A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF WOMEN ENROLLED IN THE OFFICE CAREERS PROGRAMMES AT SELECTED COMMUNITY COLLEGES

by

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Abstract

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The purpose of this study was to form a description of the characteristics, motivations, and reported problems of women enroled in Office Careers programmes, in order to provide a preliminary data base for appropriate counselling of students. No local or specific information was available on Office Careers women, and there was reason to believe that the data on United States' academic women students might not generalize to this group. A group of eighty women students, drawn from two colleges in the lower mainland of British Columbia, was given a questionnaire derived from Astin (1976). Responses were divided into subgroups of mature and youthful students, and subjected to chi square analysis. In addition, the results of Astin's study of Continuing Education for Women students were used as an empirical reference point for the presentation of the survey responses of the total group and mature subgroup of Office Careers students.

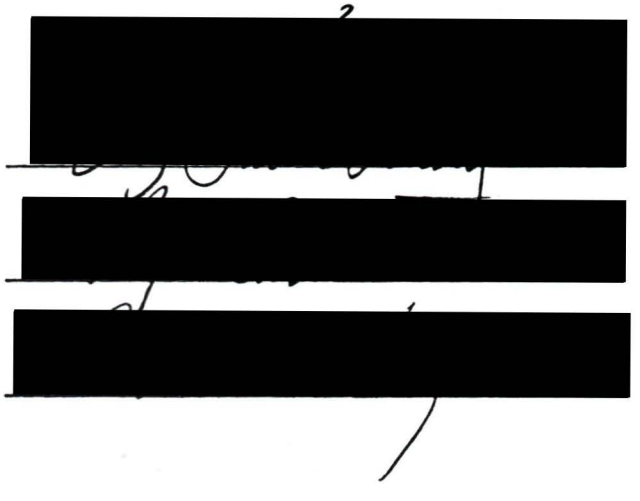
The results of the study suggest that the surveyed women in college Office Careers programmes are part of a nontraditional group. These women have low incomes, little education or employment experience, and a relatively non-risking life-style. Their resources, both emotionally and financially, are under strain to meet the demands of the student role. The Office Careers women attend college in order to qualify

for employment, yet report little affinity with or interest in their training area. Although they value a career as part of their own self-fulfilment, their priorities and goals are diffuse or in flux. The mature women of this group are particularly overloaded and under-supported, and often are the single parents of relatively young families. While they are highly concerned about finding employment, the mature women also seek to develop personally through their return to education.

There were more similarities than differences between the mature and youthful Office Careers students, there appeared to be many large differences between the Continuing Education for Women sample and this Office Careers group.

Implications for counsellors working with mature women, career students, and lower socioeconomic status women were drawn, together with recommendations that further study of these populations be made.

Examiners



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to Graham

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Mature women re-entering the educational system need greater and more appropriate counselling support than they are currently receiving. The B.C. college system, with its open door policy, special mature entry, low tuition fees, and diverse programming, has dispensed with many of the institutional barriers that normally face mature women students. It has done less to help with the personal and situational readjustments needed for successful re-entry. Although upgrading, vocational, and career programmes have led to the attraction of large numbers of mature women college students, most counselling departments are still heavily focused on the recruitment and advisement of recent high school graduates (Brandenberg, 1974) and on brief academic counselling with little attention paid to emotional or skills readiness.

The normal vocational counselling and advising procedures are patently inadequate to offset mature women students' uncertainty of goals, low self-confidence, and lack of study skills. Most of these students have few ideas about their career options, and they tend to choose relatively short term job-oriented programmes in which to enrol. Once at college, they frequently have difficulty settling into their training programmes and must cope with

time and energy wasting problems that could be remedied with appropriate counselling intervention (Brooks, 1976).

Counselling efforts with individual mature women and class-sized workshops for career programmes led mature students in one Office Careers programme to request a formal re-entry course to aid the transition from homemaker to student-trainee.

However, no locally developed or appropriate model was available. Further, even the counselling approaches used with these students were based on a set of assumptions of needs and characteristics drawn from an entirely different group of people. Ironically the counsellor most interested in these women's special needs would be the most prone to being misled by the readings and theories based on an inappropriate data base.

Most of the literature on women's educational and counselling needs that counsellors would tend to use is American, and examines affluent women aiming for university degrees (Astin, 1976). Those studies which include minority or poor women tend to focus on urban ethnic groups not found in most B.C. colleges (Gray, 1975). In contrast to the subjects of this readily available literature, and as a direct result of the uniquely characteristic 'melding' of vocational, career, and academic programmes in B.C. colleges, the B.C. women usually aim for rapid job entry within four months to a year, rather than embarking on a four or more year academic degree programme (Faris, 1976). The typical woman entering

B.C. colleges is likely to be from the rural working classes, with little education, and often in urgent need of marketable skills because of a recent divorce or separation.

Counsellors and educators of this group of women have little more than their own observations to go on. The tendency to use American research results and American counselling responses to deal with the apparently different goals and life situations of B.C. mature women students in Office Careers programmes is tempting in view of the lack of local data. Properly, the American answers can not be evaluated until more is known about B.C. women, sorting out the useful from the inappropriate will require specific description of the needs and characteristics of local women.

The purpose of this study is to add to the available data on B.C. Office Careers students by providing a preliminary description of the characteristics of this group, along the dimensions of background data, motivations, and barriers experienced in the completion of the training. The characteristics will be investigated in two forms: as an examination of the surveyed group using a study of American Continuing Education for Women students as an empirical reference point, and as a comparison between the mature and youthful subgroups within the Office Careers population of this study.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

A great deal of literature and research have been generated during the past decade on the topic of women in higher education. Most of the focus has been on the adult woman who returns to classes after an interruption due to obligations of work, family, or both. While most available studies are done by American researchers, both they and the Canadian researchers have tended to restrict themselves to the academically oriented student, or to the transition period preceeding academic re-entry. A considerably smaller but growing body of literature examines the characteristics of vocational or working class students.

Since this study is based largely on the work done by Astin (1976) the review of the literature will cover Astin's research study in detail. Also examined will be relevant major studies on the characteristics of mature women in academic and nonacademic training, and the characteristics of younger women students. Mention will be made of studies including mature men students as a comparison group to the women.

Background Characteristics

Much of what is known about women students still presents a distinctly middle class picture, despite a slowly increasing shift toward lower socioeconomic status women

attending college and university (Young, B., 1977). Although most programmes for women, and most general enrolment populations, contain students from a wide range of age, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, the average demographic descriptions of mature women attending post-secondary institutions are surprisingly standard. The average adult woman student at the college or university level is thirty-five years old, has two children, and is married to a husband whose education and income are well above average and who is supportive of her career plans. She has had some previous college experience, achieved good marks, and has probably chosen a relatively conventional career as her goal (Fredrickson, 1975; Lantz, 1970; Lyon, 1976; Markus, 1973).

Richards (1977) identified three types of returning women: single parent women in their 20's and 30's who were practical, confident, and purposive, married women in their 20's and 30's, with children at home, seeking career or personal fulfillment, but lacking confidence; and married women in their 30's and 40's whose children were almost grown, who wanted help with direction and skill redevelopment. Rossi and Calderwood (1973) noted that recent patterns at the University of Michigan's Center for Continuing Education for Women showed younger, poorer women becoming more visible on campus. The average user of the Center was more likely to be single or divorced than were her predecessors of a decade before; she was, however, just as traditional in her career choices.

Although the mature women students were embarking on a 'nontraditional' venture by even considering schooling and employment, most of them had a rather traditional life-style. Most of the women studied felt positive about their role as housewife and mother (Lyon, 1976). The great majority chose careers and study areas considered 'female' rather than the more neutral or male-dominated disciplines (Ladan & Crooks, 1975). Baruck (1972), LeFevre (1972) and Veres (1974) found that other factors that seemed to discriminate the returning students from nonstudent women were their higher self-esteem, and a higher likelihood of their having had a working mother while they were growing up.

Motivations

The motivations of returning adults generally fall under the headings of psychological and economic, with considerable overlap between the two (Lenz & Shaevitz, 1977).

The widespread expectation that women do not need to derive their identity other than through intimacy with a man (Erikson, 1963), has led to many women reaching middle adulthood with the adolescent task of identity formation incomplete (Lopata, 1971; U.B.C. Women's Research Collective, 1974; Westervelt, 1969). Eckard (1977) translated the concerns of the mature college students in her study as corresponding to developmental tasks normally associated with adolescence, or as unique to the new educational experience of the women. Middle class women in particular tend to turn to the educational system to help resolve identity and

integrity crises in their lives, and are more likely than working class women to be motivated to seek out the opportunities and information available to meet their particular needs (Eckstrom, 1972, Letchworth, 1970).

The growth motivations of all classes of women are inhibited by an upbringing which discourages the development of independence and ambition, and which encourages self-definition in terms of relationships rather than achievement (Bardwick, 1971, Leonard, 1978, Maccoby, 1963). Horner (1970) highlighted the social view of femininity and competitive achievement as being mutually exclusive, and pointed to the fear of success that results in bright women being unable to reconcile their sexual identity with their intellectual potential.

Ladan and Crooks (1975) studied women at the University of Calgary who had returned to complete their education. Initial motivation was strongly based on a search for self-fulfillment and identity, although by the second year many of the women were becoming more conscious of their career ambitions and had begun to initiate lifestyle changes that might indicate a new sense of identity had been achieved.

The average life sequence of women still follows the succession of public school, short-term job, marriage, motherhood, gradual return to part-time or volunteer work, with possible retraining before resumption of fulltime work (Bardwick, 1971, Komarovsky, 1973). This typically broken pattern has produced many women with characteristics and

needs markedly different from those described by the classical adult development theories, such as Erikson's (1963), and different from the model to which higher education still gears its delivery of services to the public (Astin & Myint, 1971, Howe, F., 1975).

Neugarten (1968) wrote about a social time clock to complement the usual concept of biological time clocks as the pacemakers of psychological change. In the lives of mature women cues are drawn heavily from the timing of events within the family, as opposed to adult men's cues which come from the work setting. These women are typically moving from an affiliative to an independent lifestyle (Brim, 1976, Lowenthal, 1973). The achievement motive that young women often submerge during childbearing years begins to reassert itself in middle age, although recent trends indicate a slowing down rather than a suspension of non-familial ambitions (Astin, 1976, Baruch, 1967). The necessity of choosing either the family role or the work role is becoming less exclusive as society allows more blending of male and female roles, although the resulting conflicts are a very active part of the mature women students' campus experience (Glogowski & Lanning, 1976, Voelz, 1974).

Another aspect of the psychological motivation to return to education is the desire to keep up with the rapid change and growing complexity of contemporary life (Lenz & Shaevitz, 1977). Upgrading one's information and knowledge in order to counteract stagnation and to keep up with

children and peers particularly affects women who may have been isolated and dependent within the home for a number of years (Self, 1969). Lyon (1976), studying the elite Sarah Lawrence Continuing Education for Women programme, found the vast majority of those students to be motivated by the desire for intellectual stimulation and the desire for a degree (71% each), slightly fewer by the search for direction and identity, the wish to escape boredom, and the 'empty nest syndrome', and only a small group by the need for career credentials or financial self-support. Durcholz and O'Connor (1973) found that equal numbers of their mature college subjects wanted personal growth and education (60%), with 35% interested primarily in employment. Again, education is more often the choice method of change for middle class women, who are likely to be more 'learning oriented' than their working class peers (Lenz & Shaevitz, 1977; Husbands, 1972). Wolfson (1976) stated that the housewives and office workers in his study tended to have poorer scholastic records and a markedly lower interest in academic matters than women with school re-entry ambitions. Cognitive measures were all more clearly linked for females than for males, to parental social class (Kagan, 1971), and in fact, Mushkin (1972) found that the higher the per capita income of her neighborhood, the more psychological and practical access to education a woman was likely to have.

The urge for change, and education as an expression of

that change, can come through sudden crises as well as the more leisurely processes of growth (O'Neill & O'Neill, 1974). Durcholz and O'Connor (1973) described almost a quarter of their sample as responding to an external crisis such as marriage breakdown or financial pressure. In a well known study of the work values of women, Eyde (1962) mentioned the concept of 'emergency vocations', loosely conceived job options that women resort to in case the traditional patterns and promises fail. These plans are rarely thought through by the young women, and rarely updated or improved as the years pass, with the result that many middle-aged divorcees and widows have few ideas about career options or familiarity with their own abilities and interests beyond the limited fantasies of their youth (Hansen, 1974, Lewis, 1965, Zytowski, 1969).

The psychological motivations for educational re-entry have been strengthened during the past decade by a growing appreciation for such concepts as human potential and self-actualization, and by emphasis on civil and equal rights. The women's movement has encouraged women to examine their own needs and priorities, and to engage in lifeplanning beyond the limits of the home. In addition, societal changes such as the increase of divorce rates, rising standards of living, and loosening of sex-role stereotypes have led many more women to consider education as an option (Williams, 1977).

For many women, the attraction of education lies in

the pragmatic need to improve their financial situation. Recently divorced women, older women facing widowhood or retired penury, single mothers, wives whose husbands' salaries no longer keep up with the bills, women who want to better themselves socially and economically, women needing to upgrade job credentials--all are likely to stress economic as well as personal motivations for their education (Lenz & Shaevitz, 1977, Seear, 1971). Indeed, women have been entering the labour market in ever-increasing numbers (Labour Canada, 1977). Over 45% of all B.C. women over the age of 15 are in the labour force, representing 36.7% of all workers. Married women, most of them working fulltime, constitute 59.6% of the female labour force and represent 41.6% of all married women, an increase of almost 17% in 10 years. More than a third of these women are working in the clerical occupations, including almost 50% of women who have completed high school, and almost 15% of those with a university degree (Cockburn, 1967; Howe, L.K., 1977). Those women who seek other occupations generally choose from a small range of options, with the result that 80% of working women are to be found in only five major occupational groups (Labour Canada, 1977; Shack, 1977). Women receive lower salaries even for comparable work; men are paid from 54% to 114% more than their female coworkers, reaching $15,304 to women's yearly $9,479 (Grenby, 1978; Kreps, 1971; Labour Canada, 1977).

Women who wish to work and who need to work are left

with no option but to increase their educational qualifications, in the hope that their income will be sufficient for their needs (Howe, L.K., 1977). Ironically, lack of money is a reason frequently given by women for nonparticipation in adult education (Carp, Peterson & Roelfs, 1974; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965).

Glogowski and Lanning (1976) stated that mature women attached more importance to economic work values than did younger women students. Frederickson (1975) studied University of British Columbia graduate students whose motivations were to upgrade their economic status (44%), to facilitate personal development (37%), and to acquire more education (12%). Rossi and Calderwood (1973) noted that users of the University of Michigan CEW programme were becoming increasingly interested in training for jobs, and were more in need of financial assistance than students of a decade ago. The undergraduates studied by Durcholz and O'Connor (1973) had a strong desire for both employment (35%) and achievement or education (30%), with almost 65% having definite career goals in mind. Three quarters of the group planned to work after graduation. Not only are these women redefining themselves in terms of new roles and experiences, they also typify the adult learner in being conscious of their reasons for learning and in understanding the benefits of education (Knox, 1977).

Barriers

The barriers and problems encountered by mature women

students in the post-secondary educational system have been studied extensively (Cook, 1976; Erickson, 1970; Furniss & Graham, 1974; Willis, 1977b). Evidence from researchers such as Kelman and Staley (1975), Ladan and Crooks (1975, 1976) and Perrone, Wolleat, Lee and Davis (1977), points to a distinct range of problems unique to this group and absent or less troublesome for younger women or for male students.

Ekstrom (1972) created a systematic three-part category that is useful to consider when examining the various specific studies on barriers:

1. institutional barriers
    a. admissions restrictions and quotas
    b. financial aid guidelines and omissions
    c. regulations governing course patterns
    d. curriculum planning and student personnel services
    e. faculty and staff attitudes and behaviors
2. situational barriers
    a. sociological factors
    b. family characteristics and responsibilities
    c. financial obstacles, real and perceived
    d. residential factors
    e. personal factors of preparation or influence
3. dispositional barriers
    a. attitudes about role appropriateness
    b. motivational levels and inhibitions
    c. stereotypic personality traits

As Eckstrom's work was the preliminary to a large survey of institutional problems, the third category received less careful analysis. However, many other studies focus heavily on both situational and dispositional barriers.

Janet Willis (1977a) recently completed a cross-Canada survey of institutions offering educational programmes for women that included all the colleges, most of the universities and YM/YWCA's, and selected women's centres and groups. Her opening words, 'nothing has changed' (p.1), refer to the fact that despite a great proliferation of programmes geared to women, there has been 'virtually no change in the provision of the education services necessary in order for a woman to access learning in the first place' (p.1). The educators that Willis surveyed indicated that the major barrier interfering with a woman's opportunity to learn was her own self-concept (Willis, 1977b). The women typically felt they could not learn, and that they had no right to use available time or income on their own learning. Few institutions offered facilities or services to help with the re-entry process. Available courses were often at inconvenient times and places, with child care remaining a major obstacle, particularly with part-time students and single parents. Lack of income, whether real or perceived, put many of the courses out of reach, especially those Continuing Education offerings planned on a cost-recovery basis. There was no Canadian equivalent to such programmes as 'CLEP' (Ford Foundation, 1976), or a truly flexible system of open education for

non-traditional students. Most women's courses were 'frills' that did not address themselves to the women's needs for re-training of self-concept and job skills. Those courses that were job oriented tended to be in the traditional low-paying, sex-stereotyped career areas such as office training. Willis joined Shack (1977) and Young, F.A. (1974) in singling out the largest barrier or rather, gap, within the Canadian educational system as inadequate career counselling.

Self (1969) described the women taking part in his college programmes as committed to maintaining their marital and maternal relationships. Most of them were middle-class, 'normal in emotional adjustment', and looking for something meaningful to pursue. Self outlined three group characteristics that interfered with an easy transition into college life. The most common trait was the women's lack of confidence in their own abilities, maintained by lack of feedback concerning their real abilities, lack of external criteria for evaluating themselves, and little or no chance to utilize intellectual, academic, or employment skills for a decade or more. The second psycho-social trait was depression. Self described its presence as chronic physical complaints, inability to mobilize energy, waning interest in activities or friends, lack of zest for living, and a general reluctance to fully participate in the world outside the cloistered home. The angers normally generated by loss of youth and lack of intimacy were directed inward as feelings of worthlessness, inadequacy and loss of joy.

The third trait was an identity crisis brought on by the suppression of personal needs and longterm goals in service of the goals of other people. These women were directionless, had difficulty relating openly, and carried a pervasive sense of loneliness and isolation. Adjustment to academic study was inhibited by these unresolved conflicts. Dealing with the issues from within a group of women with similar characteristics, as occured in Self's programme, was a supportive and effective technique in promoting educational readiness.

Counsellors at the Western Michigan University (Manis & Mochizuki, 1972) found that the women seeking re-entry programmes were uncertain of their abilities and options, and that they had to overcome feelings of role conflict, low self-worth, dependency, and goallessness. Most were reluctant or uncertain about taking up their previous occupations, but had few ideas about career options beyond the usual range of teaching, nursing, secretarial, sales, and social work positions. Ladan and Crooks (1975) found that Calgary women experienced very low confidence during their first semester at university, and that as the successful completion of their work led to added confidence and enjoyment, the women tended to become more adventurous in both their career planning and their life-style.

Lenz and Shaevitz (1977) described the realities of re-entry in a handbook for mature students. They addressed the myths that inhibit participation: the concept of adult-

hood as a static period full of regret and failing powers, the fears that adults are incapable of learning or growth, assumptions that memory, knowledge and reasoning ability have eroded away, preoccupation with menopause and disease as a norm of aging. O'Neill and O'Neill (1974) referred to these attitudes as 'the maturity myth' that lulled adults into a static and deadening set of external goals, rather than challenging the individual through lifelong learning and growth. Once the adult woman has overcome these myths and enrolled at school, she faces another set of common 'traps and traumas', particularly an anxiety arising from her sense of insecurity and inadequacy in this new environment (Bem & Bem, 1971; Lenz & Shaevitz, 1977). Women who have been full-time homemakers often do not allow themselves a period of transition to relearn study skills and gain confidence before embarking on their career programmes. Feeling out of phase and out of place, fearing the competition of younger students, and coping both with unpleasant memories of past schooling and unrealistic expectations of personal achievement, mature students are easily discouraged during the initial weeks of schooling (Maccoby, 1963). Women are especially socialized to feel guilt over role-conflicts, and often express this ambivalence by trying to carry too many commitments yet being reluctant to ask for the assistance, space, time, or funds that could make the added responsibilities manageable (Eckstrom, 1972, Leonard, Tanney, Hill & Clancy, 1978).

Most women are not readily aware of the institutional barriers they face, and they take for granted the construction of a 'male university' based on the 'clockwork of male careers' (Hochschild, 1975; Rich, 1975). They are often not aware that admissions regulations, financial aid, scheduling, lack of daycare, and rules about course load are rather arbitrary decisions based on tradition and the 'built-in adolescent bias' (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965) of male administrators within the institution rather than on proven standards of excellence and appropriateness (Cless, 1969; Elliot & Mantz, 1976; Ruslink, 1972).

The B.C. college system has opened its doors to students other than the recently graduated high school student. Some of the common institutional barriers have been overcome, allowing students from a wide range of educational backgrounds and with a diversity of educational goals to attend. Increased access is provided through special mature entry, financial aid programmes, low tuition fees, adult upgrading, part-time study in university programmes and some career programmes, and the availability of job-entry certification and apprenticeship programmes. However, many barriers remain to prevent women from taking full advantage of their educational opportunities, specifically the lack of re-entry assistance, lack of drop-in daycare, inadequacy of career counselling, and financial aid for mature women being largely restricted to traditional sex-stereotyped career programmes (Willis, 1977b). Many administrators do not

distinguish between services and courses attended by women, and services and courses designed for women, thus perpetuating the limiting and molding of women students that passes for equal opportunity in education (Zimmerman & Trew, Note 1).

The largest classification of problems reported by women are the situational barriers created by lifestyle, socioeconomic status, and traditional definitions of femininity. Bardwick (1971) wrote of the way in which society creates conflicts for women by rewarding occupational achievement while inhibiting its development in women's lives through lack of appropriate opportunities and support services. Frederickson (1975) found that among women students at the University of British Columbia problems were significantly more intense for those with children, those who had interrupted their education early, and those born outside Canada. Financial need was the most important problem for 56%, overtiredness and the struggles of combining studies and family life an issue for 53%, and adjustment to academic life concerned 46%. Only 12% were aware of spouse opposition, although the high levels of fatigue suggest little actual help was given.

Mature women at the University of Calgary (Ladan & Crooks, 1975) reported background characteristics that strongly resembled those of the average American CEW students. They reported their worst obstacles as lack of funding, lack of childcare facilities, and the need for time bargaining between study and family needs. Lack of confidence was

often mentioned, as was an extreme dissatisfaction with the self. While the attitude of the spouse was often positive upon re-entry, there was a significant reduction in enthusiasm the longer the mature women remained on campus. Ladan and Crooks (1975, 1976) extended their study to include both mature men and young women students. The younger women were concerned about money, distance and travel, the opposition of significant others, specifically peers, and a degree of self-dissatisfaction. Mature men students were bothered by lack of money and a slight initial lack of confidence, with 36% claiming to have no problems at all.

deWolfe and Lunneborg (1972) reported that mature undergraduate students attending the University of Washington in 1970-71 also found financing to be a serious problem. Two thirds of the women had recently had jobs at the 'lower levels' of an organization, while two thirds of the men had recently left jobs at the 'higher levels'. Although half the men and almost three quarters of the women were supported, 60% had financial worries. The more affluent women at Sarah Lawrence (Lyon, 1976) found home/school conflicts to be their greatest burden (44%), followed by guilt about prioritizing available funds for their own use. Fatigue and lack of time were major issues, while a third mentioned difficulty sorting out personal priorities, finding childcare, and readjusting to study demands.

Eckstrom (1972) and Ruslink (1969) considered the lack

of adequate financial aid as a withholding of equal access for women students, particularly affecting lower socio-economic class women, women with children, and women needing to 'buy' study time from childcare and housework duties.

Waniewicz (1976) conducted personal interviews with 1541 Ontario residents in a study of the demand for part-time learning in Ontario. His investigation of the obstacles experienced by the 'learners' group of women found that being too busy with other responsibilities was by far the biggest problem, followed by lack of money, difficulty getting out of the house, and distance/transportation. Level of previous education, age, place of residence, and marital status greatly affected the ranking of problems.

Harmon (1975) suggested that the varying needs of special groups of women made it inappropriate to think, and counsel, only in terms of 'self-actualization'. In light of Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs, she proposed that, until the economic, security, and emotional requirements of these women are met, they will be deaf to attempts to facilitate further personal or career development. In a study of the needs of mature women students at Colorado State University, Kelman and Staley (1975) reported that the strongest work-shop interest was for job application and resume skills (66%) followed by study skills development. Ninety-one per-cent suggested daycare on campus, and 86% felt the need for an orientation course for new mature students. Smallwood (1977) was even more specific about the pragmatic orientation

of the women she surveyed at a Texas community college:

> 'Only when the adult women college students had coordinated their family and job responsibilities could they then be free to focus on academic issues . . . choosing a career and getting a job were next . . . concern about relationships (including self confidence) . . . was lower in priority (as) other needs were more pressing' (long abstract, p. 4).

Smallwood joined Eckstrom (1972), Johnstone and Rivera (1965), and Lyon (1976) in finding a direct link between the intensity of the problems reported by the women and the amount of credit hours, income level, marital status, length of time enrolled, and age of the students.

Another group of community college women students, studied by Richards (1977), also identified a largely practical set of problems: shortage of time, school-related anxiety, difficulty with prioritizing of multiple role functions, money problems, child care, study skill deficiencies, and counselling or instructional inadequacies. An amazing sixty percent of these women were hampered by families who did not support their return to school, bearing out the findings by Aguren and Dameron (1977), Brandenburg (1974) and Roach (1976) that negative family attitudes were a major problem for re-entry women.

Writing about the college re-entry experience, Gray (1975) focused on California women enrolled at seven community colleges in the San Francisco Bay area. All the subjects were from low and moderate income families, and many were the heads of single parent families. While lack of confidence was an overwhelming problem at the time of

enrolment, the positive feedback from instructors soon reduced its impact after the first semester. The main long-term issue for student mothers was role conflict, in the sense of meeting the stringent demands of study in addition to maintaining the role of the parent most responsible for the welfare of the children. The priority and time conflicts inherent in this issue contributed to an energy-draining guilt that 'never really went away'. Inadequate money was the second major concern, highlighting the lack of financial aid available to mature women students. Study skills were a prime need of many women, especially for those counselled in their high school days to concentrate on clerical skills to the exclusion of college-appropriate study habits and attitudes (Gray, 1975; Pietrofesa & Schlossberg, 1970).

A research study by Young B. (1977) uncovered an even more specific group of high-risk students, that of mothers on welfare who attended a community college in Kentucky. Young states that most welfare women are sent into vocational programmes of short duration, rather than encouraged to attend an academic programme such as the ones she surveyed. Although the majority of the welfare women did well at college, the over-25 age group performed significantly better than the younger women. The older women also tended to perceive greater benefits from their college experiences, especially in the area of personal growth, self image, and confidence. The greatest barrier experienced by all the

women involved finances and government support services. Personal and academic factors, particularly the lack of remedial help, were secondary problems for the group as a whole. However, the older women perceived frequent and continuous interference from personal problems on their studies, which was not surprising given the heavier load of family responsibilities and the greater financial strains involved in their participation.

Non-degree Training

As community colleges continue to offer a rapidly expanding range of vocational, career, and upgrading programmes, the students will become increasingly nontraditional (Cross, 1974). Entering with different educational and socioeconomic backgrounds from those of most degree seeking students, these new students will bring their own distinct goals and problems to the campus (Vickers & Adam, 1977).

Perrone, Wolleat, Lee and Davis (1977) complained about the dearth of information on 'the educational, vocational, social, or personal needs of the adult student' and constructed their study to identify the counselling needs of adult students enrolled in vocational-technical schools. Although they completely ignored the body of literature on women's educational needs, they addressed differences of age, sex and course load with a twenty-five item questionnaire. Women students of all ages were significantly more concerned than the men over having enough money to pay for their education. The men were more concerned about being dis-

tracted by outside activities, getting studies done on time, and having to take required courses. Respondents over 26 years of age were less concerned about getting job information, being unemployed, being distracted by outside activities, getting money, taking oral reports and examinations, completing required courses and coping with maths than were the younger students. Likewise, students with less than a full load were less worried about all items than were those enrolled in diploma, certificate or arts programmes. The concerns of male and female adult students ranked differently in several important ways. Although both males and females reported that doing well on exams was their top concern, women seemed to be considerably more concerned about facing unemployment and finding money for education. Unemployment appeared thirteenth on the male hierarchy, money did not appear at all. The mature women as a group tended to cluster their concerns among six high intensity items (exams, jobs, job information, courses, math, money). The reported concerns of mature male students tended to be more evenly distributed over lower scores and more items. The researchers concluded that full-time adult students differed substantially from the students-in-general, and that adult men differed from adult women in their student concerns.

Zeroing in on Canadian college secretarial programmes, Shack (1977) found a largely female mixture of young high school graduates, heads-of-families, and mature re-entry

students. Students were often directed into secretarial programmes 'simply because there seemed no other place to go' (p.56). Women from the higher income homes seemed to enroll in the longer and more specialized training programmes, and often expected to earn near their original standard-of-living level. After the first few months, the expectations for high salaries and development of technical skills had been lowered to realistic levels, and many of the mature students had been allowed to modify their entry plans to fit their abilities and restrictions. Such flexibility in college programmes is made necessary by the growing practice of allowing non-academic qualifications such as past experience and personal qualities to facilitate entry of mature students. Shack's interviews revealed that the concerns of these women centered around the intense pressure of the training, lack of time for assignments and for outside activities, and the shortage of funds for those students not sponsored by Canada Manpower. Those women who chose Business Administration rather than Office Training often had difficulty being accepted by the predominantly male instructors and student peers during their first year in the programmes. In addition, there was often the failure to develop potential because of generally low expectations--low on the part of families, on the part of the students themselves, on the part of teachers, and above all, on the part of employers (Shack, 1977).

Royce's (1970) classic study on educational opportunities

for women in Canada includes a report on a Vancouver Canada Manpower programme for welfare women that was the first of the Employment Orientation for Women series. In designing an adjustment period before the beginning of training or employment, Manpower placed emphasis on improvement of self-confidence, basic academic skills, personal development and assistance with child care and job orientation. Significantly, daycare, financing, and transportation were provided by the organizers. Absence of the latter three arrangements was the major reason given for educational non-participation of lower socioeconomic status women in an earlier Vancouver study (Webster, 1968). Interestingly, these women themselves cited their prime need as education for employment, while their social workers' goals included cultural orientation, relationship and home management counselling, citizenship, and finally, employment.

As with many of the nonaffluent mature students in college academic programmes, the needs and problems of non-academic women were largely practical and related directly to their life situations as women. Many of the barriers were the direct result of institutional limitations or oversights in providing service to adults with pressing outside responsibilities and few financial and/or emotional resources. Relatively few barriers related to the actual inability of the women to cope with the academic work.

Continuing Education for Women

Many institutions have become aware that women, par-

ticularly those who have been at home for some years, need special services to equalize their opportunities for learning. American colleges and universities responded by developing more than three hundred Continuing Education for Women programmes to exist alongside or integrated with the regular educational offerings (U.S. Department of Labor, 1971, 1974). The nationwide study of fifteen of these programmes by Astin (1976) has quickly become a major reference in the field of women's education (Buckland, 1978; Lyon, 1976; Wolfson, 1976). In response to the writer's requests for information, the directors of both the Sarah Lawrence College and the University of Michigan Centers for Continuing Education of Women recommended Astin (1976) as the primary reference on re-entry women students (Campbell, 1978; Green, 1978) (Notes 1 and 2).

Astin (1976) developed her survey to investigate the characteristics of women participants in Continuing Education for Women (CEW) programmes, and the impact of such participation on the women. Although much of the literature on the education of mature women focuses on continuing education, the enormous diversity of content, purpose, and clientele makes definition of CEW a difficult task. Matina Horner (1976) classifies offerings on a functional basis as: personal growth and self development; intellectual development in the liberal arts tradition; professional development in the career sense; job skill training; and refresher/retraining services. The programmes under study were oriented toward

the job market and organized to develop the students' capacity for competent job performance. Most offered both vocational skills training and liberal arts curricula. Counselling and career guidance played key roles in this process, but job placement services tended to be inadequate.

Astin's sample study included fifteen CEW programmes selected for diversity: samples of mixed and homogeneous racial, religious and ethnic groups, rural and urban, co-educational and single sex, small, medium, and large campuses, multifaceted and single focus, sectarian and nonsectarian programmes.

The initial phase was a case study of each of the 15 programmes, followed by a mail survey that reaped 649 participants, and concluded by interviews of 212 students and student families. Programmes were asked to send in the names of up to 150 women who sought enrolment or counselling during July to September 1974. A total of 999 names were randomly chosen to receive mailed surveys, to a maximum of 67 per programme. Astin also approached 541 former participants as a comparison group. The methods of data analysis included frequency distribution, cross tabulation, and regression analysis.

The main findings contradict the stereotype of a bored middle class housewife dabbling in a little culture. The survey respondents were serious, determined, and pragmatic in their goals. Most reported both personal and professional benefits from their educational activities, many reported

profound changes in their self-concept. Husbands were usually financially and emotionally supportive, and in most cases the marriage was reported improved. Children's respect for their mothers and interest in education were also increased.

Astin's findings on the background, motivations, and problems of her students are of particular interest in this research, and will be dealt with in more detail.

Virtually all participants had completed high school, 85% of them with a B or A average. Almost half had one degree and over a third were working for certificate or degree qualifications, usually part-time. Grades for current academic work tended to be high--a fourth A, almost half at B.

Ninety-two percent of the women had worked at some time, over half of them concurrently with their studies. Thirty-one percent had been in clerical jobs, 7% in sales, 4% in skilled or semi-skilled work, and all the rest were in art, business or professional areas. Astin considered that the women's pay was low--only 60% had incomes, and a fifth made less than $5,000, another quarter less than $10,000, and only 5% exceeded $15,000 a year. The husbands tended to be well-educated businessmen or professionals, 85% with at least a college education, and 10% with a trade training. Over one quarter had incomes over $30,000, while less than 10% made under $10,000.

The median age for the women was 36 years, with a range from 18 to 75 years. A third of the women were under 30 years old. About two thirds were married, 15% were separated or divorced, and 3% were widowed.

Sixty-eight percent of participants had children, with the mode being two children, although almost 1 in 5 had four or more. Almost one quarter of the women had children of pre-school age, almost half had children over 18 years old.

The three motivations which ranked most important were the desire to become more educated (63%), to achieve independence and a sense of identity (44%), and to prepare for a better job (44%). Only 29% specifically wanted a degree or certificate, while 35% wanted counselling and information. Non-married women were most focused on job preparation (50% single, 58% formerly married). The lower income women, living on less than $10,000/year, were more likely to make use of information and financial aid services (21%), and to be enrolled in a certificate programme. Higher income women favored group counselling, degree programmes, and noncredit classes. While the lower income women came specifically to acquire the skills and credentials needed to obtain employment (58%), the higher income women tended to not want to work, or to defer to the needs and preferences of their children instead.

Women students already employed were less likely to be motivated by the boredom or the desire for qualifications that moved nonworkers, and they were more likely to seek information or support for possible new job placements. Frequently their husbands, while approving of the work, were non-supportive of the return to school. Working women as well as younger women were flexible about how old the

children should be before the mother returned to work or school, and were more likely to have had a working mother themselves.

The majority of students were attracted by the courses themselves (61%), and many (33%) were strongly encouraged to enroll by friends. Dissatisfaction with jobs and homes were incentives for one fifth of the women and previously married women were five times as likely to be motivated by marital problems and employment needs as were married women. Death or illness (4%) and marital problems (10%) were the catalyst for a small group, which was comparable to those experiencing the less traumatic reduction of home responsibilities (16%).

Regardless of entry motivation, most participants gained incentive from the positive effects of their schooling, personal growth was reported in the form of increased self-awareness (39%), openness (36%), self-confidence (32%), and gains in self-direction (32%). It was noted that fewer than 4% cited negative changes Consistent with their focus on employment, the nonmarried group was 2 to 3 times as likely to mention development of employable skills and increased desire to work.

Effects on other aspects of their lives also seemed mostly positive. Fifty-four percent had increased respect from their children while 4% had children who resented the schooling. Half gained more respect from other people, while a few coworkers (8%) and friends (11%) disapproved. Marital relations improved for 35% and deteriorated for 13%.

While shortage of time affected some families (22%) and friendships (35%), other families drew closer (34%) and became more self-reliant (32%).

Despite the flexibility of CEW programmes, the most frequently cited problems were programme-related. The most troublesome issues were: class scheduling (46%) and costs, distance, transportation and location (25% each). The pressures of being at school and at the same time carrying out other duties also created problems for many, close to one in four mentioned lack of time, job responsibilities, or family and housework obligations, as major obstacles. Other problems were more closely connected with competencies, motivations, and feelings: lack of specific skills and abilities (15%), lack of direction (15%), lack of self-confidence (12%), lack of energy (11%), guilt about money (9%), and guilt about neglect of children (8%). Older married women had the least financial problems, but experienced more demands from their jobs. Women under fifty had the greatest time problems, and those under 40 felt the most guilt about being at school and the most conflict about not meeting family obligations. Only 5% experienced their families as nonsupportive. In fact, almost two-thirds of the husbands were considered to be very supportive of their wives' schooling, as were 43% of the children. Between one third and one quarter of parents and siblings, and close to half of all women friends and classmates, were supportive.

The aspects of academic work mentioned as creating

pressures on degree-seeking women of the sample, were conflicting demands on time (72%), exams (62%) and lengthy homework assignments (49%). About a third were concerned with the issues of public speaking, reading skills, inadequate math preparation, and grades. Twenty-seven percent mentioned inadequate study skills as a problem. Older women had the most anxieties about public speaking and reading.

Self-concept did not seem to be an obstacle, the women saw themselves as successful in several spheres: work, academia, and the home. Two-thirds of the CEW women rated themselves as well above average on the majority of twenty-four self-rating items, only mathematic, athletic, public speaking and artistic abilities were commonly seen as average or below when compared to other women of similar age. Non-married women were more likely to rate high in independence and cheerfulness, and low in homemaking skills. The sense of competence and drive perceived by Astin was confirmed by three-quarters of the whole group indicating that having a career in addition to being a wife and mother was important or very important to their self-fulfillment. Among the 52% of women who attached very high importance to a career, there was a distinct tendency to be flexible regarding the issue of mothers returning to work or school, to rate themselves highly on intellectual self-confidence, to be bored at home, to have been away from school a short time, to have worked and probably still be working, and to have a supportive husband.

Astin separated the responses of those women enrolled in degree (11%) and certificate (7%) programmes. These academically oriented students were more likely to report their original objectives as the attainment of credit or certification rather than obtaining of information or counselling. Job dissatisfaction was a major reason for re-entry, and 65% cited a concern over their ability to finance their education, 21% being highly worried. Astin judged many from this group as deviating from sex-role norms, in that they rated themselves low on physical appearance but high on independence and sense of self-direction. They reported their husbands as approving of their work plans, and they tended to choose nontraditional careers at the professional and executive levels. Those in the certificate programmes contrasted with the degree-aimed group by having been away from school for less time, by wanting to prepare for a better job, and by having sought vocational testing rather than counselling. They also tended to have had less previous education, poorer grades, and more conventional career plans than the degree students.

Astin's distinctions between non-academic and academic, and degree and certificate students were a useful step in bringing researchers out of the general realm of education for women and into an examination of specific groups of women in education.

Summary of Trends

The studies cited in this chapter, while contributing

to a relatively uniform image of the middle-class student, do include trends that run counter to this description. Emphasis on pragmatic problems and motivations by mature women in community colleges and in non-degree programmes suggests that counsellors of mature women students need to be familiar with more than academic values and middle-class solutions (Harmon, 1975; Smallwood, 1977).

As students taking Office Careers training at B.C. community colleges seek neither an academic degree nor credit-free personal development programmes, but are strongly employment focused, they might be expected to have characteristics similar to the emerging pragmatic trends mentioned in the literature. Evidence from Webster (1968), and Young, B. (1977), suggests that mature college women of lower socioeconomic status tend to be drawn to short-term job preparation, in contrast, many other writers emphasize the middle class value system underlying choice of degree programmes (Husbands, 1972, Lenz & Shaevitz, 1977, Wolfson, 1976). Astin (1976) herself, in subgrouping her subjects according to degree and certificate goals, found that certificate-oriented women had less income and education, more concern with jobs, a more traditional lifestyle, and greater numbers of problems than the more academic-oriented students. Shack (1977), Webster (1968) and Young, B. (1977) noted that low income and job-oriented women had few financial or emotional resources available to them, yet had to cope with serious personal, practical and academic

difficulties. From another Canadian perspective, Vickers & Adam (1977) noted that the changing student population of lower socioeconomic status women brings a set of distinctly different goals and problems to the traditional campus.

Some of the research cited also leads to an expectation that the mature and youthful subgroups with the Office Careers population will have different characteristics. The definitions of the subgroups lead easily to predictions of difference in age, marital status, and length of time away from school. The effect of these factors on confidence, study skills, role complexity, and available time and energy has been explored by many of the researchers (Gray, 1975; Ladan & Crooks, 1975, Lenz & Shaevitz, 1977). Study of variables such as age, income, children and course load were made by Frederickson (1975), Lyon (1976) and Smallwood (1977), and were found to be a burden particularly to mature women students.

In addition, mature women students were cited as having strong economic and employment concerns (Glogowski & Lanning, 1976, Perrone et al, 1977) and as frequently being handicapped by a lack of emotional or family support (Markus, 1973).

The fact that these women are of different generations leads to expectations that their developmental tasks and motivations would vary: mature women would be concerned with issues of identity and personal growth, while younger women would look to jobs and relationships (Ladan & Crooks, 1975, 1976; Letchworth, 1970).

Finally, Bardwick (1971), Gray (1975) and Young, B. (1977), stressed that the family responsibilities of the older students were a major concern that single young women did not have to deal with.

These findings, coupled with the writer's observations that many college women are prematurely forced into training due to economic and marital crisis rather than through considered decision making, have led to the expectations about Office Careers women underlying this study.

CHAPTER 3

Method

Subjects

The subjects consisted of three groups of women Office Careers students attending two separate B.C. community colleges. One group of 17 was voluntary, comprised largely of recently enrolled students who formed approximately half of the total college programme. Two groups of 29 and 34 participated at the direction of their mutual programme director, and formed the entire Office Careers population of their college. The male students enrolled in the programme (N=3), were not included in the survey.

Students enter the Office Careers programmes after several months of waiting. Canada Manpower purchases half or more of the available seats, thus allowing a wider socio-economic range of student than might otherwise be possible. Each month a small group enters and another group graduates from the programme.

College A is situated in a middle-to-upper class suburban area within minutes of a large city. College B, in a rural farm area, has two campuses 50 and 70 miles out of the same large city. Residents in area B are influenced by a heavy fundamentalist religious settlement, although the more urban B campus is tempered by a growing commuter population.

The Office Careers programme at College A keeps its

students grouped from entry onward, while College B uses some small grouping to supplement a largely individualized study approach. The two college programmes offer a variety of specialties, lasting from 4 to 6 months at College A and from 4 to 10 months at College B: clerk typist, bookkeeper, accountant, stenographer, basic office skills, and general refresher courses. Both programmes run thirty hours a week, take attendance, have dress codes and stress the importance of faculty support and role modelling Personal development workshops are made available to students, and College A offers job planning and interview skills (although none of the surveyed students had yet taken this instruction).

For the purpose of this study, 'mature woman student' is defined as a woman who is or has been married, or who has been away from classes for three or more years and is at least 25 years old. The terms 're-entry woman' and 'mature woman' are here taken to mean 'mature woman student'. The terms 'youthful woman student' and 'young woman' are defined for this study as a woman student who is single, under 25 years old, and who has been away from classes less than three years.

Instrument

A search of the literature for survey studies on mature women students produced a comprehensive nationwide American study by Astin (1976) on women in continuing education. The services of the institutions surveyed covered continuing education (credit free), women's studies, re-entry pro-

grammes, vocational and academic programmes leading to degrees or certificates, and counselling services. Duplicating the Astin study offered the possibility of comparing the well researched mature women's population with the B.C. Office Career group. Astin's work, as well as being more thorough than most studies, has become one of the major references in the area of counselling and educating mature women (Lyon, 1976).

Some of the questionnaire's 62 items were altered or eliminated in order to make them appropriate for a career, rather than a continuing education, programme and to a counselling, rather than an administrative, focus. Some items specific to the campuses under study were added, as were single items drawn from a review of the literature.

A small pilot group of six mature women office workers and two counsellors completed the survey and generated several major changes for ease of response and appropriateness of questions to the education and socioeconomic levels of the population. At College A, the instructors of the intended population made editing suggestions that further shortened the survey. A cover letter was attached to the questionnaire to explain its purpose and to elicit cooperation. Confidentiality was promised, although 17 persons gave up anonymity to volunteer for possible interviews later. As the survey data was adequate, no interviews were held.

The final version of the survey instrument had 36

questions and 275 individual items, designed for rapid responses. It was arranged in four sections: I, factors surrounding the decision to attend college, II, experiences with the business office training programmes, including problems, support systems, and perceived changes over time, III, issues and data regarding education and work history, IV, personal background, attitudes, and self-concept. Topic selection was based largely on the Astin survey, with other literature and personal opinion suggesting additional foci. Most items were based on a two-stage decision format asking that items be checked off if 'important', and then circled if 'very important'. This approach was judged by the pilot study group to be less confusing and less time consuming than a Likert type scale, as well as imposing a lower respondent load on participants. Data on past, present, and future jobs, and the husband's job, needed to be written in, as the Astin checklists were found to be inappropriate to this population. Education and income levels were asked for both self and spouse. The elements of business office careers that were helpful, the sources of pressure, and the level of supportiveness of significant others were assessed for present and initial intensities. Most questions had an 'other' category, and comments were invited at the end of the paper.

Procedure

The third week of the month was chosen for the survey in order to allow comparison of initial and current re-

entry problems of all individuals.

Initial arrangements were made with College A only, for an expected survey population of 60 to 80 students. Seasonal withdrawals and absenteeism together with the voluntary nature of participation resulted in an inadequately small sample. Permission was immediately sought to test College B's total Office Careers programme, which would allow the number to reach 80. All testing was completed within four days of the same month.

The writer was present at all three group testings to give a brief introduction as to the purpose, background, and format of the survey, and to answer questions of interpretation. Because the original wording was created for the situation of College A, some translations and additions were necessary for College B regarding marks and specialty areas. All students had been previously informed of the coming survey by their instructors.

Student responses to the questionnaire took from 25 to 45 minutes, with younger students taking less time, probably because many of the questions were directed to the situation of mature students with family responsibilities. In addition, the host instructor at College A offered early dismissal for those who finished the survey quickly, a challenge taken up by half a dozen of the younger students. After each testing session, two or three students approached the writer to comment that they had enjoyed answering the questions and were provoked to consider important issues of their experience at college.

Projected Findings

Analysis of the survey results will include discussion of the Office Careers responses in comparison with those compiled by Astin on Continuing Education for Women students. Since the methodologies used in subject selection were different, the two studies can not be statistically compared. Using Astin as an empirical reference point, the writer expects that the Office Careers women will follow the trends noted in the Review of the Literature for non-degree oriented students, specifically with regard to:

A. background factors: that the Office Careers women would report lower levels than Astin's subjects in the areas of income and education, a lower rate of intact marriages, a higher incidence of divorce and separation, more and younger children, and a lower average age,

B. motivations: that the Office Careers women would report more interest than Astin's subjects in finding a job, less concern with personal growth and education, less belief in a career being central to their self-fulfilment, and that they would have a more traditional lifestyle,

C. barriers: that the Office Careers women would report less spouse supportiveness, less money available for their education, more study and academic problems, and more personal and role conflicts than would Astin's subjects.

The survey results will also be examined for distinctions between the subgroups of mature and youthful women. Researchers such as Ladan & Crooks,(1975, 1976) and Perrone

et al,(1977) were noted in the Review of the Literature to have found such significant differences for both academic and vocational students. Based on the established research and on personal observations, several hypotheses about the survey results were made. It was hypothesized that there would be significant differences ($p < .05$) between the characteristics of the mature and youthful groups within the Office Careers programmes, specifically with regard to:

A. background factors: that the mature women would report a lower level of education than the younger women, and that by definition most mature women would have been away from school longer and would be older,

B. motivations: that the mature women would report more objectives involving identity issues, economic need, and the desire to find job training than would the younger students,

C. barriers: that the mature women would report more role conflicts, worry about finding employment, concern with academic skills, lack of confidence, lack of support from significant others, and lack of time than would the younger students, and that the length of time in the programme would have different effects on the problems reported by the two groups of women.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion

The responses to the eighty questionnaires were tabulated in raw frequency and percentages for both the total group, and the subgroups of mature and youthful students. The responses for the total and mature groups were examined on a percentage basis using the results achieved by Astin (1976) as a reference point. Not only were Astin's raw scores not available for chi square analysis, but also the procedures used in selecting a study population were so dissimilar from those used in the present study as to preclude statistical inference based on any comparisons between the studies.

Scores for the two subgroups within the Office Careers programmes were subjected to chi square analysis.

Comparison of Continuing Education for Women and Office Careers Group

The questionnaire used with the Office Careers women was derived from Astin (1976). Because Astin's Continuing Education for Women (CEW) sample represented a wide range of programmes, ages, and life situations, there was not a direct parallel with the total Office Careers Group, nor with either of the two subgroups of mature and youthful Office Careers students.

The Office Careers group represented the entire popu-

lation of the groups surveyed, rather than a sample of a larger, perhaps provincial population. Results can therefore only be considered as a descriptive, rather than a sample, set of data. Analysis of the studies will focus on a discussion of the responses of both the total group and the mature subgroup of the Office Careers study, using the results of Astin's study as an empirical reference point. The acceptance of Astin's results as a typical and prominent example of the research available on mature women students makes her data a suitable standard for such discussion and comparison. As a number of researchers have been cited as pointing out differences between degree-aimed academic women students and job-oriented non-academic women students, reference to Astin's data can be expected to contribute an interesting dimension to the discussion of results.

However, because of the differences in survey methodology, the comparisons and discussions made in this section must be viewed as preliminary to a full replication of Astin on the provincial or national level, and any differences found can only represent the subjects directly under examination.

Background

Eighty percent of the Office Careers group was under 36 years old, 60% under 26 years (see Table 1). The mature group had 36% under 26 years and 10% under 50 years. Astin's group was more concentrated in the middle years, with 71%

Table 1

Student Age

Distribution of Respondents

and Comparison with CEW Group

Student Age	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=80	Mature N=50	Total N=649
20 or under	30 %	10 %	2 %
21-25	30	26	12
26-30	11	18	18
31-35	9	14	17
36-40	8	12	16
41-45	6	10	10
46-50	1	2	12
51-55	3	4	8
56-60	3	4	4
61 or over	0	0	3

of the total within the 25-50 years range.

The mature Office Careers group had almost two-and-one half times the separations and divorces that Astin's group had - 36% as against 15% (see Table 2). Astin found a much higher rate of married students (66%) than the mature group (46%), even when the 12% 'other' category, representing commonlaw marriages, was added to the latter total. Few (2%) mature Office Careers women were single, as all the youthful Office Careers women were single, the figures for the total group show a lower rate of separations, although still exceeding those of Astin. In sum, both the Office Careers groups seemed younger, less inclined to be married, and more likely to be divorced or separated than the CEW group. Regardless of whether these differences are real or apparent, the resulting family patterns are integrally involved with the motivations and problems reported by the Office Careers women.

Sixty-five percent of the CEW group had children, compared with 44% and 45% of the Office Careers groups (see Table 3). The mature group was more likely than Astin's students to have either two children (47%) or more than three children (28%). Astin's CEW group was most likely to have two (36%) or three (29%) children.

The mature Office Careers women were more likely to have preschool age children (39%) than were Astin's group (24%), possibly a reflection of the age difference in the women themselves (see Table 4). In all but one category,

Table 2

Marital Status

Distribution of Respondents

and Comparison with CEW Group

Marital Status	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=80	Mature N=50	Total N=649
Single	39 %	2 %	17 %
Married	29	46	66
Separated or Divorced	23	36	15
Widowed	3	4	3
Other	8	12	- [a]

[a] Item not included in survey

Table 3

Number of Children

Distribution of Respondents

and Comparison with CEW Group

Number of Children	Office Careers Group Mature N=36 [a]	CEW Group N=441 (approx.) [b]
one	17 %	17 %
two	47	36
three	8	29
four	17	12
five	8	3
six or more	3	3

[a] 44% of total response

[b] 68% of total response

Table 4

Age of Children

Distribution of Respondents

and Comparison with CEW Group

Age of Children[a]	Office Careers Group Mature N=36[b]	CEW Group N=441 (approx.)[c]
Birth-3 years	17 %	(24 %
4-6 years	22	(
6-12 years	53	40
13-17 years	42	35
18-22 years	31	28
23 years and over	17	21

[a] Multiple responses

[b] 44% of total response

[c] 68% of total response

more mature women than CEW woman had children in each age group, yet only 10% more of the Office Careers group had large families of four or more. The explanation might lie in Astin's women having spaced their children more closely together. In effect, the average age of the Office Careers group's children was lower, but the difference in the number of children was not decisively greater for either group.

Approximately equal percentages of total Office Careers (42%) and CEW (40%) had no income, with women of the mature Office Careers group even more likely, at 52%, to be totally dependent on other sources (see Table 5). These figures were also the modal averages for the three groups. For the CEW population, the figure corresponded with a high marriage score (66%), heavy (44%) reliance on spouses for financial support, and the likelihood of having been in school for at least the greater part of the year (70%). For the Office Careers mature group, the marital rate was lower (46%), spouse support rate was lower (34%), and length of time in school was shorter (80% had enrolled less than six months ago). Even those that did earn an income fared little better, with the result that 97% of the total Office Careers group and 96% of the mature Office Careers group had an income of under $10,000 a year. All three groups suffered a decreasing percentage of responses as the income levels rose. The Office Careers women were much more likely to have small incomes, a reflection in

Table 5

Annual Family Income

Distribution of Respondents

and Comparison with CEW Group

Annual Family Income	Office Careers Group			CEW Group	
	Total Self N=80	Spouse N=28	Mature Self N=50	Total Self N=649	Spouse N=28 (approx.)[a]
None	42 %	4 %	52 %	40 %	2 %
$4,999 or less	41	11	28	17	3
$5,000-9,999	14	21	16	24	7
$10,000-14,999	3	18	4	14	20
$15,000-19,999	0	32	0	3	17
$20,000-29,999	0	4	0	2	24
$30,000-39,999	0	11	0	0	12
$40,000 or more	0	0	0	0	16

[a] 66% of total response reported having a spouse

part of their greater youth, and, as will be noted later, their lower levels of education, career ambition, and family support. In fact, while the Office Careers women were moving from no job or an unskilled job into a clerical position, most of the CEW subjects were moving from a clerical (31%) or teaching (15%) position to a professional, administrative, or artistic career. Only 11% of Astin's group had no job or an unskilled job prior to returning to school, and only 3% expected to work in a clerical position in the future.

Spouses' incomes followed a similar pattern. Office Careers spouses were more likely to be at the lower income levels, to have a lower average and modal earning power, and to not have the higher ranges of the CEW spouses. B.C. men out-earned their wives from the $5,000 level, American spouses began to surpass women at $10,000. For both individual and family income, Astin's CEW group surpassed the income of the Office Careers groups. This is even more impressive considering that the American figures are for 1974, and the B.C. figures for an inflationary 1978, and that American salaries seem to run lower than B.C. salaries in many occupations. A slight balancing factor to also consider is the currency conversion rate, which has reversed from favoring Canadian to favoring American dollars in the four years under consideration. On the whole, from both individual and family incomes, the Office Careers women had less money available to them.

Astin's CEW group also had a clearly higher level of education than the Office Careers groups (see Table 6). Almost half had completed their first degree, with a further third having taken some college credit, only 14% had high school completion or less. In comparison, 77% of the Office Careers students had no education beyond high school. Eighty-two percent of the mature subgroup had not gone beyond high school and most had not finished grade 12. In a later question, the Office Careers group gave multiple reasons for not continuing their schooling: marriage and pregnancy (46%), work (36%), lack of confidence in own ability (15%), lack of motivation (16%), and lack of funds (13%). The subgroup of mature women had a high marriage/pregnancy rate (64%), and some reported their parents had opposed education for girls (6%). Those of Astin's group who did not attend college gave as their reasons the lack of funds (34%), marriage/pregnancy (25%), and lack of motivation (16%). For Office Careers women, the attractions of work and motherhood precluded further education.

The school grades of the Office Careers students, while not matching those of the CEW group, were certainly respectable and no indicator of lack of intelligence. 11% A, 31% B, 46% C, 4% below C. The subsequent low interest in education and limited career goals of these women bear out the finding that the largest reservoir of academically qualified people left untapped are bright working class women (Cross, 1974).

Table 6

Highest Level of Education

Distribution of Respondents

and Comparison with CEW Group

Highest Level of Education	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=80	Mature N=50	Total N=649
less than high school completion	25 %	34 %	1 %
high school graduation	34	26	13
high school equivalency	18	22	-[a]
technical or business school	1	2	7
some college	14	10	30
degree	0	0	48
other (art, RN, Bible school)	9	6	1

[a] Item not included in survey

Motivations

Astin's questions on motivation appear to have contained Likert scales. She reported many of her answers as 'very important', implying a five point range of choice, but as a copy of the full questionnnaire was not available, the writer was not able to verify this possibility. The Office Careers pilot study discarded the Likert format in favor of a two stage 'not important/important', 'important/very important' sequence. As a result, the responses of the two studies were not reached in identical fashion and can not be interpreted as identical in meaning. In addition, many of the Astin 'very important' scores were closer in magnitude to the Office Careers' inclusive 'important/very important' than to their 'very important' responses. This may be due to the decision-making process producing similar first responses, regardless of test instructions, or may be a reflection of a greater articulation and self-awareness on the part of the CEW population. Whatever the cause, Astin's responses were much stronger in intensity in almost all the questions that called for a consideration of degree of reaction. The writer will report all results from a rank order format for each of the three groups, and will discuss the comparative values whenever they appear to be of particular interest. As the Office Careers populations are neither a random nor a representative sample, final conclusions cannot be drawn from such comparisons, but must await further studies.

The Office Careers groups overwhelmingly (98%) came to college for job training (see Table 7). They needed to support themselves (61%) and perceived more education as the best route (64%) to that end, preferably with the goal of a certificate (45%). They did not want to spend a long time training for a job (45%), they looked forward to independence (44%) and the self-respect (41%) that employment would offer. They welcomed the challenge of returning to school (35%), and relied on supportive others (34%) to encourage and help them past the difficult periods. The desire for personal growth (33%), contact with other people (31%), and development of more effective living skills (25%) were important motivations for many. Twenty-eight percent turned to the training because they were dissatisfied with their jobs, and 24% cited marital changes as an incentive.

Those specifying 'very important' motivations closely followed the same ranking, with job preparation (61%), economic need (25%), education (23%) and quick job entry (21%) as particularly strong incentives. Although members of the mature subgroup of the Office Careers women also cited jobs and economic need as their major motivators, they were more interested in changing and growing personally, and more affected by changing family situations in the timing of their return than were members of the total group.

Astin's group was motivated by very different factors: the desire to be more educated (63%), and the appeal of the courses themselves (61%). This ranking would imply that

Table 7

Factors and Objectives Leading to Enrollment

Distribution of Respondents and Comparison with CEW Group

Objectives[a]	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=80	Mature N=50	Total N=649
job preparation	98[b] (61)[c] %	96 (58) %	(44)[c] %
become more educated	64 (23)	60 (24)	(63)
challenge self	35 (9)	44 (14)	(26)
career counselling wanted	14 (5)	16 (8)	(35)
quick job entry	45 (21)	48 (26)	-[d]
personal growth	33 (13)	44 (16)	(44)
qualify for promotion	3 (1)	2 (2)	-[d]
receive credit, certificate	45 (18)	40 (10)	(29)
contact with people	31 (4)	32 (2)	(24)
independence	44 (20)	44 (22)	(44)
develop skills for effective living	25 (9)	28 (10)	(34)
dissatisfaction with job	28 (16)	26 (18)	(22)
home duties lessened	21 (5)	30 (8)	(16)
illness, death in family	8 (4)	10 (4)	(4)
funds available	16 (5)	12 (4)	(13)
economic need to work	61 (25)	62 (26)	-[d]
appeal of courses	10 (4)	2 (0)	(61)

Table 7 (Continued)

Objectives[a]	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=80	Mature N=50	Total N=649
in rut at home	21[b] (6)[c]	26 (8)	(18)[c]
marital changes	24 (9)	30 (12)	(10)
moved close to college	4 (0)	4 (0)	(7)
unhappy with self	41 (14)	48 (18)	-[d]
encouragement from others	34 (9)	34 (8)	(33)
other	15 (9)	16 (10)	-[d]

[a] Multiple responses

[b] Items not in parenthesis were considered important or very important

[c] Items in parenthesis were considered very important

[d] Item not included in survey

education to these women was not just a way of improving employment prospects, but had value of its own sake. This is borne out by the next strongest group of 'very important' motivators reported by this group: personal growth, desire for independence, and job preparation, all at 44%. With the exception of items on job preparation and marital changes, Astin's responses were stronger, usually much more so, for every 'very important' listed item. Again, Office Career's 'important/very important' responses were often comparable in magnitude to Astin's 'very important' percentages. Interpreted in this light, the job preparation and marital change items noted by the Office Careers women become very important in distinguishing the motivations of that group.

Items not drawn from Astin were: quick job entry, economic need to work, unhappy with self, and qualify for promotion. The first three were inclusions based on the writer's experience, and drew valid responses of importance from mature students at 48%, 62%, 48%. The fourth item (2%) was included as a possible comparison item with mature male students' motivations, frequently reported as career and promotion based (Husbands, 1972, Ladan & Crooks, 1976).

CEW participants clearly chose their specialties on the basis of interest in the work (74%) and a feeling of personal suitability (62%) (see Table 8). Other reasons given were more security conscious: job opportunities (31%) and prior experience or training in the field (30%). A few women were concerned about training time (18%) and costs (17%).

Table 8

Motivations for Choice of Specialty

Distribution of Respondents

and Comparison with CEW Group

Motivations[a]	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=80	Mature N=50	Total N=649
job opportunities	49[b](19)[c]%	40(14) %	(31)[c] %
prior experience	25 (5)	20(4)	(30)
low training cost	20 (0)	14(0)	(17)
suits my abilities and personality	34 (10)	32(4)	(62)
didn't consider other training	13 (1)	12(0)	-[d]
interested in the work	58 (21)	52(16)	(74)
suits needs for flexibility	6 (1)	8(2)	-[d]
good career beginning	46 (8)	40(6)	-[d]
short training period	36 (11)	17(14)	(18)
like the people in this work	3 (0)	4(0)	-[d]

[a] Multiple responses

[b] Items considered important or very important

[c] Items considered very important

[d] Item not included in survey

The Office Careers students seemed less clear about their choice of career. Just over half were interested in the work (58% total and 52% mature), only about one fifth of them avidly so. Forty-six percent of the total and 40% of the mature group considered office work a good beginning to their career, although few appeared to believe that very strongly. Their hesitation was well founded, for few women office workers are promoted out of the office, and only two-thirds of all working women find work outside of the office (Tepperman, 1976). In addition, the effects of consumerism and a rising standard of living combine to make further training difficulties as the family begins to depend on the woman's earnings (Howe, L.K., 1977).

Only about a third of the Office Careers students felt suited for office work - 10% of the total and 4% of the mature subgroup strongly so. Almost half were attracted by the job opportunities, and about one seventh considered the job and the short training it required to be strong motivation. An alarming 13%, almost all from the mature subgroup, did not even consider any other occupation, and may have made up their minds according to the sparse information on careers available to the average woman in our schools and society, or perhaps on the basis of 'emergency vocations' (Eyde, 1962) long kept in readiness. In view of this response, Hembrough's (1966) observation that women frequently must choose their goals according to the time, money, and institutional scheduling accessible

to them might be worth pursuing in future studies of Office Careers students.

Several questions probed the issue of lifestyle. The most interesting responses occurred to the question 'how important is it for your self-fulfilment to have a career in addition to being a wife and mother?' (see Table 9). A few women did not respond, commenting that they were not married or that they planned to have no children. Those who responded were overwhelmingly in agreement that they wanted a career for their own personal fulfilment--94% of the mature and 83% of the total group stated that the career was 'important or very important'. By comparison, Astin's group response was 78% positive The fact that the Office Careers women had much higher job motivations than personal growth motivations in their decisions to return to school makes this emphasis particularly interesting.

Office Careers women were slightly more likely than Astin's women to have had employed mothers during their childhoods, possibly a factor in the importance they attached to their own careers (deWolfe & Lunneborg, 1972) (see Table 10).

Respondents who had been married were asked how much discussion they and their spouse had had regarding the woman's future career outside the home (see Table 11) The Office Careers women had more actual discussion than the CEW group--53% as compared with 42%, but almost 20% fewer assumed with their spouse that they would certainly have a

Table 9

Ranking of Importance of a Career to Self-fulfilment

Distribution of Respondents and Comparison with CEW Group

Ranking	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=67	Mature N=48	Total N=649
very important	55 %	65 %	52 %
important	28	29	26
neutral	12	2	14
relatively unimportant	5	4	5
totally unimportant	0	0	4

Table 10

Employment Status of Students' Mothers

Distribution of Respondents and Comparison with CEW Group

Employment Status	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=80	Mature N=50	Total N=649
mother employed	48 %	50 %	44 %
mother not employed	49	46	56
not sure	4	4	0

Table 11

Degree of Personal Career Planning with Spouse

Distribution of Respondents

and Comparison with CEW Group

Planning	Office Careers Group Mature N=47[a]	CEW Group Married N=539 (approx.)b
none-assumption of no outside career	34 %	26 %
none-assumption of an outside career	13	32
some discussion	38	32
extensive discussion	15	10

[a] 63% of total response

[b] 83% of total response

career. Over one third of the Office Careers and one quarter of the CEW group had believed that they would never be employed. That assumption might still be valid for some of the CEW women; the Office Careers women obviously changed their goals and mutual assumptions midway through (or after) the marriage. This may have been a factor in the lack of spouse supportiveness and the high degree of ambivalence reported by the women. The large group of divorced and separated Office Careers women presumes that at least some of the reversal of goals was not voluntary. "Every housewife is one husband away from welfare" (Callwood, J., Note 3).

The question 'how old did you feel the children had to be before you returned to school or work?', also revealed a number of women who were acting against their earlier beliefs (see Table 12). Fourteen percent of the Office Careers women, most of them separated or divorced, were at school well before they had wanted to give up fulltime child care. In general, the Office Careers women were more conservative than Astin's sample about leaving infants and preteens in care, and slightly more liberal with the older preschool and midchildhood years. The majority of women from all three groups favored waiting until children's school-entry before initiating their own re-entry.

In general, the Office Careers group responded in a more traditional way than the CEW group to the questions about lifestyle. The central position given to a career

Table 12

Age of Children Before Mother Should Work/Study

Distribution of Respondents

and Comparison with CEW Group

Age of Children	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=42	Mature N=36	Total N=649
infancy	10 %	11 %	15 %
2-5 years	21	22	18
6 years	29	31	32
7-12 years	12	8	14
13-17 years	19	17	12
18 years +	10	11	9

in terms of self-fulfilment was not part of a traditional pattern for the Office Careers women, and merits further attention in the next chapter of this study.

Barriers

In response to questions about problem areas, the Continuing Education for Women group again was much more voluble that the Office Careers group. In many cases, Astin's 'very important' responses equalled or outweighed the Office Careers' 'important/very important' responses. Caution must again be used against comparing data beyond rank ordering and against considering the populations as equivalent. Comparisons between the studies are for the purposes of discussion rather than conclusion.

The Astin participants cited as their strongest academic problem the conflict of demands from school, home, and job (72%) (see Table 13). That a relatively low (27%) were concerned with time management might indicate how strongly these women were tied to their old priorities and intent on adding roles rather than substituting new time and energy priority systems (Turner, 1964). Other strong sources of anxiety--examinations (62%), homework (49%), assignments (46%), and grades (38%)--were not unexpected considering the gap in the women's school attendance and their strong need to succeed and gain approval for their venture (Lenz & Shaevitz, 1977). On the other hand it was surprising, given the nature of CEW programmes, that concern over instructors' attitudes (28%) and teaching methods (43%) was an issue. Faculty attitudes are often a major barrier.

Table 13

Academic Problems

Distribution of Respondents and Comparison with CEW Group

Problems[a]	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=80	Mature N=50	Total N=649
examinations	58[b](15)[c]%	60 (16) %	(62) %
conflicting demands on time	40 (13)	38 (14)	(72)
homework	10 (0)	12 (0)	(49)
lack of skills	14 (3)	18 (4)	(15)
instructor's attitudes	21 (5)	20 (4)	(28)
lack study area	18 (6)	22 (3)	- [d]
lack self discipline concentration	28 (9)	14 (8)	(27)
timed assignments	30 (10)	26 (10)	(46)
reading skills	26 (6)	32 (6)	(34)
public speaking	23 (4)	16 (2)	(31)
math background	21 (5)	26 (8)	(34)
evaluation	9 (0)	4 (0)	(38)
time management	26 (11)	22 (4)	(27)
teaching methods used	33 (9)	34 (8)	(43)

[a] Multiple responses

[b] Items considered important or very important

[c] Items considered very important

[d] Item not included in survey

to women in academia in the regular programmes (Berkely, 1970, Harvard, 1970), that such a condition also exists in CEW would indicate that the problems of appropriate instruction for mature women students is a complex one and not solved by goodwill alone (Willis, 1977a, Zimmerman & Trew, Note 4). Further CEW concerns centered on lack of study skills, but involved a relatively low number of women, possibly since many had a solid educational background and maintained viable reading skills.

Office Careers students as a whole worried about examinations (58%) and time conflicts (40%). They judged as 'important to very important' the concerns over teaching methods (33%), assignments (timed) (30%), and a variety of study skills. Instructor attitudes produced anxiety for one fifth of the group. Few (9%) worried at all about evaluation, possibly as the majority of respondents worked in an individual study system for which the criteria were standard rather than comparative or ambiguous, and in which advancement took priority over actual grades. In addition, homework became a minor (10%) concern as the 30 hour class-week was designed to suffice for all but the slowest students.

The mature Office Careers subgroup had very similar responses to the Office Careers total group, with the same contrasts to Astin regarding lower ranking of concern over time conflicts. Problem scores for homework, evaluation, and public speaking were ranked considerably lower than for Astin's CEW group.

The Office Careers women did not appear to have more study and academic problems than the CEW group. In general the rank ordering of issues was similar, but the magnitudes of most reported academic problems were higher for the CEW group. Breaking that pattern were the intense CEW concerns over time conflicts, homework, and evaluation--again partially explained by the traditional class format of most CEW academic offerings being compared with the individualized and programmed format of Office Careers courses. For these particular groups, there did appear to be differences in intensity and ordering whether such differences have any significance must be left to further studies of the issues.

In the realm of nonacademic barriers, the women surveyed by Astin seemed to feel pressure from the practical realities of institutional life--inconvenient class scheduling (46%), high costs (26%), and lack of time (20%) (see Table 14). The intrusion of multiple role responsibilities produced further scheduling problems--job (19%), and family care and housework (18%). Lack of confidence and direction plagued a small number (12%, 14%), and in view of the multiple obligations many of the women had, surprisingly few mentioned a shortage of energy (11%), guilt over money (9%), or concern over neglect of the children (8%).

The mature group of Office Careers women seemed much less sure of their priorities, commitments and goals. Over one third suffered from a lack of energy, and many expressed concern over undone housework (22%) and family care (26%).

Table 14

Non-Academic Problems

Distribution of Respondents and Comparison with CEW Group

Problems[a]	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=80	Mature N=50	Total N=649
obtaining childcare	NA[b] %	22[c] (0)[d] %	-[e] %
location, transportation	19 (3)	16 (0)	(26)[d]
class time	5 (1)	6 (2)	(46)
costs	11 (1)	10 (2)	(26)
lack of confidence	6 (1)	8 (2)	(12)
lack of direction	8 (3)	8 (2)	(14)
nonsupportive family	15 (4)	18 (2)	(5)
family care duties	19 (6)	26 (8)	((18)
housework	31 (4)	22 (4)	(
lack of time	18 (5)	18 (6)	(20)
lack of energy	30 (4)	34 (6)	(11)
guilt about money	13 (5)	12 (4)	(9)
guilt about children	NA	18 (8)	(8)
job duties	6 (0)	8 (0)	(19)

Table 14 (Continued)

Problems[a]	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=80	Mature N=50	Total N=649
medical reasons	11 (6) %	8[c](4)[d]%	(5)
worry over getting a job	41 (15)	48 (18)	-[e]
reduced social life	16 (4)	14 (0)	-[e]
no problems	15	10	-[e]

[a] Multiple responses

[b] Items not applicable

[c] Items considered important or very important

[d] Items considered very important

[e] Item not included in survey

They often had nonsupportive families (18%), lack of time (18%), and difficulty finding childcare (31% of those with children). They worried about their children (18%), money (12%), and their social life (14%). Above all, half of the group were afraid they would not get jobs at the end of their training, and strongly desired more help with job application and placement. A small group reported having no problems at all.

About a third of the women in all three groups reported no concern over financing their schooling (see Table 15). Although Astin's participants could be seen as more affluent, they also tended to be enrolled in longer programmes and to pay much higher tuition fees than the Office Careers students. The latter paid only $15 per month, and, while they could take from four to ten months to complete their training, 57% were enrolled in a six month programme. Close to half of Astin's group reported some concern over financing, slightly more of the Office Careers groups (54% total, 58% mature) were worried. However, over half of all the Office Careers students received training allowances from Canada Manpower, from $45 to about $100 a week. Only 8% of the total group and 6% of the mature group were seriously concerned as to whether they could complete their training, slightly over one fifth of Astin's group reported major concerns over financing. The benefits of government subsidies for Office Careers students need to be looked at with the consideration that office training is one of the

Table 15

Financial Situation

Distribution of Respondents

and Comparison with CEW Group

Financial Situation	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=80	Mature N=50	Total N=649
no concerns	39 %	36 %	36 %
some concern	19	24	44
some concern/ reliance on Canada Manpower	35	34	- [a]
major concerns	8	6	21

[a] Item not included in survey

few forms of education for which subsidy or bursary is readily available to re-entry women, the less affluent but bright women are effectively channeled into officework on the basis of cost factors alone.

The married women in the Office Careers group had a much lower degree of supportiveness from husbands than did those of Astin's group (see Table 16). Only 44% of the spouses were supportive to any degree, and only one fifth were termed 'very supportive', compared with 62% 'very supportive' spouses in Astin's group. The Office Careers children were more supportive (52%) than were their fathers. In another question, the Office Careers women reported that only a few children (4%) and marriages (22%) suffered any overt difficulties. The majority of spouses (56%) therefor appeared to be passively rather than actively non-supportive--"as long as dinner is on the table...". This lack of fully sympathetic help was echoed in the previously reported answers, specifically the role conflicts, lack of energy, worry over housework, and diffuse career planning.

Mothers tended to be supportive of all the Office Careers women as did siblings and female friends. On campus an atmosphere of camaraderie seemed to exist with classmates and instructors. Figures for the total Office Careers group were close to those reported by the mature subgroup. However, few experienced high intensity supportiveness, and none approached the figures that Astin's students cited for their more intimate relationships. Friends and acquaintances

were as 'supportive/very supportive' to the Office Careers women as they were 'very supportive' to Astin's respondents. It seems possible that the socioeconomic attitudes of the Office Careers families would inhibit support for the women returning to school (Husbands, 1972), and that despite the obvious economic benefits of the wife's return to school and work, the family would resist any shifting of male-female role responsibilities within the home (Cross, 1974). In addition, the high rate of separation and divorce made spouse supportiveness unlikely for 42% of the Office Careers mature women. A few individuals commented that they had no supportive others in their lives. Markus' (1973) findings that staying and succeeding in school were clearly correlated to the amount of support that mature women received from their spouses and significant others, make these indicators even more important to college personnel.

In sum, there were a number of interesting differences between the surveyed Office Careers women and the sample described by Astin. Whether these findings generalize to all Office Careers women can not be answered by this study: the data is descriptive only of the groups under study. However, the tentative findings on such issues as the emphasis on job rather than personal growth motivations, the apparent diffusion of energy and goals, and the valuing of a career for personal fulfilment indicate that further study on a replication standard with Astin, would be worthwhile.

Table 16

Degree of Support

Distribution of Respondents and Comparison with CEW Group

Significant Other[a]	Office Careers Group		CEW Group
	Total N=80	Mature N=50	Total N=649
husband	NA[b] %	44[c] (22)[d] %	(62)[d] %
children	NA[b]	52 (12)	(43)
mother	65 (18)	62 (14)	(32)
father	44 (6)	40 (4)	(25)
siblings	60 (14)	56 (8)	(27)
female friends	59 (11)	48 (14)	(49)
male friends	39 (5)	32 (6)	(29)
employer	6 (1)	6 (2)	(36)
other relatives	24 (6)	24 (4)	(20)
BOT instructors	46 (6)	42 (6)	(39)
classmates	53 (8)	50 (8)	(43)
neighbors	26 (4)	22 (6)	(14)
no-one	4	6	- [e]

[a] Multiple responses

[b] Item not applicable

[c] Other considered supportive or very supportive

[d] Other considered very supportive

[e] Item not included in survey

Comparison of Mature and Youthful Subgroups of Office Career Students

It was hypothesized that mature and youthful students would differ significantly on items of background, motivations, and barriers. Findings by such researchers as Ladan & Crooks (1975, 1976) Perrone et al (1977) and Smallwood (1977) indicated that the age, role complexity and generational differences of these two groups would lead to a number of distinctions, specified in the previous chapters of this study.

All items of the questionnaire relating to background, motivations and barriers of mature and youthful subgroups were subjected to chi square analysis. In addition, items 15, 16 and 18 were further analyzed as to the degree of change noted between initial and current levels of response as reported independently by mature and youthful groups. Level of significance was set at $p = < .05$.

Only 37 of the more than 275 individual items and item relationships subjected to chi square analysis reached a statistically significant level. Further, many of the significant differences can be attributed to the definitions used to distinguish the mature and youthful subgroups.

Results achieving significance are listed in Table 17. All calculations of multiple intensity items were collapsed to the category of 'important/very important'. Items inviting complex responses about job history and self-concept were not included in the analysis.

Table 17

Comparison of Mature and Youthful

Office Careers Subgroups

Items Reaching Statistical Significance

Item	Category	Value of Chi Square[a]
1.	Length of time since last academic or vocational course	28.85*
2.	Important or very important objectives when coming to college	
	to challenge myself	4.74*
	for personal growth	8.04**
3.	Important or very important factors in the timing of enrolment	
	lessening of home responsibilities	6.10*
6.	Changes desired at the college	
	more social contacts for students	6.70**
10.	Important or very important reasons for choosing Office Careers	
	good job opportunities	4.09*
15.	Helpful or very helpful programme elements	
	orientation sessions (changes for mature)[b]	7.43**
	orientation sessions (changes for youthful)[b]	9.64**
	friendliness of peers (changes for mature)[b]	6.42*
	quality of books and equipment (present)	4.06*
	familiar group (initial enrolment)	4.98*

Table 17 (Continued)

Item	Category	Value of Chi Square[a]
16.	Non-academic pressures	
	lack of self-confidence (changes for mature)[b]	12.70**
	lack of self-confidence (changes for youthful)[b]	10.42**
	meeting family care obligations (present)	4.59*
	meeting family care obligations (initial enrolment)	11.99**
	meeting housework obligations (present)	10.09**
	meeting housework obligations (initial enrolment)	7.17**
17.	Important or very important responses of others	
	family has less time together	9.14**
	increased respect and regard from children	10.18**
	family sharing costs	15.14**
18.	Supportive or very supportive others	
	husband (present)	18.21**
	husband (initial enrolment)	14.95**
	children (present)	23.11**
	children (initial enrolment)	14.95**
	mother (initial enrolment)	7.11**
	female friends (present)	6.36*
	male friends (initial enrolment)	12.19**

Table 17 (Continued)

Item	Category	Value of Chi Square[a]
18.	male friends (changes for mature)[b]	4.57*
	other relatives (present)	8.66**
	other relatives (changes for youthful)[b]	6.94**
19.	Highest level of education achieved[c]	10.09*
26.	Family income level	
	self	4.92*
	self compared with spouse[d]	31.52**
28.	Age of Respondents	32.76**
29	Marital status[e]	95.39**

[a] df=1 unless otherwise stated

[b] difference between initial level and present level

[c] df=3

[d] mature women only

[e] df=4

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Background

The mature women were decidely older than the youthful group, despite the writer's decision to include several married women aged 20 or less in the mature count. Since only one mature woman was single, and no youthful women had been married, it is not surprising that analysis of marital status had an extremely high level of significance. Mature women were also significantly more likely to have been away from classes more than three years, than were the younger women. The final hypothesis in this section, that mature women would have a lower level of education, was strongly borne out. Younger women were more likely to have finished high school, and to have achieved graduation rather than a high school equivalency diploma. This emphasis on education for young women might be the result of society's increasing encouragement of women's self-development. Another reason for the presence of graduated young women and non-graduated mature women in the Office Careers programme might be the tendency of young women without high school to choose work or marriage rather than college, while older women with high school might tend to choose work or training in other than the Office Careers area.

While most of these background factors are obvious given the definitions used in this study, it is nevertheless important to take note of them in view of the effect they have on the motivations and barriers reported by both groups.

Motivations

It was hypothesized that the mature women would report more objectives involving identity issues, economic need, and the desire to find job training than would the youthful students.

Respondents were asked their objectives when coming to college, factors influencing the timing of enrolment, and the reasons for their choice of Office Careers. Mature students gave greater importance to motives of personal challenge and personal growth through education, while the youthful students were significantly more interested in the job opportunities offered by an Office Careers training. The lessening of home responsibilities was a significant factor in the decision of mature women to return to school. The mature group expressed appreciation over the quality of books and equipment available to them. The youthful group felt most helped by being part of a familiar group during the first weeks of classes, while the mature women reported a significant increase in the importance of friendly classmates after the initial adjustment period. It seems that the younger women immediately related to their peers for support, but the mature women kept apart from peers and institution during the beginning of their classes. Understandably, both groups cited a significant decrease in importance of the orientation sessions after the passage of a few weeks.

The hypothesis that the mature group would be more

interested in identity issues was borne out, while that regarding the mature group's concern for job training was not. Neither group was significantly more motivated by economic need than the other, although both did consider money a strong incentive. Indeed, as was seen in the previous section, almost two thirds of the respondents needed money, and almost all wanted job preparation. The youthful group was more deliberate in the choice of Office Careers as a good employment opportunity, while the mature women seemed to value the process of education more than the specific subject. The fact that the majority of the Office Careers students were mature therefore has implications for the approach of career counsellors.

Barriers

It was hypothesized that the mature women would report more role conflicts, worry about finding employment, concern over academic skills, lack of confidence, lack of supportive others, and lack of time than would the youthful group. The reported problems of the two groups were expected to change in different ways after the initial enrolment period.

No significant difference was found in the academic problems or anxieties reported by the two groups, despite the longer interruption and notably poorer educational background of the mature group. Responses as to level of satisfaction with the college experience, length of time of enrolment, and marks achieved at both college and high school likewise revealed no significant differences. The

mature group appeared to have used its life experiences to adjust to and cope with college work despite its academic handicaps. The policy of colleges allowing mature students to attempt career and academic programmes regardless of educational background seems partially justified by these figures, although these women do differ from university students by equalling rather than surpassing their younger classmates' performances (Davis, 1973, Markus, 1973).

Most of the non-academic pressures that were significantly more important for mature students involved definitional factors of home and family care. The lessening of mature students' family time was even more of a problem than the younger students' curtailment of social time. Mature women were hampered by the need to tend to family and housework, both upon initial enrolment and in the present. Some youthful students also had reported home and family duties with their family of origin, although these role conflicts with school were less severe. Obviously, the mature students tended to add the student role to an already heavy schedule, rather than make priority changes. A few women did report that their families were making significant contributions to required chores, again more so for the married women than the younger ones.

Both groups reported a low level of self-confidence at enrolment and a significant increase after a few weeks. The mature women gained even more here than the young women, possibly connected with their initial withdrawal and subsequent

socialization around their classmates as well as the satisfactory evaluations of their work.

Although there was no difference in the concern expressed over the financing of training, younger students were significantly more likely to have an income than were the mature group, even though many of the former were straight out of high school. Wives who did have an income named substantially lower amounts than were reported for their husbands. This absence of income by the mature women, combined with the lack of significantly strong motivation for career development when compared with young single women, and the overall low income levels of both the women and their spouses when compared with Astin's group, seems to indicate that while many of these women live near or below the poverty line, they see only a limited range of actions open to them in alleviating this situation.

The students were asked about the support system they had developed with their families and friends. The mature group, by definition, had a significantly higher level of support from husbands and children, although the high divorce and separation rate substantially reduced the amount of support received from husbands. Possibly because marital breakdowns had re-routed many of the women back to their families of origin for emotional strength, the mothers were very supportive of both subgroups of women students. However, the younger women reported significantly higher initial encouragement and supportiveness from their mothers

than did the mature women. The young women were also more likely to be supported by male friends right from the beginning, and by relatives and female friends once the course had started. Mature women noticed a significant increase of support from their male friends after a few weeks. In fact, for both groups the supportiveness of others uniformly increased after the early weeks, possibly once they had 'proven' the resolve of their initial decision.

The lack of supportive others reported by the mature students in comparison with their younger classmates must certainly relate to the high degree of role conflict and overloading they contend with. The decision to attend school appears considerably more difficult for the role-complex mature woman than for the younger, role-simple woman who moved quickly from high school to college training.

Hypotheses about the differences in perceived barriers between the two groups were thus borne out with regard to the mature group reporting more role conflicts, less supportive others, and different problem changes after the initial enrolment period. Differences of responses were most highly significant for items on nonacademic problems and availability of support, and to a lesser level involving differences of motivation. The hypotheses were not upheld regarding the mature group's worry being greater over finding employment, concern over academic problems, lack of confidence, or lack of time.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The results of the present study suggest that the surveyed women in college Office Careers programmes are a nontraditional group. They have low incomes, little education or employment experience, and a relatively non-risking life-style. Their resources, both emotionally and financially, are under strain to meet the demands of the student role. The Office Careers women attend college in order to qualify for employment, yet report little affinity with or interest in their training area. Although they value a career as part of their own self-fulfilment, their priorities and goals are diffuse or in flux. The mature women of this group are particularly overloaded and under-supported, and often are the single parents of relatively young families. While they are highly concerned about finding employment, the mature women also seek to develop personally through their return to education.

Implications

For the counsellor in the community college, the results of this study have several interlocking implications.

Career Programme Students

Increasing proportions of the college population are enroled in career and upgrading programmes; the majority of these students are women (Educational Data Services, 1978).

Counsellors need to find ways to integrate their services with the career programmes. Students of these programmes do not often come for assistance to the counselling office. They generally have not been institutionalized to trust change agents, nor do they recognize the possibility that some of their concerns might be alleviated by personal counselling or skills workshops. As well as being familiar with the characteristics and needs of non-degree oriented students, the counsellor must exert care not to impose an academic value system onto the counselling process.

Women Students

The counsellor should be familiar with the patterns of women's lives, and understand how the socialization process limits career options for women of all ages. The inadequacy of career counselling for women has long been recognized within the literature, yet counsellors are frequently still unaware of their own biased attitudes and approaches to women's vocational decision-making Counsellor-educators such as Hansen (1974), Matthews (1972), and Schlossberg (1972) have proposed strategies to overcome the narrow career horizons normally alloted to women.

Mature Women Students

Discussions of Continuing Education for Women programmes usually place counselling as the central pivot around which the other services and courses can effectively operate. Because they differ from the traditional image of college coed, mature women students require a specialized counselling

approach. Their lack of occupational information and experience, their strong other-directed value system, and in particular, their culturally induced role-conflicts, require a unique combination of factual and psychological interventions. Programmes such as described by Brooks (1976), and Manis and Mochizuki (1972), combine a group support system with a graduated decision-making process geared to the women's complexities of roles and requirements. Zimmerman and Trew (Note 1) recommend a model for B.C. that would not only assist women to access the services of the college through information-giving and counselling, but would also assist the institution to modify policies and practices that represent barriers to women adult learners. Counsellor activities would include instruction of skills workshops, facilitation of emotional support groups, and advocacy of re-entry programmes. Dealings with these non-traditional students require that counsellors expand their repertoire of counselling approaches and skills, and be prepared to respond knowledgeably to the myths and misconceptions that exist about mature women who become students

Lower Social Class Students

Consideration of the characteristics of mature women students may not be enough. The fact that there were more similarities than differences between the mature and youthful Office Careers students, points to another set of implications of this study. The increasing democratization of the B.C. College system has led to the enrolment of many

students who in the past would have been intimidated or excluded from post-secondary study. Many of these students, particularly the women, can not afford to take academic programmes, and are attracted by the subsidized training sponsored by Canada Manpower and Labour Canada. The result is that many college students now are from cultural and socio-economic groups not traditionally found on campus. Counsellors using middle-class male-oriented career development theories have difficulties relating services to these low income, frequently mature, women clients.

The women of the present study closely resemble those persons of low social class and external orientation toward the world who were described by Farmer (1978). Their perceptions of helplessness regarding options in the present and restriction regarding choices for the future relate to an absence of adequate vocational decision-making. Their diffusion of long range goals, absence of effective problem-solving techniques, and low risk behavior with regard to career goals are both understandable and realistic given their past socialization and lack of resources and environmental support. The women are clearly in need of career information, yet seem unaware that there is a service they could consult and a method they could use to make well-considered plans. Even when counselling does take place, seemingly innocuous counsellor behaviors such as the use of traditional testing instruments, the bypassing of recent trends in work and training for women, and the inclination

to turn all vocational counselling with women into either personal therapy or advice-giving sessions, can serve to subtly reinforce the limitations of low self-esteem and an external locus of control.

The importance given to a career as a source of self-fulfilment by the Office Careers woman, both mature and youthful, negates the facile assumption that working class people seek only practical benefits from their work. What it does point out is the lack of awareness, knowledge, and skills these women have in combining their personal goals with the practical necessities of their existence. They do not seem to have the access of Astin's subjects to a value system that stresses the importance of personal interest, aptitudes and goals in career choice. Long range personal priorities take second place to more immediate practical necessities, and last place to the requirements of stereotyped roles. The realities of poverty, marital crisis, lack of education, and lack of interpersonal support create an external framework to their decisionmaking. Education is viewed as a means of financial and social betterment rather than as a growth fostering process that includes the pursuit of both personal satisfaction and vocational preparation. Ensuring that these women are made aware of educational and lifestyle options, and teaching them to assume a more internalized orientation of control within the constraints of their lives, are challenges of major proportions to the counsellor. Again, the counsellor may

need to develop lines of influence within the decision-making forums of the college in order to affect necessary institutional changes.

Ironically the one factor that allows many of these women to consider attending a training programme also reinforces many of their personal and career limits. The availability of Canada Manpower subsidies for Office Careers training combines with the view of office work as a woman's occupation, the urgency of economic need, and ignorance about career options and information to ensure the continued relegation of women to low paying, and frequently unchallenging, employment. Office Careers becomes the 'obvious choice' for mature women with little confidence, no money, and no awareness of their alternatives. In effect these women have made a cultural rather than a personal choice. Many of them have completed none of the phases of good decision-making: inner preparation and the rallying of family support are in a turmoil, personal assessment, generation of alternatives, values clarification, and goal setting have been given scarce consideration; implementation of action plans has been achieved only at a stereotypic level for persons of their age, sex, background, and resources. Why should some of these women not enter the Welding programme instead? It takes no longer, is likewise government funded, and has a much better salary and job potential. Why should more of these women not enter Business Administration, which follows similar lines of interest but offers greatly improved scope for promotion, salary and job enrichment?

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Replication of this study with other Office Careers college groups might establish whether the results discussed here are general characteristics, or are peculiar to the mixture of rural, religious, and ethnic groups that made up the majority of the study's population. Use of a random sampling technique over all the Office Careers college programmes in British Columbia or in Canada and replication of other details of Astin's methodology would allow for valid comparison of results with an existing base on Continuing Education for Women students.
2. Investigation of women students in other career programmes such as Daycare or Human Services might determine whether other short programmes in traditionally female occupations attract similar individuals as does Office Careers, and whether counsellors need to develop additional expertise to work with these students.
3. More detailed computer-assisted analysis of the data on Office Careers students produced as a result of this study might be used to identify whether any of the variables such as age, marital status, or income have any bearing on the reported problems and motivations. The literature indicated several such correlations for academic students. Identification of significant variables would be of considerable value in the counselling of career programme students, and

might be of assistance to potential students in their decision-making process.

4. Followup of the graduates of the Office Careers programmes could serve to identify their degree of success in employment, and to evaluate the suitability of their college preparation along both practical and psychological dimensions. Once rapid job entry has been achieved, and the urgent survival needs somewhat met, the students may experience a shift toward the more internal needs and value systems of their academic peers. If such is the case, the counselling intervention becomes important in laying the groundwork for potential growth as well as immediate problem-solving.

5. As a number of the respondents made a point of commenting that the questionnaire was a source of personal interest and challenge, it might prove useful to develop this or a similar instrument into a counselling tool. Many of the women had never directly addressed the issues covered in the survey, nor would they be influenced to become more aware of these issues through the normal avenues of interaction and discussion. The use of a simple questionnaire might be one way for counsellors to initiate service and generate interest with career programme students.

6. Role conflict was such a major barrier to the students surveyed that counsellors would do well to investigate methods of alleviating its influence. Some of the

sources of ambivalence and pressure experienced by these women might parallel those of middle-class women students. On the other hand, the effects of socio-economic deprivation, lack of support, and pragmatic concepts of education might introduce a vastly different set of factors into the issue.

Conclusion of Study

This study was a descriptive investigation of the characteristics of women Office Careers students. It aimed to create a preliminary local data base pertinent to the students enroled in Office Careers. With this groundwork accomplished, further study is now needed to standardize and expand this descriptive information so that it will be directly useable by counsellors working with non-traditional students. At present it can only indicate to counsellors that there is important and timely work to be done in the colleges.

It is counsellors who are in a unique position of seeing the trends, the difficulties, and the potentials of today's shifting college population. It is counsellors, too, who are possessed of the skills and versatility to be able to remedy the deficiencies of both institution and clients. To go on as they have always done, to counsel in the familiar ways, and to wait to be asked for their opinions or assistance--these easy responses on the part of counsellors imply support of the status quo and rejection of the special needs of non-traditional college students.

The responsibility of counsellors lies not with any philosophic extreme, traditional or contemporary, but rather with the growth and development of each individual client. Counsellors as student-advocates need to apply available knowledge and skills to help the client, and to summon sufficient courage and influence to improve the learning environment so that it is of maximum benefit to every student.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire Used in the Study

July 1978

Dear Students,

This questionnaire is being given to you in order to obtain a description of women students in office careers programmes. As the number of women in College career programmes gets larger, it becomes more and more important for educators to know the background, resources, and pressures that affect the academic success of women students. The more that educators know about what does make a difference in the experience of going to college, and for whom, the more help can be built into the programmes to reduce the strains and encourage the strengths of its students.

The following questions have been carefully chosen according to the issues that seem to affect a smooth transition from home/job/school to a college career programme. All replies are confidential and anonymous, although total results will be available to your office careers programme, and yourselves, to use as feedback. I will be using the results for a Master's thesis in Counselling, and as valuable groundwork for transition courses such as College's ECO programme.

The questionnaire will take 15-30 minutes to complete. I will be present to answer any of your questions. Please do work quickly, although you may find yourself wanting to think about some of the issues at greater length afterwards. And please feel free to add comments at any point on the questionnaire.

In most of the questions, you are asked to check ✓ the items that apply to you. Many of them will ask you, in addition, to circle the responses that are particularly strong (✓), such as a 'VERY' important reason or change. At times you are asked to consider your answers for both now and for the first few weeks you were at college. Please try to answer every question carefully.

Thankyou for your help.

Margaretha Hoek
formerly counsellor and
instructor.

SURVEY OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN
BUSINESS OFFICE TRAINING

I. This section deals with your experiences and reactions while a student at the college

1. When you first made contact with the college about taking office training, how long had it been since you last took an academic or vocational course (minimum of 2 months)?

___Less than one year
___1-3 years
___3-5 years
___6-10 years
___11-15 years
___16-20 years
___21-30 years
___More than 30 years

2. Consider the objectives you had when coming to college
   a. Check (✓) any of the following items that were important to you Do this first
   b. Now go over the items you have checked as important, and circle the check (✓) to any that are VERY important

___to prepare for a job
___to become more educated
___to challenge myself
___to receive counselling about career opportunities
___to enter the job market quickly
___for personal growth
___other(specify)_____
___to qualify for a promotion
___to receive a degree, certificate, or college credit
___to make contact with other people
___to achieve independence
___To develop skills to become more effective with my family or community

3. Consider the factors that led you to decide to attend college at this time
   a. Check (✓) any of the following items that were important in your decision Do this first
   b. Now circle the checks (✓) to any that are VERY important

___dissatisfaction with my job
___lessening of home responsibilities and duties
___serious illness or death in the family
___availability of funds
___economic need to work
___intrinsic appeal of the courses offered
___in a rut at home
___family or marital changes(including divorce)
___moving close to the college
___not happy with myself
___encouragement and advice from others
___other(specify)_____
_____

4. In what ways have your experiences with the college influenced you?
   a. Check the items that reflect important changes in your self.
   b. Circle the checks to any items that are VERY important

___I feel more confused about my goals

___gave me self-respect and self-confidence

___I regret some loss of femininity

___caused me to seek employment

___I feel better educated

___I have raised my goals and am more ambitious

___I feel tired and depressed

___I feel good about doing well in my classes

___made me decide that my place is at home

___I have difficulty deciding on my daily priorities

___other(specify)_____

___I know what is important to me and what I want to do

___informed me of alternatives and options

___I feel more restless and discontent

___increased self-awareness and insight

___I am a happier woman

___I have become more open to new ideas and people

___decreased my self-confidence

___I have developed employable skills

___increased my respect and liking for other women

___nothing has really changed for me

5. Indicate your degree of overall satisfaction with your college experience (Check one)

___very satisfied

___satisfied

___neutral

___dissatisfied

___very dissatisfied

6. Consider the changes you would like to see at the college
   a. Check those items you think need improving or changing
   b. Circle the checks to those items you consider need MAJOR or URGENT change

___lower tuition

___provide more financial aid

___reach and enroll a wider population(men, native Indians, mature students, etc)

___provide for more social contacts for students

___make personal counselling more easily available

___provide help with educational and career planning

___other(specify)_____

___provide child care

___improve quality of instructors

___increase publicity about offerings and services

___have more locations

___greater variety of courses

___provide or improve job placement

___provide training in job application and interviewing skills

___allow for part-time study in all programmes

7. Do you have any concerns about your ability to finance your training?(Check one)

___none(I am confident that I will have enough funds)

___some concern(but I will probably have enough funds)

___some concern(but with my Canada Employment Center allowance I will probably have enough funds)

___major concern(not sure I will have enough funds to complete my training)

8 Indicate the major sources of financing for your training

___employer subsidy

___spouse

___Canada Employment Center allowance

___insurance, pension, social security, alimony

___other

___loan or loan/grant

___own part or full-time job

___family(parents and other relatives)

___scholarship or bursary

___savings and investments

9 How familiar are you with the Educational and Career Orientation for Women course?

___I took it and found it very useful

___I took it and found it moderately useful

___I took it and did not like it

___I decided I did not need to take it

___I do not know what it is

II *This section deals with your experiences and reactions while enrolled in the Business Office Training Programme*

10 Consider your reasons for choosing to enter the Business Office Training Programme

a Check the reasons that were important in your decision

b. Circle the checks to those items that were VERY important

___job opportunities are good

___prior job or educational experience

___can afford the training costs

___it suits my abilities and personality

___I didn't consider any other kinds of training

___interested in the work

___it suits my need for flexible work times

___good place to begin my career

___training time is short

___I like the people who do this work

___other(specify)_____

_____

11. How long have you been in the Business Office Training Programme?(Check one)

___Less than 4 weeks ___4-6 weeks ___6-8 weeks

___2-3 months ___3-4 months ___4-6 months

___6-8 months ___8-10 months ___more than 10 months

12. What is your training specialty?(Check one)

___Clerk typist
___Basic Office Skills
___General Refresher
___Bookkeeper
___Stenographer
___other(specify)_____

13. What is your present grade average?(Check one)

___excellent
___satisfactory
___unsatisfactory
___I have received no grades

14. Consider the aspects of your training that create pressures or anxieties for you.
a. Check the items that have been an important concern for you.
b. Circle the checks to those items that are VERY important concerns.

___examinations
___conflicting demands on my time(home, job, school)
___lengthy homework assignments
___lack of skills
___some instructors' attitudes
___no private place to study
___lack of self-discipline or concentration
___other(specify)_____
___timed assignments and quizzes
___understanding what I read or needing to read faster
___speaking before a class
___inadequate preparation in math
___grades, evaluation
___organizing my time
___some instructors' ways of presenting subject matter

15. Consider the elements of the BOT programme that have helped you succeed, both during the first few weeks and at present.
a. Check the items that have been helpful at any time.
b. Circle the checks to those items that have been VERY helpful.

	at present	when first enrolled
instructors' concern for their students	___	___
orientation sessions	___	___
friendliness of other students	___	___
smallness of the classes	___	___
quality of books and equipment	___	___
staying with a familiar group	___	___
professionalism of instructors	___	___
well-planned lessons	___	___
knowing the course is short	___	___
relaxed atmosphere of classes	___	___
other(specify)_____	___	___

16. Consider the non-academic pressures that you have to deal with
a. Check the items that have been an important concern for you at any time.
b. Circle the checks to those items that are VERY important concerns

	at present	when first enrolled
obtaining child care	___	___
location, transportation	___	___
time of day of classes	___	___
costs	___	___
lack of self-confidence	___	___
lack of direction or purpose	___	___
nonsupportive family attitudes	___	___
meeting family care obligations	___	___
meeting housework obligations	___	___
lack of time	___	___
lack of energy	___	___
guilt about money	___	___
guilt about neglect of children	___	___
job responsibilities	___	___
medical reasons, self or family	___	___
worry about getting a job	___	___
elimination of social life, hobbies	___	___

17. Consider how the people around you have responded to your being at college
a. Check those changes that have been important to you
b. Circle the checks to those items that have been VERY important to you

___family has less time together

___family has become closer, tends to talk things over more

___marital relations improved, greater rapport with spouse

___my children's respect and regard toward me have increased

___improved status on the job

___less time for social life

___some friends and neighbors are disapproving or distant

___family has become more self-reliant and organized

___family is sharing more household chores

___marital tensions and difficulties grew

___my children are upset and resent my involvement

___coworkers disapprove of my involvement

___other people respect me more

___other(specify)_____

PLEASE REMEMBER TO CIRCLE THE ANSWERS THAT ARE 'VERY IMPORTANT' FOR ALL COLUMNS

18. Consider how supportive people have been of your decision to contact or participate at the college. Omit any that do not apply to you.
    a. Check the individuals who have been supportive of you at any time.
    b. Circle the checks to those individuals who have been VERY supportive.

	at present	when first enrolled
husband	___	___
children	___	___
mother	___	___
father	___	___
brothers and sisters	___	___
female friends	___	___
male friends	___	___
employer	___	___
other relatives	___	___
BOT instructors	___	___
classmates	___	___
neighbors	___	___

III. This section deals with questions regarding your education and work experiences.

19. What was the highest level of education reached by you and, if applicable, by your spouse? (Check once for each person)

	self	husband
less than high school	___	___
high school graduation	___	___
high school equivalent diploma	___	___
technical or trade school	___	___
business training	___	___
some college or university	___	___
Bachelor's degree	___	___
Master's degree	___	___
Professional degree(MD, DDS, LLB)	___	___
other(specify)_____	___	___

20. If you did not continue your schooling after high school, indicate the primary reasons.

___wanted to work
___illness(self or family)
___lack of interest or motivation
___marriage
___other(specify)_____
___parents not in favour of girls' education
___funds not available
___wanted to test myself in the 'real world' first
___pregnancy
___did not think I had the ability

21. What was your approximate grade average during your last years at school?

___A ___B ___C ___below C ___don't know

22. Please list the main jobs you have had in the past. Maximum three.

name of jobs	length of time at the job	amount of time since leaving job	full or part time

23. Please list the job you have at present, if employed.

name of job	length of time at the job	full or part time

24. Please list the jobs you would ultimately like to get(dream a little')

name of jobs	full or part time

25. Please list the job your husband has at present, if you are married.

name of job _____

26. What is the approximate family income over the last year(check once for each person)?

	self	husband
None	___	___
$4,999 or less	___	___
$5,000-9,999	___	___
$10,000-14,999	___	___
$15,000-19,999	___	___
$20,000-29,999	___	___
$30,999-39,999	___	___
$40,000 or more	___	___

27. If you have not been recently employed, please check your primary reasons.

___no desire to work
___was too busy
___inadequate training
___husband's objections or preferences
___no financial need to work
___scarce job opportunities in my field
___found volunteer work was satisfying enough
___not sure I could handle it

27 cont'd

27.cont'd

___was too tired
___was unclear about goals
___was not sure I could cope
___children's needs and preferences
___difficulties and costs of household maintenance and childcare arrangements
___found it was hard to get out of the house
___other(specify)_____

IV. This section covers a variety of questions about your background and attitudes.

28. What is your age?

___20 or under
___21-25
___26-30
___31-35
___36-40
___41-45
___46-50
___51-55
___56-60
___61-65
___66 or over

29. What is your marital status?

___single(never married)
___separated or divorced
___married
___other
___widowed

30. How many children do you have?

___none
___one
___two
___three
___four
___five
___six or more

31. Indicate whether you have children in any of the following age categories:

___no children
___Birth-3 years
___4-6 years
___6-12 years
___13-17 years
___18-22 years
___23 years and over

32. How important is it for your own self-fulfillment to have a career in addition to being a wife and mother?

___very important
___important
___neutral
___relatively unimportant
___totally unimportant

33. How old did you feel the child(ren) had to be before you returned to school/work?

___Infancy
___ages 2-5
___age 6(school entry)
___ages 7-12
___ages 13-17
___age 18 or older

34 Was your mother employed while you were growing up(before you were 18)?

___yes ___no ___don't know

35 If you ever married, to what extent did you and your husband discuss your educational and occupational plans before you were married?

___not at all, because it was already understood that I would be continuing work or school

___not at all, because it was already understood that I would not be continuing work or school

___we discussed it a little

___we discussed it extensively

___not married or in a serious relationship

36 Consider the qualities that you have when compared with other women of your age. Rate yourself on the following traits as you really think you are. You may use each rating as many or as few times as you wish. You must rate each item once.

1=excellent for women my age
2=good for women my age
3=average for women my age
4=below average for women my age
5=terrible for women my age

___physical appearance
___intellectual self-confidence
___popularity with men
___leadership ability
___effectiveness on the job
___homemaking ability
___athletic ability
___originality
___assertiveness
___public speaking ability
___artistic ability
___independence
___close to my ideal self
___social self-confidence
___sensitivity to criticism
___popularity with women
___academic ability
___success as a wife
___success as a mother
___femininity
___drive to achieve
___cheerfulness
___mental and emotional well-being
___writing ability
___mathematical ability
___physical stamina

THAT COMPLETES THE QUESTIONNAIRE THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

If you would be willing to give a followup interview, please add your name and phone # below.

Any further comments would be welcome.

VITA

Surname: HOEK Given Names: Margaretha S.M.

Place of Birth: Amersfoort Netherlands Date of Birth Sept., 8, 1947

Educational Institutions Attended, with Dates of Entering and Leaving:

University of Victoria, B C	1964	to	1969
University of Victoria, B C	1972	to	1978
	____	to	____
	____	to	____

Degrees, Diplomas, Etc., Awarded, with Dates and Names of Institutions:

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	____	
	____	
	____	

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Title of Thesis/Dissertation

A Descriptive Study of Women Enrolled in the Office Careers Programmes at Selected Community Colleges

Author [redacted]
Signature

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Name

Nov 23, 1978
Date