might be outside mowing the grass. Just because you're a man doesn't mean you're not going to be inside cooking, and just because I'm a woman doesn't mean I'm not going to be out shovelling snow.

Spouses today seem to be helping out more with the responsibilities for household chores. Betty said, "He does chores and looks after the two children if I got to go anywhere." May stated, "In the winter time, he does just as much as what I do around, the only thing he don't do usually is make the bed." Most of the women had the task of doing traditional chores such as cleaning the house, doing dishes, dusting, vacuuming, laundry and making beds.

In some of the families where there were only females and no males, the females were responsible for outdoor

chores such as splitting wood and bringing it in, as well as bringing in water. Mandy said:

Chores, everybody did everything at our house.

Two girls, there were no guys to do the wood and splitting and bring, help bring in water in the winter time when it was froze up or anything else.

So you helped do everything. And it had to be that way.

Another young lady, Nancy, expressed that,

We never had to do anything heavy, like I mean we had to lug in wood every now and then.

Interestingly, the women talked about their assigned chores but did not comment on chores that were normally assigned to males, except for a couple of women where there were no males in the family and they were responsible for helping with all chores inside and outside.

Interestingly, out of all ten women talking about their chores responsibilities in their families today, when it comes to female roles, nothing much has changed even though some of the women had referred to earlier that their husbands do help out on occasion. Only one of the ladies, Belle, made a statement to the fact that, "Oh, my girls have been brought up not to be, what, well used by men, they're equal."

Financial and Emotional Support

While growing up in the family unit, the financial support in a majority of the households was the sole responsibility of the father 7 out of 10 times. In a couple of the households both parents worked and in one household the financial responsibility lay with the mother. As some of the children got older and were gone, some of the mothers went to work out of necessity. As one woman said,

Well Dad was always the main bread winner until 1974 ... mom went out and went to work because we had a boy with leukemia and she had to sort of get the extra money to support us.

As for the emotional support in the family unit, 6 out of 10 times the women stated their mother as being there emotionally. Alice said, "Mom was the main one to be there emotionally." Another lady said, "Mom definitely ... if it came from anybody it would have been Mom ... never felt like I was really given any emotional support or anything ... no. She had too much going on ... Too many kids."

Two of the women felt that they received more emotional support from their grandparents. As May said, "And emotional support, I have to be honest, I think I got more from my grandparents." Only one of the women felt that total, emotional support came from the father. Jane said that, "Mom wasn't the type you could talk to." Another woman, Belle, said, "Emotional support we didn't get too

much of. Some from Mom. See we didn't grow up in your average family either. I mean there was five families mixed up together ... a lot happened ... tried to forget over the years ... so there wasn't much emotional support because Mom always sided with dad no matter what he did ... and it was him, it was almost like a world against us children."

Only one of the women stated that both of her parents were there for her emotionally. Another one of the women, Mandy, said,

Mom was total emotional support up till 1966, when he came home, both of them were. So, you know, both of them were there when he was able to be at home full-time, then he was.

As from the women's statements emotional support seemed to have varied from one household to another depending on the circumstances with some feeling there was a lot to some feeling their was very little.

For some of the women, in their households today, things have changed. For example two are divorced, one separated, one living common-law, one single and five married. Out of the five married women, three of them stated that both share the financial responsibility and the other two women stated that their husbands provided all the financial support, as well the lady living common-law said, "he takes care of the financial support."

Only three out of the ten women felt that both of them provided the emotional support. It was felt that even today, women provide most if not all of the emotional support.

#### Quality Time

With the exception of two of the women, the other eight women felt that the family spent quality time together by going on outings, vacations and lots of discussions around the dinner table while growing up.

Alice: "Ya, pretty well everything was done as a family base thing. I remember Sundays going for a drive or Saturdays going to the park and we'd go down and we'd have a boil-up or cook-up and stuff like that ... and dinner, you wouldn't sit one at a table now or someone come in for dinner now and some later, everybody come in at the same time and sat and said your grace and ate dinner ... it was all done as a family."

Another young woman, May, said, "there was a lot of activities and we used to ... even when we moved we used to make it an activity ... Dad brought a camper ... made a camping trip out of it."

Family discussion around the dinner table was felt to be significant for all of the women except two. Mandy felt

there was always things being talked about ... few families who did that because there was only two children in the family ... talking about who was going to be beating on the checker game that night ... make home-made ice cream in the winter time ... uncle played the accordion ...those are things that you never forget.

Two of the women felt that they did not spend a lot of time together as a family. For one of the women, Jane, she said,

At times but they were few and far between ... too many of us you know to go on outings and stuff like that ... but still felt they spent good time together ... I don't like the word 'quality' time, I think anytime you spend with your children if you're sitting there reading a book and a child is in the room and he or she knows that he can come to you for something, that is a quality time as far as I'm concerned.

Discussion at the dinner table was unheard of in two of the homes. Belle said, "Um, no we weren't allowed to speak at the dinner table, you were seen and not heard." Another young woman, April, said, "When Dad spoke, you know, everybody else shut up, and that type of thing."

The women felt that in their own families today, they do spend quality time with their families as much as is possible.

Mary said,

While he's working not much ... most quality time with son, when they go to church camp ...

Saturdays and Sundays is the most time we spend together ... discussion at the dinner table depends on if the father is late getting home from work.

This is what one lady stated previously, about years ago having all the family at the dinner table together, whereas now, where situations have changed, sometimes it is very hard for everyone to be at the dinner table at the same time. Another one of the women, Belle, said that when it comes to outings and discussions "we do all the things that my family didn't do."

Quality times for most of these women seemed to be looked at from the point of view that no matter how small the amount of time you spend with your family, the most significant factor as one woman, Jane, put it was "when a child is in the room and he or she knows that he can come to you for something, that's quality time as far as I'm concerned."



As another young lady, Nancy, put it, "with my partner we have more time for each other but like with my family, we don't have as much time ... times have changed a lot...."

### Career Choice

For the women in this study at the time they were growing up, a career choice "was not seen as something significant," in other words, all of the women felt that they were encouraged or expected to stay in school until they completed grade 11 or 12 whatever it was at the time but felt that they were not motivated or encouraged to further their education after high school.

Some of their actual statements will confirm this:

Mary said, "Dad quit when he was in grade 7 ... regretted it ... says that education will be the way to go ... they did push us to stay in school ... like if you wanted to go to university you could ... they never really emphasized it or anything."

Betty stated that "her grandmother taught her the importance of school ... praised her when she got good marks ... when I did go to school."

Jane: "I never had much motivation to be honest ... like I had motivation but I wasn't encouraged from neither of my parents ... after I finished high school, there was never anything mentioned

about going to college or going to university ...  
it was get out of school and go to work."

Sue: "Both parents taught us we needed to have a  
good education in order to get anywhere in this  
world."

April: "Mom encouraged her to go to school ...  
praise her for doing well."

Mandy: "My parents ... they wouldn't dare to talk  
that you were not going to school ... it was not  
an option ... you were going and that was it ...  
no questions."

Belle: "Where both parents did, we were told that  
... we were all getting our grade 11 and we all  
did ... we could get it at 16 or we could get it  
at 30 ... that was our choice, but we were getting  
it ... then you were on your own ... I think that  
was the attitude at that time."

As one of the women, Jane, said, "Encouragement was  
there but ... not like it is today. Like, at that time with  
grade 11, you could get work, you had no problem ... go out  
and pick ... pick your job. Lots of 'em there and a lot of  
employers, at that time, too, took people and trained them  
in whatever position they wanted ... so it wasn't as  
important for post-secondary education." Has this young  
woman come up with a possible solution for why so many young

women did not go on to seek a more professional, rewarding, and lasting career?

All of the women felt their career decisions or lack of were influenced by their parents in one way or the other, although several of the women chose one particular parent as being most influential in their career development or lack of, many of the women felt that both of their parents were significant in encouraging them to stay and finish high school but felt there was not any motivation or encouragement to further their education.

### **Community Influences**

#### **Leisure and Community Activities**

The majority of these women have been involved in a variety of leisure and community activities throughout their lives. Involvement for some of the women has been ongoing and began in childhood. Most of the women were involved with some form of youth group such as 4H or the Missionettes with the church while growing up. Today seven out of the ten women are still involved in community activities. The range varies from treasurer of the Sunday School, president of a bowling league, hospital, Work Ability Corporation, Epilepsy Newfoundland and Labrador, Lions Club to president of a Taking Off Pounds Sensibly organization.

All of the women felt that volunteer work in the community was important.

Betty: "I think it makes you feel better about yourself ... even if you volunteered just for something to do."

Sue: "Well I think it's great ... you get to know a lot of people ... you're helping other people ... get a lot of self-satisfaction from that ... not doing it for money ... help someone out in some way...."

May: "I think it makes every difference in the world ... it gives you confidence."

Mandy: "I think people who aren't involved are losing a lot ... don't know what's happening on the outside because they're not taking advantage of learning how things are changing...."

With the exception of one woman, the other nine grew up in rural communities and as they stated, they had to make their own fun.

April: "There were lots of kids around all the time ... go out and play games ...play ball ... go swimming ... sledding in the winter ... not really set up ... as a teenager started having dances ... snack bar ... places to go."

Belle: "Actually there was more to do then than there is now ... dances, every Friday night ... looked forward to that and we'd all go ... we made our own fun ... like it seemed we were never bored

... in any community now ... even the bigger cities, bigger centres ... you'll find the same thing, they're all bored whereas we weren't ... it seemed like we had a lot but we didn't ... when I look back now."

Mandy: "There was never a lack of something to do and say I'm bored ... I don't ever remember saying ... thinking that I was ever bored."

For the majority of these women growing up, their activities consisted of single things that they created and did with their friends after school, such as baseball, swimming, sledding, skating, playing hockey, trout fishing, volleyball, dances, "going to old fashion times," as one woman put it, but they never appeared to be bored.

#### Socio-Economics of the Community

A majority of the women grew up in small rural communities that were mostly involved in the fishery and labour work where the work was seasonal. Today, not much has changed for most of the women. They still live in small rural communities where the work is seasonal, except for the fact that for some of the communities the fishery is gone but the labourers are still intact.

Even though these re-entry women are aware of the economic hardships at this time, personally, they feel they are ready to re-enter the world of work. For a majority of

them, their families are raised and gone and returning to training for the workforce is for most a self-fulfilling and self-satisfying personal goal (they want to do something for themselves now).

Betty: "I feel that I can see things ... like the way they are in the community, so small ... nobody really working or doing anything ... everybody is suffering ... that's what I call it, suffering. The way I am ... when I worked in Toronto I felt good about myself ... really want to get back to work."

Only one lady, Belle, said, "that the main thing ... very main thing that influenced me to return ... was the fact that we were kind of sick and tired of only having enough money to pay bills ... like no extra income."

Most of them felt that in today's society, in order for a household to have and be able to afford everything one needs, is for both to be working full-time.

### Career Awareness

For a majority of the women growing up the general awareness of different occupational choices available for women was not there or that they did not think it was important at that time. The explanation appears to centre around the fact that there was no encouragement to further one's education after high school. All of the women stated

that accessibility and availability of information was lacking, including women from 20 years ago and young women today.

Sue said, "no encouragement ... no awareness of what was out there ... nobody ever sat down and talked about future/career goals ... if they did career development might have taken a different look."

For some they felt the attitudes were different back then.

Jane: "I thought when I got out of high school I was suppose to go to work instead of furthering my education ... finish school, you go to work--that was the law of the land."

Belle: "It was a completely different life ... weren't pushed to finish our education ... jobs were so easy to get."

Several of the younger women's comments were similar to the older women's comments:

Nancy: "Lack of information--availability ... not enough time and information to sort out what one wants."

April: "If I had someone to sit down and help me assess myself, figure out what my interests were, strengths and weaknesses ... I would never have gone to University."

May: "The focus is on university--don't really concentrate enough I don't think on the community college aspect and the idea that maybe there's other things you might be interested in ... a student can jump into it a little bit too quickly."

As for career awareness, one of the women seemed to put it all into perspective from then to now. Mandy said,

I think the access, the knowledge of access ... where you needed to go ... parents had very little education. You probably knew what you wanted to do in most cases, but you didn't know how it was going to work for you to get there. Availability for one ... not knowing enough, education wise ... not having the information readily available to you ... back in the sixties and earlier there was a lot of things that you didn't get, you didn't belong to an urban area, it wasn't accessible to you. The development outside of urban areas wasn't here--we needed that rural development ... areas that are perhaps lower income, rural areas don't have all those different little centres that somebody could pop into and the accessibility to get there ... popping in is not the problem--I think the access is a problem. So I think that's something that's desperately needing to be kept,



the lines for that kind of communication need to be kept open....

### **School**

This section will deal with the influence that lack of school personnel, guidance counsellors, extra-curricular activities and course selection had on the career development of the women in this study. The majority of the women found school to have been a positive experience for them. Five out of the ten women went to schools that did have counsellors, three did not have counsellors and two of the women could not remember the presence of a counsellor in their schools.

### **Counsellors' Role**

Of the ten women, only five had counsellors in their schools. The women's responses indicated that they saw the counsellor's role as being one to give advice to students with problems (i.e., family problems, or who got into trouble at school). They did not perceive his role as one of having any input into career planning. For some it was just encouragement to finish high school and further information beyond that was limited.

All of the women responded that when it came to counsellors or teachers they did not feel that they discouraged them from engaging in a variety of activities

that served to increase or strengthen their expectation of personal efficacy and were somewhat encouraging regarding finishing high school.

For five of the women they saw the counsellor's role as:

May: "I didn't see him as helping people with their applying for university and college and furthering their education. I just thought they were there to help students who had a problem ... didn't play any role in career development."

Another one of the women, Alice, commented: "We knew he was there, if we had a problem, but as for talking to you and asking where you wanted to go in life there was no such thing as that when I was young."

The response from another young woman, Betty, was that "the counsellor was not actively involved in career planning but did encourage her to stay and finish high school-- nothing beyond that."

May saw it as talking to people that had problems, like family problems.

Nancy stated that "the counsellor talked to me, set up meetings with university ... wasn't enough information."

Two of the women commented that they could not remember if there was a counsellor or ever being told there was a counsellor and what the purpose of the counsellor was for.

Three of the women did not have access to a counsellor. Some of the responses from these women were:

Belle: "Back then did we know what a school counsellor was--it was a completely different life--but makes a difference today."

Mandy: "School counsellors weren't even thought about when I was growing up--talked to the teacher or principal. Counsellors definitely needed today."

April: "If there had been a counsellor there explaining to me what university is like and how many years were involved--went through--who could sit down and help me assess myself, figure out what my interests were, strengths and weaknesses, I would never have gone to University."

Most of the women saw the teachers as being encouraging when it came to finishing high school and to help you learn but nothing further beyond that.

#### Extracurricular Activities

The results indicated that seven out of the ten women were involved in the extracurricular activities organized by the school. All of the younger women and some of the women

in their thirties and forties indicated being involved either with school sports or other activities such as library prefect and spelling bees. For the other three women there were various reasons why they were not involved in extracurricular activities. One was too shy, one felt she could not measure up to the next person and another did not want to tie herself down to responsibilities.

All of the women, even the ones that commented on the reasons why they were not involved felt it was important to be involved in some kind of activity, be it sports, community involvement, committees, or groups. One woman said "I think the more involved you are the more self-confidence and self-esteem you have in you, you keep moving --it's good to be involved."

For another one of the women, her response was that, "I think that those who are on committees, and involved in sports and trying to learn more get a lot further than those that are not involved with anything. The interest is there and when you're interested in something, I think they got more of a chance to do something rather than ...."

The youngest of the women made this comment:

It helps 'em get along with people better ... I don't know if it helps them get along but they're interacting with more people from different places, different attitudes ... if they didn't they wouldn't meet people and see their views on

things as well ... think it's good that people should be involved.

### Course Selection

The majority of these re-entry women performed very well in school, academically; some had commented that they could have been better if they had put their mind to it. Five out of the ten women's favourite subject was Math. They liked working with numbers and felt it came easy for them. Some of the other women, who did not like Math, Physics or Chemistry, felt they were not discouraged from doing them by counsellors or teachers. They felt it discouraging because they either hated it or felt they could not do it. Some of the women felt that particular sciences were too difficult for them and even when the opportunity was there decided not to pursue it. The results indicated that for a majority of the women school was a positive experience. A theme that seemed to recur throughout the women's responses was that they did what they had to do to finish high school and that the ability was there to do better if they had put their minds to it.

In summary, schools and the services they provided did not always adequately prepare these women for the world of work. These reasons included limited course selection, the lack of career guidance and career counsellors. However, several of the women mentioned teachers who encouraged and

supported independent thinking as being significant in their lives whether it be career development or not. All of these re-entry women have finished high school and three of them have some university.

### **Role Models**

With the exception of a few, the rest of the women were able to identify role models in their lives. Over the life span the women were influenced by a number of role models, both male and female. Many of the role models discussed by the women were family members or teachers. There were different reasons why they saw them as role models.

#### Family Role Models

A majority of the women mentioned their mothers, grandmother, sister and aunt as role models. However, a couple of the women mentioned that male figures in their families were good role models for them. Betty's uncle taught her that determination and the willingness to work for something has its benefits. For Mandy, her grandfather meant respect from others.

He was just a gentleman ... a gentleman's gentleman ... he was a fisherman ... somebody that you and everybody else respected ... never raised his voice, yet everyone knew what he meant. He

was just one that took one day at a time and did his best that day ... that was a role.

Yet another one of the women, April, said that her mom was her role model for a slightly different reason as you will see by her statement:

She's a perfect person ...seven kids ... started off as a school teacher, like everybody did, way back ... started having kids ... stayed home and raised the kids ... she's a great person so that's why she's a role model.

But at the same time she's a role model ... because it's exactly what I don't want to become, sitting home with the kids ... man is the bad guy ... she just tries to make up for his bad points.

One young lady said, "Never had one, doesn't have one now. No, because like the way I think about it, ... didn't have a role model ... just wanted to be who I want ... who I'm going to be, whatever, you know. I don't want to be like this one because of this, and this, I just wants to be me."

#### Community Role Models

With the exception of one, none of the women felt that any one community person had any major influence on their lives. Except for the one woman who felt that a lady from Epilepsy Newfoundland and Labrador had influenced her quite

a lot: "She's confident, she's positive ... good communication skills. She's humorous ... she's well liked amongst everybody ... she knows how to talk to people. I like it ... she saved me ... she's my role model today, right."

For another, "The community itself had influenced her to go back to work so that she could get out of it ... not any one person in the community."

### School Role Models

For these women, school role models were seen as teachers providing encouragement for them to continue their education and to be the best they could be. Some indicated how different teachers' personalities impacted on their lives. Another woman in reference to school role models made this statement:

I think your teacher was something like your parents--or they were like my parents; I should say--my parents always said your there to learn, you will learn, I will help you, I will do the best I can.

Not one of the women saw their father as being a role model for them. Most of the women were able to reflect on the influences of role models in the family on their re-entry to the world of work. For others either male or female members of the school and the community had some influence on their



attitudes and determination to now re-enter the workforce. For many, it was not the role model's actual career but instead it was the personality of the role model they admired.

### **Role Conflict**

A large majority of the re-entry women learned to balance a number of roles over their life span. They actively balanced the roles of wife, mother, student, worker, leisurite, child and citizen. However, the study suggested many women were deterred from pursuing a career because of themselves and lack of information. Six of the ten women chose to stay at home and raise their family. Therefore, the women in the study were asked about the concerns they had in re-entering the world of work and the conflict, if any, in combining the roles of spouse and parent with a career and how they managed to balance their roles.

The responses indicated that each woman, whether married or single, considered the conflict associated with combining the many different roles. The majority of the women did not report any major problems in their career decision to re-enter the workforce. For most of the women the role conflicts encountered have declined over time as the women and families learned to adjust to the demands of a working mother and spouse. Many of the women said their

husbands supported their decision to re-enter the world of work at this time and the majority of women who had spouses had talked it over with them before they made their decision.

For some of the women, the different life roles have taken precedence over other roles at different periods of their lives. Also, it appeared that family support made it easier for these women to re-enter the workforce to finally fulfil and maintain their possible career aspirations. Only two of the women in the study had some concerns over their decision to re-enter. One of the women in her mid-forties said it would probably make a difference to her son because she's always been there for him. Another young woman in her early twenties said it was positive for her children but stressful on her marriage, "her husband didn't like the idea of her mixing with too many people."

For the majority of women the worker role and their understanding of the importance of work was introduced at an early age with the responsibility of chores. Some of the women have worked at various times in the fishery, in local stores, babysitting, housecleaning, waitressing and at anything that was available to them. Some of the women who did not enter part employment were involved with household responsibilities. All of the women felt that the worker role should be one of self-satisfaction, to fulfil one's needs, fulfill one's dreams rather than just out of

necessity. But as one of the women, Jane, stated, "It would be nice if you could get what you wanted, love to do, but not always the case--so you take what you can." Some of the women's comments regarding role conflict were:

Mary: "As far as I'm concerned it takes more than one to have a child so why can't the family be balanced out...."

Alice: "I think you can still be a wife and a mom ... hold a working position or continue your education ... it's just that you got to re-route some parts of your life and do it different ... and discussed before with your family."

Betty: "People say well you're not much of a mother because you're not there all day ... my children are not hurting with me out trying to benefit them."

Jane: "A lot of women probably out working that would like to be home with their families ... only doing it because they feel their suppose to ... and there's a lot of women who decide to say home ... get the pressures from other women ... that's the sad part."

Another one of the women feel it is up to the women no matter what society thinks.

I think it's up to the person if they get total fulfilment in their life for staying home and

being a housewife and a mother, I think it's alright. But I think if you need to be satisfied by going to work by full-time or part-time work, I think it's up to the individual.

I have a friend and she always worked when she had a family and she thought that I wasn't giving my child everything because I didn't work ... I'm not a materialistic person so that, that doesn't bother me.

For another woman, the mother of five children who stayed at home until her youngest son was fourteen had this to say: "Everyone's affected by it, that's understandable, you'd have to be ... I think myself if you arrange your time right, it's not going to have a drastic effect on your family."

All of the women felt that in today's society there is an economic need for both spouses to work in order to maintain a decent standard of living. All of the women, especially the ones who have their children raised, felt that re-entering the workforce, retraining and continuing their education as being very important to them. For some of the women when they finished high school they thought that their role was to get married and have a family or just go to work not to further one's education.

In summary, all of the women have dealt with problems associated with the conflict. All of the younger women and

older women who have decided to re-enter the world of work have made a conscious decision to follow through with further education whenever it is possible for them to get into school. The mature women who decided to re-enter the world of work considered the attitudes and support of their spouses and children to be important in decision making. They felt that there was some stress, but they could all deal with it. For some, pressures from society did not affect them, but they all felt it might affect some others, depending on how you grew up.

One of the women seemed to sum up "role conflict" in this way:

It can only be a conflict if you let it be a conflict. It could only be a conflict within you if you let it be there ... can be a conflict within your family I guess if your husband or your parents has been brought up to say the woman works in the home only ... I think getting that changed ... get that opinion changed that it's okay for me to do these things ... I don't know if that changing their opinion or as much as opening up their mind that it can be done ... if you make them realize that you're there for them and you will be there for them, going to school doesn't change that ... going anywhere doesn't change that ... that's only them that can change that.

### **Support for Re-Entry Women**

This section will discuss the women's need for support from family, friends or support groups.

For a majority of the women the first major support for them would be their spouse, children or the rest of their families. Other support systems were important if one had then such as friends, support groups or the community but were not necessary for them to move on with their career choice.

As one of the women said, "I would never be able to do it if he didn't, my husband, there's no way ... I'm not the type to come home and face conflict every day ... he's been a big support and will be a big support."

Another young woman's response was that:

Grandmother the only person I can say is really supporting me ... the main one would be my husband, if he really supported me ... where I could probably continue more freely to go do it ... would have to worry about coming home ... getting into an argument ... I'm not going to let it stop me from going to school ... I'm not doing any harm....

As Jane commented, "Support from other people, it's nice ... if they support you I guess, but it really doesn't matter."

For some of the women, family support was important if it was there but as one woman put it, "the most important support right now would be myself, because I believe a person has to support themselves and keep themselves going, you can't depend on anybody else basically ... you have to have that within yourself ... but at the same time you need encouraging words from people...."

Family, especially the husband, was a significant support for some of the women, they felt they would not be able to do it without him. For others, the support of their children was very important.

When it came to friends, some of the women felt that it was important to have that support others felt that it did not matter, whereas some felt their women friends were jealous. The majority of the women who had friends said that they were very supportive, encouraging, and made comments such as "go for it," "yes definitely," "I can't believe you've gone ahead and done this," and "whatever I want go for it." For some of the women their friends were there to talk to about difficulties in re-entering the workforce and ways to overcome them. As for the community none of the women mentioned it as having any kind of impact as far as being supportive in their decision to re-enter the world of work at this time.

When it came to support groups it varied from church, community organizations, personal, health, and educational.

Eight of the ten women had been involved in a group which they found to be very supportive dealing with career and personal development. Some of their comments and statements will clearly depict how they saw this form of support. For the two women who were not involved in any form of group, felt that those types of groups are very productive, very supportive and very valuable for most women at a time when their re-entering the workforce after a lengthy absence.

One of the women commented, "didn't know there was so much involved in your career choice and your own personal self--we learned about each other and helped each other." In most cases, women probably would feel isolated and alone when making such a major decision to re-enter the world of work. As one woman put it,

in the support group, it was support there cause you're not alone, sometimes it just feels you're alone trying to get back into the workforce ... seems a lonely road to walk ... the women were excited about re-entering ... got other people excited, sort of rubs off ... and that's the way I felt.

The diversity in such a group could and can be overwhelming for a majority of people but as one put it, "women from all different walks of life, different backgrounds come together ... it's so good ... it just motivates you."



The majority of the women felt that lack of confidence, low self-esteem and perception of one's ability is questionable on re-entry after a long absence but that some kind of group support helps build that through the interaction with others. One of the women said, "It was different ages of women ... talking about different home situations and experiences ... you get to know each other, how they were feeling ... was similar to how I was feeling ... I learned to believe in myself which I didn't before." Other comments were such as "it helps my confidence ... helps me understand me and helps me deal with it ... it boosted me up--my self-esteem ... my confidence ... everything was high. The group support was good and that it was there ... telling us we can do it, you can do anything if you try ... I'm not saying I'm gonna go out and try it all but I know now I could."

Would, or could, circumstances have been different for these women earlier in their career development if those types of groups or programs had been offered? According to some of the women, "if those programs was on when I was younger, I think a lot of 'em would have took advantage of it and probably start work earlier or found that they could rear up the children and have a career also." One young lady said, "definitely, seeing all those women come in and do all those talks, ya that would definitely make a difference, because when I was going to school or leaving

high school, trying to figure what to do, all women were teachers, nurses, secretaries, you didn't have many choices. All of the women, including the two who weren't involved in any group felt that those groups would be really beneficial, and that they would recommend the group to anyone, not just women. They all felt that anyone re-entering the world of work after a long absence should do a course that involved career and personal development.

The need for support from others, especially family, specifically the spouse, was a significant factor for all of the women interviewed. For all of the women, support whether it be informal or formal had some impact, to what degree, only the women can answer that on their final decision to re-enter the world of work at this time.

#### **Decision-Making for Re-Entry Women**

This study was based on re-entry women, so therefore, it was significant to explore what had influenced their decision for re-entry into the workforce, to establish a career at this time and not earlier in their career development. Several factors were involved in some small way such as family background and early experiences, discouraging factors and the importance of work. The impact of these factors varied in different degrees for these women.

For the majority of women a recurring theme that was felt throughout the study was that early in their career development, they did not feel there was anyone discouraging them but they did not feel, either, that there was anyone there encouraging them to further their education after school. As one lady put it, "I don't know about anyone discouraging, but there was no-one that encouraged--you got out of school, got married, have your family, settle down--never encouraged you to go and try this or go to university." The way she summed it up was the same for the majority of women. Some of the women, whether they were in their early twenties or mid-forties, felt that access, and lack of information in rural communities was a significant barrier in making career decisions, years ago and still today. Others felt it was just themselves--not knowing what to do.

When it came to family background and early experiences it was very interesting to see how those factors motivated these women to re-entry at this time. Some of the statements made went like this:

Seeing mom was out of the workforce and was thirty-five when she went back ... seeing she could do it ... I guess maybe I could do it too if I put myself into it....

Financial for others,

Never had the things in life that I wanted ...  
important to get a good education to get a good  
job to have the financial things to give my  
children.

Others felt that parents could have been more positive in some of their interactions with their children. For one woman, "Never encouraged or I had a lot said like, 'You can't do it,' instead of Dad or Mom saying 'Go for it.' That's where lack of confidence comes into play--felt because they told ... felt I couldn't."

Another young woman felt that her family like a lot of other families discouraged her because of the seizures and that encouraged her because, "she felt that she needed to prove to herself that she could stand on her own two feet."

For others seeing their parents struggle encouraged them to consider re-entry at this time. One woman stated, "I don't want to be in Mom's or Dad's situation ... for one thing large family, great house, but they're not financially stable the way they should be for a man retired at sixty-five ... sisters doing basically the same thing ... I don't want to fall into the same trap."

For another young lady, the motivation came from, as she put it, "to see Mom and Dad struggling in the fishery--with no education--don't even have grade 12, motivated me to want to get out and go on."

All of the women personally felt that this was a good time for them to re-enter the world of work. Their families are raised, some grown and gone, so they felt it was time to do something for themselves. They all felt it was important to find something that would fulfil their needs ... personal needs ... satisfy their personal self first, wherever the journey takes them.

In summary, whether it was because of a negative impact or a positive impact regarding the way these women made their decision to re-enter at this time, one woman seemed to have a perspective:

Just knowing that you can do what you set out to do, if you want to and if you're willing to apply yourself. You always have to be willing to work for it.

That's a decision you have to make, and only you can make and the things that you've done in your life through having or not having things makes you decide ... cause somebody who has everything, at times don't see where the value is of having to learn to get there for themselves, they just have too much ... but if you come out of a background where you do have things but you've always worked to get those things ... keep those things ... keep everything looking good, then you'll learn to respect what you have. You may not have

everything, um, how do I say, may not have everything at your fingertips, but you know it's always within reaching distance.

### **Self-Concept**

As the research literature shows, one's self-concept is fostered and developed over time by both situational and personal determinants. Feelings of doubt concerning their abilities was experienced by a majority of women in this study. The development of the self-concept was influenced by parents, grandparents, education, the community and for the married women, their spouses. All of the married women indicated the need for support from their spouses as they make this transition into the world of work. This section will discuss the women's perceptions of their abilities, their aspirations and how they have been influenced or/not by home, school and the community at large.

All of the women in this study were asked to comment on or explain this statement, "Many women have come to see themselves as having such a discrepancy between their ability and their perception of ability, aspirations and/or achievements." For all of the women, the responses were basically the same that many women think that what they are able to do and what they actually perceive they are able to do are two entirely different situations. One young woman said, "A lot of women today, especially my age, don't think

they're capable of doing things that they are well capable of doing ... like myself."

As one woman put it, "Oh I think it's easy to see the difference of whether you realize your capable of doing it and what you actually feel your capable of doing."

The majority of women felt this discrepancy in one's perception of their ability was developed over the life span as a result of society and the way you were raised then and now. They felt that the attitude for the most part emphasized the fact that women were to finish school, get married, have children and stay home. They were not the main breadwinner and felt they were looked at 'per se' as the little housewife--who could do nothing. They all felt that housewives did a lot of things but never got recognized for it. All of the women, from their mid-forties to one of the youngest in her early twenties, today, felt that the same attitude is there today in most situations.

The majority of women felt that low self-esteem has a tremendous impact on the way a person sees herself, especially women. All of them indicated that most women's self-esteem, including themselves, would be low after a long absence from the workforce. The feeling was that living in a small community, women were expected to stay home and if you did not have anyone to boost your ego and say "Well, your capable of doing this or your capable of doing that, a lot of women would have low self-esteem because they would

feel they didn't have the ability to accomplish any goal they set for themselves."

All of the women indicated that they were working towards a goal and felt that their decision for re-entry was considered a small step to the next stage of their career development. The majority of women made some indication of future career goals that were acceptable for them to do in their present circumstance in order to be realistic.

Living in small rural communities with limited access and information surfaced as a reason for many of the women's lack of career development. However, career information offered to young women today has changed in accordance with the changing times. In the early seventies counsellors were not even heard of for some of these women. As one young woman said, "'information' was readily available to her, not necessary enough and the career counselling aspect was missing even though there was a counsellor in the school she attended."

All of the women seemed determined to get ahead now that they have decided to re-enter and to succeed to the best of their ability. All of them felt that they are now fully aware of the need for transferable skills, flexibility when necessary to function in today's society and the need for further education to be prepared for the changes in today's workforce.



All of the women indicated the importance of a good work ethic because of their family backgrounds and most were raised to be hard workers, whether it was paid employment or unpaid employment in the household. They felt it was important to be satisfied and happy in what they were doing, if that meant being at home until the children were raised, so be it, if it meant going to work, so be it.

A majority of the women were involved in the community in some way whether it was donating time to different organizations, or giving donations, or helping out with baked goods for a variety of fundraisers. A sense of responsibility was established for many of the women early in childhood. All of the women felt that they had hidden talents and abilities but that they could be fostered and developed through group experiences with other women.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented the research findings obtained from subject responses to semi-structured interviews as told by the women from their own personal experiences. Actual quotes and comments from the women were used throughout the entire chapter to address the factors that the women considered important to their career development.

Family was seen as a significant or influencing factor in the career development of these women. Spouses were particularly seen as the major support for these women re-

entering the workforce today. One of the major barriers for the women was a lack of encouragement from their parents to motivate them to further their education after high school.

When it came to community involvement, all of the women felt it was important to be involved because it helps build a person's confidence and self-esteem. Even though they are aware of the economic hardships at this time, they still feel they are ready to enter the world of work.

School was seen as a positive experience for the women. Some of the women had access to counsellors; others did not but felt that counsellors are definitely needed in the school system today to help students with career decision-making. The women who had counsellors saw the counsellor's role as one of helping students in trouble, not as one of career counselling.

The women felt that they could learn to balance the roles of wife, mother, student and worker. The women felt that stress and conflict within the family could be avoided as long as it was discussed prior to their decision to re-enter. The women indicated that the role conflicts encountered have declined over time as families are aware of the need for both members of the household to be working to fulfil the financial as well as the women's personal needs in order to survive in today's society. The first major support for these women would be their spouse but felt there are still women today who are lacking family support,

especially spousal, when it comes to re-entering the workforce. The women in this study indicated that there was a discrepancy between most women's ability and their perception of ability and felt this discrepancy was developed over the life span as a result of society and one's family experiences.

In conclusion, women felt that confidence in one's ability can change with just a little support and belief in themselves. All of the women in this study felt that the time was right to do something for themselves, fulfil their roles and satisfy their own personal needs and wishes.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this study was to examine the non-salient factors in re-entry women's self-exploration of early life career development. This chapter will discuss the findings in Chapter 4 as they relate to the different theories outlined and explored in Chapter 2. Recommendations for practice and further research are presented.

The findings that emerged from the semi-structured interviews were addressed according to the factors discussed in the literature, such as situational and personal determinants outlined by Super, and other factors specific to women such as role conflict and self-concept, discussed by Farmer, Betz and Hackett, Markus and Gottfredson. In the next sections, there will be a discussion on the variables which emerged from the women's narratives.

#### Family

A significant factor, identified by this group of re-entry women was the role of family on career development and on their life role decisions. Spousal support emerged as the number one factor for the majority of the women. According to Super (1980), Astin (1988), Farmer (1985),

family background is essential in shaping an individual's career development. Roe (1957, cited in Tittle & Denker, 1980) proposed a theory of career development related to an individual's personality and the main focus was the influence of early parent-child relations and their subsequent effects upon career direction. For all of the re-entry women, parents encouraged and motivated them to do the best they could and finish high school but nothing further towards their education. The women felt it would have been important if their parents had encouraged them to further their education. Whether the outcome would have been different or not would have depended on other factors. Most of the women felt that their role was to finish high school, have children, and to stay at home while the husband went to work. 'Career choice' was not seen as something significant back then.

Most of the women, except for two who had no brothers, were responsible for traditional female chores. Those two, who had no brothers, however, were responsible for outdoor chores, as well as the traditional female indoor chores. The majority of the women communicated well with their families. While growing up in the family unit, the financial support in seven out of ten households was the sole responsibility of the father. In only one household did the financial support come from the mother. As for the emotional support in the family, six out of ten times, the

mother was seen as the one to go to for emotional support, and only one saw the father as being there emotionally for her. With the exception of two of the women, the other eight felt that the family spent quality time together--going on outings, vacations and having lots of discussion around the dinner table.

As seen by the results, the women felt that their family life growing up was typical. Most of them, however, felt lack of motivation from their parents to encourage them to further their education.

#### **Community Influences**

Farmer (1985) predicated that the self-concept of the growing person is further influenced by experiences in the home, school and the community. The majority of these re-entry women have been involved in a variety of leisure and community activities throughout their lives. Involvement has been ongoing and began in childhood. All of the women felt it was important to be involved in some kind of activity in the community--for example, sports, volunteer work, organizations, committees or specific groups. They felt that it helps build a person's confidence and self-esteem through interaction with others and that people who are interested in learning more advance further in life than those that choose not to be involved. Astin (1984) stated "the recognition that women can meet survival, pleasure and

contribution needs through work, whether it be paid or unpaid ... such as involvement in the community as volunteers."

As suggested by Super (1990), the majority of women have been and continue to be influenced by the community and the socio-economics where they live. Even though these re-entry women are aware of the economic hardships at this time, personally, they feel they are ready to re-enter the world of work. For those women situations have changed as Super (1990, cited in McDaniel and Gysbers, 1992) stated, the situations in which people live and work, and hence, their self-concepts change with time and experience.

Career awareness of different occupational choices for these re-entry women living in rural communities was lacking due to accessibility and lack of information including women from 20 years ago to young women today. Gottfredson (1981) proposed that one's perception of job accessibility may be compatible with one's self-concept and yet be inaccessible depending on the opportunities and barriers that exist in the social or economic environment.

### **School**

School was identified by Astin (1984) and Farmer (1985), as well as Super (1990) as a determinant that directly influences career choice and work behaviour. The majority of the women in this study found school to have

been a positive experience and were good to excellent students academically up to high school.

Many of the women were not exposed to counsellors in any way that would have influenced their career decisions. The women in this study felt they were not discouraged from engaging in activities that would serve to increase or strengthen their expectations of personal efficacy, but were only encouraged by their counsellors and teachers to finish high school. According to Hackett and Betz (1981), women lack strong expectations of personal efficacy as to their career pursuits because in this society they are either not encouraged or are actively discouraged from engaging in a variety of activities that serve to increase or strengthen expectations of personal efficacy.

According to Herr and Cramer (1992), much of the counselling for re-entry women depends on how long the women have been absent from paid employment and formal education. Brooks (1976) suggests that re-entry falls within two broad categories, preparation and decision-making. She views the re-entry process as a series of stages which has the benefit of providing the counsellor with a framework for both assessment and intervention. McDaniels and Gysbers (1992) suggested that in career counselling it is first necessary to establish a process that would involve interactions between client and counsellor, as well as a focus on the outcomes and methods to foster career development. Betz



(1982) suggested that counsellors should have knowledge in the area of women's career development, factors influencing that development, counsellor biases and why the limited options for women.

### **Role Models**

Different role models were important and influenced these re-entry women in various ways over the life-span whether it was earlier in their career development or now. The kinds of models hypothesized to influence women's career development includes teachers, parents and family spouses and other significant adults (Almquist & Almquist, 1971; Basow & Howe, 1980; Betz & Fitzgerald, cited in Hackett et al., 1989). The literature strongly suggests that a lack of role models hinders the development of women's educational and occupational potentials (O'Leary, cited in Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). These women had role models in their lives but did not seek a career earlier in life, and it is only now they have decided to re-enter the world of work in search of a career. Perception of the various types of role models and what they signify could have some effect on women's career development. According to Herr and Cramer (1992), from the studies on role models, the suggestion is very strong that developmental support and encouragement of important adult figures is an essential variable in career

development. The role of mentoring in the career development of women was not mentioned in this study.

### **Roles and Role Conflict**

A concept that is consistent throughout Super's theory is the concept of role. As is evident from other sections, the women learned to actively balance the roles of wife, mother, student, worker, leisurite, child and citizen. Super (cited in Sharf, 1992) suggests that these roles emerge and interact within the lifetime of one person and are played out in various settings, although some roles may overlap causing conflict and confusion from the home to the workplace. These women learned the importance of responsibility at a very early age, as they indicated, being responsible for household chores.

The responses in this study indicated the re-entry women had considered the conflict associated with combining the many different roles. Lewis (1985) states that it is not unusual that significant others (spouses, children, family members, friends) are threatened by or opposed to a woman's educational and career pursuits. The re-entry women indicated that the role conflicts encountered have declined over time as the women and families learned to adjust to the demands of a working mother and spouse. The research supports the fact that for some of the women the different life roles have taken precedence over other roles at

different periods of their lives as is evident in this study. Some of the women had chosen to stay at home and raise their families for various reasons, whether it be family upbringing or societal values and standards. According to Greenhaus and Beuteu (1985, cited in Lewis, 1988), despite the sense of self-worth that often accompanies a return to school--strain, anxiety and stress are the inevitable consequences of multiple role incumbency. The women in this study indicated the stress involved and how it would affect the family. The feeling was that, as long as it was discussed prior to their decision to re-enter, there would not be any drastic outcomes. The women indicated that they could have a career and a family life as well by adjusting everyone's schedule to accommodate each other while still allowing for the caring of each other.

#### **Supports for Women's Decision to Re-Enter**

Numerous researchers have observed that a partner's attitude toward a woman's return to school is a crucial factor in her educational success and satisfaction (Hooper, 1979; DeGroot, 1980; Gilbert, 1982; Lewis, 1983, cited in Lewis, 1988). The women indicated in this study that the first major support for them would be their spouse, and were not sure if they would be able to accomplish their goal without their spouse's support. Other support systems were

considered important if one had them such as family, friends, support groups or the community.

According to the research re-entry women are less likely than traditional-aged students to make use of available services. Numerous reasons have been given but one contributing factor may be women's underutilization of support services. Thus, lack of information, and a feeling that services are inappropriate or geared to younger students may preclude participation (Banderhoop & Johansen, cited in Lewis, 1988). According to Herr and Cramer (1992), there are many reports of successful programs designed for re-entry women.

The majority of women in this study indicated they were involved in a Career and Personal Development Group which they referred to as a support group. They suggested that if a course had been offered to them as high school students, the possibility exists that maybe their career development could have taken a different path. The general consensus was that they all would strongly recommend this type of group to anyone who was in the process of trying to decide on a career, especially re-entry women. They did not limit this type of course only to women but to men as well. The women also indicated that they felt there are still women today who are lacking family support, especially spousal, when it comes to re-entering the workforce. Lewis (1988) suggests that, given what are commonly referred to as

changing times, some people question whether there really are women who experience lack of support from significant others. The fact is that support, whether attitudinal, emotional or functional, continues to loom as a large issue for many women. Caution should be used in generalizing but research spanning the past twenty-five years indicates that a women's decision to return to school continues to be questioned and challenged by significant others (Houle, 1961; Astin, 1976; Lewis, 1981, cited in Lewis, 1988).

According to Herr and Cramer (1992), the literature over the past 25 years has stated numerous reasons why women return to the world of work (for example, self-fulfilment, boredom, financial), to fulfil personal goals or to finding more stimulating or better paying jobs). The women in this study indicated that this was a good time for them to re-enter the world of work even though they were aware of the economics of the province. Household income was seen as important and that dual family income was needed to share the financial responsibilities. The women in this study felt that the time was right to do something for themselves that would fulfil their needs, and satisfy their own personal self first, wherever the journey may lead them.

### **Self-Concept**

According to Markus et al. (1982), the self-concept contains representations of our special abilities, achievements and preferences, the unique aspects of our appearance and the characteristic expressions of our temperament. Farmer (1985) suggests that no one influence is expected to account for a large amount of variance, instead the combination of several background factors, home, school and community influence a person's self-concept, as well as motivation. The re-entry women in this study indicated that there was a discrepancy between most women's ability and their perception of ability, aspirations and/or achievements. The majority of the women felt this discrepancy in one's perception of their ability was developed over their life span as a result of society and one's family upbringing then and now. As Super's notion of self-concept implementation states "the effect of life stages on human development through the life span and how the stages interact with personality" (Swanson, 1992, p. 104). These re-entry women have taken a positive step for themselves by re-entering the world of work at this time believing in themselves, that it is now possible to fulfil their dreams. Markus and Wurf (1987) stated a significant component of one self-schema is one's beliefs about what is possible in a domain in the future. Therefore, "perception of one's own competence, a sense that 'I am effective' or 'I

can do it' are critical to individual functioning throughout life" (Bandura, cited in Markus et al., 1987, p. 205).

In this study, five out of the ten women considered their favourite subject to be Mathematics and were academically good at it and another one of the women enjoyed Biology. As for the other four women, Science was seen as discouraging in the sense that they felt academically, it was difficult to overcome. The research of Betz and Hackett (1985) and their colleagues has indicated that females report lower and weaker self-efficacy expectations with respect to their successful completion of male-dominated educational majors and careers with respect to the study and performance of Mathematics. The research indicated that since beliefs are related to achievement behaviour, females' lower self-esteem probably serves as a serious barrier to their educational and career achievements (Tittle & Danker, 1981; Herr & Cramer, 1992; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). Confidence in one's ability can change, according to the women in this study, with just a little support and belief in themselves. Super's theory makes the assumption that one's self-concept becomes more clearly defined with age, and that career choice is a process of matching self-concept with images of the occupational world.

### Summary

In this chapter, there was a discussion on the situational and personal determinants which influenced the career decisions of these re-entry women. It is important for the reader to keep in mind that these results are from the significant life events of these women, as they construct their world from their perceptions of their own unique individual experiences. As MacIntyre (cited in Peavy, 1992) argues:

It is because we live out narratives in our lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of the narratives that we live out, that the form of the narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others. (p. 217)

The intent of this study was to examine the different factors that emerged from the semi-structured interviews. The intention was not that the findings be considered significant or be generalized to the population at large. However, the intent was to explore how personal and situational determinants influenced their life role decisions.

One of the most significant factors identified by the women was family, especially support from their spouse. It was also indicated that support and encouragement from other family members and friends were important. School and school personal are also important factors in the career



development of women. A theme that kept recurring throughout the study was the 'lack of encouragement' from parents, as well as school personnel, especially the counsellor, to motivate these women to further their education after high school. The women suggested that career awareness be ongoing throughout the whole school process. The women indicated that career information has improved over the years but there still remains the issues of accessibility and lack of enough information on different career opportunities in rural communities. One of the findings in Dyke's (1992) study was similar to the findings in this study that career counselling is still not an integral part of the school program as was expressed by the younger women. Finally, for these re-entry women the acknowledgement of the economic hardships and the effect it will have on them re-entering the world of work at this time in their lives.

The women indicated their awareness of the conflict associated with combining the roles of a spouse and working mother and the barriers/obstacles they would have to overcome to be able to succeed. It appears from this research and from the literature that a lowered self-concept can be a serious barrier to career achievement. The re-entry women in this study acknowledged the fact that the discrepancy in one's ability and their perception of ability and low self-esteem can have a devastating effect on most

re-entry women and possibly deter them from continuing with their life-long dreams.

In conclusion, these findings seem to suggest that the career development of women cannot be separated from the many roles and life experiences of the individual. As Super's theory postulates, career development is a life-long process. Relationships and emotions appear to be a key factor in the career development of these re-entry women who were willing to tell their stories so freely. This study confirmed that research into the career development of women is intertwined with other life roles and one's perception of those roles. Therefore, career counselling should recognize that 'life career histories' are constructed by the individual out of an on-going dialectic of circumstance and personal desires and abilities. In conclusion, Kelly (cited in Neimeyer, 1993), said:

What we think we know is anchored only in our assumptions, not in the bed rock of truth itself, and that worlds we seek to understand remains always on the horizons of our thoughts. (p. 221)

### **Recommendations**

This study explored the non-salient factors in re-entry women's self-exploration of early life career development. The results of this study suggested the following recommendations:

Recommendations for Practice

1. It is recommended that parents be made aware of the early influences they have on the career development of their children, especially when it comes to encouragement to motivate their children.
2. It is recommended that counsellors should have knowledge in the area of women's career development, especially when it comes to re-entry women.
3. It is recommended that career/guidance counsellors be more readily available to discuss career education with women to address their concerns and doubts.
4. It is recommended that counsellors offer more programs on career education and counselling to be implemented into the ongoing school programs, beginning at an early age.
5. It is recommended that a greater need for improvement in the accessibility and availability of career counselling and career information, particularly in the rural areas of this province.
6. It is recommended that heightened awareness of support groups involving such programs as career and personal development for re-entry women become more visible to the public.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. A qualitative study to be conducted on re-entry males to compare the responses of males to the questions posed in this study to females on re-entry women.
2. Further research is required in the area of self-concept. Parents' lack of encouragement to motivate children to further their career aspirations is influenced to what degree on the development of the self-concept.
3. Further research is needed in the area of re-entry women's perception of their ability and the discrepancy between their actual ability. What are the significant factors that contribute to such a perception.
4. Further research needs to be conducted to see how much support is really there from family, especially spouses in women's decision to work early in life with a family or later in life when they re-enter.
5. Further research needs to be conducted in the area of support groups for re-entry women and how these groups may best benefit these women in making such an important transition in their lives.

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**APPENDIX A**

### Interview Questions

The research questions that are pertinent to the study are outlined in the following section and are adapted from a study by Dyke (1992) and modified for this study on re-entry women.

#### A. Family Experiences

1. When you were growing up in the family unit, who do you feel motivated you to take responsibility for your actions? (For example, to stay in school, chores, activities)
2. When you were growing up, who in your family, do you feel had the least impact on the decisions that you made?
3. While growing up, who in the family unit provided the financial support? Emotional support?
4. While growing up, do you feel that the family spent quality time together? (For example, outings, discussions at dinner, other activities)
5. When you were growing up, do you feel that you had a significant role model in your life? If yes, explain who it was and why?
6. Today how has your family background and early experiences motivated or discouraged your decision to (re-entry) seek a career and then achieve it?



**B. Community Experiences**

1. What kind of community did you grow up in? Was it rural or urban? Size? Type? Is it similar to the community you live in now? Is it the same one? How often did you move?
2. Was there high unemployment or were the majority of the people employed? Was the work seasonal or year round? Is this similar to where you live now?
3. What kinds of things were there to do in the community for entertainment? Were you involved in sports or other activities such as youth groups, or other? In your community now are you involved in volunteer work or do you serve on any committees.
4. Was there anyone in your community that you feel influenced your re-entry to the world of work at this time?
5. Do you have friends similar to you now in their decision to re-enter the work force? Were they supportive of your decision to re-entry at this time?

**C. Influence of School and School Personnel on Career Decision Making**

1. What kind of experience was school for you? Positive? Negative? Explain.

2. Were there counsellors or teachers that actively encouraged or discouraged you from engaging in a variety of activities that served to increase or strengthen your expectations of personal efficacy?
3. What was your favourite subject? Was there a course that you were discouraged from doing or were unable to do?
5. Was there a school counsellor? If yes, then what role did he or she play in your career planning at that time?
6. Was there a teacher whom you feel was a positive role model for you? If so, what kind of things did that person do that encouraged you?

**D. Influence of Supports**

1. Do you have close friends who are supportive of your decision to return to the work force?
2. Do you have friends who are returning to work after a long absence from work? Do you have any communication with them?
3. Are you aware of any support groups for re-entry women into the world of work?

**E. Influence of Specific Aptitudes and Academic Abilities on the Career Development of Re-entry Women**

1. Were you a good student in school? Did you feel capable with all subjects?
2. Many women have come to see themselves as having such a discrepancy between their ability and their perception of ability, aspirations and/or achievements. Can you explain or comment on this statement?
3. What level of education have you acquired up to now? What are your plans for the future?

**F. The Influence of Attitudes**

1. How has your decision to re-enter the world of work affected other areas of your life? (For example, marriage and children)
2. (For women with a significant other.) What role has your spouse/partner played in the development of your career to re-entry?
3. What are the individual responsibilities within the family unit now?
4. What kind of quality time do you need or have with your spouse and family now?
5. How does your spouse/partner and family view you returning to work at this time?

6. How do you feel about the statement that people say 'women who work are in conflict with their role as wife and mother'? Do you think you would feel affected by this type of conflict? How would you learn to cope with it?
7. How do you cope with negative criticism?
8. How has the pressures from society affected your decision to return to the work force at this time?
9. Were there factors that you feel discouraged you earlier from continuing your education in a chosen career?

**G. The Importance of Work**

1. What do you think is the relationship between a woman's decision to return to the work force, especially after a long absence, and self-esteem? How has your self-esteem affected or influenced your decision to return to the world of work at this time?
2. What influenced your decision for re-entry into the work force at this time and how do you feel about work? What advice would you give young women or your daughter (if one) entering the work force early in life, in terms of working to fulfil their needs?

3. At times when you feel the stress of your decision to return to work, or you have feelings that the decision is not worth it, what kinds of things do you do to cope with the situation?
4. Have you changed your attitude towards yourself over the years? Explain.
5. What, in your opinion, makes this a good time for you to re-enter the work force? Explain.
6. What, in your opinion, would be the most important supports for you as you make this transition?
7. Was there anyone else in your family who had returned to work after a long absence from work? How did you feel about it at the time?

**H. The Influence of Extracurricular Activity Involvement**

1. Were you involved with sports or school activities? (For example, public speaking, committees) Describe.
2. In what kinds of activities are you involved with now other than your family? (For example, volunteer work in organizations, or committees) Describe.

**APPENDIX B**

**Consent Form**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University. The research that I am conducting is in partial fulfillment of a graduate degree and my thesis supervisor is Professor Millie Cahill. I will be interviewing re-entry women in their homes to investigate the non-salient factors in re-entry women's self-exploration of early life career development; Why now? I am requesting your consent to take part in this study.

Your participation will consist of my conducting a taped interview session with you involving a questionnaire on personal and situational determinants. This will take approximately 2-3 hours of your time. The tapes will be erased upon completion of the study.

All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential and at no time will individuals be identified. I am only interested in the individuals' perspective of their actual experiences. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice and you are free to refrain from answering any question(s) you prefer to omit. This study has received the approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee. The transcripts of the interviews will also be available to you if you wish, for viewing and correction before they are used within my study. The results of my research will be made available to you upon request.

If you are in agreement with participating in this study, please sign below, one copy is for the researcher and the other one is for you. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at home (547-2222). If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Stephen Norris, Acting Associate Dean, Research and Development (737-3402).

I would appreciate it if you would please return this sheet to me by \_\_\_\_\_.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours Sincerely,

Betty Avery

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby give consent to take part in a study on re-entry women to examine the non-salient factors in re-entry women's self-exploration of early life career development being undertaken by Betty Avery. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw consent at any time. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_









