AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF A CAREER COUNSELLING INTERVENTION WITH "AT-RISK" YOUTH

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by

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ABSTRACT

There has been a growing concern over the nature of programming for "at-risk" youth. A proliferation of studies (Wells. 1990: Gottfredson. 1981: Kelly. 1989: Cross & Markus. 1994: McDonald & Jessell. 1992: Kaplan. 1995) over the last two decades show the importance of a number of factors which the educator should consider when designing and implementing such programs. The data point to the significance of the following variables: socio-economic status. gender. ability. self-efficacy. self-esteem. perception of goals. locus of control. role models. level of motivation and attitude towards school.

A number of interventions have been designed to assist "at-risk" students to stay in school and achieve better grades. Although many such interventions are comprehensive and require time and financial commitment. more recently there has been a trend towards short-term treatments. In either case. systematic evaluations of the intervention are often lacking. thus. limiting the further application and refinement of such programs.

In the present study. the investigator implemented and evaluated the Engage program. which is a national short-term career intervention program aimed at empowering "at-risk" youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in today's society. Twelve students' (10 males and 2 females). who were considered "at-risk". according to the criteria presented in Chapter 3. were selected for participation in this program.

Perceptions of participants on the program were measured and compared on a pre- and post-test questionnaire. Statements within the questionnaire were initially intended as sub-components of constructs that answered specific evaluative questions. However. lack of inter-reliability between these sub-components precluded such statistical comparisons. Instead. statements were examined on a case by case basis for changes following intervention.

Results indicated that the most significant changes were evident within variables measuring locus of control and self-efficacy. It would appear that the treatment allowed students to examine their own lives and begin to exercise some control over it. Despite the brief duration of the program, findings indicated positive changes in many of the variables associated with students considered "at-risk". In some cases, it is not certain whether the program served to better train individuals or instead act as a "reality check", encouraging individuals to start taking control of their lives and learning. This program could be viewed as a readiness tool for students deemed to be "at-risk" of dropping out of the school system. It ought not, however, replace other long-term interventions designed for this clientele.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to implement and evaluate an activity-based, short-term counselling intervention targeting "at-risk" youth. These youth, ranging in age from 16 to 18 years, were enrolled in levels 1, 2 and 3. Students identified for this study were enrolled in an inner city school and were identified according to the criteria established in Chapter 3. The present study aims to examine the Engage program, a short-term intervention program that is currently being used on a national level.

Rationale and Significance

Introduction

Currently in Canada there is great concern over the high dropout rates for students in secondary schools. Patterson (1992) stated that "the high school dropout rate in this country has reached alarming proportions" (p. 30). Among this group are individuals with disabilities, culturally different, low income and other disadvantaged groups. In an article released by the Edmonton Journal (1991), it was estimated that over the next 20 years approximately 187,000 Canadians will leave school because of the effects of poverty alone. Others will leave school because it either has no meaning and relevance in their lives, or from lack of ability or "perceived" lack of ability.

Given the difficulties facing the youth in society, in particular the disadvantaged, it is important to provide appropriate guidance for these youth. Peterson and Housley (1982) state that too often counsellors give vocational tests without being aware of the skills

needed to succeed in particular vocational programs. They implied the need for career development activities and assessment designed with specific competencies to ensure that the disadvantaged individual is given the best preparation for employment.

According to Liontos (1991), most children can be considered "at-risk" at some time during their development. "At-risk" students are those that generally do not experience much success at school, are low academic achievers who exhibit low self-esteem, are often male, and generally originate from families of lower socio-economic status. These students are often not active in school activities and have minimal identification with the school (Donnelly, 1987). It is further suggested that these students have disciplinary and truancy problems which often leads to difficulties in completion of course work. As these students experience failure and fall behind in their academics, school becomes a negative environment which often reinforces their low self-esteem (Donnelly, 1987).

Factors influencing "at-risk" youth

There are many factors that are associated with "at-risk" youth. These factors include, but are not limited to, socio-economic status, gender, ability, self-efficacy, self-esteem, perception of goals, locus of control, role models, as well as one's motivation and attitude towards school. Each of these variables have been extensively reviewed; findings often reveal interactions between these variables.

Socio-economic status has long been cited as a correlate of one's occupational goals and career aspirations. Holland (1981) suggested that one's socio-economic status is the most useful predictor when determining career attitudes. Many researchers have since reviewed factors such as low educational and occupational attainment level of parents, parental income levels, as well as family cohesiveness (e.g., Wells, 1990; Hasley, Heath & Ridge, 1980; Essen & Wedge, 1982).

Gottfredson (1981) proposed one of the more accepted theories in the area of career development. She proposed that self-concept, as well as belief in one's ability (self-efficacy) to be able to obtain a particular occupation, directly influences career decisions. Many researchers have since tested this hypothesis and results generally support this theory (e.g., Hageman & Gladding 1983; Henderson, Hesketh & Tuffin, 1988; Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1984; Richardson & Johnson, 1984).

Gottfredson (1981) further examined the role of gender on career aspirations and occupational choice. She suggested that occupational choice was limited by one's gender expectations. Although there are studies that refute this hypothesis (Henderson, Hesketh & Tuffin, 1988; Zuckerman, 1980), others are more supportive (Lueptow, 1981; Herzog, 1982; Cox & Morgan, 1985).

Another variable that has been related to "at-risk" youth and career aspirations and occupational choice is that of ability and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has been defined as one's "self-perceived ability" (Gottfredson, 1981; Betz & Hackett, 1981). Markus (1977) related self-efficacy to one's self-schemata which she defined as the cognitions that one develops about oneself derived from past experiences. Cross and Markus (1994) later suggested that one's abilities and one's self-schemata are vital in determining competence and self-confidence.

The theory of career self-efficacy has generated considerable research; much of this research supports the postulated role of cognitions when determining career-related decisions (Kelly, 1989; Betz & Hackett, 1981; Lent & Hackett, 1987; Rotberg, Ware & Brown, 1987; Hannah & Kahn, 1989). According to Betz (1992), the self-efficacy theory is directly applicable to counselling interventions and thus, needs to be examined when measuring career aspirations and occupational choice among "at-risk" youth.

Closely related to the theory of self-efficacy is the concept of one's self-esteem. Throughout the years researchers have indicated the need for positive relationships that

enhance one's perception of self (Herr, 1990; Canfield, 1986). It is this perception of self which ultimately influences one's career attitudes and occupational decisions (Otte & Sharpe, 1979; Korman, 1966). However, other researchers caution against using the self-esteem variable as a sole indicator of career aspirations and occupational choice (Strube, Lott, Le-Xuan-Hy, Oxenberg & Deichmann, 1986; Trope, 1980). Kaplan (1995) stated that "self-esteem is not the national wonder drug" (p. 341). He expressed concern regarding the focus that counsellors have been placing on this solitary variable. Kaplan (1995) suggested that self-esteem is more than just a function of self-appreciation but is indeed a function of mastery. However, for most researchers, self-esteem (along with other related factors) has been an important element for "at-risk" youth when measuring career aspirations and future occupational goals.

When considering career aspirations and occupational goals, it becomes even more vital to explore the area of parental influence and role models in general. According to Trusty, Watts and Crawford (1996), parents may be considered the most important resource among adolescents when determining one's occupational goals. Throughout the literature there has been much empirical evidence supporting the positive influence of parents on the career choices of their children (Super, 1957; Hoyt, 1973; Young & Friesen, 1992; Middleton & Loughead, 1993). Peterson, Stivers and Peters (1986) found that low income adolescents tended to rely on their parents, more so than teachers, peers or other relatives, for career planning information (also see Middleton & Loughead, 1993).

Unfortunately, there has been little research into the negative effects that parental influence can have on adolescent career aspirations. Research (for example, Young & Friesen, 1992; Middleton & Loughead, 1993) has generally reported only the positive and beneficial effects that parents have on teenagers. However, regardless of the research findings, it can be stated with confidence that one's parents as well as other role models do influence the career aspirations and occupational goals of their children. It is also indicated

by Herr and Cramer (1996) that career guidance and career counselling becomes vital for children who are socially and economically disadvantaged. Thus, it is felt by the present investigator that the influence of parents and/or role models must be considered when measuring career aspirations and occupational goals among "at-risk" youth.

The importance of having occupational goals for oneself has also been cited throughout the literature as an important factor in attaining one's career aspirations (Herr & Cramer, 1996). Sociological theorists propose that one's gender and socio-economic status can constrain one's career alternatives (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1990; Rojewski, 1995). Social learning theorists suggest how inaccurate beliefs about oneself can alter the decision making process (Mitchell & Krumbultz, 1990). Most theorists agree that self understanding and self knowledge are essential when developing one's career aspirations and occupational goals.

Herr (1990) suggested the need for personal flexibility in today's changing economy. He proposed that the role of the counsellor was to aid in the process of goal identification. Herr (1990) indicated that counselors need to help clients to:

> consider alternatives, sharpen values, deal with their individual quests for meaning or spirituality, understand more about their strengths and their possible application in social and work situations and identify and learn the skills sets likely to permit them to live more purposeful and productive lives. (p. 42)

By taking this type of empowering approach to goal-setting, individuals develop a sense of personal competence which should ultimately guide how they approach their futures. Herr (1990) suggested that this approach should help clients develop an internal locus of control rather than an external locus of control. Thus, the role of the counsellor becomes one of empowerment.

As Herr (1990) suggested, the importance of developing an internal locus of control is essential to the career development process. Locus of control can be defined as the degree to which people believe that they are in control of and responsible for what happens to them. This concept has been discussed extensively throughout the literature and results have consistently shown that individuals possessing an internal locus of control can deal with life's difficulties more effectively than individuals possessing an external locus of control (Taylor, 1982; Cabral & Salomone, 1990; Chandler, 1985).

All of the above variables contribute to a student's actual motivation and attitude towards school. Students, from a very early age, become acutely aware of the importance placed on grades by both the home and the school. Depending on the feedback received, students will interpret the information and formulate their attitudes and motivation levels to fit the feedback (Weiner, 1984; Stipek, 1984). According to Weiner (1984), one's interpretation of life's experiences will either motivate individuals to perform or not to perform within their environments. Often, especially for "at-risk" youth, the feedback provided is less than inspiring and thus the process of failure begins. With this clientele, it appears that the student's level of motivation and attitude towards school, becomes increasingly negative.

In the this section a brief overview of some of the factors that can influence "at-risk" youth have been discussed. All of these factors can contribute to an individual's self concept. Throughout the literature, regardless of the variable being discussed, one's self-esteem as well as one's self-efficacy has been central to the development of career aspirations and occupational goals. It would appear that believing in oneself and accepting responsibility for one's successes or failures becomes essential ingredients to the whole career development process.

The need for career interventions

Over the years there has been an increasing need for career counselling interventions with "at-risk" youth. According to George, Land and Hickson (1993), potential early school leavers can be considered one of the most difficult problems facing schools in society today. Much of the research (McWhirter & McWhirter, 1995; Herr & Cramer, 1996; Wells, 1990; Gottfredson, 1981) indicated the need for a focus on "at-risk" youth. According to George, Land and Hickson (1993), school environments need to become more hospitable and less alienating for large numbers of "at-risk" students.

Many researchers have reviewed counselling interventions and have indicated that "at-risk" students respond positively to them (Herr & Cramer, 1996; Wehlage & Rutter, 1987; Boyer, 1983; Hamilton, 1986). In fact, there is little doubt among researchers that career interventions do yield positive results (Rounds & Tinsley, 1984; Herr & Cramer, 1996). However, a difficulty arises as one attempts to determine the complexity and comprehensiveness of an intervention. Savickas (1989) confirmed the positive effects that can result from career counselling interventions. However, he further stated that "we need to determine which interventions work, with whom and under what circumstances" (p. 102).

According to Niles and Herr (1989), career guidance activities or interventions should vary depending on the adolescents targeted. They suggested that career activities or interventions should incorporate three elements: stimulating career development, treatment, and placement. They also suggested that senior high school students may need to acquire the vocabulary, self- and career awareness, and exploratory experience that should have been gained at an earlier point in their lives, in a much shorter period of time.

More conventional theorists promote the idea of long-term counselling interventions. According to Herr and Cramer (1996), "a shotgun approach to enhancing decision making

may not be nearly as effective as tailoring interventions to the specific characteristics of the clients" (p. 608). Holland, Magoon & Spokane (1981) further support this approach by stating the need for more analytical and fewer "shotgun" approaches to career counselling. However, according to Fretz (1981), most career counselling interventions provide some type of positive results. Since there was no conclusive data suggesting that one mode of intervention was more effective than another, Fretz proposed that counselling interventions should continue to be implemented as well as evaluated.

Although Holland, Magoon & Spokane (1981) caution against "shotgun" approaches to career counselling interventions, they also propose treatments that prove beneficial to clients. They suggested that programs that provide exposure to occupational information, cognitive rehearsal of occupational aspirations, acquisition of some cognitive structure for organizing information about the self, occupations and their relations, as well as providing a supportive network, can prove beneficial to most clients. Regardless of the intervention used, positive results become apparent because most individuals, especially "at-risk" youth, have little understanding or have received little training for the career decision making process. Thus, even small amounts of information and support can make a difference.

In a study conducted by Spokane and Oliver (1983, as cited in Herr & Cramer, 1996), findings suggested that clients receiving any career interventions were better off than 81% of the untreated controls. Clients receiving group/class career interventions were better off than 89% of the untreated group and individuals receiving a variety of career alternative treatments (for example: computer-assisted or self-directed were considered better off than 59% of the untreated control group). In a later study by Oliver and Spokane (1988), these findings were modified suggesting more favorable outcomes in association with greater number of hours and sessions held. However, they do indicate that although workshops

and structured groups were somewhat less effective. according to results obtained in their study. they were still effective.

"Brief Therapy" (Metcalf. 1995) is a more recent approach to career (and other) counselling. characterized by promotion of more short-term interventions and therapies. Brief therapy stresses competency-based and solution-focused interventions. This approach encourages counsellors and clients to focus on "exceptions". thus enabling clients to concentrate on a time when their difficulty seemed less substantial. This solution-focused way of thinking allows individuals to externalize problems. access resources and confront and overcome troubling situations.

Another approach that has received much attention over the past number of years is that of an activity-based approach to career counselling. This approach uses the clients' own practical experiences as an integral part of the counselling process. According to Vahamottonen. Keskinen and Parrila (1994). the main objective of this approach is to "combine the clients' external practical activity with their internal psychological processes" (p. 19). This approach is seen as an alternative to the more traditional methods of career counselling.

Unfortunately. one of the biggest difficulties associated with career interventions of any kind. is the lack of evaluative information available (Herr & Cramer. 1996). Herr and Cramer (1996) have defined evaluation as a series of activities designed to determine how well goals have been achieved. It would appear that although many counselling interventions are being implemented. comprehensive evaluative work does not necessarily follow. Herr and Cramer (1996) suggested that more "rigorous evaluations of all forms of vocational interventions" was needed (p. 715). This would indicate that. regardless of the type of intervention used or the duration of the study. such information could prove beneficial to obtaining a better understanding of career counselling interventions and their overall effectiveness in relation to a particular group of students.

The Program

In the present study, the investigator proposed to implement a brief, activity-oriented intervention called "Engage". The Engage program is a short-term career counselling intervention that was originally developed in Alberta under the auspices of Youth Affairs (of Human Resources Development Canada) as part of a national initiative to help prevent youth from dropping out of school.

Program developers proposed a two day motivational and practical workshop at which time participants are introduced to the concepts of the program. The group is utilized as a resource from which information can be drawn.

The program is intended to be process-oriented, whereby students are encouraged to participate in exercises that will facilitate their acquisition of knowledge and skills. Rather than didactically disseminating information, facilitators are encouraged to promote experiential learning. According to Carr (1988), this type of learning validates the learners' perspectives, helping individuals to become their own authority.

In the present study, participants explored self-management skills, goal-setting skills, occupational choices, current skills and knowledge of personal strength, necessary skills and knowledge for the work place, current values, beliefs, and interests. The program also introduced its participants to key concepts in career development. Participants were given the opportunity to explore the importance of calculated risk-taking and optimizing chance opportunities. There was an emphasis on the importance of considering consequences of one's actions. A considerable amount of time was spent on the communication theme focusing on non-verbal, passive, assertive, aggressive and collaborative negotiation.

Present and future goals were examined in relation to one's values and belief system. The importance of being able to access one's allies and support systems were also introduced. The program attempted to assist participants in determining concrete strategies

for dealing with issues. Participants also gained an understanding that change is constant and learning is ongoing.

Of great importance within this program was the integration of all significant individuals involved in the child's life. All key players (parents and teachers) were made familiar with the program goals and were encouraged to support participants during the program as well after completion.

The need for this kind of program, in particular one that stresses career awareness, has been widely documented (Herr, 1990; Herr & Cramer, 1996; Peterson & Housley, 1982). Career awareness programs, such as Engage, are designed to help equip youth with the skills and the knowledge to believe in themselves and develop occupational aspirations. Program developers identified the outcomes of this program as: (a) to enable youth to take control of their learning, (b) to motivate youth to learn both inside and outside of school, (c) to make learning meaningful, (d) to help youth learn effective ways of managing themselves and their environments, and (e) to help youth become aware of the many career options available to them.

This program goes beyond helping youth stay in school in that it aimed to provide participants and parents with information about better lifestyles and varied occupational choices. These goals were pursued through building self-esteem and helping youth develop occupational and personal goals for themselves. Such involvement was intended to help the youth understand the importance of education, and to help them take a closer look at their own lives and develop new goals for the future.

It is important to tailor the program to meet the needs of each unique group. Developers state that the Engage program can be effectively integrated with other programs. Printed materials can be used alone or in conjunction with a two day workshop. For the purposes of this study, the two day workshop format was followed.

Definition of Terms

A total of seven different variables were examined in the present study. While many of these variables require little or no explanation, others require operational definitions if they are not to be misinterpreted.

1. Career Intervention - Any activity (treatment or effort) designed to enhance a person's career development or to enable that person to make more effective career decisions (Spokane, 1991).

2. Program - An organized compilation of techniques or strategies with specific and well defined objectives that is designed to systematically alter the vocational behavior of a group of individuals in a specific setting (Spokane, 1991).

3. Career Guidance - A systematic program of counsellor-coordinated information and experiences designed to facilitate individual career development and more specifically, career management (Herr & Cramer, 1996).

4. Self-efficacy - Simply stated, self-efficacy refers to the perception of one's ability to perform in respective spheres. It has also been defined as the cognitions that one develops about one's self derived from past experiences (Markus, 1977).

5. Locus of Control - The degree to which people believe that they are in control of and responsible for what happens to them (Rotter, 1966).

6. Evaluation - A series of activities designed to determine how well goals have been achieved (Herr & Cramer, 1996).

7. Self-esteem - The evaluation which the individual makes with regard to him/herself: it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgment of worth that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds about oneself (Herr & Cramer, 1996).

Limitations of the Study

1. The low "n" in this study limits it to an exploratory examination of the nature of the intervention. As such, it lacks in generalizability across larger populations. In addition, by setting alpha = 0.1 the study lacks the power of more extensive examinations (using alpha = 0.05). However, despite use of a higher alpha level, a number of questions demonstrated significant changes at $p < .05$.

2. Attempts were made by the researcher to group survey questions into constructs that would reflect each research question. However, reliability between statements within a specific research question was typically low thus precluding the use of such constructs. This may be due again to the low "n".

3. Future evaluation of this project should include a control group to provide baseline information on changes in career attitudes not due to the treatment. This could be easily implemented by selection of a group of "at-risk" individuals not selected for the study, but given pre- and post-test questionnaires during the same intervals. As an ethical

consideration this second group would be given the opportunity to complete the treatment following completion of the intervention.

4. Due to the low "n" and ethical considerations, grouping within certain variables could not be achieved. For example, the male/female ratio of 10:2 precluded analysis of gender interactions within the intervention. However, such a ratio may reflect the predominance of males in the "at-risk" category. Also, socio-economic interactions could not be measured as such data was constrained by ethical considerations. This is of some concern as a number of researchers have demonstrated the importance of socio-economic status in considerations of "at-risk" interventions.

5. Finally, it should be noted that this intervention would traditionally be classified as "brief". Although brief interventions are becoming more accepted, a number of researchers would question their effectiveness because of the limited exposure to career information and programming for "at-risk" subjects.

Research Questions

Research Question 1 : Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their self-esteem?

(a) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of the value of their contributions to classroom activities and discussions?
(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their ability to be happy and successful in life?

Research Question 2: Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their ability to achieve in life?

(a) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their "present" ability?

(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their "future" ability?

Research Question 3: Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of the importance of role models in their lives?

(a) Did students indicate having significant individuals in their lives who influenced them in a positive way? What was the nature of the relationship and what was their occupation?

(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their attitude towards authority figures?

(c) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their attitudes towards parents?

Research Question 4: Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their goals?

(a) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their occupational aspirations?

(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of salary expectations for their desired job?

(c) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of post-secondary schooling needed for their desired job?

Research Question 5: Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their locus of control?

(a) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their internal locus of control?
(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their external locus of control?

Research Question 6: Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their level of motivation towards school?

(a) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their motivation to stay in school? Did students indicate reasons why they continued to attend school?
(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their motivation to learn in school?
(c) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their involvement in classroom activities and extra curricular activities?

Research Question 7: Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their attitude towards school?

(a) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their attitude towards the importance of obtaining a good education?
(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their willingness to work harder in school?

(c) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of time spent on outside learning?

(d) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of length of time needed to finish school?

(e) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of time spent on planning for the future?

Summary

In this chapter. the researcher examined a number of factors that one should consider before implementing and evaluating a career intervention. A brief review of some of the more pertinent factors associated with "at-risk" youth have been discussed followed by a rationale documenting the need for career interventions with "at-risk" youth. A brief description of the Engage program is presented followed by definition of terms. research questions and limitations of the present study. Chapter 2 will provide a more in-depth look into each of the above variables followed by theoretical approaches. A further examination of the nature of interventions as well as the need for evaluations will be reviewed.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, the literature associated with "at-risk" youth was reviewed. Many background variables were examined including: socio-economic status, gender, ability, self-efficacy, self-esteem, perception of goals, locus of control, role models, as well as one's motivation and attitude towards school. The review begins with an examination of the target population—the so-called "at-risk" group. It then highlights factors influencing academic and career success—factors that should be examined in proposed intervention programs. A brief review of existing theories and possible intervention styles and programs follow. The chapter ends with a rationale for such interventions as the one utilized in this study.

The "At-Risk" Population

The term "at-risk" was first used by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). Students considered to be within the "at-risk" group were identified as youth whose potential to succeed in school, home and community was limited. Since that time, a number of authors have attempted to semantically re-define the term "at-risk". In itself, the term is often used interchangeably with others such as disadvantaged, delinquent, poverty, troubled and even minority.

Pallas, Natriello, and McDill (1989) characterized the educationally disadvantaged, or "at-risk", child as one who has been exposed to certain background factors or experiences in formal schooling, family, or community. Although a categorical model was not employed, these authors have determined that particular combinations of risk factors can be detrimental to success. Examples of these "at-risk" factors are single parent homes, low

parental income and/or education. limited English proficiency. having a sibling who dropped out of high school.

Tidwell and Garrett (1994) discussed "at-risk" youth differently. They identified the necessity of having an awareness of the cycle of poverty when defining "at-risk" individuals. However. these authors identified many problems with the term "at risk". They acknowledged that the term is often used to refer to young people who are already in. or have been in trouble. In the past. the term has been applied to juvenile offenders. school dropouts. drug abusers. teenage mothers. as well as many other unacceptable social behaviours or groups. Tidwell and Garrett (1994) proposed that such youth are not actually "at-risk" but have. in fact. already "arrived". Thus. they suggested that the term "at-risk" indicated potential difficulties in the future. rather than a generic condition applied globally. There is a temporal component employed. that is. whether the term describes the status of "what is". or rather the potential "to become".

McWhirter and McWhirter (1995) also discussed the concept of "at-risk" youth. They highlighted three areas that underlie the "at-risk" terminology: (a) the future time dimension. (b) "at-risk" as a continuum. rather than a dichotomy. (c) interactions between treatment and prevention (p. 567). The first area that McWhirter and McWhirter (1995) describe is that of a future time dimension. This idea was used in relation to specific behaviours. attitudes. or deficiencies which can be used as an indicator for later problem behaviours. This concept also supports suggestions made by Tidwell and Garrett (1994).

Second. McWhirter and McWhirter (1995) discussed the importance of the "at-risk" term. in relation to an on-going continuum. They suggested a classification system in which "at-risk" individuals fit into one of five broad stages: minimal risk. remote risk. high-risk. imminent risk and "at-risk" activity. These categories are reviewed below as they aid in the identification process of potential "at-risk" candidates.

McWhirter and McWhirter's (1995) continuum theory is the first of these categories. According to McWhirter and McWhirter (1995), minimal risk individuals generally come from "higher economic and social class backgrounds, have fewer psychosocial stressors, attend good schools, and have loving, caring families, peers and social relationships" (p. 567). One must question whether such a group exists, although they do acknowledge that even in "good" homes with "good" families, problems can occur (they do not provide a definition of what a "good" home or a "good" family represents). However, McWhirter and McWhirter (1995) do acknowledge that "neither money, social status, popularity, or the good life, guarantees meaning and purpose in life" (p. 567).

The second category on McWhirter and McWhirter's (1995) continuum is the "remote risk" group. Individuals in the remote risk group are identifiable with demographics which include low socio-economic status as well as poorer family, school and social interactions. McWhirter and McWhirter (1995) claim that such combinations are cumulative - for example, a young person who comes from an impoverished, dysfunctional home who attends a poor school lives in a marginalized neighborhood is farther along the continuum towards the "at-risk" classification than someone having just one of these disadvantages.

McWhirter and McWhirter's (1995) third classification along the continuum is that of "high-risk". High-risk individuals would demonstrate similar disadvantages as individuals in the remote group classification. However, in addition these individuals would display negative attitudes and emotions. McWhirter and McWhirter (1995) suggested that high risk characteristics include depression, anxiety, aggression, and hopelessness, as well as deficits in social skills and coping behaviours. Such outward expressions may act as indicators revealing an individual's internalization of problems (McWhirter & McWhirter, 1995).

The fourth category along the continuum is the "imminent risk" classification. Individuals who fall in the imminent risk category find ways to express their feelings of

depression. anxiety. aggression. and hopelessness. Often times such behaviour progresses from a behaviour with minimal consequences to one holding more substantial consequences. McWhirter and McWhirter (1995) referred to such a progression of escalating negative activity involvement as "gateway behaviour". Although the progression through each gate is neither certain nor predictable. there is enough evidence linking gateway behaviours with more serious activities that place youth imminently at risk (McWhirter & McWhirter. 1995).

The final step on the continuum involves the actual participation by a young person in activities used to define "at-risk" individuals. Tidwell and Garrett (1994) would argue that at this point the individual is no longer "at-risk". since s/he is already exhibiting the maladaptive behaviour. In contrast. McWhirter and McWhirter (1995) claim however. that such behaviour is still applicable to the "at-risk" category since behaviours can escalate and become more severe thus putting an individual more "at-risk".

In contrast to the above definitions for "at-risk" youth is one proposed by Heath and McLaughlin (1987). They considered the changing family dynamics that are occurring in society today. Dual parent families like single parent families have little time to spend with their children and thus even children well outside the low socio-economic parameters may be "at-risk". Friedman (1986; cited in Allen & Mason. 1989). supported such a view by quoting work conducted by John Levy as an example. He identified another "at-risk" situation which he entitled "affluenza" - that of insulating a child from "challenge. risk and consequence". Friedman reported that psychologists believe that in some ways the children of urban rich most resemble the children of urban poor. Both tend to suffer from broken homes and absentee parents. Both develop hard street-wise skills that ultimately incur "at-risk" behaviour.

In summary. although the semantic definition of "at-risk" varies. it would appear that more recent definitions provide support that "at-risk" individuals have common

environments and circumstances which evoke negative consequences. Consequently, to maximize the effectiveness of interventions that aim to reduce "at-risk" potential, one must examine the various factors that could influence, or contribute to, its presence.

Factors Influencing "At-Risk" Potential

A number of factors have been researched directly and indirectly as predictors of "at-risk" potential. The following are reviewed below: socio-economic status (SES), gender, ability, self-efficacy and self-schemas, self-esteem, parental influence, locus of control, and goals (although "at-risk" potential would not necessarily be limited to these factors). Some studies also permit the examination of interaction between one or more of these variables.

Socio-economic status (SES)

The social environment has proven to be a significant factor when studying adolescent success and job choice. Wells (1990) reviewed some of these factors such as low educational and occupational attainment levels of parents, frequent high school non completion rates of one or both parents, low family income, weak family cohesiveness or single-parent families, and the lack of learning materials and opportunities available in the home. Other indicators of family-related characteristics contributing to the "at-risk" status include: lack of communication between home and school, an excessively stressful home life, siblings and/or parents who were drop outs as well as social issues including child abuse and neglect, divorce and separation, parental apathy, family crisis and poverty (Wells, 1990).

All of these factors can affect a child's performance and ability to cope in the school environment and thus must be considered when examining occupational choice of "at-risk" individuals. Many studies (Hasley. Heath & Ridge. 1980: Crowley. 1976: Fogelman. 1979: Essen & Wedge. 1982). have attempted to provide support for the variables as delineated previously. Following is a review of some of the literature which examines factors influencing the socio-economic variable.

In a study conducted by Halsey. Heath and Ridge (1980). early school leavers were found to more likely originate from lower-working-class or socially disadvantaged families. In an even earlier study conducted by Crowley (1976). findings suggested a strong link between advantaged or higher attaining peer associations and potential early school leavers. Such a theory however. seems somewhat idealistic: probably. for disadvantaged students who associate with more advantaged students. this theory could be true. However. Crowley 's premise is dependent on the assumption that these students would not achieve better in school associating with students of a similar socio-economic group. This assumes that individuals of lower socio-economic groups can not or at least are unlikely to achieve well in school.

Fogelman (1979) conducted a longitudinal study focusing on the occupational aspirations and expectations of a British sample of 16 year olds. Although this study found a clear association between the children's social class and their level of occupational aspiration. even the lower-working-class children aspired to jobs of apparently a skilled kind. Similarly. Essen and Wedge (1982) studied the occupational aspirations of approximately 400 sixteen year olds who came from disadvantaged families. Compared to their more advantaged peers. they aspired less toward professional jobs and more toward service and industrial manual jobs. This suggests that while lower-class or socially disadvantaged children have lower occupational aspirations. many of them still appear to be oriented towards skilled jobs rather than unskilled jobs.

Gottfredson (1981) studied notions concerning the possible limitations of occupational choice in school age children. by hypothesizing a model of occupational choice that addressed both gender and SES. Gottfredson suggested that as children develop a cognitive awareness of socially acceptable gender roles. they begin to limit their occupational aspirations to fit their newly acquired gender norms. Gottfredson also suggested that in later developmental stages. children become acutely aware of social class differences and thus limit their occupational choices further to prestige levels equivalent to or below their own SES background ("prestige" here refers to the presumed quality of an occupation). Therefore. by the time adolescents are ready to enter the work force. they have already been strongly influenced by social norms and class. Gottfredson argued that:

> ...youngsters begin to rule out occupations of unacceptably low prestige because they are inconsistent with their social class self-concept. At the same time they rule out occupations requiring extreme effort to obtain in view of their image of their general ability level. Only in adolescence do youngsters turn to their more personal interests. capacities. and values as criteria for further narrowing their choices. (p.565)

Gottfredson's theory has elicited numerous investigations into the effects of prestige and socio-economic status on occupational aspirations. In a study conducted by Hageman and Gladding (1983). it was found that youth from lower socio-economic backgrounds tended to be more "conservative" in their perceptions of what was considered to be a suitable occupation more so than youth of higher socio-economic backgrounds. Holland (1981) also suggested that one's socio-economic status is one of the most useful predictors when determining career attitudes.

Similarly. Henderson. Hesketh. and Tuffin (1988) conducted a study testing Gottfredson's assertions concerning the developmental stage at which SES influences

occupational choice. However. they further examined the importance of SES and ability on the level of occupational choice. Although they found that SES influenced choice after the age of 9. (as Gottfredson predicts) the effect of SES in their study was almost always dominated by that of ability. contrary to Gottfredson's theory. In fact. the authors noted that "the ability measure captured most of the significant social background variance likely to influence SES level of preference" (p. 45).

A slightly different angle was proposed by Mitchell and Krumboltz (1984) and Richardson and Johnson (1984) when they hypothesized that although SES would be a factor in shaping one's social learning experiences. it would further be affected by one's confidence level when considering occupations of different levels of prestige. Gottfredson (1981) proposed a similar hypothesis stating that adolescents would feel less confident working in occupations with higher levels of prestige than their SES background.

The studies cited previously (Gottfredson. 1981: Mitchell & Krumboltz. 1984: Richardson & Johnson. 1984: Henderson. Hesketh. & Tuffin. 1988) indicate a relationship between one's socio-economic status and one's occupational aspirations. Many youth. because of their social status. cluster towards occupations/jobs considered appropriate for what they believe is their social ranking. This model becomes greater when other variables are introduced. Gender. for example. coupled with socio-economic status broadens the career aspiration model. In the following section. the gender variable was examined in relation to the career aspiration model.

Gender

Gender and its relationship to career aspiration and occupational choice has been widely examined in the literature. Gottfredson (1981) suggested that occupational choice was limited by gender. She stated "that occupations that are perceived to be inappropriate for

one's sex are first eliminated from further consideration" (p. 558). Thus gender, social norms and class together were suggested as factors responsible for molding career choice. Henderson, Hesketh and Tuffin (1988) also tested the effects of gender and found that: (a) occupational sex-typing occurs earlier than Gottfredson's theory predicts, and (b) contrary to Gottfredson's theory, the process is not comparable for the sexes, in fact it was suggested that occupational stereotyping was much more pronounced for males than females.

In a similar study conducted by Teglasi (1981), it was noted that children were "gender-typed" in their selections of occupations. While it appeared that both genders recognized the appropriateness of male/female occupations, both genders rated the male-dominated occupations as "better". Teglasi concluded that there were more incentive for females than males to choose "cross-gender-dominated" careers.

Other researchers provide support for the conclusions made by Teglasi (Lueptow, 1981; Farmer, 1985; Cox & Morgan, 1985). Lueptow (1981), Herzog (1982), Garrison (1979; as cited in Hannah & Kahn, 1989), compared the job choices of adolescent cohorts over several time periods. Results indicated, in all three studies, that males consistently choose male-dominated careers, but females were more likely to choose cross-gender-dominated careers. However, Lueptow (1981) demonstrated a stronger shift towards the lower prestige jobs than the higher prestige jobs by females, again supporting Gottfredson's (1981) model.

Contrary to the above stated findings, Zuckerman (1980), although sampling only a few backgrounds, found no SES differences between women choosing male and female-dominated careers. However, several authors' research contradict this finding. Greenfield, Greiner and Wood (1980) found that women who choose male-dominated careers often came from homes with a highly educated father. Similarly, Burlin (1976), when studying

adolescent females. found that females coming from environments with less-educated fathers tended to choose more traditional and female-dominated occupations.

Marini (1978) discussed gender in a slightly different way. Marini found that females from lower socio-economic groups tended to choose occupations of lower prestige than males who originate from similar backgrounds. Marini suggested that this could be due to the fact that many of the females involved in the study had not previously sought status or received much income through paid employment. Marini speculated that as attitudes change in respect to female employment. the more likely it is that females will choose occupations of higher prestige. and thus SES could become a stronger factor in female job choices. In support of this idea. Danzinger (1983) found that SES tended to have a greater influence on the aspirations of females than males. although Farmer (1985) reported that SES is related to both the aspirations of males and females.

Finally. Cox and Morgan (1985) examined career aspirations and occupational interests for disadvantaged children aged 15 years. While the disadvantaged males aspired to jobs of lower socio-economic status than their control group peers. the female group showed very similar aspiration levels when compared to its control. Overall. the disadvantaged group was oriented towards skilled jobs. A higher proportion of the disadvantaged children were reported as being unemployed after leaving school. Cox and Morgan concluded that there was a "serious mismatch between the career aspirations of some of the disadvantaged group and their prospects" (p.199).

The above studies provide supporting data that gender and socio-economic status are possible factors to consider when determining career aspirations among youth. When examining the issue of job choice and career aspirations one must also consider ability as well as one's perceived ability (self efficacy) to perform a particular job. Important here is not only the issue of actual ability but also the issue of belief in one's ability. In the next section. an in-depth review of the literature will be examined in relation to ability. self-

efficacy and one's self schemas. Each variable will be explored and studies will be presented highlighting research findings.

Ability, Self-efficacy, and Self-Schema

A distinction must be made between ability and self efficacy. When examining one's ability, information can be obtained to determine accurate measurements on achievement. Achievement tests can help produce results that aid in determining one's ability. Although such tests are not foolproof it can help in the overall process of measuring one's academic ability. It could be argued that such measurement tools effect one's self efficacy. Self efficacy here however, focuses more on individuals who can achieve, but for various reasons do not believe in their own ability.

Kelly (1989) conducted a longitudinal study on the development of career preferences for three age groups between 11 and 17 years. She examined the top ten job preferences of children in each group and then explored their socio-economic aspirations. Kelly (1989) reported significant differences in occupational aspirations among children of different social class and academic ability. When studying social class differences, Kelly used parental occupation as a means of classifying children as either middle-class or working-class. Subsequently, occupational preferences were explored independently. Findings suggested that children from middle-class backgrounds, for all three ages, were more likely than those from working-class backgrounds to aspire to professional, managerial, and immediate occupations, and less likely to aspire to manual jobs. Among males, the relationship between aspiration and social-class remained fairly constant with age. For female participants, class differences declined between age 11 and 14 and then increased again. By age 17 middle class females were aspiring to jobs of considerably higher socio-economic status than working females.

As with social class. the differences between groups were stronger when job status was compared rather than when individual jobs were considered. For both sexes there was a significant relationship between academic ability and aspirations in all three age groups. For males. this relationship increased between the ages of 11-17: high ability males steadily increased their likelihood to choose professional jobs. while low ability males seemed to choose semi- or unskilled manual jobs. The relationship between female aspirations and ability was stronger at fourteen than at seventeen. "High-ability" females seemed to lower their aspirations. choosing white collar jobs instead of the earlier selected professional. managerial or intermediate occupations.

Gottfredson (1981: as cited in Kelly. 1989) stated that "children's gender roles are consolidated between the ages of 6 and 8. that social class and ability become salient concepts between ages 9 and 13. and that self knowledge is taken into consideration from around the age of 14" (p. 198). Kelly proposed that some of Gottfredson's theory was tested in her study. Kelly's results supported Gottfredson's theory concerning occupational aspirations being differentiated by sex before the age of 11. and this did not change at later stages. However. Kelly's findings on social class and ability provided less support for Gottfredson's theory. Although Kelly acknowledged a relationship between social class and ability to occupational aspirations. she did not find a strong relationship.

In contrast to actual ability. some studies have also researched the effects of self-efficacy - that is. self-perceived ability - on career choice. often in addition to SES and gender effects. Betz and Hackett (1981) researched socialization experiences of individuals and their beliefs about their ability to perform. According to their model. an individual's perception of job options is influenced by his/her self-efficacy expectations. This is similar to the model proposed by Gottfredson (1981) as she also discussed the occupational limits that children set for themselves. Betz and Hackett (1981) proposed a model whereby the children maintain those limits - as in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In the 1980's. self-efficacy theory was widely applied to studies of career and academic choice and persistence. Betz and Hackett (1981) reported that female students expressed lower self-efficacy for male dominated occupations than for female-dominated occupations. whereas male students did not differentiate between the two. Lent and Hackett (1987) reported that measures of self-efficacy may confound the prestige level of occupations with gender composition. A slightly different approach was selected by Rotberg. Ware. and Brown (1987). They tried to rectify the confounding of gender and prestige by selecting occupations from a range of prestige levels for each gender-dominated category in their study to measure the self efficacy variable. They also included SES as a predictor variable for self efficacy expectations. It was found that neither gender nor SES were predictors of self efficacy expectations.

Similarly. in a study conducted by Hannah and Kahn (1989). SES and gender of adolescents were examined in relation to gender composition and prestige level of occupations. Adolescent job choices were examined. as well as the adolescents' self efficacy expectations for jobs varying in gender composition and prestige level. Findings supported SES differences on several aspects of occupational choice. Males predominantly chose male-dominated careers. but high SES females were more likely than low SES females to choose male-dominated occupations. In keeping with Gottfredson's (1981) model. students chose occupations in prestige levels comparable to their own socio-economic background. Other findings suggested that socialization experiences related to gender did not affect overall self-efficacy expectations. In fact. Hannah and Kahn (1989) found that there were no differences in total scores on self-efficacy but both males and females expressed higher self-efficacy for same-gender-dominated occupations rather than cross-gender-dominated occupations. Among SES groups however. the low SES group reported significantly lower self-efficacy expectations than the high SES group regardless of the prestige level.

Closely related to the idea of ability and self-efficacy is the concept of self-schemas. possible selves and competent performance. Markus (1977) described self-schemata as. "cognitive generalizations about the self. derived from past experience. that organize and guide the processing of self-related information contained in the individuals social experiences" (p. 64).

According to Markus (1977). individuals possessing self-schema in a particular domain are capable of making quick and confident decisions. are adaptable and flexible when developing and processing goals. and can reject information that is inconsistent with their self-schema. Markus. Crane. Bernstein and Saladi (1982) stated that a person who has a self-schema in a particular area is better able to predict his/her future behaviour in that domain. Markus and Nurius (1986) have called these future oriented self-conceptions "possible selves". Possible selves have been defined to include those selves the person could become. would like to become. or is afraid of becoming.

Cross and Markus (1994) conducted a study examining schematic (individuals who believed that they were good in a particular area. and this ability was very important to their self-evaluation) and aschematic students (individuals who believed they had moderate ability in a particular area. and this ability was of moderate to low importance for their self-evaluation). They found that the one's beliefs about perceived abilities were very important in the development and maintenance of competence. According to Markus. Cross. and Wurf. 1990 and Marsh. 1992 (as cited in Cross & Markus. 1994) "competence depends not only on one's abilities or attributes but also on those structures of the self-concept that represent these attributes or abilities" (p. 423). They suggested that in order to obtain competence within a particular field. it would be necessary to acquire both ability and a self-schema for the ability. They called these structures of self knowledge that represented an individuals school-related abilities or attributes "self-schemas".

Cross and Markus (1994) further discussed possible selves in relation to the "self-system" which allows an individual to explore the necessary steps and strategies necessary to accomplish goals. According to Inglehart, Markus, and Brown (1988, as cited in Cross & Markus, 1994), possible selves enable individuals to focus on particular task-relevant thoughts and feelings, thus organizing possible actions. Similarly, Oyserman and Markus (1990, as cited in Cross & Markus, 1994) stated that "possible selves build a bridge between the current state and the desired outcome" (p. 424). It would appear that the more vivid the picture one can create in relation to one's possible self, the better prepared one will be when engaging in future activities. According to Markus (1977) and Markus, Crane, Bernstein and Saladi (1982, as cited in Cross & Markus, 1994), "individuals with self-schema in a domain have a better organized knowledge structure for their ability in the domain, which facilitates information processing relevant to the domain" (p. 424).

Ability, self-efficacy, and self-schemas are all variables that can influence one's career choices and aspirations. If one does not have the ability to achieve in a certain occupation, then negative consequences will probably result if one attempts to be employed in that area. On the other hand, if an individual does not realize his/her full potential or does not have a schema for a particular skill, this could also result in negative consequences. Ultimately, all three factors are important when examining one's career aspirations and occupational goals.

Closely related to the field of ability and self-efficacy is that of self-esteem. In the following section the self-esteem variable will be reviewed in relation to career aspirations and occupational choice.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is a necessary component in the way one views him/herself as well as the world in general. In order for one to remain purposeful and productive in one's life. Herr (1990) suggested the necessity of creating a relationship based on "caring. trust. understanding. honesty. sincerity. acceptance. liking and interest" (p. 40). Such characteristics become a vital link when aiding an individual overcome past negative experiences which have resulted in low self-esteem and self-worth. Herr also suggested that these ingredients are in fact "the healing ingredients by which people can be helped to self-disclose. exhibit trust in another. and communicate their feelings of pain and loneliness that underlie dealing with problems of self-esteem" (p. 40). Johnson (1986) stated that:

> ...confirmation consists of responses from other people in ways that indicate that we are normal. healthy and worthwhile. Being disconfirmed consists of responses from other people suggesting that we are ignorant. inept. unhealthy. unimportant. or of no value. and. at worth. that we do not exist. (p.3)

Canfield (1986) suggested three essential ingredients when considering the self-esteem variable: sense of belonging. competence and "worthwhileness". Similarly. Glaser (1967) stated that the need for love and self worth are the two most basic needs of any person. Self-esteem seems to be a key ingredient when examining a person's emotional development. Thus. when reviewing career aspirations and occupational choice. it becomes necessary to consider one's level of self-esteem.

Dillard (1976) proposed that self-esteem was the most important variable governing behaviour of young adolescents. Otte and Sharpe (1979) and Korman (1966: as cited in McDonald & Jessell. 1992) acknowledged that self-esteem served as a proxy variable with

respect to career attitudes. In contrast however. Strube. Lott. Le-Xuan-Hy. Oxenberg and Deichmann (1986) and Trope (1980. as cited in McDonald & Jessell. 1992). stated that constructs such as attitudes. aspirations. and perceived occupational abilities are not mediated by self-esteem concerns.

As indicated above. many authors have attempted to define self-esteem (Herr. 1990: Johnson. 1986: Canfield. 1986). According to Kaplan (1995). it would appear that most experts tend to agree that self-esteem is closely related to. or is a function of. mastery. Kaplan stated that self-esteem includes many elements such as a combination of self-respect. self-confidence. and competence. He stated that self-esteem originates from competence and accomplishment. which ultimately leads to further success. According to Kaplan. self-esteem is the "belief that what we do. think. feel. and believe matters. and that we can have an effect on our own lives. and on our own environment" (p. 342).

Kaplan (1995) also viewed the self-esteem variable as a cycle. He compared it to the "chicken and the egg" scenario. He discussed how in this cycle. one is faced with initial anxiety when attempting to solve a problem. This anxiety is followed by a period of struggle and perseverance. It is during this time that one must accept mistakes and disappointments. finally achieving mastery to varying degrees. He states that. "when one is able to do today what one was not able to do yesterday. the individual develops an 'I can do it' attitude towards the next learning challenge" (p. 343). It is this cycle that he cited as being critical. Such an experience can lead either to a person taking responsibility for their learning. choices and outcomes or to a person becoming frustrated and placing blame on others for their own shortcomings. thus avoiding difficult situations.

Kaplan (1995) also suggested that if we have not acquired self-esteem then it cannot just be given. regardless of how much positive attention is given to a person. According to Kaplan. self-esteem is something that must earned through individual effort. persistence. mastery and meaningful achievement.

In a study conducted by Hughes. Martinek and Fitzgerald (1985). an examination of how self-esteem differed for the male and female gender. when choosing non-traditional careers. was explored. They discovered that the relationship between self-esteem and non-traditional attitudes and beliefs of females were highly established at the primary level. This study also found that males who displayed high levels of self-esteem maintained sex-role stereotyped attitudes in relation to non-traditional career choices. whereas females who demonstrated high levels of self esteem made less traditional career choices. This study illustrated that childhood attitudes can influence later adult career choices.

Powell (1990) further associated the self-esteem variable with "at-risk" youth. According to Powell. educators have often associated poor self-esteem with "at-risk" youth - that is to say. youth in this category are more likely than others to meet with academic failure and are less likely to complete high school. Certainly. a positive correlation exists between low self-esteem and youth suicide. depression and loneliness (Beard-Guffey. 1987: MacAdams & Bryant. 1987: Sturkie & Flanzer. 1987: as cited in Blake & Slate. 1993).

According to Finn (1989). there are two main theories that describe why students are "at-risk". or choose to consider leaving school. He suggested that one of the problems associated with "at-risk" youth leaving school is a model entitled "frustration self-esteem". This theory hypothesized that poor school performance would lead to a lower self-esteem and subsequently the student places that blame on the school. This theory also suggested that with such negative perceptions. are associated behaviours such as disruption in class. skipping class. or even committing delinquent acts. Finn suggested that these behaviours arise because many times the schools have not provided the programs or support that challenge students and make them feel valuable and competent by teachers and other peers. According to Herr and Cramer (1996). it is important for schools to focus on interventions

that will assist children in developing positive attitudes of self-esteem and ability, thus it is necessary to build structures within the school setting that will motivate students.

Another factor associated with self-esteem is what Finn (1989) called the participation-identification model. This model inferred that students need to be active participants in the school process in order to retain interest in learning. It also stressed the need to feel a sense of belonging, in order to believe in oneself and thus be motivated to learn in school.

The literature (Herr, 1990; McDonald & Jessell, 1992; Kaplan, 1995) affirms the need to help children and youth develop positive self-esteem. This can be achieved through positive communication and interactions with parents, siblings, family, friends, teachers and other significant individuals. Although all relationships are important, the interaction between a child and parent(s) becomes a vital factor when examining career aspirations among youth.

Parental Influence and Role Models

As early as the 1950's, attempts have been made to link occupational choice to role models. Roe (1957) attempted to establish a link between attitudes held by parents and its effect on eventual occupational choices by children. Super (1957) also acknowledged the importance of family on career choices later made by children. Young and Friesen (1992) discussed variables such as social class, maternal employment, family structure, and perceived parental influence when reviewing adolescents' occupational aspirations and attainment, and the range of choices considered.

Super (1975) proposed certain developmental tasks that correspond to the various life stages. He suggested that during a child's development, interactions between the child and the home (as well as the neighbors and the school environment) have the ability to nurture

certain abilities, interests and values. Such relationships can be either positive or negative: nonetheless, all relationships will provide some form of role modeling.

In another study conducted by Super (1963), he proposed that one's self-concept develops through exploration, differentiation, identification, role playing, and reality testing. Similarly, Hoyt (1973) indicated that the "home environment is the foundation for the development of fundamental values, attitudes, and skills which are the central factors of career success" (p.153). Tennyson (1971) however, stressed the importance of the teacher's role in career development and career education.

In the 1970's many researchers (Baruch, 1974; Holland, 1973; Jackson, 1974; Oliver, 1975; as cited in Chartrand, 1991) became interested in, not only, parental influence on children but further expanded the research to include the relationship between parental influences, childhood attitudes and experiences, and career development. Palmer and Cochran (1988) examined the necessity for parental involvement in relation to a child's career planning. They suggested that a child's career plan is not just his or her plan, but in fact, it would be more accurate to call it a "family plan".

Many theorists (Kantor, 1977; Kelly, 1989; Raby & Walford, 1981) explored the effects of the family structure and how one's level of employment can affect career aspirations among children. Kantor (1977) discussed the possible threats that can develop in the family structure when examining both the family and the work place. Similarly, Liem and Rayman (1982) addressed the effects of unemployed parents in relation to the stress level experienced by children and other family members. They further identified moodiness, problems in school, and strained relationships with peers as being some of the effects of unemployment in the home. Riegle (1982) expanded on this theory to what is termed a "ripple effect". Riegle inferred that unemployment within a home not only effects the one individual but effects all associated parts.

In a longitudinal study conducted by Kelly (1989), similar results were obtained indicating that "perceived parental wishes" were a strong indicator of career choice. For most children aged 14, perceptions of the type of job their parents wanted them to get were more strongly predictive of their aspirations at age 17 than the children's own wishes at an earlier age. This was true for both males and females. Of particular interest was the strong link established between parental wishes and daughter's aspirations, despite the fact that parents took little notice of their daughter's intellectual ability. In contrast, a son's aspirations were more closely related to their academic ability - although parental wishes were still important. From this study, authors concluded that males aspire to socio-economic status according to their individual abilities, while females aspire to status according to the class background of their family. This supports Raby and Walford's (1981) results regarding the strong influence of parents' perceived wishes on children's job aspirations.

Herr and Cramer (1996) discussed the need for career guidance and career counselling for socially and economically disadvantaged youth. The Business Advisory Commission of the Education Commission of the States (1985), in a national report dealing with the growing problems associated with the alienated, disadvantaged, disconnected, and other "at-risk" youths, recommended, "...new structures and procedures for effecting the transition from school to work to other productive pursuits...Young people today need more guidance than ever (p. 401)".

In a later report written by Herr (1989), it was indicated that one out of every four children under age six can be classified as "poor" according to national standards. Hess (1989) further defined poverty as the "insufficient access to basic goods, services, and opportunities which are commonly available to non-poor individuals and which are accepted as necessary to a decent standard of living" (p.6).

Palmer and Cochran (1988) evaluated a counsellor-free, family-centered program to assist adolescent children (10th and 11th grade students) in career planning. The intervention involved a self-directed workbook (Cochran, 1985) that involved children and their parents forming a partnership and working through the exercises together over a four week period. Reports indicated significant gains for the treatment group in career development and in parental child bonding.

Finally, although not parenting per se, the effect of role models in general on a student's success should also be considered. In study conducted by McWhirter and McWhirter (1995), a comparison was made between students of high and low risk. Results indicated that students who succeeded and overcame life barriers had access to supportive and encouraging teachers. Many of these students appealed to positive role models for emotional support. These students exhibited good social skills, were able to set goals, problem solve, and persist towards attaining whatever they believed would achieve a positive and meaningful life. In contrast, McWhirter and McWhirter (1995) stated that students who were "at-risk" for failure obtained very few of these skills and networks.

Similar results were evident in a report released by the College Board Commission on Pre-College Guidance (1986; as cited in Herr & Cramer, 1996). This report suggested that children of lower socio-economic status often turn to the school for academic support that is not received at home. The report also indicated that as one's socio-economic status declines one's teachers and counsellor become more influential.

As cited above, there are many influences that affect a child's career aspirations and occupational choice. However, the importance of having career aspirations for oneself is vital if one is to follow a dream of any sort in one's life. The importance of having goals is an essential element in obtaining an occupation of choice.

Goals

Career aspirations and occupational expectations have been widely studied over the past decade and have received grounding in many different theoretical perspectives. Gottfredson and Becker (1981) proposed a psychological perspective by stating that individuals begin to develop occupational aspirations early in childhood as they begin to develop concepts of themselves. McNulty and Borgen (1988) suggested that occupational aspirations and expectations emerged from theories originating from a socio-cultural and social-psychological base. Similarly, Mitchell and Krumbultz (1990) discussed how the social learning theory can be used to explain how dysfunctional, inaccurate beliefs can impede the decision making process.

Gottfredson and Becker (1981) further suggested that aspirations and expectations begin formulating as soon as one can begin to develop a self-concept. However, it is also believed that career aspirations and expectations are influenced by economic and sociological factors (Gottfredson, 1981). Sociological theorists, including Hotchkiss and Borow (1990; as cited in Rojewski, 1995) suggested that "systematic bias and structural barriers" (p. 35), created as a function of gender and socio-economic status, can constrain an individual's career alternatives. Consequently career availability, as defined by the environment and economy, may limit aspirations more so than one's self-concept (Gottfredson & Becker, 1981).

Herr and Cramer (1996) suggested the following factors were influential in the occupational decision making process: stereotypes, expectations, ability to take risks and one's aspirations. Holland (1963; as cited in Herr & Cramer, 1996) indicated that individuals will search for environments that they feel will meet their needs and in which they will feel comfortable. He suggested that many occupational decisions are modeled after prestigious positions. Clack (1968; as cited in Herr & Cramer, 1996) stated that high

school students will generally indicate a preference towards higher status jobs, even if such a job may not seem attainable for the individual. Herr and Cramer (1996) indicated that these students, in time, will have to moderate their occupational decision by consideration of such factors as ability, interests, and skills.

Another variable that may be related to the process of occupational choice is that of risk-taking (Ziller, 1957; Herr & Cramer, 1996). Many other researchers (Burnstein, 1963; Mahone, 1960; Morris, 1966) have attempted to connect risk-taking with occupational choice. A later study by Witwer and Stewart (1972) risk-taking was connected with a way of life. Together these authors suggest that individuals who are willing to take higher risks have more opportunities to participate in a wider selection of experiences. This, in turn, may reflect an individual's higher level of self confidence when dealing with life's challenges.

Level of aspiration has also been cited as contributing to one's occupational choice. This variable has often been associated with self-esteem. Self-esteem positively correlates with one's level of occupational aspiration (Prager & Freeman 1979; Herr & Cramer, 1996). Similarly, Walls and Gulkus (1974) suggested that congruency between expectations and aspirations depend on past successes and failures (which in turn would be reflected by self-esteem).

As early as the 1900's, three important criteria for choosing an occupation were recognized (Parsons, 1909); specifically: a) understand yourself, b) have a knowledge of work, and c) "true reasoning" wherein one's personal characteristics are matched with one's work desires. Holland (1985) suggested a similar model in which one chooses a work place suitable to one's personality.

Most theorists agree (Forster, 1992; Holland, 1985) that self understanding and self knowledge are essential components when developing one's occupational expectations and career aspirations. Forster (1992) discussed a model, as proposed in earlier work by Kelly

(1955), called Personal Construct Psychology. By using this rationale, he reviewed a structured career intervention entitled GROW (The Goals Review and Organization Workbook) whereby participants learned to articulate their goals by becoming more aware of themselves, thus learning to communicate new findings about themselves. Bannister and Mair (1968; as cited in Forster, 1992) indicated that "personal constructs are structures which facilitate the better understanding of future events" (p. 176). Thus, according to Forster (1992), when individuals learn to articulate their goals from personal constructs that they themselves have developed, they should have a greater understanding of these goals and thus be more empowered to work towards them. He suggested that understanding one's future goals can help individuals choose high, yet realistic, expectations—allowing them to find environments in which these goals are attainable.

Having career aspirations and occupational goals are vital for all individuals. However, many individuals feel that their futures are not guided by their own will to succeed but instead by uncontrollable events. This concept is known as locus of control and is often reviewed in relation to one's internal and external locus of control. This variable will be explored further in the next section.

Locus of Control

Closely related to the area of goals is that of locus of control. Locus of control originated from the social learning theory which provides an interpretation of the beliefs that people have about the origin and control of events in one's life. Rotter (1966) defined "locus of control" as the degree to which people believe that they are in control of and responsible for what happens to them. A more applied definition by Spector (1988) suggested that locus of control is "a generalized expectancy that reinforcements, rewards or outcomes in life are controlled either by one's actions (internally) or by other forces (externally)" (p. 335).

Lefcourt (1991: as cited in Fournier & Pelletier, 1996) suggested that locus of control allows one to develop a better understanding of why some individuals act when faced with difficulties while others feel powerless and defeated when faced with the same problems. Carver and Scheier (1981: as cited in Fournier & Pelletier, 1996) suggested that this may be because of an individual's prior experiences that are used to "guide" his/her future. According to Folkman (1984), one's beliefs about control are vital in determining how one evaluates and copes with potential threats and difficulties that arise in life.

Taylor (1982: as cited in Luzzo & Ward, 1995), summarized the role of locus of control in relation to the career development domain stating that:

> Individuals perceiving an internal locus of control tend to view themselves as having more control over and personal responsibility for the direction of their lives than do externals, who are likely to feel themselves powerless to control events. Thus, internally-locused individuals may take both an active role in the direction of their educational/vocational futures and personal responsibility for decision making and for gathering the kinds of information necessary to such decisions. Externals, on the other hand, may believe that vocational plans are largely influenced by chance factors and thus fail to invest time and energy in information-gathering and vocational decision-making activities. (pp. 319-320)

In a more recent study by Cabral and Salomone (1990, as cited in Herr & Cramer, 1996: also see Krause, 1987), career development is discussed in relation to chance encounters. They suggested that individuals who have an external locus of control are more effected by unpredictable events than individuals who have an internal locus of control. Individuals who have an internal locus of control would be less affected by unforeseen events and thus would "attempt to control or diminish the uncertainty they represent, or would embrace

these encounters and events as opportunities to seize and act on" (p. 11). According to Chandler (1985), children who believe that they have control over their life experiences, are ultimately better equipped to deal with life's difficulties.

Throughout the literature, locus of control has been cited as being an important factor when developing occupational goals and career aspirations (Rotter, 1966; Fournier & Pelletier, 1996; Luzzo & Ward, 1995). However, in a study conducted by McNulty and Borgen (1988), discrepancies between ideal versus realistic aspirations were not found to be significantly influenced by grade, gender, or locus of control variables. Regardless of incongruence between studies most theorists agree that with the development of an internal locus of control, individuals will be more able to take control over their own careers and be able to deal with life's unforeseen difficulties more effectively.

The level and degree of motivation, together with attitude towards school, are correlated with the locus of control variable. In the following section, one's motivation and subsequently one's attitude towards school will be reviewed in relation to one's career aspirations and occupational goals.

Motivation and Attitude towards School

Past theories on motivation arise from either the biological or behavioural perspective. The biological perspective focused on the importance of one's basic needs and how they influenced one's behaviour. The behavioural perspective encouraged the development and implementation of behaviour modification practices such as rewards and punishment. However, in recent years, more emphasis has been placed on the development of cognitive theories and how they relate to motivation.

Rogers was one of the first theorists to connect classroom motivation to one's self-concept. Rogers (1983) suggested that motivational strategies should include techniques

that would focus on developing the "whole person" and therefore must address "affective, behavioural and cognitive" aspects of the individual. Rogers (1983) suggested five basic steps when working with students who had motivational challenges: (a) teach new material/skills to the student, (b) encourage the student to be self-motivating, (c) alter a student's behaviour in a positive manner, d) help students judge for themselves their successes - that is, there should be a mechanism for self-evaluation that doesn't require feedback from the teacher, and e) be aware that new information may be seen as a threat, causing anxiety in the student.

Much of Roger's work has been used as a model in establishing current cognitive theories regarding motivation. Weiner (1984) indicated that the underlying premise within cognitive theory is that of the ability to understand and make sense of experiences within one's life. Weiner (1984) suggested that it is this interpretation of life experiences which motivates individuals to perform or not perform within their environments.

Stipek (1984: as cited in Lewis, 1992), determined that children place more value on academic achievement as time passes. She noted that children's beliefs regarding their own academic abilities and expectations for success tends to decline with time. Stipek also stated that children, as they advance through school, become more concerned about grades and less concerned about personal satisfaction from school success. She attributed these changes to the way in which children receive and process feedback, thus affecting motivation.

Weiner (1979; 1984) developed an attribution theory for student motivation. He proposed a three-dimensional model whereby locus of control, constancy and responsibility all inter-related to affect motivation. Weiner concluded that students were most highly motivated when they attributed their successes and failures to effort, rather than ability or luck, since effort allowed individuals not only to control but also to change unfavorable outcomes.

Lewis (1992) connected the attribution theory to self-esteem. He suggested that the theory of learned helplessness may be significant in explaining why students often lack in motivation. Seligman, Maier and Geer (1968) first used the term "learned helplessness" to refer to "the learned or perception of independence between the emitted response of an organism and the presentation and/or withdrawal of aversive events" (p. 256). Consequently, by receiving consistent negative feedback from previous failures, subjects often 'learn' the inappropriate perception that they are unable to control failure or success.

Dweck (1986; as cited in Lewis, 1992), proposed that achievement behaviour was related to goals that children acquire in learning situations. She stated that children who were motivated towards acquiring new information or skills were "working toward learning goals and would seek challenges, persist in spite of obstacles and exert substantial effort towards mastery". Deiner and Dweck (1978) implied that with the proper training of task relevant cognitions, children could learn to focus on attributing one's failures to effort (or lack of knowledge) as opposed to ability. If children could monitor their cognitions and participate in self-instruction and self-monitoring a more successful approach to learning may result.

All of the above theories attempt to explain why learned behaviours can influence one's motivation, self-esteem, locus of control and ultimately one's attitude towards school. It is impossible to account for lack of motivation or attitude towards school through one variable. Like most constructs, there are many influences which consolidate and affect the whole person and thus it becomes difficult to separate each component. According to Farmer (1985), career motivation consists of three dimensions including career commitment, mastery motivation and career aspiration. Farmer suggested that this model is composed of background, personal and environmental factors that can ultimately should used to predict each of the motivational dimensions. Thus, these factors must be considered when examining motivational and attitudinal factors with "at-risk" youth.

The above literature review examined some of the research and its findings associated with career aspirations and occupational choice and how it relates to "at-risk" youth. All research however, must have some basis in theory. Theory allows one to not only identify the findings but it can also provide ideas in relation to possible intervention strategies that can be used to bring about change in unwanted behaviours. According to McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), the use of theory in practice "provides counselors and clients with direction and focus for the counseling for career development process, assisting clients to reach their goals or resolve their problems" (p. 64). Following is a brief review of select theories associated with career development.

Theories of Career Development

In this section, a brief review of the Trait and Factor theory, the Developmental theory, and the Needs theory will be discussed. A more in-depth review of the Sociological, the Social Learning and Cognitive theories will be examined due to its relevance to the present study. Further implications for counsellor interventions and strategies will be examined for the Sociological, Social Learning and Cognitive perspectives.

Over the past 50-60 years, many new developments have come about in the area of career development. Even though it continues to evolve, what is presently known provides a sound basis for helping children and youth make occupational and career decisions. This present section provides an overview of select theories that have attempted to identify and interrelate the various factors which influence the process of career choice.

Trait and Factor

The trait and factor theory evolved from studies focusing on individual differences coupled with the later development of the psychometric movement. This theory assumed that individuals had unique patterns of ability or traits that could be objectively measured and correlated with various types of jobs. The trait and factor theory focused on matching individuals traits with the requirements of a specific occupation thus. solving the career search dilemma.

Parsons (1909) was among the earliest theorists who proposed a three stage process to career counselling. He suggested: (a) the need to assess the individual. (b) the need to survey occupations. and (c) the need to match the individual with the occupation.

Over the past four decades the trait and factor theory has been challenged. Studies by Thorndike and Hager (1959) and Ghiselli (1966: as cited in Zunker. 1981). caution against the hazards of over reliance on test results as predictors of future career success. The assumptions that there is a single career goal for everyone and that career decisions are based on measured abilities (Herr & Cramer. 1996) are openly challenged. Zunker acknowledged the usefulness of the trait and factor theory as a component of the career counselling process. but considered the approach to be too narrow for independent use.

Developmental Theories

Although there have been many theorists associated with the developmental approach. Donald Super seems to have received the greatest amount of attention. Super's theory expanded on older theories including additional factors such as the importance of one's interests and self concept in the career decision making process. Super (1953: as cited in Zunker. 1981) proposed a series of five stages of vocational development.

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 pre-retirement considerations. work output. and eventual retirement. (Zunker. 1981. p.10)

Super also developed a framework for vocational behavior and attitudes which consisted of five vocational developmental tasks through which an individual passes in his/her career development. These include: crystallization. specification. implementation. stabilization and consolidation.

According to Zunker (1981). the completion of the appropriate tasks at each level. by an individual. was an indication of that person's career maturity. Within this theoretical framework. a longitudinal study was conducted by Super and Overstreet. (1960: as cited in Zunker. 1981) studying the vocational development of ninth grade boys. Results indicated a relationship between career maturity and adolescent achievement and that the assessment of vocational behaviours had predictive validity for the future. Super found that boys who successfully accomplished developmental tasks at period stages tended to achieve greater maturity later in life.

Super takes a multifaceted approach to the career development process. His model included many components including knowledge of self. knowledge of the world of work.

decision making skills, ability to accept responsibility, and basically, the ability to view one's career as a lifelong process.

Super's theory offers valid explanations of developmental concepts which have generally been supported (Osipow, 1973; as cited in Zunker, 1981). Zunker suggested that Super's theory is "highly systematic" and thus very useful for developing objectives and strategies for career counselling. Super's focus on the self concept, career development as a lifelong process, as well as his concept of vocational maturity are highly recognized and applied to the field of career counselling.

Needs Theories

Roe and Holland are often associated with the needs theories. The general assumption underlying these theories is that individuals select their occupations to satisfy their psychological needs.

Roe's main focus was on the influence of early parent-child relations in determining career direction. Roe believed that it was the basic parental attitude toward the child rather than specific child rearing techniques that shaped the child's needs structure and the style for satisfying the child's needs.

Roe's work generated considerable research, but she obtained little support for her theory (Osipow, 1973). Due to the nature of her work the validation of parent-child interactions on later vocational choices was a difficult connection to make. Differing parental attitudes and subsequent interactions within families presented such an overwhelming number of variables that no study could be sufficiently controlled.

Like Roe however, Holland (1973; as cited in Zunker, 1981) maintained that individuals were attracted to given careers because of their personalities and backgrounds. While implicitly developmental, the theory emphasized both hereditary and environmental factors

as major determinants of career choice. Holland believed that an individual is the product of his/her heredity as well as his/her sociocultural milieu. Thus, out of experiences obtained from peers, family, and friends, one will develop habitual preferences when reacting to environmental demands. Holland called this preferred style of dealing with environmental tasks "modal personal orientations".

Holland proposed a classification system of six work environments and personality styles which included the following: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. Holland assumed that individuals could be grouped according to their personality type. He felt that although individuals did not necessarily fit into one specific category, they could fit into two or three categories.

Holland's theory of vocational personalities and work environments have important implications for career guidance. Holland's theory aids in the career exploration and decision making process, enables and encourages client knowledge, and finally, can help clients analyze their career behaviours.

Sociological and Social Learning Theories

McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), discuss career development in relation to socio-economic variables. They indicated that theorists in this group assume that one's socio-economic background is an important factor when considering occupational choice and career aspirations. They suggested that such factors as "occupation and income level of parents, education level of parents, gender, race, ethnic group, religion, place and type of residence, family stability, size of family, birth order, value of peers, school environment and community all affect one's occupational choice" (Hotchkiss & Borow, 1990; as cited in McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992, p. 41).

Sociological theories tend to emphasize the notion that circumstances are beyond the control of the individual and that chance is a contributor to the decision making process. According to Zunker (1981). sociological theorists view career choice as a series of interrelated decisions involving the individual's biological. social. and environmental conditions. However. although determinants of the career choice process. they are considered beyond the control of the individual. This model identifies the biological and social elements of career development. as well as. the situations which influence its development yet ignores external influences.

The social learning approach represents a slightly different approach in that it emphasizes the importance of learning experiences and their effect on occupational selection. Krumboltz. Mitchell. and Gelatt (1975) emphasized four variables in their approach: genetic endowments and special abilities. environmental conditions and events. learning experiences. and task approach skills. Krumboltz and his colleagues suggested that an individuals learning experiences throughout one's life span act as the primary influence that guides one into career choice. Thus. since career decision making is a lifelong process. it should be taught in education and career-counselling programs. Closely related to the social learning theory is the socio-economic systems theory.

The social learning theory introduces many variables of a complex nature. Social learning theorists. Bandura (1972) and Goldstein (1988). emphasized the importance of motivation and personal/social competence. According to the social learning theory. social skills. anger control. moral development. problem solving. empathy skills. and cooperation with others are important for adolescent success (Goldstein. 1988). Although work has been done in this area the process of empirical validation of results needs further support.

Individuals who support this approach believe that due to the effect of one's environment. counsellors working with students in less privileged environments should

provide clients with the opportunity to expand on their experiences through structured career intervention groups. Furthermore, socio-economic theorists further attempt to expose clients to alternative choices in relation to the career development process. These theorists also accept cultural experiences as being a part of life and thus, draw from these backgrounds and experiences. Finally, socio-economic theorists believe that counsellors need to help clients perfect adaptive skills so that they can function more effectively in the ever changing economy.

Cognitive Theories

The application of cognitive theories to career development is a fairly new approach. As cited in McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), many theorists including Bandura, Beck, and Meichenbaum laid the groundwork for the application of cognitive psychology to therapy. Others have extended this view to include career development (Keller, Biggs, & Gysbers, 1982).

Rest (1974, as cited in McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992) indicated that all cognitive theories are based on three basic concepts: structural organization, developmental sequence and interactionism. Structural organization refers to models which require individuals to act as "active interpreters" of their own environment and situations. According to McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), they suggested that "individuals selectively attend to certain stimuli, arrange these stimuli in a meaningful pattern, and develop principles to guide behavior and solve problems" (p. 60). This processing of information has been termed "cognitive schemas". It is further suggested that one's cognitive schemas will determine how one views oneself as well as others. They proposed that in order to change one's behaviours, ultimately one must alter or change one's cognitive self schemas.

The second concept proposed by Rest (1974: as cited in McDaniels & Gysbers. 1992) was developmental sequence. This refers to a process experienced when an individual progresses through various sequential and hierarchical stages. Knefelkamp and Slepitza (1976: as cited in Osipow. 1983) developed this approach by focusing on nine areas of change. These areas included: (a) locus of control - shifting from an external to an internal. (b) analysis - the ability to break a subject done into its parts. (c) synthesis - the ability to put a subject back together again in a complex form. (d) semantic structure - the ability to deal with nature of language in concept use. (e) self-prophecy - the ability to become increasingly aware of the factors that define one's self. (f) increasing openness to alternative perspectives. (g) ability to assume responsibility. (h) ability to assume new roles and. (i) ability to take self risks. largely in terms of exposing one's self-esteem to risk.

According to Knefelkamp and Slepitza (1976). each of these nine areas represented increasing maturity. Knefelkamp and Slepitza (1976: as cited in Osipow. 1983) also discussed the stages that individuals encountered as they moved towards the end of the continuum and further grouped them into four broader categories. These include: (a) Dualism - is seen in simple and dichotomous thinking about career decision making. Here individuals rely on others to help make decisions for them. (b) Multiplicity - at this stage individuals realize their ability to make right and wrong choices and recognize that their development and decision processes are complex. Individuals begin to engage in analysis. (c) Relativism - here an individual switches from an external to an internal point of reference. but continues to involve the exploration and implementing that is needed. This stage ends with a sense of motivation to create some order and clarity to the process and decision. and (d) Commitment to Relativism - one's choice of career is now viewed as a personal commitment. The individual takes responsibility for the career decision making process (p. 61).

Although the cognitive approach as outlined by Knefelkamp and Slepitza (1976) is recognized, one can note that according to Osipow (1983), the data gathered, as well as the outcomes and interventions delivered are said to be "soft" and difficult to measure. However, it is felt by cognitive theorists that development or progression results from interactions experienced between an individual and the environment.

The final element as proposed by Rest (1974, as cited in McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992), is called interactionism which indicates a need for individual maturity or readiness which must be matched with environmental opportunity in order for growth to occur within an individual. They further suggested that growth requires that individuals be confronted with environmental stimuli that the individual does not feel capable of dealing with. At this point individuals must reorganize their thinking to accommodate incongruenicies within self-schemas.

McDaniels and Gybsers (1992) listed five cognitive approaches that can be used when working with clients from a cognitive perspective. These include: guided career fantasy exploration, rational emotive therapy, elimination of dysfunctional cognitive schemas, self-instruction techniques, and cognitive self-control.

McDaniels and Gybser's (1992) first cognitive intervention strategy is guided career fantasy exploration. In this process, clients are asked to consider a typical workday in the future. The guided fantasy allows the client to image the various roles that he/she may be involved with or would like to be involved with, in the future. Guided fantasy has been further described by Brown and Brooks (1991), as being a five-phase process, including "induction, relaxation, fantasy, reorientation, and processing" (p. 308). Brown and Brooks (1991) further stated that this technique can be used by counsellors to deal with various aspects of career choice and adjustment problems.

The second cognitive intervention strategy that McDaniels and Gybser's (1992) identified as an effective strategy in career counseling is a technique known as rational

emotive therapy. McDaniels and Gybser's (1992) defined rational emotive therapy as the process in which irrational thought processes are challenged and participants are encouraged to develop more rational beliefs about themselves. This process teaches individuals how to change negative or nonproductive feelings into neutral or positive feelings. According to Gladding (1995), although people are permitted to feel as much emotion as they want about events, this approach allows the individual to control their emotion by switching their focus to their thoughts. By doing this, Gladding (1995) proposed that individuals can make better-informed decisions and thus, relate more positively to themselves and others.

The third cognitive intervention strategy proposed by McDaniels and Gybser's (1992) is elimination of dysfunctional cognitive schemas. This strategy focuses on directing one's effort towards the identification and elimination of making decisions based on limited knowledge, exaggerating the negative or ignoring the positive aspects of a career event, blaming oneself too often for negative occupational occurrences, and only considering extremes.

McDaniels and Gybser's (1992) fourth cognitive intervention strategy is one in which the client is taught self-instruction techniques. This strategy teaches participants the art of "self-talk". According to Gladding (1995), self-talk is an internal message that processes, that influences the mental health and actions of individuals. This process allows one to identify goals, possible barriers, alternative solutions, and praise.

Finally, McDaniels and Gybsers (1992), discussed the effectiveness of using cognitive self-control as a technique in career counselling. Participants, using this strategy, are taught to seek information that will aid them in the career decision making process. Participants are also taught to further monitor their behaviours by providing both self-reinforcement and self-punishment to bring about desired behaviours.

This kind of approach is evident in a study conducted by Ellis (1977) and Feineler and Ecton (1986). These researchers stressed the need for adolescents to exhibit behaviours such as self control, initiation of activities with others, motivation, problem solving, and coping with stress. Related to this approach is the need for many adolescents to learn how to manage their anger.

The cognitive based theory, along with the sociological theory, provides the framework for the present study. Further models in career development expand on the above stated theories and will be reviewed briefly below.

New Models for Career Development

Over the past 10-15 years many new theories for career development have evolved. Many of these theories incorporate old ideas with a new way of thinking. Interventions are proposed identifying appropriate strategies for dealing with clients lacking in career aspirations and occupational goals. In the following section, the need for viewing one's career as a life long process is examined and is further connected to the present day research literature and the need for career interventions.

Researchers have identified many skills necessary for promoting adolescent success. These skills include: the need for interpersonal communication skills among adolescents and their families (Serena, 1991), social skills (Serna & Lau-Smith, 1995), and the use of self direction and management skills when aiming for student success (Watson & Tharp, 1993).

Herr (1990) discussed the need for personal flexibility in today's global economy. He discussed the need for nations to empower and facilitate personal flexibility, individual competence, purpose and productivity - since these skills do not appear spontaneously. He further stated that the concept of life-long learning is no longer only relevant to segments of

the working population but is a necessary component for any individual seeking future growth. He claimed that in order to achieve life-long learning, individuals must be equipped with basic academic skills such as literacy, numeracy, and communications. Herr expanded his theory on personal flexibility to include adaptive skills. Such skills include coping and decision making skills, occupational employability skills, work survival skills and career development skills.

Super (1985) stated that career maturity in adolescence entails planning, exploration, information, decision making and reality orientation. However, as cited in Herr (1990), career development not only involves the culturing of physical and cognitive skills, but it also nurtures the development of one's interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. These skills enhance the initiation, development and maintenance of relationships. They encompass the ability for self disclosure, communicating feelings accurately and unambiguously, being supportive, conflict resolution, assertiveness, decision making, values clarification, anger management, self control, and relaxation management.

Amundson (1989) discussed personal flexibility in relation to competence. Amundson (1989) stated that competence not only refers to a state of "being" but also to a state of "doing". A competent person is one who has the capacity to adequately deal with emerging situations. Amundson included eight components in his model of competence including: (a) a sense of purpose, (b) self/other and organizational understanding, (c) communication and problem solving skills, (d) theoretical knowledge and understanding of facts and procedures, (e) practical experience, (f) a supportive organizational context, (g) support network, and (h) self confidence, including acceptance of oneself, the strength to learn from mistakes and perseverance.

Schools today are attempting to equip their students with these vital skills. Career counselling helps encourage and promote self-understanding in their students, life options, conflict resolution and social skills, as well as the basic skills that prepare them for the

work force. Herr (1990) stated that counselling towards personal flexibility will not only be an active. collaborative. and goal directed journey. but will also be a mechanism that frees individuals from "negative attitudes. irrational beliefs. information deficits. and low self-esteem"(p.39). He envisioned a career awareness that would overcome self-imposed or environmental barriers. increase one's self-worth. dignity and ambition. ultimately evolving feelings of confidence and competence.

Herr and Cramer (1996) stated that career counselling and career guidance operate at the critical point between individuals and their environments. Subsequently. it becomes important for counsellors to equip youth with the necessary skills that will help them exist in today's changing world.

Career counselling has become less of a matter of providing information and more about providing skills training. support and encouragement. Herr and Cramer (1996) present a mandate for counsellors to consider when helping youth develop such skills. Herr and Cramer (1996) stated that counsellors need to help adolescents consider future alternatives. sharpen their values. deal with their individual search for meaning and spirituality. understand more about their strengths and weaknesses. and furthermore. be able to identify and learn the skills necessary to live more purposeful and productive lives.

Herr and Cramer (1996) also discussed the need for counsellors to prepare clients for change. Many individuals do not the have adequate skills to cope with the many changes that occur in their lives. Herr (1990) viewed such difficulties as an opportunity to stimulate growth and avoid crises situations. He suggested that the counsellors role in this situation is to help individuals monopolize on their resources. help them look for new alternatives. and clarify the experience so that the individual can move toward greater stability and change.

The need for the development of comprehensive counselling programs are vital. Herr and Cramer (1996) addressed the need for such programming in relation to the

disadvantaged. He identified three areas of caution for counsellors. First. he discussed the need for counsellors to remain objective. He stated that counsellors must avoid blaming victims of social circumstances for having negative attitudes towards the self or others. He also discussed the need to avoid stigmatizing or glamorizing unemployment as a life style. He further encouraged counsellors to assist youth and their families in gaining a perspective on unemployment but not to accept it as personally inevitable or as a condition from which they cannot escape. Second. he discussed the need for counsellors to assist individuals in examining the range of community resources available to them. He emphasized the need to help people see themselves as part of the system. rather than as social isolates. Finally. he informed counsellors that they must be aware of those who are among the disadvantaged and unemployed that are likely to need "more than support". He identified this clientele as having multiple problems such as: lack of basic skills. family discord. drug and alcohol problems.

Pryor and Ward (1985) recommended the use of the following techniques: relaxation training. systematic desensitization. assertiveness training. modeling. video role play. psychological assessment and job search skills (pp. 4-14). Borgen and Amundson (1984) also included such skills as: effective listening. job search support groups. retraining and reassessment of self and values. Herr and Cramer (1996) stated that such career counselling is critical to providing a sense of purposefulness and self-efficacy that will reduce levels of hopelessness and despair among the disadvantaged.

Another theory that has received much attention over the years is 'Constructivism'. Constructivism builds on earlier work done on Personal Construct Theory as described by Kelly (1955). Kelly (1989: as cited in Neimeyer. 1992) first developed the theory of personal construct by recognizing the important roles played by anticipation. self-agency. and personal interpretation. Kelly (1989: as cited in Neimeyer. 1992) suggested that individuals make sense of events by abstracting salient themes from perceived similarities

and contrasts in their experience. These similarities and contrasts are known as constructs which help determine one's direction in life.

Constructivism has been defined as a way of thinking about people. events and problems (Fisher. 1991). Fisher suggested that one needs to understand how we construct our experiences. how that bears upon our actions. and how to work with these understandings.

Constructivism has received lessened support since it requires one to accept that simple solutions to human problems are seldom available. Fisher (1991) discussed each of us in relation to our participation in "life's drama". He stated that everyone's drama may be different depending on the meanings that we give to events and how we impose those meanings on others. Constructivists takes the position that we are in control of what we do and who we become in life. According to the constructivists view. it assumes that it is always possible to give different meanings to events. It implies that choice is always available to us and that each individual must determine his/her own meaning.

This model of change is very process oriented. It assumes that change is a reflective process derived from our construing and reconstructing events in our lives. Constructivism does not strive for the ideal but helps us recognize that we are in a continuous process of constructing the realities in which we live. The goals we set for ourselves are not the ends in themselves but rather the way in which we give meaning to our realities.

The constructivist's approach assumes that the person is directed towards understanding one's experiences more fully and giving meaning to it. Thus. personal experiences become vital elements in the process of meaning-making and one's career choices. Peavy (1992) stated that:

> 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. (p.9)

Such views in counselling provides individuals with the skills to take control and responsibility of their lives. thus. helping them cope with any situation that they will encounter in their lives. The ability to examine a situation. look for alternatives. access one's resources and have a belief in oneself. are vital elements for succeeding across the life span.

Strategies are needed to develop self-esteem and career training for youth. Youth living in lower socio-economic areas need this training and focus on career development probably even more than youth from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Attitudes about the world of work often become imposed on these children and attainable goals are never nurtured because of societal attitudes and expectations. Youth are given gender appropriate roles and any deviation outside of this norm is not considered acceptable.

In the following section. the investigator will examine some strategies and interventions that are presently being used in career counselling programs. A rationale will be provided in respect to present therapies that are being used and new theories which focus on brief interventions. Finally. the need for an evaluative process when using such strategies will be reviewed.

Nature of Interventions

The nature of interventions for "at-risk" youth vary greatly according to area and philosophy. There are however. many characteristics that remain constant when measuring success or effectiveness of programs for "at-risk" youth.

In a resource book developed by Spain and Dyke (1993), over 400 individual programs were profiled within Newfoundland and Labrador. The majority of these programs targeted high school students addressing specific concerns and difficulties preventing the students from reaching their full potential. The primary goal of many of the programs was to provide personal, academic, and/or career support in order to prevent "at-risk" youth from dropping out of school.

Wehlage and Rutter (1987), in a review of alternative programs, found that "at-risk" students responded positively to an environment that combines caring relationships, personalized teaching and a high degree of program structure which has clear but attainable expectations. Boyer (1983) conducted a study in American high schools and found that close relationships between a student and a teacher or counsellor provided positive results. Such programs provide the student with a trusted role model allowing for high standards yet, allowing goals to be reachable.

Hamilton (1986) compared a number of successful programs targeting "at-risk" youth and found the following characteristics to be common: (a) separation of the "at-risk" youth from the general population in the school, (b) strong vocational component, (c) out-of-classroom learning and (d) small group and individualized instruction, offering more counselling than regular schools.

Mann (1987) discussed effective programming for "at-risk" youth as needing the four C's- Cash, Care, Computers and Coalitions. Specifically, Mann felt that in order to facilitate effective programming one would need sufficient funding, a caring staff, the use of computer assisted learning with support from teachers and parents as well as support from local businesses and communities.

Morris, Pawlovich and McCall (1991) identified specific strategies used to reduce risk among potential early school leavers. They categorized strategies with respect to the nature of the identified goals and the means used to achieve those goals. They grouped each of the

strategies under four basic goals. These include: (a) prevention strategies (elementary schools and earlier). (b) intervention strategies (junior high and senior high school). (c) school to work transition strategies (prior to and after leaving school) and (d) re-entry strategies.

The present study is characterized by the "School to Work Transition" group. Strategies in this category attempt to provide support to "at-risk" students by encouraging them to stay in school. This is achieved by implementing programs that strengthen the relationship between school and employment. thereby making schooling more relevant to the student and making the school experience more relevant to the labor market. Examples of this type of intervention include cooperative education programs. work orientation workshops. vocational counselling. career awareness programs. and school-business partnerships.

According to Morris. Pawolvich. and McCall (1991). the following strategies were reported as being the most effective when working with "at-risk" youth. These include: (a) increasing and improving parental involvement. (b) introducing quality Kindergarten programs. (c) providing comprehensive support in reading and mathematics. (d) mentoring programs. (e) individual instruction for "at-risk" children. (f) use of teachers as mentors. (g) work readiness programs. (h) tutoring programs. (i) alternative programs and flexible scheduling. (j) school-based management/effective school programs. (k) staff development programs and (l) collaborative school-based community programs.

Most of these strategies require long-term planning and commitment from all involved (parents. teachers. counsellor. and students). Although conventional theorists promote this type of program. there has been. in recent years. a movement promoting short-term interventions and strategies. One such approach has been labeled "Brief Therapy" (Metcalf. 1995).

Brief therapy tends to promote competency-based and solution-focused interventions. It attempts to find efficient. yet brief methods of approaching problems by concentrating on

"exceptions" or times when a problem was less evident. Many of the principles associated with the brief therapy approach has its grounding in cognitive theory. It promotes modification of thought processes and incorporates many cognitive strategies including cognitive restructuring, self-instruction techniques and cognitive self-control. According to Metcalf (1995), brief therapy promotes a solution-focused way of thinking. By externalizing problems, learning to access one's allies and resources, as well as providing hope and encouragement, clients learn how to develop realistic goals and further make them a reality.

Brief therapies are cited to have many advantages. Probably one of the most obvious of these, as the term suggests, is that they are short in nature. Time commitment to programs has long been cited as problematic when implementing long-term interventions. Frequently, there is attrition or participants attend meetings sporadically, thus marginalizing the effectiveness of programs. Also, in today's age of accountability and economic uncertainty, many individuals are searching for solutions that are not only fast, but also inexpensive. Brief therapies often avoid such barriers. One such program that has been accepted nation-wide in Canada is a program entitled "Engage". This program is short-term yet dynamic in nature. It goal is to provide participants with a process-oriented approach to career development, thus aiming to empower participants to take control of their lives and learning.

However, brief therapy—and short term interventions in general—are frequently criticized. McDaniels and Gybsers (1992) provide a cautionary note emphasizing the need for long-term interventions. They suggest that less emphasis should be placed on short-term interventions because of reduced exposure (and therefore presumably effective treatment) to clients. Instead, they promote comprehensive and developmental approaches to career counselling.

Although many studies of career development have been conducted, both short and long-term, many of these studies or interventions have never been evaluated. According to Herr and Cramer (1996), due to the limited evaluative work, "distribution of research about the many forms of career assistance is uneven" (p.705). Trantoe (1970) defined evaluation as "essentially an effort to determine what changes occur as a result of a planning program by comparing actual changes with desired changes and by identifying the degree to which the activity is responsible for the changes" (p.3). According to Herr and Cramer (1996), evaluation cannot occur unless time has gone into planning an activity and the evaluator is clear on goals to be accomplished. In summary, an evaluation provides a means to obtain feedback in relation to the overall effect of a particular program. It provides insight into whether or not the program is achieving its goals as well as providing valuable information that can improve the program being studied. Such a process is vital in determining the level of usefulness and success in programs with varying goals and outcomes.

In summary, it would seem that there is no single approach that will totally eliminate "at-risk" students. The most effective approach, according to conventional theorists, seems to be one that co-ordinates the school, the family, the community and social service agencies, providing long-term and continuous support to identified clients. Such a coordinated approach seems to encourage development of a comprehensive set of strategies that mutually reinforce each other in order to enhance the achievement of disadvantaged students. However, more recently theorists have proposed more immediate and short-term programs.

According to Herr and Cramer (1996), research has shown repeatedly that career interventions in general do produce positive results. They further suggest that, regardless of the intervention used, evaluation is an important component to the implementation of any career counselling program. Frequently, within the spectrum of career interventions available, the extent of the theoretical development, as it relates to the program and its

evaluation, seems to lack in consistency. Consequently, evaluative procedures must be stressed during the study of any career intervention.

Summary

The discipline of career development has progressed greatly since its inception. From the early thinking of Frank Parsons to more recent theorists such as Markus and Herr and Cramer, significant developments become apparent. Over the years many researchers have attempted to establish links between career development and other variables such as socio-economic status, gender, ability, self-efficacy and self-schemas, self esteem, role models, goals, locus of control as well as motivation and attitude towards school. Many of these variables are interrelated and thus it becomes difficult to measure the variables independently.

In the present chapter, the above stated variables were reviewed. A description of the target population - the "at-risk" group - was also defined, followed by some of the theories that have grounded present day research. New models for career development were reviewed highlighting theories that promote the need for personal flexibility and lifelong learning (Herr, 1990). The Constructivist theory was examined followed by a section reviewing the effective components of intervention strategies and the need for an evaluative process when implementing career programs.

In this exploratory study, the researcher undertook to examine the variables as delineated above, using a short-term intervention program entitled "Engage". This program has been described by its developers as being dynamic in nature: promoting a process-oriented approach to career development and learning. It focuses on providing knowledge about the career process to participants allowing the participants to assume ownership of their lives and learning thus, becoming active participants in their own career development. As

indicated above, often programs are implemented but the evaluative component is ignored. The present study aims to provide an exploratory evaluation of a short-term intervention program that is currently being used on a national level.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter was to present the overall methodology used in this study. A description is given of the research design. sample population. data gathering procedures. instrumentation used. and overview of statistical analysis.

Research Design

This study. exploratory in nature. implemented and evaluated a national counselling intervention with a group of students enrolled in levels 1. 2. and 3. The students were selected according to school criteria for "at-risk" youth (see following section).

The data were collected though the implementation of a pre- and post-test (student questionnaire) which was developed considering the literature (Chapter 2) as well as the research questions (Chapter 1). The pre-test was administered on April 17. 1996 followed by the post-test which was administered on May 9. 1996. An intense two day workshop was implemented. followed by a student evaluation. The data was examined as per the variables delineated for the study. The student questionnaire focused on evaluating students' perceptions of goals. self-esteem. ability. motivation. attitudes towards school. locus of control. and role models. prior to and after program implementation. Such information was then used to describe the overall effectiveness of the career intervention program as proposed by developers.

Selection of Participants

Participants for this study consisted of 12 high school students (10 male and 2 female) enrolled in levels 1, 2 and 3. The participants were identified by: teacher referral, parent referral and/or self-referral. Criteria for involvement in the study as outlined by the teachers and the counsellor were as follows:

1. Any student missing a number of school days deemed inappropriate by administration and staff.
2. Any student attending classes but in danger of failing courses due to lack of effort or motivation.
3. Any teacher, parent or self-referral that would benefit from participation in the Engage program.

The researcher found that one of the most challenging problems in the initial phase of this program was establishing a sound criteria for identification of "at-risk" youth. The literature indicates that there is no one standard approach applicable to all situations. Thus, for the purposes of this study, students were identified according to level of risk, as perceived by the school.

Procedure

Initial contact for data collection was made with school board officials for the proposed site to elicit permission and support for the study (see Appendix B). The purpose, procedure for data collection, instrumentation, ethical considerations, and data collection schedule were discussed and approved. School board officials granted permission for the

implementation of the program and subsequent study. notifying both the school officials as well as the researcher. by way of letter .

Once approval had been granted from the participating school board. a package was then sent to the cooperating school indicating the purpose for the study. procedure for data collection. instrumentation. ethical considerations. and data collection schedule. The school guidance counsellor and principal were providing full support and cooperation for the study. Planning was initiated by the researcher and guidance counsellor. Participants were identified according to the criteria as outlined above which were further approved by the school principal. A parent letter (see Appendix B). that was pre-approved through ethics and the school board. was sent home to parents identifying items similar to that contained in the school board and school letters. Anonymity of participating students and school was ensured with the added assurance that data would be destroyed after the necessary information was obtained. These efforts resulted in the complete cooperation of all involved parties.

The selection of "at-risk" youth was conducted over a three week period prior to program implementation. Parents and teachers were given an orientation about the purpose and goals of the program. Each student was then informed of the purpose of the program and received a letter stating essential information (see Appendix B). Students were aware. from the beginning. that the program was totally voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. To ensure instrument validity. the researcher administered the student questionnaire to 6 students prior to program implementation. and adapted the questionnaire following the pilot phase.

Three weeks prior to program implementation. the researcher met with participants and discussed the program and research that would be conducted. The researcher first took time to build rapport and to establish the importance of the study with the students. Students were then introduced to the questionnaire and urged to be as honest as possible with their

responses. This instrument was used as a means of measuring students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the intervention (see Appendix A). Students were seated in various areas of the room giving adequate space to ensure confidentiality. The administration of the questionnaire took approximately 30 minutes. During this time program facilitators (the researcher and the guidance counsellor) circulated throughout the room answering questions posed. Questionnaires were then assigned anonymous numbers and stored for later analysis.

One week after the administration of the questionnaire. the dates were scheduled for program implementation. Due to school scheduling constraints. the workshop was scheduled to run on May 7 and May 9. 1996. Students participated in a two day. 10 hour intense workshop over that time. Workshop session began promptly at 9:00 am. and ended at 3:00 PM. with an one hour lunch period in between. Program facilitators followed the outline as proposed by developers as closely as possible. some slight modifications were made.

After completion of the program. students were then asked to complete the post test (student questionnaire). which was administered approximately one month after the administration of the pre-test. Information obtained from pre- and post-test questionnaires was then used to assess the effects of the intervention. Participants attitudes'. self-esteem levels. motivation and occupational aspirations was analyzed in a series of t-tests. Information gained was then used to measure the overall effectiveness of the career intervention program as proposed by developers.

Instrumentation

The participant questionnaire (see Appendix A) was devised based on the objectives and intended outcomes of the program. Many sources guided the development of the

questionnaire (Brake-Brushett. 1995: Holland. 1980: Engage Evaluation. literature review - Chapter 2 and the research questions - Chapter 1).

The participant questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part A required students to give some basic demographics. identify significant individuals in their lives. indicate what their desired and expected jobs might be. school and salary expectations. as well as identify some personal goals. Part B consisted of a list of randomly placed statements ranging from. 1= strongly agree. 2 = agree. 3 = agree. 4 = disagree and 5 = strongly disagree. which were used to measure such variables as self esteem. ability. motivation. attitudes towards school and authority. as well as role models. Questions consisted of varying numbers of statements for each construct to be measured. Part C examined such variables as motivation. time spent on planning. time spent on learning and occupational goals. A final evaluation was administered measuring the perceived effectiveness of the program. as stated by program participants.

Sections A and C were then coded according to a preset scale and data entered according to assigned coding. After data was entered. using the SPSS statistical analysis package. questionnaires were then stored until finalized assessment was complete.

Overview of Statistical Analysis

Upon completion of the collection of data. coding of items were assessed using a preset scale. Data was entered into a SPSS database. Once data was entered. further inspection was conducted for possible errors. Initial descriptives were obtained on all variables (frequency. distribution. means. standard deviation. standard error of measurement. degrees of freedom. level of significance).

To answer each research question as specified in Chapter 1. it was initially planned to construct composite variables based on responses to specific questions. However.

reliability checks for these variables were inconsistent suggesting that construction of composite variables would be inappropriate since sub components of each scale were not well inter-correlated. As an alternative analysis. Student's t-tests. were used to compare responses to each question before and following intervention. In some cases. where multiple responses were required to a specific question. chi-squared analyses were used to compare distribution of scores between pre and post tests. In all statistical tests. an alpha = .10 was assumed because of the exploratory nature of this study.

Summary

This chapter has presented the design of the study and described the procedures used in conducting the research. The research design. discussion of sampling and data gathering procedures. instrumentation and statistical analysis. provided an in-depth description of the methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this chapter an analysis of the data is presented, using the instruments described in Chapter 3. Analyses were performed in an attempt to answer the proposed research questions as stated in Chapter 1. Also, presented in this chapter are data collected in this study on select demographic and research variables which have been associated with "at-risk" youth.

Research Question 1: Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their self-esteem?

The self-esteem variable was assessed by measuring responses to statements about students' perceptions of the value of their contributions to classroom activities as well as to statements indicating probable or possible success in life. This variable was made up of a composite of items that will be examined independently. Each question was analyzed according to results obtained from paired t-test analysis.

1(a) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of the value of their contributions to classroom activities and discussions?

Statements used to measure this variable include "I believe that other students have more to contribute than I do"; "I generally think of myself as being equal to everybody else"; "I will speak up in class if I have something valuable to say"; "My classmates want to hear my opinions"; "I believe that my opinion counts"; "I will speak up in class only if I know my answer is right"; and "I am not afraid to speak up in class". Statements were randomly

assigned throughout the questionnaire and students rated each statement from 1 (="strongly agree") to 5 (="strongly disagree"). In Table 1. the data on the analysis of these statements appear.

Table 1

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to the perceived value of contributions by participants. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. I believe that other students have more to contribute than I do.	3	2.5833 2.6667	.900 1.303	-.20	.845
2. I generally think of myself as being equal to everybody else.	8	2.1667 2.4167	1.115 1.443	-.90	.389
3. I will speak up in class if I have something valuable to say.	15	2.4167 2.0000	1.311 1.044	1.24	.241
4. My classmates want to hear my opinions.	20	2.7500 2.7500	.965 .754	.00	1.000
5. I believe that my opinion counts.	29	2.4167 2.0833	1.240 .996	1.08	.305
6. I will speak up in class only if I know my answer is right.	32	1.9176 2.8333	1.165 1.337	-1.73	.111
7. I am not afraid to speak up in class.	37	2.3333 2.0000	1.303 1.348	.84	.417

1(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their ability to be happy and successful in life?

Table 2

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of their deserving to be happy and successful in life. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. I reward myself when I do something well.	17	2.7500 2.7500	1.288 1.485	.00	1.0000
2. I feel proud of myself when I do something well.	18	2.0833 2.0833	1.240 1.379	.00	1.0000
3. I feel that I deserve to be happy and successful.	42	1.8333 1.5833	.835 .793	1.91	.082*

* significant at p = 0.1

This question was measured according to three separate statements which include "I reward myself when I do something well"; "I feel proud of myself when I do something well"; and "I feel that I deserve to be happy and successful". Table 2 presents the data on these three statements.

There was no change in participant responses on the first two statements between pre- and post-test measurements. However, participants believed significantly more that they deserved to be happy and successful in life (p = 0.082), following the intervention.

Table 3

Post hoc analysis of proxies of socio-economic status (SES) correlated with statements associated with self-esteem. Data given are correlation coefficients. Probabilities associated with individual correlations are given in brackets.

Self-Esteem Question #	Mother's Education Level	Father's Education Level	Pooled Education Level
3	-.273 (.4173)	-.266 (.4285)	-.298 (.3740)
8	.197 (.5619)	-.220 (.5162)	-.010 (.9767)
15	-.104 (.7617)	-.251 (.4571)	-.195 (.5661)
20	.121 (.7232)	-.158 (.6436)	-.018 (.9571)
29	-.261 (.4387)	-.687 (.0194)*	-.521 (.1004)
32	.166 (.6260)	.463 (.1516)	.345 (.2983)
37	.214 (.5273)	.090 (.7932)	.169 (.6204)
17	-.087 (.7904)	-.380 (.2488)	-.256 (.4473)
18	.086 (.8015)	-.016 (.9628)	.039 (.9087)
42	.404 (.2184)	.025 (.9418)	.239 (.4789)

* significant at $p = 0.1$

Further *post hoc* analysis was conducted on the self-esteem variable, in an attempt to correlate it with SES. Because measures of SES were not directly available, a proxy was used instead: specifically, level of parental education. Table 3 indicates results of this analysis. However, because of differences in coding between statements, directions of correlations do not necessarily indicate a direct relationship between SES and self esteem.

In examining the mother's education as a factor, no significant relationships were found on the 10 self-esteem items (5 out of the 10 correlations indicating a direction in favor of the hypothesis). On the father's education, however, 8 out of the 10 pre-test items moved in a direction in favor of the hypothesis, and one of these was a significant correlation (qu.29, $p = 0.0194$). When considered combined, 7 out of the 10 correlations indicating a positive relationship between education level of parents and self-esteem of the participant, although none were significant.

Research Question 2: Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their ability to achieve in life?

This variable examined students' perceptions of present and future ability. The question measuring present ability consisted of three separate statements that were analyzed according to paired t-tests. The question on future ability was analyzed according to results obtained by way of paired t-tests for six separate statements. In general, results indicated that although many of the respondents felt that they did not possess the proper skills at the present time, many believed that they had the ability to learn these skills and would acquire these skills in the future.

2(a) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their "present" ability?

The following statements were examined to measure participants' perception of their present ability: "At the present time I feel that I possess the proper skills to help me reach my goal(s)": 'At the present time I feel that I can learn the proper skills to help me reach my goals"; and "I believe that I can do well in school". Analysis of these statements can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of their "present" ability to achieve in life. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. At the present time I feel that I possess the proper skills to help me reach my goals.	7	2.7500 3.0833	1.215 .996	-.89	.394
2. At the present time I feel that I can learn the proper skills to help me reach my goals.	13	2.3333 1.6667	.985 .985	3.55	.005*
3. I believe that I can do well in school.	44	1.8333 1.6667	.835 .778	.62	.551

* significant at p = 0.1

Results suggested that students were less likely to indicate that they had the proper skills required to help them reach their goals after the treatment, although this difference was not significant. Following intervention, students believed significantly more that they could learn the necessary skills (p = 0.005). Consequently, although many of the students did

not feel that they possessed the proper skills at that time, they did however realize that they had the ability to learn these skills.

The statement, "I believe that I can do well in school", although not significant, did indicate a move in a positive direction following intervention.

2(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their "future" ability?

Table 5

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of their "future" ability to achieve in life. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. I can see myself getting a good job.	2	2.3333 1.6667	.888 .651	2.60	.025*
2. I can see myself attending a post secondary institution.	5	2.5000 2.1667	1.382 1.267	1.17	.266
3. I can see myself being successful in life.	9	2.4167 2.1667	.996 .937	1.15	.275
4. I feel confident that I can finish school.	11	1.9167 1.3333	.793 .492	3.02	.012*
5. I can see myself graduating from school.	12	1.7500 1.2500	.622 .452	3.32	.007*
6. I believe that I can become whatever I choose.	23	1.9167 1.6667	.996 .492	.90	.389

* significant at $p = 0.1$

Future ability was measured according to independent t-tests on six separate statements as well as using descriptives pertaining to one's ability to obtain occupational goals. Independent t-tests were conducted on the following items: " I can see myself getting a good job": "I can see myself attending a post secondary institution": "I can see myself being successful in life": "I feel confident that I can finish school": "I can see myself graduating from school": and "I believe that I can become whatever I choose". In Table 5. the data may be viewed on these statements.

Three of the following statements demonstrated a significant positive shift following intervention. specifically. "I can see myself getting a good job" (p=0.025): "I feel confident that I can finish school" (p=0.012): and "I can see myself graduating from school" (p=0.007). The remaining three statements. although not significant. indicated a positive move.

Frequency analysis was conducted on pre-test responses obtained from the question: "I don't think that I will obtain the occupation I really want because...". Responses were re-coded as: 1= grades not high enough (n = 7). 2 = inability to reach career goal (n = 0). 3 = can't afford training (n = 1). 4 = reluctance to spend further time in school (n = 1). 5 = don't know (n = 0). and 6 = other (n = 3).

Post-test distributions indicated that 50% (6) of respondents replied in the "other" category followed by descriptors such as. "I think that I will get this job" or "If I work harder I will do better". Four students still felt that their grades were not high enough to be able to reach their occupational aspirations. The remaining two students indicated that they either didn't want to spend any more time in school. or that their families could not afford it.

Further *post hoc* analysis was conducted on the self efficacy variable. in an attempt to correlate it with SES. Because measures of SES were not directly available. again. a proxy was used instead: specifically. level of parental education. Table 6 indicates results of this

analysis. However. because of differences in coding between statements. directions of correlations do not necessarily indicate a direct relationship between SES and self efficacy.

Two of the three correlations concerning present ability indicated a negative relationship between self-efficacy and socio-economic status. suggesting that students coming from lower socio-economic environments had lower self-efficacy. This supports research by Gottfredson (1981) and Kelly (1989). With respect to future ability. four out of the six correlations suggested a similar relationship. However. only 2 of the total 27 correlations (nine statements versus each of mother's education. father's education and combined parent education) were significant (qu.11. $r = -0.554$. $p = 0.0768$: qu.44. $r = -0.663$. $p = 0.0261$). both of these measuring future ability against level of the father's education.

Table 6

Post hoc analysis of proxies of socio-economic status (SES) correlated with statements associated with self-efficacy. Data given are correlation coefficients. Probabilities associated with individual correlations are given in brackets.

Self Efficacy Question #	Mother' Education Level	Father's Education Level	Pooled Education Level
7	.185 (.5852)	.069 (.8402)	.141 (.6787)
13	-.111 (.7457)	-.402 (.2202)	-.281 (.4020)
44	-.269 (.4238)	-.663 (.0261)*	-.512 (.1071)
2	.371 (.2616)	.311 (.3527)	.377 (.2536)
5	-.082 (.8104)	-.313 (.3483)	-.217 (.5220)
9	-.019 (.7500)	-.192 (.5707)	-.166 (.6260)
11	-.298 (.3737)	-.554 (.0768)*	-.469 (.1457)
12	-.173 (.6112)	-.434 (.1819)	-.334 (.3160)
23	.447 (.1679)	0 (1.000)	.250 (.4588)

* significant at $p = 0.1$

Research Question 3: Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of the importance of role models in their lives?

This question was analyzed by conducting paired t-tests for four independent questions which measured whether or not students felt they had role models and what their attitude was towards them.

3(a) Did students indicate having significant individuals in their lives who influenced them in a positive way? What was the nature of the relationship and what was their occupation?

Table 7

Frequency distributions on role models and their occupations.

Statement	Percentage		If yes, Occupation		
	Yes	No	Professional	Trades	Unemployed
1. Do you have significant people in your life who influence you in a positive way.	66.7	33.3	25%	63%	12%

Students' perception of having significant individuals who they admired or who influenced them in a positive way, did not change from pre- to post-test. Frequency distributions (see Table 7) suggest that 66.7% of participants indicated having significant individuals in their lives during the pre-test and these results remained the same after treatment. Half of these subjects indicated that an individual within their immediate family was their role model. The remaining 50% indicated that individuals within the distant

family or an acquaintance served as their role model. Frequencies of occupations held by role models indicated that 25% were employed in professional jobs. 63% had a trade job. and 12% were presently unemployed.

3(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their attitude towards authority figures?

Table 8

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of their attitude towards authority figures (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. My teachers will support me in accomplishing my goals.	39	2.1667 2.0000	1.115 1.044	.69	.504
2. I respect people in leadership roles.	22	1.7500 1.6667	.622 .778	.43	.674
3. School is a supportive place for me.	14	2.5833 2.6667	.900 .985	-.43	.674
4. My principal will support me in accomplishing my goals.	24	2.5833 2.5833	1.084 1.165	.00	1.000
5. My Guidance Counsellor will support me in accomplishing my goals.	26	1.8333 1.8333	.835 .996	.00	1.000

This question was measured by identifying specific individuals in roles of authority within the school. and asking students to rate them on a scale ranging from strongly agree

to strongly disagree. Individuals identified in this sample include one's principal. guidance counsellor. and teachers. Students were also asked to rate the statements. "School is a supportive place for me" and "I respect people in leadership roles".

Results suggest (see Table 8). that students' perception of the level of support received from their principal and guidance counsellor remained the same ($p = 1.00$). Responses associated with the statement. "my teachers will help me in achieving my goals" indicated a positive but non-significant shift. Students also indicated a non-significant positive change in response to the statement "I respect people in roles of authority" following treatment.

There was an apparent trend in a negative direction on students' perceptions in the experience of school in their lives. The statement. "school is a supportive place for me". for example. elicited a negative trend. However. caution is suggested in over generalizing the possible implications here as significance was not obtained.

3(c) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their attitudes towards parents?

Two statements were examined when analyzing this question. In responding to the statement "I can talk to my parents about my future goals". students demonstrated a non-significant negative shift. On the statement "My parents will support me in accomplishing my goals". students responded with a significant ($p = 0.096$) negative shift. This would indicate that students believed. after treatment. that their parents were less likely to support them in accomplishing their goals.

Table 9

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of their attitude towards parents. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. I can talk to my parents about my future goals.	4	1.8333 2.0833	.718 1.311	-.71	.491
2. My parents will support me in accomplishing my goals.	16	1.4167 1.8333	.669 1.193	-1.82	.096*

* significant at p = 0.1

Results of analysis for these items (see Table 9) were contradicted by responses obtained on a statement which asked participants to indicate with whom they were most likely to discuss their occupational aspirations. A majority (75%) of respondents indicated that they were more likely to discuss their occupational aspirations with their parents. The other 25% responded that they would discuss their occupational aspirations with either distant relatives or outside acquaintances.

Research Question 4: Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their goals?

A qualitative assessment of each participant's response was examined independently comparing both pre- and post-test data. Results indicate that six out of the twelve participants did not indicate personal or occupational goals in the pre-test questionnaire.

Two students listed relatively vague goals such as "to be wealthy" or "to leave a mark on the world". These two subjects also indicated goals associated with material possessions such as owning an expensive car or ambitions concerning unusual experiences, such as sky diving. The remaining four students indicated common needs such as the completion of their schooling, getting a good job, having good friends, and being able to have and support their families.

For the same question administered in the post-test, results suggest that all participants, except for one, indicated having personal goals. The four students who had initially indicated having definite goals did not change in their response. The remaining seven students listed such goals as wanting to do better in school, wanting to finish high school, attend a post secondary school, getting a good job and having a happy family.

4(a) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their occupational aspirations?

Responses suggest that nine out of the twelve participants indicated having a desired occupation in the pre-test questionnaire. Out of these nine responses, six indicated that they felt that they would obtain their desired job, while the other three indicated that their desired job and their expected job would be different. Three students were undecided about possible occupational aspirations (see Table 10 for the frequency distribution of raw data for this analysis).

Post-test results indicate that all participants had some occupational aspiration at the end of the workshop. Eight of these responses indicated that their desired job and their expected job would be the same. Out of the three undecided responses in the pre-test, one individual indicated an occupational goal and felt that this goal was attainable. The two

other students who was undecided in the pre-test indicated that their desired job and their expected job would be different.

When pre- and post-test scores were re-coded (same/different/undecided). a significant change in distribution of scores was evident following intervention (Chi-squared test. p = 0.04979). Approximately thirty-three percent more subjects indicated that they could achieve their desired occupational goal in the post-test questionnaire.

Particularly interesting in this question is the distribution of occupational choice among participants. Post-test results indicated that seven of the twelve participants wanted to be associated with jobs involving law enforcement (5 police officers. 1 national defense. and 1 conservation officer). Four other participants responded with the same response for both pre- and post-tests. These four individuals seemed to indicate occupational goals requiring more intense post secondary schooling than others: occupations included occupational medicine. criminal law. and veterinarian medicine.

Table 10

Contingency table for student's occupational aspirations. Raw frequencies giving raw data.

		Pre-Test			
	Category	Same	Undecided	Different	Total
	Same	6	1	1	8
Post-Test	Undecided	0	2	2	4
	Different	0	0	0	0
	Total	6	3	3	12

Chi-Square (p = 0.04979)

4(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of salary expectations for their desired job?

Analysis suggests that there were no significant differences between responses made prior to and after program implementation regarding expectation of salary (see Table 11). In the pre-test. 50% of respondents (n = 6) indicated expected earnings of $40-60.000 ("intermediate income") following completion of their schooling. Three students felt that they would be earning $20.000 ("low income") or less. The remaining two subjects indicated that they would earn in excess of $60.000 ("high income"). One respondent did not give a response.

Table 11

Contingency table for student's expectations of salary. Raw frequencies giving raw data.

Expected Salary	Pre-Test	Post-Test
$60.000 or more (High Income)	2	3
$40-60.000 (Intermediate Income)	6	6
$20.000 or less (Low Income)	3	3
No Response	1	0

In general, subjects did not change in their expectations of salary following intervention. However, one member moved from the 'intermediate" to the "high" income group, while the student who did not previously give an expected salary moved into the "intermediate" category, indicating that he would earn between 30-40 thousand per year. Within the entire group, mean expected salary did increase (although not significantly).

4(c) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of post-secondary schooling needed for their desired job?

Pre-test results (see Table 12) demonstrated that 5 of the participants understood that they would require a university education. Two subjects indicated the "other" category (police training school). Two students indicated a trade or technical schools. One participant did not feel that additional schooling would be necessary to obtain his desired job. The remaining two students did not give a response.

Post-test results indicated that two individuals still responded as "other". A slight increase was evident in responses selecting university (n = 6), while two students indicated needing a trades or technical diploma. One individual still believed that he did not need any future training to obtain a job in his desired field. The final participant indicated a "don't know" response, but stated that he would "look into it".

Overall, frequency distributions suggest that there was no significant change in students' perceptions of where they would need to attend school in order to obtain their occupational aspiration (Chi-squared, $p = 0.00092$).

Table 12

Contingency table for student's perceptions of post-secondary schooling needed in order to obtained their desired job. Raw frequencies giving raw data.

		Pre-Test						
	Schools Identified	Other (0)	University (1)	Technical School (5)	Cabot College (6)	Don't Know (7)	None (8)	Missing Value (9)
Post Test	Other (0)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	University (1)	0	5	0	0	1	0	0
	Technical School (5)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Cabot College (6)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	None (8)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Don't know but I will look into it. (10)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Chi-square ($p = 0.00092$)

Research Question 5: Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their locus of control?

This question was broken down into two sections examining both internal and external locus of control. An analysis comparing pre- and post-test responses of independent statements suggest that students were more likely to take control of their lives after exposure to the treatment program.

5(a) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their internal locus of control?

Table 13

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of their internal locus of control . (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. I am in control of who I am and what I achieve.	28	2.333 1.7500	.888 .754	2.55	.027*
2. I have control over my career path.	33	2.4545 2.0000	1.128 .894	1.61	1.38
3. I feel in control of my own learning.	36	1.9167 1.9167	.515 .669	.00	1.000

* significant at p = 0.1

Three items were used in analyzing the above question. Statements included: "I am in control of who I am and what I achieve": "I have control over my career path": and "I feel in control of my own learning". In Table 13. the data on the analysis of these statements appear.

Results pertaining to the statement "I am in control of who I am and what I achieve". indicated a significant difference (p = 0.027) between the pre- and post-test with subjects demonstrating more positive results following intervention. Subjects indicated a non-significant positive shift following intervention in responding to the statement "I have

control over my career path". No differences in response between pre-and post-test were found for the statement "I feel in control of my own learning".

5(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their external locus of control?

Table 14

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of their external locus of control . (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. The future will take care of itself.	10	3.0833 3.6667	1.240 1.497	-1.54	.152
2. Other people (parents. teachers and counsellors) must tell me my career options	25	2.9167 4.3333	1.240 .778	-3.74	.003*
3. I am young. I have lots of time to decide on my future.	30	2.8333 3.0833	1.267 1.505	-1.00	.339
4. Because of the poor economy. there is no point in continuing my education.	35	2.8333 4.1666	.389 .835	-4.69	.001*
5. The poor economy is preventing me from doing well.	38	3.5000 4.2500	1.168 .452	-2.69	.021*
6. I let others talk me into doing things that I don't want to do.	45	4.1667 4.2500	.718 1.055	-.43	.674

* significant at p = 0.1

This question was examined using six independent statements measured by paired t-tests for each. Results (see Table 14) indicated a significant positive shift in responses for the statements: "Other people. (parents. teachers. and counsellors) must tell me my career options" ($p = 0.003$): "Because of the poor economy. there is no point in continuing my education" ($p = 0.001$): and "The poor economy is preventing me from doing well" ($p = 0.021$). Non-significant positive movements in response were recorded in the remaining three statements: "The future will take care of itself": "I am young. I have lots of time to decide on my future": and "I let others talk me into doing things that I don't want to do".

Research Question 6: Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their level of motivation towards school?

This variable was measured using paired t-tests to indicate level of statistical significance. Results indicate that although most factors measuring the motivation variable were not significant. all items did move in a positive direction: favoring the hypothesis that student's perceptions of motivation would improve following intervention. Two items elicited a significant differences between pre- and post-test measures.

6(a) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their motivation to stay in school? Did students indicate reasons why they continued to attend school?

Table 15

Frequency distributions examining why students stay in school. Relative proportions are given.

Statement	Required	Okay and it passes time	Where my friends are
I attend school because	50%	42%	8%

Table 16

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of their desire to learn more practical things in school that will better prepare them for the work place. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. I will finish school.	34	1.6667 1.5000	.888 .798	.80	.438
2. I would like to learn more practical things in school that will better prepare me for the work place.	43	1.5000 1.3333	.674 .651	1.48	.166

* significant at p = 0.1

Although not significant, results suggest that students responded in a favorable fashion to staying in school (see Table 16). It should be noted, however, that on both pre- and

post-tests students indicated a strong desire to stay in school. This would suggest that although not always motivated, students did see the necessity of finishing school.

In a question examining why students attend school (see Table 15), analysis of frequency distributions indicate that 50% of all respondents attended because it was "required". 42% indicated that it was "okay, and it passes time", and 8% said that they attended school because it was "where their friends were".

It appeared that from the statement "I would like to learn more practical things in school that will better prepare me for the work place", students significantly better understood the need to complete their schooling following the intervention ($p = 0.1$), but cited curriculum relevance as being important (see Table 16).

6(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their motivation to learn in school?

Table 17

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of their motivation to learn in school. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. At the present time, my motivation to learn in school is...	Part C #1	3.5833 3.0000	.900 .853	1.86	.089*

* significant at $p = 0.1$

Results indicate that student's perception of their motivation to learn in school increased significantly ($p = 0.089$) following treatment. This would suggest that students had a higher level of motivation after participation in the workshop. Table 17 presents the data for this analysis.

6(c) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests regarding students' perceptions of their involvement in classroom activities and extra curricular activities?

Table 18

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to students' perception of their involvement in classroom activities and extra curricular activities. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. At the present time I have ___ involvement with extra curricular activities within my school.	Part C 3	3.8333 3.4167	1.193 .793	1.10	.295
2. At the present time my involvement in classroom activities and discussions is ___.	Part C 4	3.3333 3.4167	.888 .793	-.29	.777

Students had to rate two statements associated with school involvement prior to and after treatment. These statements were: "At the present time I have ___ involvement with extra curricular activities within my school": and "At the present time my involvement in classroom activities and discussions is ___".

These items were measures that could also be associated with student's self esteem. However, for purposes of this study, these items were used as a measure of students perception of involvement with school related activities as well as a validity measure. These items were not expected to increase significantly due to the time constraints of the program.

Results (see Table 18) indicated that both statements moved towards a positive direction but were not significant. This may suggest that students were more likely to see themselves participating in school activities rather than indicating an immediate change in students levels of participation in school.

Research Question 7: Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their attitude towards school?

This variable was measured by examining five different aspects of participants attitudes towards school, using paired t-tests. Items include statements that measured the importance that students placed on education, their willingness to work harder to achieve goals, time spent on learning, time needed to finish school, and time spent on future planning. Although none of the statements examined for this variable was significant, results did indicate a positive trend.

7(a) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their attitude towards the importance of obtaining a good education?

Table 19

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to students' perception of their attitude towards the importance of obtaining a good education. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. In today's changing world. it is important to do well in school.	1	1.1667 1.0000	.389 .000	1.48	.166
2. School is a stepping stone to life.	21	1.6667 1.5833	.778 .515	.29	.777
3. Getting a good education is important to me.	31	1.5833 1.4167	.996 .515	.80	.438

This construct was measured by examining three separate statements by comparing pre and post-test findings. Statements include. " In today's changing world. it is important to do well in school": "School is a stepping stone to life": and "Getting a good education is important to me". Results (see Table 19) indicate that students responses were more favorable following intervention: however. differences between pre-and post-tests were not significant.

7(b) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of their willingness to work harder in school?

Table 20

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of their willingness to work harder in school. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. I am willing to work hard to finish school and obtain a good job.	19	2.0000 1.8333	.603 .577	1.00	.339
2. I will finish school.	34	1.6667 1.5000	.888 .798	.80	.438

This question was measured by examining two items which required participants to rate the following statements. "I am willing to work hard to finish school and to obtain a good job" and "I will finish school". Results (see Table 20) indicated a slight move in a positive direction but findings were not statistically significant.

7(c) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of time spent on outside learning?

Coding for this question ranged from 1-indicating no time spent on outside learning to 5 -indicating more than an hour. less than 2 hours. A paired t-test indicated that students' perceptions of time spent on outside learning slightly increased. but not significantly so. after treatment (see Table 21). It would seem that students identified accurately from the beginning how little time was spent on outside learning. Frequency distribution analysis indicated that approximately 67% of students indicated spending fifteen minutes or less on

out of school learning per day on the pretest. Post-test results are slightly favorable. indicating that only 50% of participants felt that they spent fifteen minutes or less on outside study. The remaining 50% indicated that they spent at least thirty minutes to an hour on outside learning per day.

Table 21

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of their time spent on outside learning. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. How much time so you spend on outside learning?	Part C #6	3.6667 2.8333	1.303 1.528	1.48	.166

7(d) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of length of time needed to finish school?

Coding for the above question ranged from 1 - indicating 1 year until completion. to 6 - indicating a response suggesting lack of intent to finish high school. Although not significant. results (see Table 22) of a paired t-test indicated that students' perception of time needed to finish school actually increased. It appeared as though students going through the treatment adopted a more realistic expectation regarding years needed to complete high school. Most students involved in the present study will in fact. require a fourth or fifth year to complete high school due to lack of credits received thus far. Such a

slight movement indicates that students may be looking at their individual situations a little closer and with more realism.

Table 22

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of the length of time needed to finish school. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. How long will it take you to successfully complete high school?	Part C #7	3.5833 3.8333	1.505 1.115	.90	.389

7(e) Were there differences between the pre- and post-tests on students' perceptions of time spent on planning for the future ?

This item was assessed by comparing pre and post-test responses. Coding ranged from 1-indicating no time spent on planning for the future to 5-indicating other. Results (see Table 23) indicate that students perceptions of time spent on future planning did increase. although slightly below the level of significance. Student responses on this question are noteworthy. Many of the students indicated an increase due to participation in the workshop: thus this participation was considered time spent on planning. Others (2 students) included notes stating that this group inspired them to look further into future occupational goals.

Table 23

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of time spent on planning for the future. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. How much time have you spent planning for your future?	Part C #5	3.5000 4.0833	1.446 1.730	-1.63	.131

Additional information emerging from the study

Emerging from the present study were some additional findings on subjects demographics. First, the researcher collected data pertaining to educational attainment level of parents. Coding on this item ranked from "some schooling" to "completion of post secondary institution".

Responses (see Table 24) showed that 50% (6) of mothers had obtained a high school diploma or less. The remaining 50% consisted of 4 mothers who had completed a trade or technical diploma, one who had received a university degree and one whose education level was not known by her child.

Frequencies were somewhat different for level of education obtained by the Father. Results indicate that only 25% (3) had received a high school diploma or less. Four (33%) individuals indicated that their father had completed a trade or technical diploma. A further four (33%) individuals had fathers who had completed university. The remaining participant recorded an unknown response.

Table 24

Contingency table for parents level of educational attainment. Raw frequencies giving data through percentages.

Education level of parents	Mother's Education	Father's Education
High school diploma or less (some schooling)	50%	25%
Trades or technical school	33.3%	33%
Completion of post secondary institution	8.3%	33%
Unknown	8.3%	9%

A second set of questions that emerged from the data were as follows:

(1) Were there differences in students' perception of the number of jobs they would have throughout their life span prior to and after program implementation?
(2) Were there differences in students' perception of their need to travel and where they would go prior to and after program implementation?

Students were asked on pre- and post-tests to give some information pertaining to the number of jobs that they expected to have throughout their life span and whether or not they would be willing to move to obtain their desired job (see Table 25). Although not significant in either case, results indicated that after intervention, students perceived that

they would have more jobs throughout their life span. Also. students were more likely to indicate that they would move away from their home province after implementation of treatment.

Frequency distributions indicated that in the pre-test the following demographics were evident on the "Where would you go to find employment". Two students indicated that they would go as far as Ontario. one indicated that he would go to British Columbia. six indicated that they would travel anywhere in Canada. one stated that he would go anywhere in North America. and one stated that he would go anywhere in the world. Only one participant indicated that he would not leave Newfoundland.

Post-test demographics show a slight movement in participant response to this question. Responses which were the same were from individuals who stated that they would go to British Columbia. North America or anywhere in the world. One individual moved from going to Ontario to anywhere in Canada and the remaining participant (previously unwilling to move) indicated that he would be willing to move from Newfoundland and work in the Atlantic provinces.

Table 25

Means and significance levels of t-tests relating to student's perception of the number of job they would have throughout their life span and their perception of the need to travel and where they would go. (df=11 for all t-test comparisons)

Statement	Question #	Means	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1. How many jobs do you expect to have throughout your life?	Part A #20	3.1667 3.5000	.577 .674	-1.77	.104
2. Would you leave Newfoundland to find employment?	Part A 21	1.0833 1.0000	.289 .000	1.00	.339
3. If yes, where would you go?	Part A 21	6.0833 5.5833	2.021 1.975	.68	.509

Summary

In the present chapter, an analysis of the data gathered from the Engage program were presented. Lack of inter-reliability between variables within the research constructs limited evaluation of the intervention to an analysis performed on a question-by-question basis. In most of the statements measured, results indicated positive shifts, favoring the intervention. Many of these shifts were not of great enough magnitude to be significant. The majority of significant changes were evident in variables measuring locus of control and self-efficacy.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study was exploratory in nature and aimed to evaluate a short-term counselling intervention that is presently being used, on a national level, to motivate students to stay in school. Many factors have been associated with career maturity throughout the years, including gender, socio-economic status, ability, self-efficacy and self-schemas, self-esteem, role models, goals as well as motivation and attitude towards school. These factors do not seem to be mutually independent, but are in fact inter-related throughout the literature. The present study attempted to measure some of these variables in relation to participants' perceptions of their career aspirations and occupational goals prior to and after implementation of the "Engage" program.

Although preliminary information was obtained on most of these factors through this study, an in-depth evaluation could not be conducted on socio-economic status, due to ethical constraints (denied access to parent demographics such as income/wealth). Also, due to the identified population within the selected school, a limited number of female subjects were involved in the present study, thus excluding statistical comparisons with respect to gender. However, this in itself is probably indicative of or certainly a reflection of the problem associated with "at-risk" youth.

As cited in Herr and Cramer (1996), evaluation of career interventions is vital in demonstrating program effectiveness in relation to specific populations. Herr and Cramer (1996) also propose the need for the development and implementation of career counselling programs with respect to the disadvantaged. In the proceeding section, there is a discussion of the results obtained as well as implications and recommendations for the present research.

Self-Esteem

Many authors have attempted to provide a definition for self-esteem. As indicated in Chapter 2. Herr (1990) discussed the importance of having caring relationships based on trust. understanding. honesty. sincerity and acceptance. Johnson (1986) discussed the self-esteem variable in relation to the confirmation that we are given throughout our lives. He suggested that being disconfirmed often promoted feelings of worthlessness and lack of self value. Kaplan (1995). further related the self-esteem variable to mastery. Kaplan stated that one's self-esteem is composed of elements such as self respect. self confidence. and competence. According to Kaplan. self-esteem is the "belief that what we do. think. feel. and believe matters. and that we can have an effect on our own lives. and on our own environment" (p.342). In the present study the researcher used a combination of these definitions in defining the self-esteem variable (see Chapter 1).

Of importance when discussing the self-esteem variable is its progression throughout one's life. One's self-esteem is molded according to our life experiences. whether good or bad. The environment plays a significant role in how young children view life. As time goes on many other factors influence how a developing child approaches life and what they believe can be achieved.

Many individuals. especially those children that are considered "at-risk". have not been given the opportunity to learn such skills as self worth. identity. or the creation of effective relationships with others. Many of them do not feel in control of their existence - subsequently. their ability to manage their lives may be attributed to fate or the external control by other people. Herr (1990) proposed that the feelings of stress. powerlessness. frustration. and lack of personal worth that these individuals experience may often get manifested in vandalism. aggressiveness. uncontrolled anger. violence. bullying. chemical abuse. and other self-destructive or anti-social behaviours.

Thus, it would seem unrealistic for a facilitator or researcher to believe that such a short-term intervention (as proposed in the present study), at the high school level, would undo a life time of learning. McCarthy (1991), a leading self-esteem educator, indicated that it would take up to 3-5 years to change one's self-esteem. Certainly, conventional theorists promote comprehensive and developmental approaches to career counselling and thus would probably refute findings from shorter interventions.

In the present study changes in self-esteem, as indicated by a program intervention, were measured using a pre/post-test design, with an interval between testing of approximately 4 weeks. Self-esteem was initially to be measured using a construct based on a number of statements in the pre- and post-surveys. However, lack of reliability between these statements precluded use of a general construct for self-esteem. Instead, each statement was examined independently. Statements focused on self-esteem in the classroom and perceptions of whether or not they 'deserved to be happy and successful in life'. As indicated in Chapter 4, while 6 out of the 10 statements moved in a direction indicative of improved self-esteem following intervention, only one of these changes (qu. 42: "I feel that I deserve to be happy and successful") was significant. This tends to support McCarthy's idea that it will take a longer period of time to see a change in such a mastery-oriented concept.

With respect to the significant result obtained on the question measuring ability to be happy and successful in life, it would appear that the training helped individuals understand that everyone had the ability to be happy and successful in life. The program promoted the idea of ownership and control of one's career path. Consequently, it is possible that the participants may have realized that if they wanted to achieve their goals, they must be instrumental in making it happen. This supports findings by Kaplan (1995).

However, one statement indicated a decrease in self-esteem, albeit not significant (qu. 8: "I generally think of myself as being equal to everyone else"). This might suggest that the

program gave students an opportunity to look closely at themselves and thus discover their inadequacies. Responses to this statement can be viewed in both positive and negative ways. If students were able to see themselves in a more realistic fashion and thus became motivated to change some of their negative behaviours. such a change could be viewed as positive. This could indicate that the program helped students understand that they are living in a competitive world and that they need to be the best in order to achieve their goals and compete with others.

Alternatively. if the program helped participants see their inadequacies but did not motivate them to change. this could be viewed as a negative aspect of the program. The group of students tested represented under achievers and non-attenders. If participating in this program deflated students' ambitions because they felt that they could not compete with their peers. then the program may well exhibit more negative results than positive with respect to the self-esteem variable.

However. from responses indicated on the post-test questionnaire. as well as from anecdotal information gained throughout the workshop. it appeared that the negative response to relation to being equal to others. indicated a recognition of need for individual improvement. As an example. students in the post-test were creating their own categories for answering many of the questions. On items on which they previously indicated a "don't know" response on the pre-test questionnaire. they were now stating that they were still unsure of their goals but that they would look into other requirements and options.

It is likely that students did feel inferior to others. Although throughout the workshop. students were acknowledged for the positive contributions that they made. discussions often led back to academic grades. For many of the participants. obtaining a passing grade was an unfamiliar occurrence. Obviously. as Kaplan (1995) indicated. such a cycle is not easily broken. Belief in one's ability is limited because of constant reinforcement through previous failures. Many of the participants admitted that it was easier to consistently

perform poorly because it reduced expectations of parents. teachers and other students. This supports work done by Powell (1990) who suggested that educators reduce expectations for "at-risk" youth and believe that they are more likely to meet with academic failure.

Also. in many cases subjects were of lower socio-economic status (private communication. from school). Previous research (McDonald & Jessup. 1992) implied that socio-economic status is positively related to children's occupational aspirations and expectations. This might imply a possible link between socio-economic status and self-esteem. Cox and Morgan (1985) contradicted this view and report no difference in occupational attitudes and perceived occupational abilities as a function of socio-economic status.

In a *post hoc* analysis. this researcher attempted to demonstrate a positive correlation between socio-economic status and self-esteem as measured in the 10 pre-test items. In the absence of a specific socio-economic variable. level of educational attainment by the participant's parents (mother and father considered both separately and together) was used as a proxy (Kelly. 1989: Pallas. Natriello. & McDill 1989).

Results indicated that the father's education level was a better predictor of self-esteem than the mother's. It was unclear why this would be the case. although this could be a response to gender stereotype: since the majority of the test group were males. it seems likely that participants would respond to the parent of their gender (as suggested by Gottfredson. 1981).

Ability. Self-Efficacy. and Self-Schemas

Closely related to the self-esteem variable is that of ability and self-efficacy (perceived ability). Bandura (1977) first defined self-efficacy as an individual's belief in one's ability

to perform a given behaviour required to produce certain outcomes. Betz and Hackett (1981) expanded on this idea and further defined self-efficacy to include one's career or the belief in one's ability to pursue a given career. Robbins (1985) suggested that career decision-making self-efficacy was significantly related to self-esteem, general anxiety and vocational identity. In the present study, the researcher uses a definition as proposed by Cross and Markus (1994) which encompasses self-schemas and the idea of future selves (see Chapter 2).

Self-efficacy has been used within the career domain, under the assumption that efficacy expectations affect occupational decisions and achievements. Betz and Hackett (1981) and Lent, Brown and Larkin (1986), demonstrated that low self-efficacy limited career aspirations. Associated with this concept is the notion of decision making. According to McAuliffe (1992), "career decision making self-efficacy can be described as an individual's beliefs about their ability to enact the behaviours required for deciding on and enacting career choices" (p.26).

As cited in Cross and Markus (1994), the way in which an individual perceives, evaluates, and constructs the self - including one's self-conceptions about one's ability - has been extensively reviewed (Bandura, 1982, 1986; Covington & Shavelson, 1979; Harter, 1983; Marsh, 1990; Marsh, Byrne & Shavelson, 1988; McCombs, 1989; Nicholls, 1990; Schunk, 1989; Zimmerman, 1985). According to Harter (1983; as cited in Cross & Markus, 1994), students with a high self-concept of ability will have higher expectations of future success and thus persist longer on domain-relevant tasks. Such belief in one's ability ultimately produces higher levels of performance than do students with a low evaluation of ability.

Herr and Cramer (1996) discuss the skills that are necessary in our global economy. They stated that one's possession of or lack of the basic academic skills will become an essential element to the career development process. According to Drucker (1989), basic

academic skills such as computation, literacy and communication skills, will be necessary in order to obtain any job in today's market.

In the present study, students' perceptions of present and future ability were examined before and after program implementation. Present ability was measured by analyzing three separate statements including "At the present time I feel that I possess the proper skills to help me reach my goal(s)": "At the present time I feel that I can learn the proper skills to help me reach my goals": and "I believe that I can do well in school".

Findings indicated that many of the students initially believed that they did not presently have the proper skills needed to succeed at their goals. Following intervention this trend continued, becoming more negative. This could indicate that the program served to make students more aware of their present lack of academic skills.

However, student perceptions of their ability to acquire the skills improved significantly following intervention ($p = 0.005$). Also, although not significant, students responses indicated a positive move when examining the statement, " I believe that I can do well in school".

This may indicate that while the program may serve as a warning to students regarding their present predicament, it may also empower students sufficiently to believe that they can succeed in their career goals, if motivated to do so. This supports findings by Cross and Markus (1994). They suggested that when one establishes a self-schema or possible self for a particular task, an individual can more easily take the necessary steps and develop the necessary strategies required to accomplish the goal. Similarly, Oyserman and Markus (1990) suggested that by having a vision of one's possible selves, the gap between the current state and the desired outcome becomes less substantial.

Workshop discussions further examined the issue of one's present ability in conversations with participants. The researcher noted that many students felt that school subjects were somewhat unrelated to what was needed for "the real world". Students were

more likely to see the relevance of school after treatment. although this increase was not significant.

Group discussions also confirmed the above suggestion that students realized that they did not have the proper skills to help them obtain their goals. at the present time. Cross and Markus (1994) discuss beliefs in relation to one's perceived ability. They indicated that one's beliefs about one's abilities are very important to the development and maintenance of confidence. Markus. Crane. Bernstein. & Saladi (1982) also suggested that having a self-schema in a particular area allows one to better predict one's future behaviour in that domain.

This was discussed in-depth during the workshop in relation to school attendance and overall student motivation. Many participants expressed that this was a time in their lives to be "having fun". Most participants seemed to understand that in order to obtain their goals. finishing school would be required. Students also indicated that they did not mind spending additional years in school. although this type of attitude may just reflect the lack of future goals beyond school or indicate possible defense and coping mechanisms.

Students' future ability was measured according to six statements modeled after previous research on future selves (see Markus. Cross & Wurf. 1990). These include: " I can see myself getting a good job": "I can see myself attending a post secondary institution": "I can see myself being successful in life": "I feel confident that I can finish school": "I can see myself graduating from school": and "I believe that I can become whatever I choose".

Three of these statements demonstrated a significant positive shift following intervention. specifically. "I can see myself getting a good job" ($p=0.025$): "I feel confident that I can finish school" ($p=0.012$); and "I can see myself graduating from school" ($p=0.007$). The remaining three statements. although not significant. indicated a positive move.

While responses to previous statements suggested that students seemed to believe that they did not have the proper skills at the present time (see above), three out of the five statements measuring future ability, indicated significant positive changes in perceived ability following intervention. This could indicate that the program served to empower students as to their abilities. Techniques used during group discussion, such as guided imagery, seemed to be particularly successful in allowing students to think about their future selves. It also emphasized the relevance of academic subjects previously thought to be unnecessary.

As a cautionary note, this researcher could not discriminate whether the students' beliefs were based in reality or mere fantasy elicited through workshop activities. While it is important to encourage goals that require expenditure of effort, these goals should, at the same time, be attainable. In other words, dreams should be tempered by pragmatism.

Again, as a *post hoc* analysis of the effects of socio-economic status on self- efficacy, this researcher examined correlations between the self-efficacy items on the pre-test and level of parental education (used as a proxy for socio-economic status - see above). These results indicated that self-efficacy may be linked to socio-economic status (assuming parental education level is an adequate proxy) however, further longitudinal data is needed to confirm this hypothesis.

In summary, results from questionnaires, informal discussions, and later consultations with the school counsellor indicate that the program did improve attitudes towards self-efficacy. Many participants indicated a willingness to work harder in order to achieve their goals. As a side-note, two students who were previous non-attendees of school were in fact reported as having returned to regular schooling following intervention.

Parents and Other Role Models

Positive parental influence in a child's life is crucial. Parents are well-positioned to positively influence the whole development of their children. However, other significant individuals such as immediate and distant family members, teachers, as well as one's peers (to mention only a few), also become important role models for children. These individuals can provide feedback and aid in the overall development of a child.

As cited in Chapter 2, Roe (1957) first attempted to establish a relationship between parental attitudes and eventual occupational choices made by children. Super (1957) also acknowledged the importance of family on career choices later made by children. According to Dillard and Campbell (1981), the family structure heavily influences the career aspirations, maturity, and expectations of children and becomes a key ingredient in developing academic excellence.

According to Middleton and Loughead (1993), models explaining parental influence on adolescent career aspirations have shifted away from a simple parent-child relationship to ones that account holistically for specific influences and events. These later models tend to emphasize the dynamic relationship that exists between parents and their adolescents in relation to career aspirations.

Furthermore, although the teenage years constitute a difficult phase in the parent-child relationship, studies seem to suggest that teenage children still prefer to seek counsel from their parents for guidance regarding matters of importance (Middleton & Loughead, 1993). Majoribanks (1986) extended the career development model as it relates to adolescents' career aspirations, to include such factors as ability, attitude towards school, as well as family environment factors such as parent aspirations and adolescent perception of parental encouragement.

However, for many parents of adolescent children a feeling of helplessness pervades. Whatever the reason, social problems, financial problems, emotional or academic, many parents seem to feel incapable of assisting their children in the academic and certainly the career development of their children. Often, parents just need the support and proper skills that they themselves have never obtained when they were growing up. Many parents need the reassurance that they can be important contributors in their children's self and career development. By assisting in the career development of their children, parents can in fact enhance their own development (Brandtstadter, 1984; as cited in Young & Friesen, 1992).

The present study examined students' perceptions of the importance of role models prior to and after program implementation. Students' perception of having significant individuals in their lives who they admired or who influenced them in a positive way, did not seem to change from pre- to post-test. Half of the subjects indicated that an individual within their immediate family was their role model, which supports findings made by Middleton and Loughead (1993), Saltiel (1985), Papini, Farmer, Clark and Micka (1990) and Rutter (1980). The remaining 50% indicated that individuals within the distant family or an acquaintance served as their role model.

Findings also suggested that students demonstrated a non-significant, yet negative shift, on statements associated with parental support. It would appear then that students felt more strongly after treatment that their parents would not support them in their occupational choice. This was somewhat puzzling since many students still indicated that the most significant role models in their lives were their parents. This finding could provide support for some of the work done by Grotevant and Cooper (1988), who discussed the negative impact of "pressurized support". Also work by Clark and Bolton (1985) suggested that "prescribed parental alternatives" could also result in negative consequences. Perhaps this may indicate that students, while more in control of their occupational choice, felt this

choice would not receive approval from their parents. Also, an element of rebellion may be associated with the responses obtained.

It must be noted, however, that little data have been collected in relation to parental negative effects on adolescent career aspirations. According to Grotevant and Cooper (1988), some forms of parent support can become overpowering and thus become a pressure to succeed. Furthermore, if parental support focused only on a prescribed range of acceptable occupations then negative pressures may be applied to the adolescent (Clark & Bolton, 1985). This may confirm why students in the present study perceived a lack of support from parents. According to Levine and Gislason (1985), both internal and external conflicts may occur when parents and adolescents career aspirations differ.

In the present study, further investigation was conducted into the perceptions of "at-risk" youth in relation to non-familial relations. Statements regarding people in positions of authority were also examined in order to obtain a list of further role models within students' lives. Students appeared to regard authorities within their school positively. Prior to intervention, most participants indicated that they felt that they could go to their teacher, guidance counsellor or principal with regards to a personal or academic problem; this finding did not change after treatment.

Students in the post-test indicated a trend towards more negative perceptions of the school. This may suggest that while students felt comfortable going to authority figures independently within their school, maybe they did not feel that the school in general, when considering all other factors (for example, other students, performance in class...) was a supportive environment.

Overall, the role model questions did not provide consistent results. It would appear that students regarded their parents and other immediate family members as role models. Paradoxically, they seemed to indicate that their parents would not support them in their occupational choice. Student responses indicated a level of respect for authority figures

within the school, yet after treatment, they indicated that they perceived the school to be less of a supportive environment. Further longitudinal studies need to be conducted in order to obtain an accurate measure on this variable.

Goals - Aspirations and Expectations

Career aspirations and occupational expectations have been widely studied over the past decade and have evolved from many different theoretical perspectives. As cited in Chapter 2, Gottfredson and Becker (1981) discussed one's career aspirations and occupational goals from a psychological perspective. They suggested that one's occupational aspirations begin to form very early in the child's development. They further suggested that one's socio-economic status can constrain an individual's career alternatives. In contrast, McNulty and Borgen (1988) suggested that occupational aspirations and expectations emerged from theories originating from a socio-cultural and social-psychological base. Similarly, Mitchell and Krumbultz (1990) discussed how the social learning theory can partially explain how dysfunctional, inaccurate beliefs can impede the decision making process.

Regardless of the theoretical perspective, theorists (Gottfredson & Becker, 1981; McNulty & Borgen, 1988; Mitchell & Krumbultz, 1990) tend to agree that self understanding and self knowledge are essential components when developing one's occupational expectations and career aspirations. According to Brown and Brooks (1991), clients who have few or no identifiable goals lack in information either about oneself, the occupations available, the world of work or a combination of these factors. Isaacson (1985, as cited in Brown & Brooks, 1991), indicated that ignorance is in fact the root of most problems.

Brown and Brooks (1991). further discuss the different types of individuals and why many of them do not have personal and occupational goals. They explained that adolescents who have limited life experiences may also lack in self-awareness. They suggested that this could be a result from not participating in activities that provide adequate stimuli (positive interactions with others) thus marginalizing self-reflection and ultimately self-knowledge. They further suggested that individuals who have limited goals may also be suffering from low self-esteem. These children may view themselves as having limited abilities and thus feel inadequate to reach their goals.

In the present study. students' goals were examined both prior to and after treatment. Students' perceptions of "desired" as opposed to "expected" jobs. as well as school and salary expectations. were examined. Quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that although students' salary and school expectations did not change significantly after treatment. their individual goals and expected occupation did indicate a positive change. It would seem that students became more informed about the educational institution needed in order to obtain their "desired" job and more aware of the salary involved for the "desired" job.

Pre-test data showed that six of the twelve participants did not indicate having personal goals prior to program implementation. Two other students indicated having vague goals such as "to be wealthy" or "to leave a mark on the world" as well as including materialistic goals (to own an expensive sports car) or unusual experiences (such as sky diving!). The other four participants indicated goals of finishing school. obtaining a good job and having good friends and a happy family.

Throughout the workshop. a considerable amount of time was spent focusing on goals. Many of the students expressed apathy towards having goals since they felt that "there was no point". Many students felt that their poor grades as well as the poor economy would prevent them from succeeding in life. Paradoxically. it appeared that although students

were protecting themselves (by refusing to aspire to a high level), they also believed they would be earning salaries equivalent to an individual in a professional position. This is consistent with findings by Clack (1968, as cited in Herr and Cramer, 1996). This discrepancy was discussed in small groups.

When examining student responses regarding "desired" and "expected" occupations, pre-test data indicated that only nine of the participants had a "desired" occupation—six of these did not feel that it would be attainable. The remaining three participants did not indicate having any occupational goals. Post-test findings suggested that an additional 33% of the participants (compared to only 25% in the pre-test), after exposure to the workshop, felt that their "desired" occupation was attainable. In addition, students often added statements like "if I work harder in school" or "I need to obtain better grades". One out of the three students who did not indicate having any occupational goals initially did suggest a modest attainable occupational goal in the post-test. The two remaining students who did not have occupational goals in the pre-test remained the same in the post-test.

These results may indicate that some of the participants, at the end of the workshop, felt more empowered to make their goals a reality. Forster (1992), indicated that when individuals learn to articulate or formulate their goals they obtain a better understanding of future events. He further stated that when individuals have an understanding of one's future goals, one becomes more empowered to attain those goals.

As cited earlier, the importance of having goals is vital to one's career aspirations. Somewhat connected to this field is the area of being able to dream and ultimately believing that one can obtain the dream. Participants in the present study were not only asked about their goals in life but were also given the opportunity to think about their lives in the future (Markus, 1977). Through a guided imagery, as well as other high impact activities, participants explored their future selves and had the opportunity to create their ideal world. Many of the participants stated that they enjoyed this activity since they were given the

opportunity to be instrumental in the creation of their futures. For many of the students this was the first opportunity in which they had ever considered what their lives would be like in the future. Responses indicated that participants gained a better understanding of where they wanted their lives to be, how they wanted it to look, and what they needed to get there.

The researcher noted that when entering data for the post-test, new codes had to be assigned to statements which often indicated participant ownership. It appeared as though students were more likely to believe that goals were attainable but they also realized that they were key in making their goals a reality.

One caution related to this finding is whether or not such enthusiasm for self-empowerment will persist outside of the workshop. Because of the study design, such information is not available. Will students remain empowered and maintain a focus once school or life presents its inevitable failures? Will students truly put the needed and necessary work into their studies in order to be compatible with others competing for similar jobs? These questions can only be answered by longitudinal examination on a case by case basis.

Of interest when examining the present variable was the high numbers of students who selected jobs of a similar nature. Seven out of the twelve participants indicated a "desired" and "expected" job in the field of law enforcement. Anecdotal notes confirm discussions around positions in law enforcement during workshop sessions. The researcher noted that some students felt that jobs in police enforcement and the military did not require a high school education (a couple of students believed that they only needed courses up to Grade 11). Many students indicated on their post-tests, however, that they would look into the required or recommended schooling for such occupations. It would seem that although students were somewhat misinformed initially as to the requirements of such an occupation, the discussions during the workshop encouraged them to at least check into the

requirements. It would seem that discussions gave some participants a "grounding in reality".

Overall, data suggest that initially many of the participants did not have many goals for themselves. By participating in the workshop, the participants increased their self knowledge and learned about the world of work. Participants were given the opportunity to generate possible goals and discussions followed on how to make these goals attainable. Post-test results indicated that participants listed more specific goals and indicated a desire to explore their goals following treatment.

Subsequently, many of the participants initially indicated a lack of control in directing their futures. Many of the responses indicated a high level of blame or external locus of control during pre-test data collection. In the following section, the locus of control variable will be explored further.

Locus of Control

Closely related to the area of goals is that of self-efficacy and locus of control. When discussing goals and expectations during the initial part of the workshop, many students tended to display apathy. Students seemed as if they wanted to blame everything and everyone around them (teachers, parents, and the poor economy), rather than take responsibility for their own present difficulties and futures (external locus of control).

Many authors have attempted to define locus of control. As cited in Chapter 2, Rotter (1966), first defined the locus of control variable as the degree to which people believe that they are in control of and responsible for what happens to them. Spector (1988) further defined locus of control as the situation in which rewards and outcomes are controlled by either internal or external forces. The present investigator adopted a combination of these definitions in defining the locus of control variable for this study (see Chapter 1).

Many researchers have attempted to measure the locus of control variable. Chandler (1985) indicated that one's life experiences can provide many resources to help one cope with life's difficulties. Carver and Scheier (1981: as cited in Fournier & Pelletier. 1996) supported this idea by stating that one's environment. and certainly one's past experiences. help shape and mold how one views the future and ultimately whether an individual assumes an internal or external locus of control. Folkman (1984) further confirmed the importance of one's locus of control when faced with difficulties that arise in life. However. in a study conducted by McNulty and Borgen (1988) findings suggested that student's career aspirations were not affected by grade. gender or the locus of control variable.

In the present study. significant findings were evident within the locus of control variable. As mentioned earlier. many students at the start of the workshop wanted to blame others for difficulties that they were experiencing. Most of these students displayed an external locus of control . Many of the students stated that they were doing poorly in school because of teachers or because there were no jobs to study for. This supports findings by Taylor (1982) and Chandler (1985). This kind of attitude was discussed throughout the workshop. Facilitators worked through group activities which gave ownership of problems back to the individual. Much discussion was initiated around the "control" issue.

The locus of control variable was divided into two separate categories. internal and external locus of control. Three statements were used to measure internal locus of control - "I am in control of who I am and what I achieve": "I have control over my career path": and "I feel in control of my own learning". Pre- /post-test evaluations indicated a significant positive change ($p = 0.027$) in only one of the statements measuring control of "who I am and what I achieve".

Six statements were used to evaluate the external locus of control measure. These include: "Other people. (parents. teachers. and counsellors) must tell me my career options" ($p = 0.003$): "because of the poor economy. there is no point in continuing my education" ($p = 0.001$): and "the poor economy is preventing me from doing well" ($p = 0.021$). Non-significant positive movements in response were recorded in the remaining three statements: "The future will take care of itself": "I am young. I have lots of time to decide on my future": and "I let others talk me into doing things that I don't want to do". Three of these statements indicated a positive significant change (that is. indicating a shift away from external locus of control) following exposure to the treatment (see above). The remaining three statements also moved in a positive direction. but were not statistically significant.

This may suggest that experiences and learnings throughout the workshop helped students realize that they were responsible for and in control of their lives and future outcomes. Non-significant results associated with two of the internal control statements might indicate that although students realized that they were in control of their lives and their learning. perhaps they were not ready to complete actions required to internalize career aspirations.

The above findings seemed to support the idea that one's life experiences can affect how one perceives locus of control (Chandler. 1985: Folkman. 1984). Many of the students in the present study originated from challenged environments. All of the students were considered in the "at-risk" category in relation to academic failure. as proposed by the school. The concept of failure within the school environment was not a foreign concept to these students and thus according to Carver and Scheier (1981. as cited in Fournier & Pellier. 1996). these students are more likely to develop an external locus of control.

Interestingly. there was an apparent change in the locus of control variable. Students responses all indicated a more positive shift towards an internal locus of control. The idea

of taking control and responsibility for one's life is a major component of the Engage workshop. Facilitators focused on this issue throughout activities and discussions.

In keeping with this shift from an external to an internal locus of control was the change in students' attitudes relating to goals. Six of the students who did not have goals or did not feel that they could obtain "desired" occupations in the pre-test, described their determination to achieve in school and in their future occupational goals in the post-test. Many of the students who in the pre-test felt that their "desired" job and their "expected" jobs would be different, indicated in the post-test that they would obtain their desired job and acknowledged the need to work harder in school. Following program implementation, students seemed more willing to access resources available to them. Responses indicated that many participants were more willing to look into possible occupational choices and the requirements needed to attend appropriate schools, after exposure to the treatment.

Many of the participants, as mentioned in Chapter 3, were non-attenders and under-achievers. It was not expected that this workshop would totally change such attitudes that had become engrained over the years. However, the workshop is considered a motivational tool and did appear to have a positive effect in relation to developing an attitude more in line with an internal locus of control. Again, it must be cautioned whether such enthusiasm will persist or disappear after treatment is complete. Further studies could provide beneficial information for gaining a more concise picture about the effects of the present study.

In relation to one's locus of control, one further concern is the development of unrealistic expectations. Did this program encourage students to achieve goals that are in fact unrealistic given their present academic status? Although the researcher feels that such a concern is valid, it is more strongly felt that regardless of what is realistic or not, giving students hope and the ability to dream becomes a more significant factor than not providing hope at all. These students need to know that others believe in them, but even more, that

they believe in themselves. If this program only serves to initiate such self-examination. then it has accomplished something valuable.

Overall. this section indicated more statistically significant findings than any other section. This may indicate that this program tends to have a strong focus on or a stronger component in taking ownership and responsibility of one's life. Many of the significant statements were related to changes in attitude away from others affecting or being responsible for future occupational decisions. It would appear that students were less likely to blame others for their situations following intervention and were ultimately more willing to internalize future goals.

Although it appeared that students were more interested in exploring future goals after treatment. the one question that pervaded the whole study was whether or not this enthusiasm and motivation would persist. Motivation is key to succeeding in the academic world. Many of the students in this study were students with attrition problems and thus without a change in attitude and a will to succeed long-term progress may not become apparent. In the following section motivation and attitude towards school is examined.

Motivation and Attitude Towards School

> Grades may be motivators for only a small segment of the student body: successful students who already earn A's and B's. Grades are not effective motivators for students who receive D's and F's. Until we understand the true complexity of the relationship of grades. motivation and achievement and until we reflect that complexity in the classroom. we will still have difficulty addressing the needs of those students who are in danger of failing. (Stiggins 1988. p. 365)

Stipek (1984: as cited in Lewis. 1992). indicated that students place more value on grades as time progresses. Rogers (1983) discussed the need for providing students with motivational strategies and techniques that would develop the whole person. not just one part of the individual. Lewis (1992) further connected the concept of motivation to that of the attribution theory as it relates to self-esteem.

Motivation as well as one's attitude towards school have long been considered important components when examining "at-risk" youth. It becomes difficult to separate the two since they are closely inter-related: both have been cited throughout the literature as being connected to self-esteem. academic achievement. and locus of control. Educators are continuously searching for ways to increase levels of motivation among students. Often. students become disillusioned with the school routine. for various reasons (boredom. lack of relevance of course work. or failure - see Barber & McClellan. 1987). and are therefore not motivated to achieve in school.

According to Herr and Cramer (1996). readiness and motivation are essential to the effective use of occupational information at any intervention point in one's life span. If one can obtain a level of motivation to learn about what is available more positive results may become apparent.

In the present study student's perceptions of their level of motivation and attitude towards school were measured. Statements were administered. highlighting various components of motivation. Results indicated however. that little change was evident for either motivation or attitude towards school. however this was due to the fact that most students indicated high levels of motivation to stay in school. in both pre- and post-tests. This would suggest that the issue of whether or not to stay in school did not seem to be a problem with the present group. although all students met criteria for "at-risk" youth as proposed in Chapter 3.

Positive significant differences were found in only two of the statements the desire to learn more practical things in school (p=.01) and motivation to learn in school (p=0.089). This is in keeping with results obtained by Barber and McClellen (1987). They indicated that students who became bored or disillusioned with the school routine were often not motivated to achieve in school.

Prior to intervention, many of the students did not seem able to make a connection between subjects taught in school and skills needed in the work place. Post-test results indicated that, following intervention, there was a slight improvement in this connection, indicating that students may have acquired a better understanding of the link between school work and skills required for the work place. Perhaps, following the workshop, students realized the need to work harder in order to achieve their goals.

The " attitude towards school" variable did not appear to change as a result of being involved in the workshop. Although slightly positive shifts were seen, none were significant. This could suggest that while this intervention was not aimed at changing student's attitudes towards school, it did encourage youth to take control of their lives and to focus on their own goals and help them learn how to get there. This supports Deiner and Dwecks' theory (1978) that with the proper training of task relevant cognitions, children could learn to focus on attributing one's failures to effort as opposed to ability. They suggested that if children could learn to monitor their cognitions and participate in self-instruction and self-monitoring, a more successful approach to learning may result.

It might also suggest that students, as a result of this program, realized that school is not going to change; instead, they must modify their behaviour to maximize the benefits of attending school. Finally, it may be possible that because of the short duration of the intervention, students may not have convinced themselves that they were ready to commit to the work needed to succeed in school.

In summary, it would appear that the motivation and attitude towards school variables did not change significantly following treatment. However, it would appear that students were already motivated to stay in school even prior to the intervention. Most of the students throughout the workshop indicated their desire to finish high school at some point, but longer term goals seemed to be missing. Students undoubtedly had negative attitudes toward school which also relates back to the locus of control, self-efficacy and indeed the self-esteem variables. This supports Weiner's attribution theory (1979, 1984), which connects variables such as locus of control, constancy, and responsibility. According to Weiner (1984) if one does not process these qualities, motivation to affect change may be lessened.

According to Herr and Cramer (1996), motivation refers to the idea of convincing individuals about the benefits of career guidance. They suggested that readiness and knowledge are essential ingredients if learning is to occur. They further suggested that to become motivated, individuals must obtain assistance in order to connect how their needs are met, by the information delivered. This program provided students with information regarding careers. The examiner feels that the readiness concept may have required additional work with the pretest group.

Summary

From the results of the present study, it is apparent that there is no one factor which independently influences career aspirations and occupational goals. This, of course is consistent with findings on career decision making recorded in other studies (Kaplan, 1995; Powell, 1990; Cross & Markus; 1994; Rojewski, 1995; Herr & Cramer, 1996) which allude to the importance of such variables. Throughout the literature, variables such as socio-economic status, gender, self-esteem, ability, self-efficacy and self-schemas,

goals (expectations and aspirations), role models, locus of control as well as one's motivation and attitude towards school.

Many themes became apparent throughout this research. Regardless of the variable being explored, it appeared that self-esteem and self-efficacy were consistently evident in all areas. As cited in Markus, Crane, Bernstein and Saladi (1982) and Markus and Nurius (1986), the ability to have a self-schema in a particular domain or the ability to develop future selves becomes an essential component when deciding on and implementing future goals. Closely related to any goal setting task, and indeed one's ability to have self-schemas or possible selves, is that of self-esteem.

Many of the participants in the present study indicated low levels of self-esteem. As indicated by Kaplan (1995), self-esteem cannot just be given to us but it is something that we must acquire over time. In fact, according to McCarthy (1991) it will take at least 3-5 years to change one's self-esteem. Thus, although implementation of the Engage program did not indicate substantial changes within self-esteem levels of participants, changes in other areas were apparent.

Perhaps the most significant changes from the present research were in variables measuring self-efficacy, goals and locus of control. The Engage program is very dynamic in nature and was developed as a process-oriented activity driven program. Its purpose was to motivate youth and to expose them to the knowledge and skills necessary for succeeding in life. Outcomes, as proposed by Engage developers, aimed to enable youth to take control of their learning, to raise their motivation level to learn inside and outside of school, to make learning meaningful, manage themselves and their environments, as well as build their careers.

Certainly the most consistent significant findings in the present study were apparent within the internal locus of control variable, students' perceptions of goals, one's future ability or self-efficacy, and student's motivation to learn, which is consistent with program

goals. Students were found to have higher levels of internal control after treatment and thus tended to have higher expectations or goals for themselves. Students also indicated having higher levels of self-efficacy in relation to their belief in their abilities to succeed whether in school or in the future. Finally, although students' motivation levels did not consistently demonstrate significant changes, it was apparent that students were motivated to stay in school, and after treatment, students were more likely to acknowledge the purpose and relevance of their school work.

The program itself exuberated energy while imparting information and knowledge to its participants. Key to this program was the teaching and learning that participants gained from each other. Although facilitators guided activities and discussions, participant feedback demonstrated a process of growth and realism even within the short time span allotted. Furthermore, although ground rules were set up to avoid put downs, participants did, nonetheless, confront inconsistencies among group members. For example, when discussing the importance of education and the desire to obtain certain jobs, participants were quick to state the need for congruence between the two. This straightforwardness allowed participants to see inconsistencies in their thinking while receiving support and guidance in directing them towards strategies that helped them realize ways to reach their goals. This process of restructuring thought processes and confronting inconsistent cognitions certainly models cognitive theories.

Herr and Cramer (1996) discussed a career counselling mandate. They proposed the need for not only information dissemination, but also acknowledged the necessity of skills training, support and encouragement. Herr and Cramer (1996) further suggested that clients must be prepared for change in the world in which we live. Thus, it becomes necessary to provide students (especially those that are considered "at-risk") with as much information and support as possible, so that students will be prepared for eventual

difficulties that they may encounter. If students are not provided with such information. ignorance may prevent success.

Engage is a program which provides students with such information and support. However. it is not without criticism. It becomes important. in all programming efforts to be able to objectively evaluate any. and ideally all. intervention programs. Many theorists have cautioned against lack of research being conducted on career interventions (Holland. Magoon. & Spokane 1981: Osipow. 1986: Gottfredson. 1990). These theorists. along with others. suggest the need for comprehensive analysis. Holland. Magoon and Spokane (1981. as cited in Herr & Cramer. 1996) suggested the need for more rigorous evaluations of all forms of vocational interventions. They stated that an analysis of how effective an intervention works is essential in determining long-term success.

The Engage program. although it appears to have many positive qualities. also exhibits many difficulties. Although the present investigator will not go into all recommendations at this point. more immediate concerns will briefly be reviewed. The most apparent difficulty with the present program is that of its short-time span. It was found that much information needed to be given in a short time frame. Although students seemed to respond well to the information. it is questionable whether such information will remain. Also. the program was very much a motivational tool with the present group in terms of enjoyment of activities. Students also went away on a "high" in respect to where to go with information received. It is questioned by the researcher however. whether such enthusiasm will persist. These students are among the highest "at-risk" group in the school. it is difficult to say with such a short term intervention whether such effects will be long lasting. This is certainly an area for further research. It was also apparent that at the crux of the problem for this group of "at-risk" students. that self-esteem and belief in one's ability was minimal. There was little change apparent within the self-esteem variable and thus one might question whether or not long-term effects will result.

These are just a few of the recommendations to follow. Conventional thinkers would propose that such short-term interventions are not the solution for "at-risk" youth. Indeed, according to McDaniels and Gysbers (1992), they recommend that less emphasis be placed on short-term interventions and that individuals become more focused on comprehensive and developmental approaches in relation to career interventions.

Some of the more recent theorists, however, encourage the use of brief therapies and interventions. Regardless of one's theoretical perspective and the type of intervention used, evaluation does remain an essential component to the career counselling field. A final thought can be demonstrated in a quote by Herr and Cramer (1996). They suggest that career interventions do consistently yield positive results - thus, it is felt by the present examiner that one must look closely at one's population as well as such issues as time and resources, and along with selected team members, select the most appropriate program within the confines of each independent school and group.

Recommendations

The following recommendations resulted from the present study:

1. Herr and Cramer (1996) suggested the need for longitudinal data of different career intervention programs. It is, therefore, felt that the students who participated in the present study should be monitored and a follow up study conducted at a later date (Perhaps 6 months to a year later). The purpose of this follow up study would be to monitor the students' progress and actual career decisions over time. A comparison of data collected from this study could help the evaluator ascertain whether the enthusiasm and zeal from the actual participation in the program could be differentiated from the real influence of the

program. This would also provide more accurate data in that the workshop enthusiasm will have diffused and true longitudinal effects can be more accurately measured.

2. It would also be beneficial for further research to be conducted in the same or alternative schools, using the same materials and format used in the present study. This would provide cross-sectional data, thus providing support or dis-confirmation of the above results.

3. It may provide interesting results to run this program over a longer period of time so that the information gained and the enthusiasm built will permit on-going homework and exploration into possible occupational goals. Also, a more extended time frame may provide these students with the necessary support that they require to maintain a positive outlook on their futures. It may also prove beneficial to integrate other career activities into this program to balance the motivational piece with some more practical strategies.

4. The present study was limited due to ethical constraints in obtaining demographic data on socio-economic status of parents or guardians. Further studies may provide useful information if such data is obtainable.

5. Due to the nature of the clientele selected for the present study, statistical gender comparisons could not be adequately demonstrated due to the limited number of females involved in the study. However, this in itself supports findings which indicate that there are more males "at-risk" than females, or at least labeled as such in the school system. It may be beneficial to conduct the same study involving more equal representation of both male and female genders.

6. Of concern in the present study is the low number of participants involved in data collection. However, since the study is exploratory in nature and does focus on a group of students who require much attention and concentration, it is felt that group size for the present study was adequate. However, further studies could be conducted running concurrent groups --therefore boosting the "n" for the study.

7. The researcher would also like to see further investigation of the above cited program with individuals of who are not considered as "at-risk". It is felt that information obtained could be of use to most students. Such research may provide more immediate and long lasting effects.

8. It is also felt by the researcher that although many supports were evident during the workshop, more supports need to be established for after program implementation. This may take the form of periodic support meetings within or outside of school, for individuals who participated in the study.

9. Although parent involvement is a recognized component of the Engage program, it is felt that the limited involvement, does not provide the necessary support and consistency for program participants. It may be beneficial to offer a similar group to parents that will also motivate them to become a part of their child's career exploration process.

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APPENDIX A

Part A

1. Male _____ Female _____

2. Age _____

3. Grade Level _____

4. Indicate the education level of your parents

	Mother	Father
Some schooling (indicate grade)		
High school diploma (yes, no)		
Attended a post secondary school (yes, no)		
Completed trades/technical school (yes, no)		
Attended college or university (yes, no)		
Completed college or university (yes, no)		
Don't know		

5. Do you have significant people in your life who you admire and who influence you in a positive way? Yes No

If yes, how are they related to you (e.g., parent, aunt, friend, acquaintance, television personality) and state their occupation (e.g., teacher, homemaker, carpenter, unemployed, etc.). *(Fill in as many as apply)*

	Relationship	Occupation
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Please check the statement that applies to you

6. School attendance: *(check only one)*

_____ I never miss a day
_____ I only miss school when I am sick
_____ I miss a couple of days of school a week
_____ I do not attend school
_____ Other
please specify:_____

7. I attend school because it is: *(check only one)*

_____ Very exciting and interesting
_____ Okay (I learn some things and it passes time)
_____ Where my friends are
_____ Not very interesting
_____ Required
_____ Other

8. What type of job would you **like to do** in the future (be specific - name an occupation)?

_____

9. Do you know anyone who is presently working or has worked in this job ? Who. and what is their relationship to you?

_____

10. What kind of salary range do you think a person in your **desired** job would make?

	(please check one only)
Less than 10.000 per year	
10.000 to 20.000 per year	
20.000 to 30.000 per year	
30.000 to 40.000 per year	
40.000 to 50.000 per year	
50.000 to 60.000 per year	
60.000 and above	

11. What school (if any) would you need to attend to receive training for your **desired** job? *(check which is most applicable)*

University		Technical School	
Marine Institute		Cabot College	
Other Community College		Don't Know	
Private School		None	
Other (specify)			

12. What kind of job do you **expect to do** in the future (be specific - name an occupation)?

_____

13. Do you know anyone who is presently working or has worked in this job? Who, and what is their relationship to you?

_____

14. Who has influenced your job / occupational choice? Please List (e.g., teacher, friend...)

_____

15. Have you discussed your occupational options with anyone? *(Check all that apply)*

Parents		Coach	
Other family members		School Counsellor	
Social Worker		A person employed in the area	
Friends		Other (Specify)	
Teacher		No one	

16. What kind of salary range do you think a person in your **expected** job would make?

	(please check one only)
Less than 10.000 per year	
10.000 to 20.000 per year	
20.000 to 30.000 per year	
30.000 to 40.000 per year	
40.000 to 50.000 per year	
50.000 to 60.000 per year	
60.000 and above	

17. What school (if any) would you need to attend to receive training for your **expected** job/career? *(check all that apply)*

University		Technical School	
Marine Institute		Cabot College	
Other Community College		Don't Know	
Private School		None	
Other (specify)			

18. I don't think that I will obtain the occupation I really want because:

My grades are not high enough	
I do not have the ability to reach this career goal	
I (my family) cannot afford to pay for this training	
I do not want to spend more time in school	
Don't know why	
Other	

if "Other", please specify

_____

_____

19. List the four most important goals you have for yourself in life. *(be specific)*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

20. How many jobs do you expect to have throughout your life? *(check one)*

None		Between 5 - 7	
One		Between 7 - 10	
Between 3 - 5		10 or more	

21. Would you leave Newfoundland to find employment? Yes No

If Yes. Where would you go? *(Please check the answer that most applies to you)*

Atlantic Canada		Anywhere in Canada	
Quebec		Anywhere in North America	
Ontario		Anywhere in Europe	
Alberta		Anywhere in the world	
British Columbia			

Part B

For each of the following statements indicate your level of agreement or disagreement by circling one of the following responses.

Strongly Agree - This statement is correct all of the time.
Agree - This statement is correct much of the time.
Undecided - I don't know how I feel about this statement.
Disagree - This statement is incorrect much of the time.
Strongly Disagree - This statement is incorrect all of the time.

Please rate the following as either :

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

		Agree => Disagree
1	In today's changing world, it is important to do well in school.	1 2 3 4 5
2	I can see myself getting a good job.	1 2 3 4 5
3	I believe that other students have more to contribute than I do.	1 2 3 4 5
4	I can talk to my parents about my future goals in life.	1 2 3 4 5
5	I can see myself attending a post secondary institution.	1 2 3 4 5
6	I have little idea what the future holds for me.	1 2 3 4 5
7	At the present time I feel that I possess the proper skills to help me reach my goal(s).	1 2 3 4 5
8	I generally think of myself as being equal to everybody else.	1 2 3 4 5
9	I can see myself being successful on life.	1 2 3 4 5
10	The future will take care of itself.	1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

		Agree => Disagree				
11	I feel confident that I can finish school.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I can see myself graduating from school	1	2	3	4	5
13	At the present time I feel that I can learn the proper skills to help me reach my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
14	School is a supportive place for me.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I will speak up in class if I have something valuable to say to the class.	1	2	3	4	5
16	My parents will support me in accomplishing my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I reward myself when I do something well.	1	2	3	4	5
18	I feel proud of myself when I do something well.	1	2	3	4	5
19	I am willing to work hard to finish school and to obtain a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
20	My class mates want to hear my opinions.	1	2	3	4	5
21	School is a stepping stone to life.	1	2	3	4	5
22	I respect people in leadership roles.	1	2	3	4	5
23	I believe that I can become whatever I choose.	1	2	3	4	5
24	My principal will support me in accomplishing my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Other people. (parents. teachers. and counsellors) must tell me my career options.	1	2	3	4	5
26	My guidance counsellor will support me in accomplishing my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
27	When I do well it usually means that I've worked hard.	1	2	3	4	5
28	I am in control of who I am and what I achieve.	1	2	3	4	5

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

		Agree => Disagree				
29	I believe that my opinion counts.	1	2	3	4	5
30	I am young. I have lots of time to decide on my future.	1	2	3	4	5
31	Getting a good education is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
32	I will speak up in class only if I know my answer is right.	1	2	3	4	5
33	I have control over my career path.	1	2	3	4	5
34	I will finish school.	1	2	3	4	5
35	Because of the poor economy, there is no point in continuing my education.	1	2	3	4	5
36	I feel in control of my own learning.	1	2	3	4	5
37	I am not afraid to speak up in class .	1	2	3	4	5
38	The poor economy is preventing me from doing well.	1	2	3	4	5
39	My teachers will support me in accomplishing my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
40	I try to learn from my mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
41	I can see myself having a happy family.	1	2	3	4	5
42	I feel that I deserve to be happy and successful.	1	2	3	4	5
43	I would like to learn more practical things in school that will better prepare me for the work place.	1	2	3	4	5
44	I believe that I can do well in school.	1	2	3	4	5
45	I let others talk me into doing things that I don't want to do.	1	2	3	4	5

Part C

For questions 1 - 4, indicate your level of agreement or disagreement by circling one of the following responses.

Please rate the following as either :

Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
1	2	3	4	5

1. At the present time, my motivation to learn in school is:

Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
1	2	3	4	5

2. At the present time, my motivation to stay in school is:

Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
1	2	3	4	5

3. At the present time, I have _____ involvement with extra curricular activities within my school.

Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
1	2	3	4	5

4. At the present time, my involvement in classroom activities and discussions is:

Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
1	2	3	4	5

5. How much time have you spent planning for your future? *(check one only)*

No Time	
I have not given it much thought	
I plan to think about it in grade 12	
I have given it a lot of thought	
Other	

If "Other". please specify:

_____

_____

6. How much time do you spend outside of school on learning? *(please check one)*

No	
Less than 15 minutes	
More than 15 minutes. Less than 30 minutes	
More than 30 minutes. Less than 1 hour	
More than 1 hour. Less than 2 hours	

7. How long will it take you to successfully complete high school?

1 year	
2 years	
3 years	
4 years	
5 years	
I don't plan on finishing school.	

8. What are your future occupational/job plans. *(Be specific)*

a._____

b._____

c._____

d._____

Part D

Evaluation of the Engage Program - 2 Day Workshop

For each of the following statements indicate your response by circling one of the following.

1. I think the program materials were:

   (a) good (b) okay (c) poor

2. I found the program information to be:

   (a) useful (b) okay (c) useless

3. I am more motivated to take control of my learning since being involved with this program.

   (a) yes (b) maybe (c) no

4. I am more motivated to take control of my career goals since being involved with this program.

   (a) yes (b) maybe (c) no

5. I found this workshop to be:

   (a) useful (b) okay (c) useless

6. By participating in this workshop, my understanding of career development is:

   (a) better (b) the same (c) worse

7. After participating in this workshop, I will be better able to make my own choices more effectively.

   (a) yes (b) maybe (c) no

8. I found the workshop to be:

   (a) enjoyable (b) okay (c) boring

9. Since participating in this workshop, my understanding of myself is:

   (a) better (b) the same (c) worse

APPENDIX B

Dear Parent:

I am a graduate student at Memorial University studying to become a school counsellor. During this term I will be working under the supervision of Mrs. Carolyn Tilley, guidance counsellor at Bishops College.

During this time I will be working with much of the school population. In particular, I hope to co-lead a program that will not only encourage youth to think about and explore the many career options available to them, but also to help motivate the participants to take ownership of their own life / career / learning. The program is designed to run over a two-day period with a lot of intensive training during that time. Participants will also be guided through a program entitled Choices '96 that will give them the opportunity to explore many occupational options. Participants will be exposed to self-management skills, goal setting, occupational alternatives, current skills and knowledge of personal strengths, necessary skills and knowledge for the work place, current values, beliefs, and interests, as well as key career development concepts.

Program participants will be asked to complete a pre and post-test . Some personal background information may be asked concerning participants' personal and occupational aspirations. The reason for this information is to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and to measure its overall effect on the participants. All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential and at no time will individuals be identified. This study has received the approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee and its results will be made available to you upon request. The goal of this study is not to evaluate individual performance but to help youth obtain as much information about themselves and the possible occupational choices available to them.

An information session will be provided to all parents with participants in the program. This session will give parents the opportunity to learn more about the program and will provide an chance to ask questions or raise any concern that one might have. The program is totally voluntary and the participants can withdraw at any time.

I ask for your support in this program. If you have any questions or concerns or would like more information on the program, please feel free to contact myself, Carolyn Todd or Mrs. Carolyn Tilley at 579-4107. If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Steve Norris, Associate Dean, Research and Development. I look forward to hearing from you.

Attached is a consent form that is required if your son/daughter is to participate in this program. Please sign the form if you give permission for your child to participate in this program and study.

Yours sincerely,

Carolyn Todd

I _____ give permission for my child _____ to participate in
Parent / Guardian Name Student's Name

the proposed study. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that my child and/or I can withdraw permission at any time. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified.

_____ _____
Date Parent's/Guardian's Signature

To whom it may concern.

I am a graduate student at Memorial University studying to become a school counsellor. As you are aware, I am presently working under the supervision of Mrs. Carolyn Tilley, guidance counsellor at your school. I am in the process of starting to conduct research for my thesis. My proposed study involves implementing a career intervention program entitled "Engage", as well as guiding the participants through the Choices '96 program as well as providing additional follow up sessions. A group of 18-20 students, will be identified by the guidance counsellor, teachers, parents, and self referrals.

The ENGAGE program was developed to encourage youth to think about and explore the many occupational options available to them. The program is designed to run over a two-day period with a lot of intensive training during that time. Participants will also be guided through a program entitled Choices '96 that will give them the opportunity to explore many occupational options. Participants will be exposed to self-management skills, goal setting, career alternatives, current skills and knowledge of personal strengths, necessary skills and knowledge for the work place, current values, beliefs, and interests, as well as key career development concepts.

Program participants will be asked to complete a pre and post-test . Some personal background information may be asked concerning participants personal and occupational aspirations. The reason for this information is to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and to measure its overall effect on the participants. All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential and at no time will individuals be identified. This study has received the approval of the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee and its results will be made available to you upon request. The goal of this study is not to evaluate individual performance but to help youth obtain as much information about themselves and the possible career choices available to them.

An information session will be provided to all parents with participants in the program. This session will give parents the opportunity to learn more about the program and will provide an chance to ask questions or raise any concern. The program is totally voluntary and the participants can withdraw at any time.

I ask for your support in this program. If you have any questions or concerns or would like more information on the program, please feel free to contact myself, Carolyn Todd , Mrs. Carolyn Tilley or my thesis supervisor, Ms. Mellie Cahill (737-7026). If at any time you wish to speak with a resource person not associated with the study, please contact Dr. Steve Norris, Associate Dean, Research and Development.

Attached is a consent form that is required from the school if you agree for the school to participate in the proposed study.

Yours sincerely,

Carolyn Todd

I _____ give permission for the school _____ to participate
Principal/Vice Principal School's Name

in the proposed study. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified.

_____ _____
Date Parent's/Guardian's Signature