

**FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CAREER DECISIONS OF
FIRST YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my sister, Christina,
and Shorty whose love, commitment and confidence in
me helped make it all possible.

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence career decisions of first year college students. It sought to answer the question: What impact did the career development programs in the education system have on the participants' career decisions?

A survey was constructed and pilot study completed by the researcher. The survey was completed by 53 first year college students who graduated from high school between 1993 and 1997. The analysis of the frequency distribution and percentage of response provided valuable information on the influential factors of career decision making.

Conclusions provide strong support to continue work experience programs. Parents were identified as being the most influential in the decision making of the participants. There was a notable increase in career goal setting by the students who graduated in 1997.

Recommendations included further research ranging from influential actions to suggestions for improving career programs in schools. Career development programs are valuable and should be expanded in future years.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Based on what I have observed during my teaching career, I believe there is a relationship between career choices of students and the activities and courses in which they participate during high school. One of the goals of the education system in British Columbia is to prepare students for their future by providing a great amount of information to be used by students in making career decisions and setting goals.

The purpose of the British Columbia school system is to enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy. (Ministry of Education, 1993, p.7)

The information about career choice is relayed in many ways:

1. Career counsellors are present in all high schools. They are available to assist students in making decisions about their future and researching careers and potential post secondary institutions.
2. Classroom teachers are encouraged to include career information in each course.
3. Career and Personal Planning (CAPP) is required at all grade levels. This curriculum enables students to evaluate

their interests and aptitudes, and related careers. When students reach grade twelve they will have been provided the guidance to make informed decisions about their future career options and to reach their goals.

4. Career programs in the educational system provide students with the opportunity to combine studies at school with a work placement in the community and surrounding communities. Work placements occur in three distinct formats;

i. Within the CAPP 12 curriculum, students participate in a work experience activity (a minimum of 30 hours) which supports their career, education and personal goals as described in their Student Learning Plans. This may be done in several manners including job shadowing, work placement, career mentoring, volunteering, entrepreneurship or student employment.

ii. Career Exploration and Cooperative Education courses provide a means for students to explore careers within a chosen field and to investigate potential career paths. Students have an opportunity to participate in the tasks that are normally performed in the day-to-day operation of a particular career. Students commit a minimum of 110 hours to the experience which, ideally, will reinforce their desire to pursue the career.

iii. Career Preparation programs are designed for students who have made a career decision and want to focus their high school courses in that direction. These programs consist of a minimum of five related courses and an intensive work placement near the end. Many colleges and technical schools recognise these programs and reserve a number of seats for students who have completed them.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Career exploration is a developmental stage identified by career development theorists and occurs typically during adolescence when boys and girls try out various work roles in part time work, volunteer work, or in school/community activities (Farmer, 1995). The purpose of the "exploration stage, which is generally thought to extend to 21 years of age, is to learn about oneself, the world of work, and alternative occupations so that one can begin to make a realistic, valid choice of an occupation" (Greenhaus & Connolly, 1982, p. 314). Erikson (1953) contends that selecting a career is the primary task that confronts adolescents and young adults (as cited in Daniels and Others, 1983, p. 4).

Ask people how they arrived at their particular career, and you'll probably find they followed many different routes to get there. Some will tell you they stumbled upon a mentor, or heard an inner voice that provided the direction they chose to pursue. Others walked in their parents' path and continued the generations-long family career tradition. For many individuals, the decision is not so simple, as "given today's complex array of career options, one of the most difficult developmental tasks people face is the identification and exploration of options congruent with their characteristics" (Prediger, 1995).

Difficulties in making career decisions have been linked to a lack of clarity of one's work values (see, for example, Salomone, 1982), and one component of "good" career decision making seems to be exploring and choosing those occupations that coincide with one's most important work values (see, for example, Cochran, 1986; Krumbolts, 1982; Zakay & Barak, 1984) as noted in Schulenberg, Vondracek & Kim (1993, p. 269). This literature suggests that career decision-making depends first and foremost on the clarity of one's work values. Individuals' work values become the foundation for focusing further exploration into career options.

It is generally assumed that students who engage in extensive exploration are more likely to make an occupational decision than students who do not engage in a great deal of exploration. While this may be true, according to Greenhaus and Conolly's (1982) findings, "it is clear that not everyone who has made an occupational decision is especially satisfied with the decision" (p. 315). Schulenberg, Vondracek and Kim (1993) having surveyed high school students who have engaged in career education and observed:

On the basis of their responses, they seem to have a career plan in mind, as well as some sense of how to proceed with the plan. This career plan may not be well formed and will likely change, yet it serves to orient the several smaller educational and occupational decisions students make.... The researchers suggested that an initial choice heightens an adolescent's interest in vocational

identity exploration, which then permits a more active consideration of work values, leading to a refinement or, perhaps, abandonment of the initial choice.

(p. 279)

These studies suggest that even students who express high career certainty might benefit from intervention.

The relationship of anxiety of students and the career decision making process was studied by Greenhaus and Sklarew (1981). They predicted and showed that for persons of low anxiety, self-related exploration results in an occupational decision that is experienced as relatively satisfying and appropriate. Alternatively, they found a negative relationship between self-related exploration and satisfaction among highly anxious persons. One suggestion for this is that the greater self-exploration, the greater the amount of distorted information on which to base an occupational decision, and the more likely the person will make an inappropriate decision (p. 9).

Cooperative education programs, where students spend an extended period of time working and learning about a career that is of interest to them, have been part of the school system for many years. A few research studies have been conducted to analyze the effect of programs on the career exploration stage of adolescents. Canna (1982) conducted a review of literature that led him to conclude that "the few studies on career retention that have already been conducted showed that cooperative education graduates remained in, or were committed to, careers they explored through experience-

based career education". The results of Greenhaus, Hawkins and Brenner's (1983) study, supported their first hypothesis; there is a positive relationship between career exploration and the development of a career decision (p.496).

Spry (1995) completed a master's project on this subject in a town in British Columbia. He noted:

The respondents agreed over four to one, that the co-op education program had assisted in clarifying their future education choices. A major component in this clarification was that 86.56% of the respondents reported co-op education helped them realize they would need further training after secondary school. Only 74.38% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed the program had helped in the decision of a career choice, and only 79.34% felt it had helped strengthen their career choice.

(p. 75)

In addition, many school districts in British Columbia (eg. Peace River South, West Vancouver, Central Okanagan) survey past career preparation and cooperative education students about their experiences. Yearly studies at Pleasant Valley Secondary School have shown that the number of students participating in career preparation programs continues to increase. About half of the career preparation students are pursuing their career preparation interests (Collingridge, 1996). Respondents in a study based in West Vancouver, "generally felt that career development helped them decide on a career area" (Roberts, 1995, p. 10). A

majority of the respondents in Roberts' study had positive attitudes towards career development programs, and suggested that they should continue to expand.

Directly opposed to these findings are the results of an earlier study that found "vocational students do not perceive that their vocational teachers or the vocational program is very influential in their career decision making process" (Kotrlik & Harrison, 1987, p. 14). Similarly, a study conducted by Greenhaus and Connolly (1982) of career exploration among undergraduate business students noted that, "work related exploration did not seem to enhance the likelihood of making an occupational decision" (p. 317).

In addition to cooperative education programs, there are many other factors that may influence career decisions of adolescents. Greenhaus, Hawkins and Brenner (1983, p. 501) found that although consultation with friends and family members was the most popular form of career exploration, it was not related to the development of a career decision, clarity of values or knowledge of chosen career. Kotrlik and Harrison (1987) found that "parents influenced the student's career choices more than any other persons, with the mother being more influential than the father" (p. 13). An informal survey of past graduates from a rural community in British Columbia, "showed the influence on their choice was predominantly self 49%, parents 27% or a teacher 12%" (Early, 1996). Daniels and Others (1983) cites other research (Brookover, Erikson, & Joiner 1967; Coleman, 1961; Hamachak, 1971) that "substantiates the contention that both parents and peers have a significant influence over the decision

making process of adolescents which in turn, effects their career decision making" (p. 4).

The type of family may have some bearing on whether parents are influential or not. Hesser (1984) conducted a study that,

...established statistically significant, but numerically limited relationships between family adaptability and/or family cohesion and four career development process variables: intuitive decision-making style, career planning, decision-making knowledge and world of work information....

Positive attitudes toward career planning were related to higher family cohesion. Higher decision making and world of work scores were associated with lower family adaptability but higher family cohesion.

(p.6)

It should be recognized that the family and its members are influenced in turn by external forces such as the school. In his conclusion Hesser (1984) states, "it may very well be that despite the family's potential to exert an inhibiting or negative effect upon adolescent development, the school system may manifest a positive, counterbalancing influence in an area, eg. career development" (p. 6).

Many parents are either ill-prepared to assist their children in career planning or may unintentionally manipulate the decisions being made. I believe that teachers and counsellors trained in career planning can distance themselves from the decisions that students must make,

thereby providing the objective assistance that the students require. I agree with Daniels et al. (1983) who in their study stated:

It is our position that career counsellors will be more influential in their attempts to assist adolescents address career decisions if they will collaborate with the parents of adolescents in addition to working with adolescents alone. ... Rationale for our position is based on three facts. Parents already play an influential role in their childrens' career decision making. Second, to either a greater or lesser degree, parents have linked school to the world of work, and they have experienced the school-to-work transition. Third, parents are in the position to provide students with the quality and quantity of time they need in order to make career decisions. By working with parents and capitalizing on the power and influence they have, career guidance counsellors will be better able to assist adolescents make career decisions.

(p. 18)

The British Columbia Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of the family in the development of children's attitudes and values. The career programs available to students all require the support of parents or guardians. Ministry documents state:

[They] will only prove effective if teachers recognize the role of parents with respect to

learning in the areas addressed by the curriculum.
... To maintain a partnership between home and school, it is important that parents be kept informed about all aspects of the program through their involvement in...

(Ministry of Education, 1995, p. 9)

The Ministry of Education in British Columbia has created connections between the educational system and the career exploration stage of adolescents through the implementation of career exploration programs. In the developmental phase of these programs, committees conducted needs assessments for the students of British Columbia and researched existing programs. Preliminary research is vital during the initial development of new programs; however, follow up research is of equal importance to ensure programs are effective in meeting the students needs and, where necessary, to inform the process of making modifications.

To date, there has not been any formal research conducted subsequent to the implementation of any of the Career Development programs in British Columbia. In recognition of this oversight, several school districts have conducted informal surveys to obtain feedback from past program participants. Unfortunately, the reliability and validity of data collected in these informal surveys is unknown. As well, conclusions drawn are specific to the surveyed population and not necessarily generalizable to other districts. There is no data related to the effectiveness of the Career and Personal Planning curriculum

because all existing surveys were conducted prior to its implementation. The introduction of new courses and the transitory nature of the teaching staff make it necessary to conduct regular surveys to obtain valid information.

Kotrlik and Harrison (1987) state that "additional research should be conducted to document the influence of vocational programs and teachers on the career decision making patterns of vocational students" (p.14). Spry (1995) encourages others to do further research and explore longitudinal support for the benefits of cooperative education and other experiential learning programs (p. 81). It is important that Canadian data be gathered regularly to assist in the continuation, promotion and modification of such beneficial programs.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Overview

The British Columbia Ministry of Education annually invests a large sum of money in career preparation and work experience programs. As a counsellor and career education coordinator, I am concerned about the impact the education system has on the career decisions of students. Because there has been no formal research done by the Ministry to evaluate the effectiveness of the Career and Personal Planning curriculum, a recent innovation in the B.C. system, I decided to use the opportunity afforded by this Creative Project to learn what I could from former high school students about the effect such a program has had on their career choices.

The following two specific research questions were addressed in the study.

1. Are school programs influential in students' career decision making?
2. Do work experience programs strengthen a student's desire to pursue a particular career?

Instrumentation

A quantitative research approach was used for the data collection and analysis elements of this study. The researcher developed a questionnaire to facilitate the collection of information regarding the influential factors of individual career decisions. The three level Likert scale used was borrowed from a survey conducted by the Saanich School District Office, B.C. Some of the statements used in the questionnaire were adapted from the Saanich survey and other surveys conducted in British Columbia school districts. The final survey (See Appendix A) was approved by the researcher's university advisors.

Pilot Study

Because the questionnaire was designed for this research and had not been used before, a pilot study was conducted to ensure readability for students. The 1997-98 first semester Career and Personal Planning 11/12 class at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School was given the survey. After they completed the survey the researcher interviewed the 17 students as a group to ascertain any difficulties they had in understanding the statements or in completing the survey. A few minor changes in wording were incorporated because of this pilot study. The pilot group of students also noted they could not respond to the statements that specified "when I graduated...". This was an expected result.

The questionnaire was also given to five educators at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School, for their comments and suggestions. The educators provided suggestions similar to those of the pilot group of students.

Participants

The data for this study was gathered from a convenient sampling of first year college students on the assumption that, because first year students have made some kind of a career choice, they should be able to provide information about how they reached their decision. A letter to the volunteer participants (see Appendix B) on the reverse side of the questionnaire informed them of the purpose of the research and their role in it. The volunteers signed an agreement to participate in the study (see Appendix B). The participants were assured anonymity.

Questionnaire Distribution

Seventy five copies of the questionnaire were sent to the office of the registrar of Northern Lights College in Dawson Creek, British Columbia. An employee of the college distributed the questionnaires to five instructors of first year courses as requested by letter (see Appendix C). The instructors were asked in writing by the researcher (see Appendix D) to distribute the questionnaires to volunteers, then collect and return them to the registrar's office. The

questionnaire was short which encouraged immediate completion and return. Once all the the questionnaires were returned to the registrar's office, the employee then forwarded them to the researcher.

Data Analysis

The questionnaires were divided into 4 groups based on the following demographic variables; female 1997 graduates, female 1993-1996 graduates, male 1997 graduates, and male 1993-1996 graduates. The 1997 graduates fulfill the provincial requirements outlined in 1996 whereas the 1993-1996 graduates fulfill the requirements outlined in 1986. Where the graduation year variable is an important factor, the data has been displayed for all 4 groups; otherwise, the data is divided only by gender.

The data collected from the questionnaires was compiled by the researcher and entered into a Claris Works 4 spreadsheet on a Macintosh computer. The frequency distribution for gender, graduation year and province of education was calculated to develop the profile of the first year college students who participated in the research. Data from students' statements were analyzed to determine the frequencies and distribution for each question. The percentages of responses were computer-generated.

The responses to the open-ended statements were organized into appropriate tables within the data analysis chapter.

Methodological Assumptions

The researcher assumed that all subjects responded honestly. As well, the researcher assumed that the instrument was constructed well enough to ascertain the correct perceptions of the respondents.

Limitations

The major limitation of the research is the small number of surveys that were completed and returned (n=53). There were 22 surveys returned uncompleted. The conclusions drawn from this study are specific to the population surveyed. The results are not generalizable to non-surveyed populations.

The reliability and validity of the instrument are unknown as the instrument was constructed by the researcher.

CHAPTER IV

DATA DISPLAY AND ANALYSIS

Table 1
Frequency of Questionnaire Respondents
by Variable Groupings
n=53

Variable Grouping	Element	Number	Percent	
Gender	Male	32	60.38%	
	Female	21	39.62%	
Graduation Year	1997	Male	11	20.75%
		Female	10	18.87%
	1993-1996	Male	21	39.62%
		Female	11	20.75%
Province	B.C.	53	100.00%	
	Other	0	0.00%	

Table 1 displays the demographic information of the participants requested on the questionnaire. Of the 53 questionnaires completed and returned, 32 (60.38%) were completed by males and 21 (39.62%) were completed by females. The graduation years of the participants ranged from 1993 through 1997. Participants from the graduation year of 1997 have been grouped together because they were required to fulfill the requirements outlined in 1996. The number of participants from the graduation years 1993-1996 have been

grouped together because they were required to fulfill the requirements outlined in government policy documents in 1986. Of the 53 participants, 21 who graduated in 1997, 11 were males (20.75%) and 10 were females (18.87%). Of the 32 who graduated between 1993 -1996, 21 were males (39.62%) and 11 were females (20.75%). All of the participants graduated from schools in British Columbia.

Table 2
Inclusion of Exploring Career Opportunities
n=53

Gender	Opinion	Number	Percent
Male	Agree	32	100.00%
	Undecided	0	0.00%
	Disagree	0	0.00%
Female	Agree	21	100.00%
	Undecided	0	0.00%
	Disagree	0	0.00%

Table 2 is a display of the data collected from the first statement on the questionnaire which was, "*It is important for schools to help students explore career opportunities*". All 53 participants responded to this item. The statement was analyzed in terms of the frequency of response according to a three point Likert scale (agree, undecided and disagree). The response was unanimous; 100% of the 32 males and 21 females agreed with the statement.

Table 3

Inclusion of Post Secondary Information

n=53

Gender	Opinion	Number	Percent
Male	Agree	30	93.75%
	Undecided	2	6.25%
	Disagree	0	0.00%
Female	Agree	20	95.24%
	Undecided	1	4.76%
	Disagree	0	0.00%

Table 3 is a display of the data collected from the second statement on the survey which said, "*It is important for schools to help students research suitable post secondary institutions*". All 53 participants responded to this question. The majority of the participants, 93.75% of the males and 95.34% of the females, agreed with this statement. Only 6.25% of the males and 4.76 % of the females were undecided at the time of the survey. None of the female or male participants disagreed with the statement.

Table 4
 Provision of Career and Education Options
 n=53

Gender	Grad Year	Opinion	Number	Percent
Male	1997	Agree	4	36.36%
		Undecided	5	45.45%
		Disagree	2	18.18%
	1993-1996	Agree	8	38.10%
		Undecided	8	38.10%
		Disagree	5	23.81%
	Combined	Agree	12	37.50%
		Undecided	13	40.62%
		Disagree	7	21.88%
Female	1997	Agree	7	70.00%
		Undecided	1	10.00%
		Disagree	2	20.00%
	1993-1996	Agree	5	45.45%
		Undecided	1	9.09%
		Disagree	5	45.45%
	Combined	Agree	12	57.14%
		Undecided	2	9.52%
		Disagree	7	33.33%

Table 4 displays the data collected from statement 3 which said, *"During Secondary school I learned up-to-date information about careers and further education options"*. All 53 participants responded to this statement. The results have been broken down by graduation year and gender to allow comparisons between the variables. Of the 11 male participants who graduated in 1997, 36.36% agreed that they learned up-to-date information about careers and further education options, 45.45% were undecided and 18.18% disagreed. The male participants who graduated between 1993-1996 had statistically similar responses in that 38.10% agreed, 38.10% were undecided and 23.81% disagreed. Of the 10 females who graduated in 1997, 70.00% agreed with the statement while 10.00% were undecided and 20.00% disagreed. Of the females who graduated between 1993-1996, 45.45% were in agreement with the statement, 9.09% were undecided and 45.45% disagreed. While the female participants had a greater variation of responses than the males, female participants generally agreed more with the statement (57.14%) than did male participants (37.50%).

Table 5
Setting Career Goals

n=53

Gender	Grad Year	Opinion	Number	Percent
Male	1997	Agree	2	18.18%
		Undecided	6	54.55%
		Disagree	3	27.27%
	1993-1996	Agree	4	19.05%
		Undecided	6	28.57%
		Disagree	11	52.38%
	Combined	Agree	6	18.75%
		Undecided	12	37.50%
		Disagree	14	43.75%
Female	1997	Agree	4	40.00%
		Undecided	5	50.00%
		Disagree	1	10.00%
	1993-1996	Agree	3	27.27%
		Undecided	5	45.45%
		Disagree	3	27.27%
	Combined	Agree	7	33.33%
		Undecided	10	47.62%
		Disagree	4	19.05%

Table 5 displays the data collected from statement 4 which said, "*Secondary school prepared me to set career goals*". All 53 participants responded to this statement. The results have been broken down by graduation year and gender to allow comparisons between the variables. Of the 11 male participants who graduated in 1997, 18.18% agreed that they were prepared to set career goals, 54.55% were undecided and 27.27% disagreed. Of the male participants who graduated between 1993-1996, 19.05% agreed, 28.57% were undecided and 52.38% disagreed. Of the 10 females who graduated in 1997, 40.00% agreed with the statement while 50.00% were undecided and 10.00% disagreed. The females who graduated between 1993-1996 responded 27.27% in agreement with the statement, 45.45% were undecided and 27.27% disagreed. Once again, the female participants responded more frequently in agreement with the statement (33.33%) than male respondents (18.75%).

Table 6
Setting Education Goals

n=53

Gender	Grad Year	Opinion	Number	Percent
Male	1997	Agree	4	36.36%
		Undecided	6	54.55%
		Disagree	1	9.09%
	1993-1996	Agree	9	42.86%
		Undecided	4	19.05%
		Disagree	8	38.10%
	Combined	Agree	13	40.62%
		Undecided	10	31.25%
		Disagree	9	28.12%
Female	1997	Agree	8	80.00%
		Undecided	1	10.00%
		Disagree	1	10.00%
	1993-1996	Agree	4	36.36%
		Undecided	3	27.27%
		Disagree	4	36.36%
	Combined	Agree	12	57.14%
		Undecided	4	19.05%
		Disagree	5	23.81%

Table 6 displays the data collected from statement 5, "Secondary school prepared me to set education goals". All 53 participants responded to this statement. The results have been broken down by graduation year and gender to allow comparisons between the variables. Of the 11 male participants who graduated in 1997, 36.36% agreed they were prepared to set education goals, 54.55% were undecided and 9.09% disagreed. Of the male participants who graduated between 1993-1996, 42.86% agreed, 19.05% were undecided and 38.10% disagreed with the statement. Of the 10 females who graduated in 1997, 80.00% agreed that they were prepared to set education goals while 10.00% were undecided and 10.00% disagreed. Of the females who graduated between 1993-1996, 36.36% were in agreement with the statement, 27.27% were undecided and 36.36% disagreed. Female participants responded more frequently in agreement with the statement (57.14%) than male respondents (40.62%).

Table 7

Participation in a Work Experience Course

n=53

Gender	Opinion	Number	Percent
Male	Yes	17	53.12%
	No	15	46.88%
Female	Yes	10	47.62%
	No	11	52.38%

Table 7 displays the information gathered from the statement; *"During high school I completed a Work Experience course"*. All 53 participants responded to this statement. The statement was analyzed in terms of the frequency of yes or no responses. The male and female responses were calculated separately for a comparison between the genders. Of the 32 male participants, 53.12% responded that they had participated in a work experience course. Of the female respondents, 47.63% indicated that they had participated in a work experience course. The results have not been broken by graduating year because the changes in ministry guidelines have not effected the work experience courses.

Table 8
 Evaluation of Work Experience Course

n=27

Evaluation	Gender	Opinion	Number	Percent
Related to Current Career Goal	Male	Yes	8	47.06%
		No	9	52.94%
	Female	Yes	4	40.00%
		No	6	60.00%
Strengthened Desire to Pursue	Male	Yes	8	47.06%
		No	9	52.94%
	Female	Yes	5	50.00%
		No	5	50.00%
A Positive Experience	Male	Yes	16	94.12%
		No	1	5.88%
	Female	Yes	10	100.00%
		No	0	0.00%

Table 8 displays the data gathered to evaluate the work experience of the participants. There were 27 responses to each of the statements; 10 were from females and 17 were from males. The responses were analyzed in terms of the frequency of yes or no responses. The findings on all three statements were statistically similar for both genders.

Less than half of the respondents (47.06% of males and 40.00% of females) agreed that the work experience they completed was related to the career they are currently pursuing. Nearly half the respondents (47.06% of males and 50.00% of females) responded that their work experience strengthened their desire to pursue a certain kind of career. The majority of respondents (94.12% of males and 100% of females) felt that the work experience course they completed was a positive experience. One male responded that his work experience course was not a positive experience.

Table 9
 Career and Personal Planning Enrollment
 n=53

Gender	Grad Year	Opinion	Number	Percent
Male	1997	Yes	10	90.91%
		No	1	9.09%
	1993-1996	Yes	1	4.76%
		No	20	95.24%
Female	1997	Yes	10	100.00%
		No	0	0.00%
	1993-1996	Yes	1	9.09%
		No	10	90.91%

Table 9 displays the information gathered from the statement; *"I was required to take Career and Personal Planning (CAPP) in high school"*. All 53 participants responded to this statement. The responses were analyzed for frequency. The responses have been calculated separately for genders and graduation years to allow a comparison between those variables. Of the participants who graduated in 1997, 90.91% of males said they were required to take CAPP, whereas 100.00% of the female participants said they were required to take CAPP. One male and one female who graduated prior to 1997 responded that they, also, were required to take CAPP.

Table 10

Evaluation of CAPP Work Experience 30 Hours

n=22

Evaluation	Gender	Opinion	Number	Percent
Related to Current Career Goal	Male	Yes	5	45.45%
		No	6	54.55%
	Female	Yes	8	72.73%
		No	3	27.27%
Strengthened Desire to Pursue	Male	Yes	4	36.36%
		No	7	63.64%
	Female	Yes	8	72.73%
		No	3	27.27%
A Positive Experience	Male	Yes	6	54.55%
		No	5	45.45%
	Female	Yes	10	90.91%
		No	1	9.09%

Table 10 displays the data gathered to evaluate the CAPP 30 hour work experience of the participants. There were 22 responses to each of the statements. The responses were analyzed in terms of the frequency of yes or no responses. Less than half of the male respondents (45.45%) but nearly three quarters of the female respondents (72.73%) agreed that the 30 hours of work experience they completed was related to

the career they are currently pursuing. The findings of the second statement were similar to the first in that 36.36% of males and 72.73% of females, responded that their 30 hour work experience strengthened their desire to pursue the career. Finally, a large majority of female participants (90.91%) responded that the 30 hours of work experience they completed was a positive experience while 54.55% of the males responded in the same manner.

Table 11
 Influence of Counsellor/Teacher
 n=53

Gender	Opinion	Number	Percent
Male	Yes	3	9.38%
	No	29	90.62%
Female	Yes	3	14.29%
	No	18	85.71%

Explanation	Male	Female
		Counsellor
		Physics Teacher
		No response
	Female	Foods Teacher
		Business Teacher
		Teacher encouraged me to work

Table 11 displays the data gathered from the statement;

"A particular teacher or counsellor helped me to make my career decision". All 53 participants responded to this statement. The data were analyzed in terms of the frequency of yes or no responses. The male and female responses have been calculated separately for a comparison between the genders. A small percentage (9.38% of males and 14.29% of females) responded affirmatively to the statement. The majority of the respondents, both male (90.62%), and female (85.71%) responded negatively to the statement. The lower portion of the table displays the explanations of the 6 participants who answered "Yes". One male did not complete this portion.

Table 12
 Influence of High School Course
 n=53

Gender	Opinion	Number	Percent
Male	Yes	14	43.75%
	No	18	56.25%
Female	Yes	11	52.38%
	No	10	47.62%

Table 12 displays the data gathered from the statement; "A particular course in high school helped me to make my career decision". All 53 participants responded to this statement. The data were analyzed in terms of the frequency

of yes or no responses. The male and female responses have been calculated separately for a comparison between the genders. 43.75% of the male participants and 52.38% of the female participants responded that a particular course in high school did help them to make a career decision.

Table 13
 Relation of High School Course and Career
 n=25

Gender	Opinion	Number	Percent
Male	Yes	12	85.71%
	No	2	14.29%
Female	Yes	11	100.00%
	No	0	0.00%

Table 13 displays the data about the relationship of influential courses to careers being pursued. 25 participants responded to this statement. The data were analyzed in terms of the frequency of yes or no responses. The male and female responses have been calculated separately for a comparison between the genders. The majority of the respondents (85.71% of males and 100.00% of females) responded that the course that helped them to make a career decision was related to the career they are pursuing. 14.29% of males and no females responded that the course that helped them to make a career choice was unrelated to the career they are pursuing.

Table 14
 Clear Career Goal When Graduating
 n=53

Gender	Grad Year	Opinion	Number	Percent
Male	1997	Agree	10	90.91%
		Undecided	0	0.00%
		Disagree	1	9.09%
	1993-1996	Agree	6	28.57%
		Undecided	6	28.57%
		Disagree	9	42.86%
	Combined	Agree	16	50.00%
		Undecided	6	18.75%
		Disagree	10	31.25%
Female	1997	Agree	7	70.00%
		Undecided	1	10.00%
		Disagree	2	20.00%
	1993-1996	Agree	5	45.45%
		Undecided	2	18.18%
		Disagree	4	36.36%
	Combined	Agree	12	57.14%
		Undecided	3	14.29%
		Disagree	6	28.57%

Table 14 displays the data collected from statement 10; *"When I graduated from high school, I had a clear career goal"*. All 53 participants responded to this statement. The results have been broken down by graduation year and gender to allow comparisons between the variables. Of the 11 male participants who graduated in 1997, 90.91% agreed that they were prepared to set education goals, 0% were undecided and 9.09% disagreed. Of the male participants who graduated between 1993-1996, 28.57% agreed, 28.57% were undecided and 42.86% disagreed with the statement. Of the 10 females who graduated in 1997, 70.00% agreed that they were prepared to set education goals while 10.00% were undecided and 20.00% disagreed. The females who graduated between 1993-1996 responded 45.45% in agreement with the statement, 18.18% were undecided and 36.36% disagreed. The total female responses (57.14% agreed, 14.29% undecided and 28.57% disagreed) were statistically similar to the total male responses (50% agreed, 18.75% undecided and 31.25% disagreed).

Table 15

Relation of Current Career Goal to Past Goal

n=28

Gender	Opinion	Number	Percent
Male	Agree	14	87.50%
	Undecided	0	0.00%
	Disagree	2	12.50%
Female	Agree	12	100.00%
	Undecided	0	0.00%
	Disagree	0	0.00%

Table 15 displays data about the relationship of current career goals to those set in high school. 28 participants responded to this statement. Of the 16 males who said they had a career goal when they graduated, 14 (87.50%) are currently pursuing a related career. Of the 12 females who said they had a career goal when they graduated from high school, 100.00% agreed that they are pursuing a related career.

Table 16

Influential Factors of Career Decisions for Males

n=25

Factor	Grad Year		Combined
	1997	1993-96	
A teacher in high school	4	5	9
My parents	8	14	22
My peers	4	11	15
A course in high school (other than CAPP)	3	3	6
CAPP (Career and Personal Planning)	0	1	1
CAPP Work Experience - 30 hours	2	0	2
Work Experience Course - 100+ hours	3	2	5
Other Please specify	6	9	15
Other Specification			
Personal interest	4	6	10
Career Day	1	0	1
Work Situation	0	1	1
Employer	0	1	1
Research	0	1	1
Grandmother	1	0	1

Table 16 displays the data gathered about the factors influencing the career decisions of the male participants. Of the 32 males surveyed, 25 completed this section. The data from the 1997 graduates have been tabulated separately from the 1993-1996 graduates. The top three choices of each

participant is the pertinent data that was tabulated. Every time that one of the factors was assigned a 1, 2 or 3 by a participant, it received a point. The total points for each factor are displayed in the table. "My Parents" was the factor ranked most frequently in the top three, yielding 8 points from males who graduated in 1997 and 14 points from males who graduated in 1993-1996. The second highest-rated factor for the 1997 grads was the "other" category, with 6 points. The second highest rated factor for the 1993-96 graduates was "peers", with 11 points.

The lower portion of the table lists the data collected from the participants who ranked the "other" as one of their top three influential factors. Personal Interest was indicated as one of the top three influential factors by 4 male participants who graduated in 1997 and by 6 who graduated between 1993-1996. "Career days", "work situations", "employers", "research" and "a grandmother" were each indicated once by a participant as being one of the top 3 influencing factors not listed in the survey.

Table 17

Influential Factors of Career Decisions for Females

n=14

Factor	Grad Year		Combined
	1997	1993-96	
A teacher in high school	4	1	5
My parents	8	3	11
My peers	2	1	3
A course in high school (other than CAPP)	7	3	10
CAPP (Career and Personal Planning)	1	0	1
CAPP Work Experience - 30 hours	4	0	4
Work Experience Course - 100+ hours	2	0	2
Other Please specify	2	4	6

Other Specification

Personal Interest	2	2	4
Job Shadowing	0	1	1
Life Experience	0	1	1

Table 17 displays the data gathered about the factors influencing the career decisions of the female participants. Of the 21 females surveyed, 14 completed this section. The data from the 1997 graduates has been tabulated separately from the 1993-1996 graduates. The top three choices of each participant is the data that was tabulated. Every time one of the factors was assigned a 1, 2 or 3 by a participant it received a point. The total points for each factor are shown in the table. "My Parents" was the factor ranked most

frequently in the top three by females who graduated in 1997, yielding 8 points, while "a course other than CAPP" was ranked second, with 7 points. The females who graduated in 1993-1996 rated the "other" category in the top three 4 times. "Parents" and "a course" both received 3 points for being rated in the top three by 1993-96 graduates.

The lower portion of the table lists the data collected from the participants who ranked the "other" as one of their top three influential factors. Personal Interest was indicated as one of the top three influential factors by 2 female participants who graduated in 1997 and by 2 who graduated between 1993-1996. "Job shadowing" and "life experience" were each indicated once by participants who ranked "other" as being a top influencing factor.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Of the 75 surveys that were distributed to volunteers at Northern Lights College in Dawson Creek, B.C., 53 were returned completed. The demographic data of the returned surveys is shown in table 1. Since all of the respondents graduated from British Columbia high schools, the variable of "different education systems" is not a factor.

Inclusion of Career and Post Secondary Information

The Ministry of Education in British Columbia has insisted on the inclusion of career and post secondary information in the school system for many years. This is accomplished in many of the ways, previously outlined in Chapter 1. The education system is seen to be an effective vehicle for facilitating career development because of the availability of a variety of resources and knowledgeable professionals. All of the respondents agreed that exploration of career opportunities should be included in the high school curriculum (See table 2). The majority of the respondents, (94% of males and 95% of females) agreed that inclusion of post secondary information in their schooling is important (see table 3). The current survey data is comparable to that collected by Roberts (1995), who noted "an astounding level of support for this field. Higher than any

other field, there is an average of 88% positive support for the Career Development in general" (p. 13). It also shows similarities to two related recommendations made by past graduates in a study by Ronaghan (1991), which concluded "get into work experience and take the opportunity to figure out a future field of work" (p. 10).

Career and Personal Planning

The 1995/96 school year was a transition year for the British Columbia education system. The Graduation Program Policy, in effect since 1986, was revised to reflect the evolving goals of the education system. The new Graduation Program Policy affected all students registered in grade eleven or lower in September, 1995. The old policy remains in effect until June 2000, for all students who began grade eleven in September, 1994 or earlier.

One of the revisions to the new policy has been the design of the Career and Personal Planning (CAPP) curriculum. This new course is a requirement for all students from Kindergarten through grade twelve. It is designed to encourage continuous learning and development and it is intended that when students leave grade 12, they will have spent many hours setting goals and evaluating their future options. A goal of the program is that students will be aware of their choices and confident in the decisions that they make. "Choosing a career is not a singular event in the life of the adolescent. It is a process that occurs over time" (Daniels & Others, 1983, p. 15).

CAPP was implemented on a voluntary basis by schools in the 1994/95 school year; mandatory implementation began in September 1995. Any students registered in grade twelve at that time were not required to have CAPP for graduation, even if they did not complete their graduation requirements within that school year; however many of those students took the course as an option.

The data displayed in table 9 shows that one male and one female who graduated between 1993 and 1996 indicated they had taken CAPP. Since those students would not have been required to take the course, it can be assumed that they chose it as an elective. One male who graduated in 1997 indicated he had not taken CAPP. It is likely that he was eligible to graduate under the old policy but took an extra year to meet the requirements.

Goal Setting

Preparing students to set career and educational goals is an objective of the CAPP curriculum. The planning process component of Career and Personal Planning includes learning outcomes specifically related to the Student Learning Plans.

Beginning in Grade 9, all students must develop, and regularly maintain Student Learning Plans. In their Student Learning Plan, students begin to identify their desired education, career and personal goals and explore plans to realize those goals. (Ministry of Education, 1995, p.1)

Some of the foundation activities include: completion of an intensive series of values; interests and aptitude surveys; setting long and short term goals; and learning decision making skills. This preliminary work leads to researching suitable careers and post secondary institutions, narrowing career paths and setting goals. The entire process is intended to begin in elementary school and end in grade twelve. Students should be confident in knowing how to attain the goals they have set for themselves. Prior to the implementation of CAPP, goal setting skills were not taught to all students.

The old Graduation Program Policy required that all students take either Business Education 10 or Consumer Education 12. The knowledge, skills, attitudes, and work habits developed in these courses enabled students to respond to post-secondary opportunities and the demands of the world of work (Ministry of Education 1990, p. 4). However, these courses were limited in the amount of time devoted to individual students' career development. In addition, the course was taken only once, in either grade 10 or grade 12, which seemed not to promote continuous development of career-based knowledge.

A very low number of the participants in this study felt that secondary school prepared them to set career goals. There is very little difference between the responses of the 1997 graduates and the 1993-96 graduates. The male responses from both graduation year groupings were slightly less than 20% in agreement that they had been prepared to set goals (see table 5). The implementation of CAPP appears to have

made no difference to whether the male participants felt secondary school prepared them to set career goals. The females' responses were somewhat more positive than those of the males; 40% of the 1997 graduates and 27% of the 1993-96 graduates agreed that they were prepared to set career goals (see table 5). This difference in the female responses may be attributable to the CAPP curriculum. If CAPP were meeting the Ministry's objectives we could expect there would have been a much higher percentage of the 1997 graduates who agreed they were prepared to set career goals.

There was a considerable difference between the response of the 1997 graduates and the 1993-96 graduates when they were asked if they had a clear career goal when they graduated. 90% of the male and 70% of the female graduates from 1997 had clear career goals, whereas only 28% of the male and 45% of the females from 1993-96 said they had clear career goals (see table 14). This increase in positive responses is very encouraging because the Ministry of Education wants every student to have a career goal upon graduating. Unfortunately this difference cannot be attributed to the educational system or the implementation of the CAPP program because only a small percentage of the respondents felt that school prepared them to set career goals. It appears that forces outside of the school system, such as parents, peers or employers, aided these students in developing a career goal.

Of the participants who responded that they had a clear career goal when they graduated, the majority (87% of males and 100% of females), are pursuing a related career (see

table 15). The continuity in career goals indicates that these respondents were certain of their career goal upon graduating from secondary school.

Work Experience

Work experience courses are intended to be related to students' career goals. "Career Explorations provides a means for students to explore careers within a chosen field and to investigate potential career paths" (School District #59, 1991, p.2). Roberts (1995) reports that "82% of the surveyed students responded that their work experience was related to the career field in which they were interested at the time" (p. 10). There is no available data connecting students' current career goals to past work experience. The present survey data revealed less than half the respondents (47% of males and 40% of females) agreed their work placement was related to their current goal (see table 8). This information would be more beneficial if the questionnaire had also inquired about the relationship of the work placement to the career goal at the time of enrollment.

Spry's (1995) survey of former cooperative education students showed "in strengthening their career choice, 79% of the former students were positive in their response" (p. 59). In contrast, of the respondents in the present study, the work placement strengthened only 47% of males' and 50% of females' desire to pursue the career (see table 8). Closer analysis of the responses showed that the students who agreed their work placement was related to their current goal all

indicated that it strengthened their desire to pursue the career. These students have remained consistent in their career goal.

One quarter of the CAPP curriculum is a work experience component. The minimum 30 hour work experience is intended to help students gain an understanding of the world of work, develop skills needed within the work place and gain practical experience.

Every work-experience placement should have specific objectives so that an assessment of the placement can be made by the student, the educator, and the employer. The objectives for all work-experience placements should relate to students' learning plans.

(Ministry of Education, 1995, p. 3)

In order for students to receive credit for the work experience component it is supposed to relate to their learning plan and career goals. Of the participants who completed the 30 hour work experience requirement, 45% of the males and 73% of the females agreed it was related to their career goal (see table 10). There are at least a couple of possible explanations for this. Many schools were unprepared, during the first two years of implementation, to monitor the work placements of students and ensure that they matched career goals. In such instances, schools may have accepted any work-related experience to avoid holding students back from graduating. Alternatively, some students may have provided inaccurate information on their Student Learning Plan to reflect different career goals, depending on

the availability of placements. As programs are refined it should be expected that a higher proportion of the work placements will be related to career goals.

The majority of the participants in the work experience course (94% of males and 100% of females) responded that it was a positive experience (see table 8). In contrast, the CAPP 30 hour work experience was a positive experience for only 55% of the males and 91% of the females (see table 10). The more favorable response to the work experience course could be because it was not mandatory for the students, whereas the CAPP 30 hours was mandatory. Knowing that they didn't have a choice may have created negative feelings in certain students from the start. In addition, the shorter period of time may not have been long enough for the students to develop a good rapport with their employer or begin to truly understand the nature of the job.

Influential Factors

The respondents to this questionnaire were asked to rank order a list of potential influential factors they believed had the greatest degree of impact on their career decision. The data from this study show that parents were rated in the top three more often than any other factor that was listed (see tables 16 & 17). This finding supports earlier research in the area. For example, Kotrlik and Harrison (1987) found that "the persons who received the most 'yes' responses were the parents, person in the occupation and a friend, in that order" (p.10). The list provided in the

present study did not include persons in the occupation; however, one male did add it in the blank provided for the "other" category. The second most frequent top three choice for the males in this study was their peers, another finding of Kotrlik and Harrison's research. A very small number of females ranked peers in the top three (see table 17). For the females participants the second choice was a high school course.

Nearly 50% of the total respondents, 43% of the males and 52% of the females, agreed that a course in high school influenced their career decision (see table 12). All except two of those agreed that the influential course was related to their career goal (see table 13). When participants were given a list of factors to rank, not nearly as many respondents chose high school courses as a top three influencer. While a course may have an impact on a student's decision, it is not necessarily a strong force. It is likely that the students were encouraged by the content of certain courses but were encouraged to a greater degree by the other factors listed.

A very small percentage of the participants (9% of the males and 14% of the females) felt that a counsellor or a teacher helped them in making a career decision (see table 11). Early's survey (1996) yielded similar results, showing that teachers were influential for 12% of the respondents (p. 5).

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of career decision-making for adolescents makes it imperative for educators to consider how best to prepare people in this age group to make those decisions. The results of this study demonstrate that no one program is likely to meet the diverse needs of "career-undecided" persons. The Ministry of Education in British Columbia has developed a career education system with a variety of strategies in an attempt to assist all students in their decision-making process.

Through a comprehensive literature review it was revealed that very few studies have been conducted with former secondary school students to determine how career decisions are made. Most research has been done in the United States and looks at only one or two possible influential factors. The main purpose of this study was to obtain Canadian data regarding the influence of a variety of career programs in the education system on the career decisions of the students.

The sample group for this study was fifty three males and females who volunteered to complete the survey. The majority of the students in three classes participated in this survey, which led me to believe that they were very typical of first year college students in northern British Columbia. In general, these students did not perceive the

school staff and courses as having a positive effect on their career decisions. However, the students who participated in Work Experience were quite favorable about their experience and were motivated to further pursue the career.

While the current survey barely scratched the surface it did provide valuable information. For example, most students who participated in an extended work experience had a positive experience and were pursuing a related career. Also, the participants advocated the inclusion of career development in the educational system. There has been an increase in goal-setting since the implementation of Career and Personal Planning but this study did not provide sufficient data to draw a correlation. While the participants identified parents and peers as most influential in their career decisions, teachers and high school courses were not completely discredited.

This research provided evidence of the existence of some influential factors; it would be valuable to know why those factors were considered to be so powerful. Did the parents encourage their children to follow in their footsteps, or to avoid the mistakes that they made? Did the participants perceive parents as influential because they told them what to do? Were the teachers considered as less prominent forces because they simply provided students with skills, choices and options, never directing the students' decisions? Future research could investigate what specific actions are considered to be influential.

I would like to recommend that a system of follow-up contact, after graduation, be instituted in British Columbia

and be done annually. I encourage others to do further research and explore longitudinal support for the benefits of career programs. Without a base for understanding the power of career development programs for students, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to justify to students and others the value of what is being taught.

Career and Personal Planning is mandatory for all students graduating in the British Columbia education system. This study focused on the effects for the students who were pursuing a college education. Thus, many groups have been omitted. Future research should examine the effects on the other groups, some of which include university students, employed persons and high school dropouts. Comparisons of the populations may provide valuable information to utilize in organizing future career based courses and programs.

What other effects have the career programs had on the students? Have they helped the individuals with their self-esteem, self-confidence, integrity and initiative? More detailed questionnaires designed to gather this information would be beneficial in promoting the programs. One possible method for this would be to survey the students before and after completing the program. Comparisons of the two would identify areas of growth and development that occur. Another dimension would be to survey the individuals' parents for their perception of their child's experience and the benefits they realized.

Large studies conducted by the Ministry of Education are costly and very time consuming. Once the research is gathered, tabulated and finalized, the information is old.

Although I understand the merits and the necessity of large provincial studies, I feel that site-based studies may be more beneficial to the local staff and students. Site-based surveys can remain relatively small. Therefore, they can provide almost immediate feedback. They could be performed by individual teachers and counsellors to identify areas of strength and weakness in schools' programs. Alternatively a comprehensive school survey designed to promote, revise or develop career programs could be conducted.

Finally, suggestions from past students and parents could be used to revise curriculums of career programs. Request for input on future surveys may help to fill gaps that exist within the current system.

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Appendix A

Survey of First Year College Students

The following questionnaire has been designed to gather information about how your secondary school experience influenced your career decision. The information you provide will be used in a project presented to the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge. Please respond to each question honestly.

I graduated from high school in ... 1997 1996 1995
other _____

My gender is ... Male Female

I graduated in ... B.C. other _____

Please answer the questions 1-11, by checking the box that best represents your opinion.

Use the following scale for questions 1-5, 10 and 11.

A= Agree U= Undecided D= Disagree

1. It is important for schools to help students explore career opportunities. A U D
2. It is important for schools to help students research suitable post secondary institutions.
3. During Secondary school I learned up-to-date information about careers and further education options.
4. Secondary school prepared me to set career goals.
5. Secondary school prepared me to set education goals.
6. During high school I completed a Work Experience course. Yes No
- IF YES: the 100+ hours of work experience I completed
 - a) was related to the career I am pursuing
 - b) strengthened my desire to pursue this career
 - c) was a positive experience

7. I was required to take CAPP (Career and Personal Planning) in high school. Yes No
 IF YES: the 30 hours of work experience I completed
 a) was related to the career I am pursuing
 b) strengthened my desire to pursue this career
 c) was a positive experience
8. A particular teacher or counsellor helped me to make my career decision. Yes No
 IF YES, please explain _____

9. A particular course in high school helped me to make my career decision.
 IF YES: that course is related to the career I am pursuing.
10. When I graduated from high school, I had a clear career goal. A U D
 If YES: I am currently pursuing a career related to that goal.
11. Please rank the following in order of the influence they had on your career decision.
 1 is most influential- 8 is least influential
 _____ A teacher in high school
 _____ My parents
 _____ My peers
 _____ A course in high school (other than CAPP)
 _____ CAPP (Career and Personal Planning)
 _____ CAPP Work Experience - 30 hours
 _____ Work Experience Course - 100+ hours
 _____ Other Please specify _____

 ***** THANK YOU !! *****

Appendix B

Cover Letter

Dec. 3, 1997

Dear First Year College Student:

I am conducting a study of factors that influenced the career decisions of first year college students. This is your opportunity to express what aspects of the secondary school system were beneficial to you in making your career choice. Recommendations and/or changes made as a result of your participation in this study will benefit future high school students. The results of this survey will be used in the completion of a Masters program at the University of Lethbridge.

As part of this research you are asked to complete the attached survey. The survey should take only a short time to complete. Please note that all information will be handled in a confidential and professional manner. When responses are released they will be reported in summary form only. Further, all names, locations and any other identifying information will not be included in any discussion of the results. You have the right to withdraw from the study without prejudice at any time.

I very much appreciate your assistance in this study. If you have any questions please feel free to call me, Karen Marshall at 250-242-5458. Also feel free to contact the supervisor of my study David Townsend at 403-329-2731 and/or any member of the Faculty of Education Subject Research Committee if you wish additional information. The chairperson of the committee is Dr. Craig Loewen, 403-329-2455.

Your assistance in this survey is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Marshall, University of Lethbridge
250-242-5458

I, _____ agree to
participate in this study.

Signature

Date

Appendix C

Letter to Employee X in the Office of the
Registrar at Northern Lights College

Dec. 3, 1997

Dear Employee X:

I did make some of the changes that we discussed last week and I am much happier with the results. I conducted a pilot study and found it effective. Thank you for all your help last week.

Enclosed are 75 copies of the survey. Could you please distribute them to first year students in career/technical programs. Once they are collected please return them to me in the enclosed envelope. If possible, could you get them to me January 9, 1998.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at work, 250-242-4227 during the day or in the evening at home, 250-242-5458. If you phone me at home, please call collect. Also feel free to contact the supervisor of my study David Townsend at 403-329-2731 and/or any member of the Faculty of Education Subject Research Committee if you wish additional information. The chairperson of the committee is Dr. Craig Loewen, 403-329-2455.

Thank you very much for assisting me in this task.

Sincerely,

Karen Marshall

Appendix D

Letter to Instructors at Northern Lights College

Dec. 3, 1997

Dear Northern Lights College Instructor:

I am currently working on my final project for my Master of Education degree through the University of Lethbridge. For the research, I am looking at the factors influencing the career choices of first year college students. The research results will be forwarded to the college in the spring of 1998. Employee X has generously offered to assist me in the distribution of the surveys to instructors/students at Northern Lights College.

I would greatly appreciate your cooperation in distributing the surveys to your class, and collecting them after they have been completed. To increase the return rate, I would prefer to have them filled out and returned immediately instead of taken home. The survey should only take a few minutes to administer. I ask that you set aside a few minutes at the end of one class between now and Dec. 19 to do this. Once they are collected please return them to Employee X.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at work, 250-242-4227 during the day or in the evening at home, 250-242-5458. If you phone me at home, please call collect. Also feel free to contact the supervisor of my study David Townsend at 403-329-2731 and/or any member of the Faculty of Education Subject Research Committee if you wish additional information. The chairperson of the committee is Dr. Craig Loewen, 403-329-2455.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this task.

Sincerely,

Karen Marshall