HOW DISPLACED FEMALE TEXTILE WORKERS MAKE A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO SKILLED EMPLOYMENT

by

DEBRA ROBERTS TEMPLETON

(Under the Direction of Bradley Courtenay)

ABSTRACT

With the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), many American textile workers are being displaced as their jobs shift overseas. After losing their jobs, these workers are faced with the choice of either trying to find another job in a tough job market or retraining for skilled employment. Many of these workers are opting to retrain at local community colleges. The purpose of this study was to understand how displaced female textile workers made a successful transition to skilled employment. This study also examined how adult learning and other factors influenced this transition process.

The methodology for this study involved semi-structured interviews with thirteen women who had lost their job in textiles, retrained at a community college, and then found employment unrelated to their previous job. Data collected through interviewing was analyzed using the constant comparative method.

There were three major study findings and conclusions. First, there was a common transition process for this group. This process involved anticipation of job loss for some of the participants. All participants experienced an initial reaction which included a wide range of emotions. A strong desire for job security proved to be a catalyst that propelled the participants into action to enroll in college. After enrolling in college, he participants experienced an adjustment period

which was followed by period where the participants began to conceptualize being a student as similar to being a worker. All of the study participants were reintegrated into the workforce into higher-skill employment. Adult learning experiences such as learning basic such as learning basic computer competency influenced the transition process from beginning to end. Finally, there were some factors including a support network, interactive instructional techniques, readiness for change, personal commitment, and financial support that also influenced the transition process. Recommendations for future research included the conduct of studies that used male participants or other female participants who did not successfully make this transition.

INDEX WORDS: Transition, Adult Development, Adult Learning, Displaced Female Textile Workers, Job Retraining

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DEDICATION

To Dennie

my husband and best friend

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

During November 1999 authorities in Seattle, Washington declared a state of emergency after violent protest aimed at disrupting a World Trade Organization (WTO) conference held in that city broke out. The state of emergency was declared as clashes occurred between the police and protesters and damage to businesses mounted ("Seattle and WTO," 1999). Though not as disruptive as the protests in Seattle, similar protests erupted in Cancun, Mexico in September 2003 (Falk, 2003) and in Miami, Florida during November 2003 ("Miami and Police," 2003). The protestors, consisting of diverse groups such as labor unions, farmers, and environmentalists, claimed that globalization of world markets would "take thousands of jobs to other countries, reduce workers' rights by exploiting cheap labor and drain natural resources" ("Miami and Police," 2003). While the protesters in Seattle succeeded in disrupting the WTO conference (no agreements were reached), the push toward globalization of world markets has continued unabated.

Founded in 1995, the World Trade Organization replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). This 148 member international organization is a permanent body of the United Nations and aims to lower tariffs and non-tariff barriers to increase international trade (The World Trade Organization, 2004). Over the last couple of decades, increased international trade has resulted in implementation of a number of regional free trade agreements including the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

NAFTA was implemented on January 1, 1994 for the purpose of removing trade barriers and investment among the United States, Canada, and Mexico. This agreement in essence created a free trade zone in North America. Like the WTO, NAFTA has proven to be controversial. Proponents of NAFTA argue that while low-skilled jobs may be lost in the short-term, the U.S. will reap long-term economic growth which will include higher skilled jobs for Americans (Davis, 2004). Opponents to NAFTA (chiefly labor unions and environmentalists) claim that cheap imports will cause substantial job loss in the U.S. and result in economic despair for displaced low-skilled American workers and enormous environmental damage along the U.S./ Mexican border as many American businesses relocate there to take advantage of cheaper labor (Bacon, 1995; Mittelhauser, 1997).

While it is too soon to assess the long-term economic impact of NAFTA on the American economy, the short-term impact points to a huge loss of low-skilled jobs, especially in the textile and apparel industries. As of the end of 2003, the U.S. Department of Labor had certified roughly 525,000 job losses due to NAFTA (Hemlock, 2003). Estimates suggest that over 200,000 textile jobs have disappeared within the last decade (Davis, 2004). "Among the five Southeastern states where the industry is concentrated," the job losses from November 2002 through November 2003 alone totaled 48,600 ("Textile Industry," 2004, p. B8). During this period, North Carolina (the largest textile-making state in the country) lost 13,600 textile jobs; Virginia lost 2,300 jobs ("Textile Industry," 2004).

Job loss is becoming more and more prevalent in America. Like the workers displaced because of free trade agreements, many other Americans have faced job or other transitions because of the new global economy and the emergence of a complex, rapidly changing, technological society (Daniels, 1990). Ingle (1999) estimates that most employed adults will

change jobs or careers “seven to nine times during their working lives" (p. 1). She goes on to say that "between 1985 and 1996 nineteen million Americans were adversely affected by corporate restructuring" (abstract). This changing nature of the American economy combined with demographic changes that have resulted in more adults and more adults living longer have increased the interest in job transitions and the impact of job loss has on the individual. According to Ingle (1999):

> The research on involuntary job loss is drawn from several disciplines, career counseling, life transition, vocational education, and adult learning. These areas of study all acknowledge involuntary job loss as an important life event…all of these literatures call for a deeper exploration of job loss. (abstract)

As noted by Ingle, more multidisciplinary research is needed to understand job loss as a major life transition and learning associated with this transition. To better understand life transitions and adult learning, one must first understand adult development. "The study of adult development has become a major topic of interest over the past few decades with a resulting burgeoning of information and data-based research” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 89). Merriam and Caffarella posit that "adult development theory and research offer a rich array of material from which numerous implications can be drawn about learning in adulthood" (p. 115).

One area of adult development germane to adult learning is psychological change. According to Merriam and Caffarella (1999), adult development involving psychological change has been charted by a number of researchers and "can be loosely grouped into three categories: sequential, life events and transitions, and relational models of development" (p. 115).

Sequential models "provide for an unfolding of adult life in a series of phases or stages, they have different end points, from becoming autonomous and independent to finding wisdom and a

universal sense of faith and moral behavior" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 101). Erikson (1963), Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson & McKee (1978), Gould (1978), Kohlberg (1973), Loevinger (1976) and others have proposed sequential models of development.

Alternatives to sequential models of adult development are life events models and transitions (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Life events models are not necessarily tied to specific age periods. There are two types of life events that shape development: individual and cultural.

> Individual life events, such as birth, death, marriage, and divorce, are events that define one's life. Societal and historical happenings that shape the context in which a person develops, such as wars, the women's movement, and natural catastrophes, make up the cultural life events. (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 105)

Neugarten, one of the prominent life events theorists, for example, talks about social clocks or the time the individual is conditioned to believe that certain life events should occur. In respect to certain life events, individuals either judge themselves to be "on-time" or "off-time." Being "off-time" carries penalties, both socially and psychologically. "Neugarten points out that the issue of time has become somewhat confused as we move toward what she sees as an emerging 'age--irrelevant' society in which people of all ages engage in activities formerly reserved to one age group" (Schlossberg, 1981, p. 9).

According to Merriam and Caffarella (1999), “the notion of life events as a process is often equated with the idea of transitions” (p. 105). "Adults continually experience transitions, whether anticipated or unanticipated, and react to them depending on the type of transition, the context in which it occurs, and its impact on their lives" (Merriam & Caffarella, p. 105). Pearlin and Lieberman (1979) define anticipated transitions as normative "gains and losses or major alterations of roles that occur in the course of the unfolding of the life cycle" (p. 220). "These

events include marriage, the birth of a first child, a child leaving home, starting a first job, and retiring" (Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995, p. 29). Unanticipated events are not predictable and usually involve crisis and other "unexpected occurrences that are not the consequence of life-cycle transitions" (Pearlin, 1980, p. 179). Pearlin states that "events of this type in the occupational arena include being fired, being laid off or demoted, having to give up work due to illness" (p. 180).

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) identify three authors "who have provided transition models that are especially helpful in understanding the notion of transition as a process" (p. 106). These include Sugarman (1986), Bridges (1980, 1994), and Schlossberg and Leibowitz. (1980).

Sugarman (1986) proposes a seven stage transitional model. According to Sugarman, this model delineates a general pattern of transition, not a rigid, fixed sequence. The transitional phases may vary in both intensity and duration, depending on the individual involved. The first transition in Sugarman's model is *immobilization,* a feeling of being overwhelmed or in shock triggered by an event or nonevent. *Immobilization* is followed by *reaction*, "a sharp swing of mood from elation to despair depending on the nature of the transition" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 106). After this initial reaction, one may transition to the next phase, *self-doubt,* where the individual grapples with the reality of the change. From there the individual experiences *letting go*, where he/she breaks with the past and begins to accept the reality of change. Once the individual lets go of the past, he/she then moves to the *testing* phase. Here, the individual begins to explore new options and formulate new identities. Once this has been accomplished and the individual has established bonds and attachments to his/her new world, transition to the next phase—*search for meaning*—occurs. When the individual begins to feel comfortable in the new, post-transition reality and the "new realities have become part of the person's view of the

world," the transition process is complete and the individual enters the last phase—the *integration* phase (Sugarman, 1986, p. 146).

Bridges (1980) characterizes the process of transition as "endings and beginnings with emptiness and germination in between" (p. 150). Transition, according to Bridges (1980), is marked by three phases: endings, time in a neutral zone, and new beginnings. From endings, the individual enters the neutral zone. While in the neutral zone, the individual struggles to disengage from his or her previous constructed reality and attempts to compose a new life and new meaning.

Informed by Bridges' transitional framework and that of others (Ebaugh, 1988; Louis, 1980; Myerhoff, 1984), Schlossberg et al. (1995) proposed an integrative transition model based on three premises:

- Adults continuously experience transitions.
- Adults' reactions to transitions depend on the type of transition, the context in which it occurs, and its impact on their lives.
- A transition has no endpoint; rather a transition is a process over time that includes phases of assimilation and continuous appraisal as people move in, through, and out of it. (p. 46)

According to these theorists, the first stage of any transition "can be conceptualized as either moving in or moving out" (Schlossberg et al. 1995, p. 44). However, as an illustration of this transitional process, they use *moving in* as the starting point of the transition. During this period of transition, people move into a new situation and "need to become familiar with the rules, regulations, norms, and expectations of the new system" (Schlossberg et al., p. 45). In other words, they must "learn the ropes." Once adults "learn the ropes," they enter into the *moving*

through period. This may be a long, sustained period that is marked by the questioning of one's decisions. "Did I do the right thing?" is typical of the type of questioning that occurs during this period (Schlossberg et al., p. 45). According to Schlossberg et al., this period is similar to Bridges' *neutral zone* period where there is a feeling of emptiness and confusion. "Moving out can be seen as ending one set of transitions and beginning to ask what comes next. Grieving can be used as a model to explain this phase in the process" (Schlossberg et al., p. 45). People in this period grieve the loss of that which is familiar. Here one disengages from former roles, relationships, routines, and assumptions. When one becomes fully aware of having disengaged from his/her former life and having moved on to a new one, the transition has been integrated.

Schlossberg et al. (1995) identifies four factors that impact how one copes with transition. They refer to these factors as the 4 S's. These factors include situation, self, support, and strategies.

Understanding the transition process adults go through in response to life changes and how adult learning helps facilitate transition is paramount to adult educators, given today's rapidly changing, complex society (Boulmetis, 1997; Creel, 1996). Daniels (1990) asserts that

> frequently, many of these changes reflect what some researchers are identifying as unique personal losses that have a disruptive impact on the ways people act, think, and feel about themselves and their environment…For many reasons, it is becoming clear that professionals, who work with adults (in industry, human resource development, training, and education) need to understand the effect transitions/losses have on their clientele. (abstract)

Bridges (1980), Sugarman (1986) and Schlossberg et al. (1995) all offer transition models that may in fact delineate the transition process. Even though the models are different, they share

some significant commonalties. For example, each model describes a period of disengaging from one's old reality, a period of composing a new reality, and a final period of accepting and internalizing one's new reality. All three models are underpinned by theories of adult development. However, Schlossberg is the only one of the three authors who explicitly identifies an empirical basis for her model. Her model is largely based on a study (Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 1980) of professional men who lost their jobs at NASA due to a reduction in the labor force. Schlossberg et al. (1995) acknowledge that there are gender differences and we "must recognize that gender differences are critical in understanding the transition process" (p. 166).

Like Schlossberg et al. (1995), other adult transitional theorists have recognized job loss as a significant adult unanticipated life event. For example, Bridges (1994) linked his theory of transition to the changing nature of work in his book *Job Shift*.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, due to NAFTA, many low-skilled manufacturing jobs have disappeared. Loss of these jobs has resulted in public backlash and a feeling of despair for those involved. For these displaced workers, losing their jobs represents more than just losing a source of income. Bridges (1994) writes:

> A job helps people tell themselves and others who they are… A job provides most people with their core network of relationships…The job has a time structure to it, and without it life can feel as vast and empty as outer space…A job gives people parts to play and tells them what they need to do to feel good about their contribution. (pp. 119-120)

In addition to suffering a loss of identity associated with their previous jobs, many displaced workers also have to confront the reality that they must acquire new skills in order to secure future employment. This may involve obtaining a high school equivalency diploma, earning a

college or technical degree, or participating in job retraining programs (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980; Bendick & Egan, 1982; Beneria, 1998; Blaxter & Tight, 1995; Caro & Morris, 1991; Jacobson & LaLonde, 1997; Kerka, 1991; Kim, 1996).

Most research on job loss as a major life transition has tended to use participants who were displaced from professional or technical jobs, oftentimes using male participants only. Schlossberg (1981) has noted that "different factors have different salience depending on the transition and on the subgroup being studied" (p. 16). Schlossberg, et al. (1995) underscored this point: "People who inhabit different parts of the social system live, in many ways, in very different contexts, have different resources, and are affected differently by different events" (p. 58). Lee (1988) offered additional evidence that culture, context, and gender may influence the transition process. In her study of Korean-American women transitioning from a Confucian-based society to a western society, Lee found that Bridges' (1980) transitional model "did not exhaustively account for the findings" (abstract). She attributed this to the fact that the women were from a different culture and societal context.

Given the fact that different groups may respond differently to life transitions, this raises several questions. Do the models of transitional processes proposed by Sugarman (1986), Bridges (1980) and Schlossberg et al. (1995) adequately explain the transition process for all groups? What impact do group demographics such as class have on coping with an unanticipated life transition?

As discussed earlier in this chapter, large numbers of textile workers in the U.S. (most of whom are female) are being displaced as a result of NAFTA. These individuals could possibly provide insight into these questions. In addition to suffering a loss of identity associated with their lost jobs, these displaced workers also have to confront the reality that they must acquire

new skills in order to secure future employment in technical and professional fields. Because of this, these individuals may be in a unique position to offer insight has to how they transversed this major life event and how demographics such as class and gender influenced the transition process and adult learning.

Aslanian and Brickell (1980) assert that "transitions require learning" (p. 35). They also note that "a job change can be a transition significant enough to require learning" (p. 35). They go on to acknowledge that there are many different types of adult learning including formal or informal, adult education or college classes, and job training. Other authors including Bennett (1995), Cross (1981), Knox (1997), Merriam and Clark (1992), and Merriam, Mott and Kim (1996) all have noted that transitory periods are potential times for adult learning. Bennett in her study of job loss and adult learning identified some specific learning outcomes that resulted from job transition. While these studies contribute significantly to the understanding of learning that occurs as a result of life transitions, they do not specifically address how adult learning influences the transition process due to a job loss.

The job loss transition process for female textile workers may vary, depending on the choices that they make after notification of their job loss. Some of those displaced may opt to find another job and resume work soon after losing their job. Others may opt to retrain for higher skilled employment. Of those who decide to retrain for higher skilled employment, some are successful in completing the process while others are not. Understanding the transition process for those who successfully retrain for and subsequently find higher skilled employment is of interest to educators of adults. In addition to understanding the job loss transition process, it is also important that those involved with retraining these individuals understand how adult learning and other factors influence this process. By understanding the process, those involved

with these adult learners are better able to assist them in this major life transition. It was anticipated that displaced female textile workers who successfully retrained and then found higher skilled employment could provide insight into the job loss transition process and help illuminate how adult learning and other factors influenced this process.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how displaced female textile workers make a successful transition to skilled employment.

Research Questions

This research addressed the following questions:

1. What steps were involved as these individuals made the transition from displaced textile workers to workers involved in higher skill employment?
2. How did female textile workers describe the role that formal, nonformal, and informal adult learning experiences played in their transition?
3. What other factors supported these successful transitions?

Significance of the Research

This research expands the theoretical literature base on adult transitions by examining a group--female, textile workers--that has not been previously examined. Moreover, it may offer evidence to substantiate or refute the transitional theories articulated by Sugarman (1986), Bridges (1980), and Schlossberg, et al. (1995) as they relate to displaced female textile workers. This research also expands the adult learning literature base by illustrating how adult learning influences job-related transitions involving displaced female textile workers who subsequently trained for professional and technical jobs.

Also, this research informs practice. Over two decades ago, Knox (1977) acknowledged that adult education practitioners needed to know how to help adults experiencing major life adjustments. Knox wrote:

> Throughout adulthood people confront major change events such as shifts in family composition, job changes, and physical disabilities. Practitioners can help adults make these adjustments by understanding the personal changes that are likely, developing realistic and constructive attitudes toward the resultant problems and opportunities, acquiring the needed understanding and competence, and arranging for supportive services. An especially important form of assistance during a period of adjustment when there are major physical or societal changes is to help an adult maintain and enhance the sense of self. Often during a transition period a person experiences strong feelings of panic, vulnerability, powerlessness, apathy, or may even have difficulty getting in touch with feelings. (p. 390)

This study helps clarify the transition process as a result of job loss for a heretofore understudied population-- displaced female textile workers. By more clearly understanding the process of transition, adult education practitioners can now better understand the impact on the adult learner and will be better able to assist those involved in major life transitions. The study also identifies factors that enhance or impede transitions that may help practitioners working with adults. Moreover, this study offers evidence as to how adult learning influences the transition process.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand how displaced female textile workers make a successful transition to skilled employment. In this chapter, the literature that provided the framework for this study was reviewed. Specifically, the following fields of research were explored: (a) NAFTA and job losses in America, (b) adult development theories that address change and transition, (c) transition models, (d) job loss as a major life transition, (e) gender differences in relation to job loss in the manufacturing sector, (f) cultural studies related to female textile workers, (g) adult learning, and (h) previously conducted studies on the relationship of transitions and adult learning.

The North American Free Trade Agreement and Job Loss

Hipple (1999) estimated that each year during the early and mid 1990s at least 2 million Americans lost their jobs. Ingle (1999) asserted that between 1985 and 1996 nineteen million Americans were adversely impacted either directly or indirectly by job losses. One frequently cited reason for these job losses (especially in the manufacturing sector), despite what some called a booming American economy in the 1990s, and was the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Bronfenbrenner, 1997; Kapstein, 1998; Martin, 1993; McGinn, 1997; Mittelstadt, 1999; Rosen, 1993; Rothstein & Scott, 1997).

NAFTA took effect on January 1, 1994. The purpose of NAFTA was to create a free trade area comprised of the United States, Canada, and Mexico. NAFTA purportedly would eliminate trade barriers in North America thereby creating an open, massive market of over 360 million people with over $6 billion in annual output. NAFTA also contained provisions designed to help

improve the environmental conditions along the U.S. and Mexican border and provisions to provide a higher level of protection of intellectual property rights (White House Fact Sheet, Aug 12, 1992).

Since its implementation over a decade ago, NAFTA has created considerable debate. Free trade proponents argue that NAFTA has opened up valuable new markets and increased trade among countries in North America. Moreover, these proponents argue that any loss of low-skilled manufacturing jobs in America will be offset by the creation of high skilled job resulting from free trade and expansion of markets. To buttress their position, NAFTA proponents cite statistics indicating that 44 out of the 50 states in the U.S. have reported a growth in their total exports to Canada and Mexico. They also claim that overall exports to Mexico grew by 113% from 1994 to 1998 and overall exports to Canada increased by 56% (Davis, 2004; Hemlock, 2003; McClenahen, 2000).

However, despite the statistics cited by NAFTA proponents, its opponents (chiefly labor unions, farmers and environmental groups) believe that NAFTA has been a dismal failure. Some environmentalists assert that the NAFTA provisions to improve environmental conditions along the common U.S. and Mexican border have had little impact. Bacon (1995) posits that border pollution has actually worsened since the implementation of NAFTA. He cites, as an example, one border area where lead and heavy metal deposits are now 40,000 times over the safe limit.

By far, the main criticism of NAFTA has centered on the loss of American jobs. Even NAFTA proponents acknowledge that close to 400,000 textile and apparel industry jobs alone have disappeared since 1993, but they assert that increased automation and productivity are to blame, not NAFTA (McClenahen, 2000). In addition to actual job loss, some critics of NAFTA claim that the availability of cheap Mexican labor will reduce wages and benefits for America's

industrial workers. Moreover, there have been some documented cases of corporate management threatening to relocate plants to Mexico if workers voted to unionize (Bronfenbrenner, 1997).

According to Scott (2003), all fifty states and the District of Columbia have lost jobs due to NAFTA. At least fifteen states (California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin) have lost over 20,000 jobs each directly attributable to NAFTA. The states which experienced the largest number of NAFTA related losses included California (82,354) followed by New York (56,793). Scott places the total number of NAFTA-related job losses between the years 1993-2003 at 879,280. The actual number of NAFTA-related job losses that have been certified as eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) by the U.S. Department of Labor totaled around 525,000 by the end of 2003. Scott and others believe that this number does not account for all the job losses because the criteria for TAA is so narrow (Hemlock, 2003).

Textile and Apparel Industries

Workers from the textile and apparel industry have been among those most deeply impacted by NAFTA. Though commonly used interchangeably, industry experts draw a distinction between textile and apparel industries. According to these experts, the textile industry manufactures yarn and thread used to produce clothing, carpets, automobile upholstery, fire hoses, and twine. On the other hand, the apparel industry converts raw products produced by the textile industry into clothing and other finished goods (Murray, 1995). While experts draw this distinction, most in the media and those working in the industry subsume both textile and apparel related industries under the general label of textiles (Allen, 2001).

Mittelhauser (1997) noted that most industries in the American economy have been affected in some way by increased globalization and new developments in technology. However, the textile and apparel industries have been among those most negatively affected. Employment in the textile and apparel industries has been steadily declining for the past 25 years. In 1993, collectively these industries employed 2.4 million Americans. By 1996, this number had decreased to around 1.5 million. During 1996, the textile industry employed roughly 624,000 American workers. The majority of these textile employees worked in three states: Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, and over half were women. During that same year, about 864,000 Americans worked in the apparel industry. The majority of the nation's apparel jobs were found in eight states including Alabama, California, Georgia, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas, and nearly three-quarters of these workers were women.

Textile industry experts chiefly attribute the loss of American jobs in this industry to automation. According to these experts, most jobs in the textile industry can be automated thus allowing textile plants to reduce labor costs. These reduced labor costs and the advanced technology of these plants allow them to remain internationally competitive and, therefore, less likely to move out of the country (Mittelhauser, 1997). On the other hand, the apparel industry remains labor intensive and has been hit deeply by foreign competition and NAFTA.

To date, many of those workers certified for TAA benefits by the DOL have been displaced due to their plants relocating to Mexico or their plants scaling back their American operations thus moving jobs to Mexico. Loss of jobs in the textile and apparel industries has impacted many states and regions, but the hardest hit areas have been individual small towns and small cities. Many of these small towns and cities depend on these textile and apparel plants for economic survival. Apparel plant closings in these towns and cities have nearly economically

devastated some communities. For example, two small, rural counties in North Carolina (Rutherford and Polk) lost nearly 3,000 apparel jobs from December 1998 to June 1999. The major job losses in these areas caused the state's governor to employ the state's Rapid Response Team to the area to help the affected workers ("More NC Mills," 1999). Similarly, other small rural counties located in the eastern part of North Carolina experienced significant job losses due to NAFTA. Robeson County alone lost nearly 5,000 jobs, according to the county's economic developer (Sinclair, September 29, 1998). Tattnall County in Georgia suffered a similar fate due to NAFTA. That county, whose population only numbers around 17,000 and at one time was home to five apparel companies that employed 850 people, now has only one apparel company that employs just 50 people (Cleary, 1999). Another area that has suffered large job losses due to NAFTA is Henry County and Martinsville located in southern Virginia. Throughout the mid 1990s, this area watched numerous textile and apparel plants close due to NAFTA including DuPont, Sara Lee, and Pluma.

For the most part, the region was able to employ those who had lost their jobs after they underwent retraining, and the unemployment subsequently remained low for the area. However, in December 1999, Tultex, a major area apparel employer announced that they had filed bankruptcy as a result of foreign competition. All told, more than 4,000 apparel jobs were lost due to this action by Tultex. The area's unemployment rate skyrocketed, causing it to become the highest in Virginia (Chittum, 2000). Unemployment in this area continued to soar when in July 2002, a VF Imagewear plant in Henry County closed displacing another 2,300 workers and in July 2003 when another textile plant there, Pillowtex, closed and displaced another 1,000 workers.

As noted in Chapter 1, the textile industry lost 48,600 jobs between November 2002 and November 2003. Over a three year period (2000-2003), industry experts claim that 200,000 textile jobs were lost. Nearly a third of these jobs losses occurred in one state-North Carolina. Of the Southeastern states where textiles are most highly concentrated (Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia), Virginia experienced the highest rate of loss of textile jobs during this period, although the state has the lowest number of textile jobs among the five states where textile jobs are concentrated. While acknowledging that the U.S. textile industry has been losing jobs for the past 30 years, industry experts assert that "intensifying global competition has quickened the pace" of job loss recently ("Textile Industry," 2004, p. 8). To support this assertion, they point to the fact that the highest rate of job loss in the industry during the past 50 years occurred in 2001when 13% of the nation's textile jobs disappeared ("Textile Industry," 2004, p. 8).

Plant closings due to free trade with Canada and Mexico impact communities in several ways. First, plant closures generally translate to loss of corporate taxes that help fund public services. Second, displaced workers rely on state unemployment assistance and sometimes state health care aid to sustain them until they find employment. Third, other area ancillary businesses (such as supply and equipment providers to the plants and retail stores where textile workers shop) that rely on income from the plants or those working at the plants are hurt financially. In some cases, the communities are able to attract new industries to offset the loss of the old ones and to help sustain the community corporate tax base, but that is not always the case. Take for example the case of Henry County and the city of Martinsville. Located in southern Virginia close to the North Carolina border with combined populations slightly over 73,000, these locales had lost 9,359 jobs due to NAFTA between 1994 and 2001. This significant loss of jobs led one

county official to claim that the situation "was catastrophic." This official went on to say that "the federal government's putting manufacturing out of business" (Allen, 2001, p. A6). According to this official, the job losses and plant closure due to NAFTA translated into a $3.6 million loss in tax and utility fees which would probably result in school budget cuts as well as cuts in other public services unless new businesses set up operations in the area to offset these losses (Allen, 2001).

The Changing American Economy and Job Loss

To be sure, the implementation of NAFTA has resulted in loss of American jobs, most evident in America's manufacturing section. However, prior to the implementation of NAFTA as acknowledged above, manufacturing jobs in the U.S. were disappearing due to automation of assembly lines and foreign competition.

In 1981, Anderson wrote:

> The American job market is changing with a speed that confounds even the experts. Over the next decade, sweeping economic and technological change will alter the jobs people do and the ways they do them. Older, heavy industries such as steel and automobile manufacturing will continue a retrenchment that has already begun and the semiskilled legions who served them will be hard pressed to find similar work. Meanwhile, high tech companies will be snapping up qualified workers as fast as schools turn them out. It will be a decade of dramatic demographic, and educational realignment. And it will be painful. (p. 88)

Anderson's words would prove prophetic for the next two decades during which time the American economy underwent a major economic transformation where technological and service-related jobs replaced manufacturing jobs.

There are varying estimates on the number of manufacturing jobs lost during the 1980's and 1990's. Cook (1987), citing Bureau of Labor statistics, estimated that 5.1 million Americans who had been employed "at least three years in a particular firm lost their jobs between January 1979 and January 1984" (p. 1). He also noted that the Government Accounting Office (GAO) had estimated that 2.3 million workers were dislocated each year between 1979 and 1984. Major reasons for this worker dislocation cited by Cook (1987) and others (Gordus et al., 1981; Howland, 1988) included plant closings as a result of technological change and world competition. During this period, the automobile, textile, steel and other manufacturing industries reported the largest number of job losses. Moore (1996) asserted that between 1980 and 1990, over one-third of America's households had at least one family member who lost his/her job.

Although large number of manufacturing jobs have disappeared Bridges (1994), noted while "blue collar jobs are disappearing" that "proportionately, white collar jobs are disappearing even faster" (p. 7). Ingle (1999) asserted that between 1985 and 1996 19 million Americans were adversely affected by corporate restructuring. Ingle went on to say that as more and more Americans lose their jobs, it is important that a "deeper exploration of job loss" within disciplines such as career counseling, life transition, vocational education and adult learning is needed (abstract). Moreover, Daniels (1990) asserted that "professionals who work with adults in industry, human resource development, training and education need to understand the effect transitions have on their clientele" (abstract).

Theories of Adult Development

To understand life transitions and learning and how they impact adults, it is first necessary to understand adult development over the lifespan. As a result of a population boom after World War II, today there are more adults. Moreover, these adults are living longer due to increased life

expectancy. This demographic shift combined with rapid social change has created an interest in adult development (Lemme, 1995; Merriam, 1984; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Merriam and Caffarella (1999) have noted that implications relative to learning in adulthood can be drawn from the study of adult development. This literature review will examine three types of adult developmental models including sequential models, life events models and transition models.

Sequential Models of Adult Development

Sequential models explain adult development though a series of phases or stages. These models have different end points from "becoming autonomous and independent to finding wisdom and a universal sense of faith and moral behavior" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 101). Erikson (1959, 1982), Levinson et al. (1978), Levinson and Levinson (1996), Gould (1978), Kohlberg (1976, 1984), and Loevinger (1976) are among those who have proposed sequential models of development.

Erikson's eight stages of human development. Erik Erikson (1959, 1982) is by far the most often quoted theorist representing the sequential development perspective (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Bee (2000) posits that Erikson's theory "has been clearly the most influential view of adult development proposed thus far" (p. 35). Erikson (1959, 1982) proposed eight psychosocial stages of human development. "For Erikson, a key concept is the gradual, stepwise emergence of a sense of identity. To develop a complete, stable identity, the person must move through and successfully resolve eight 'crises' or 'dilemmas' over the course of a lifetime" (Bee, 2000, p. 35). These stages and ages associated with each stage include:

1. Basic Trust vs. Mistrust (Birth to age 1)
2. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (1-3 years)
3. Initiative vs. Guilt (3-6 years)

4. Industry vs. Inferiority (6-11 years)
5. Identity vs. Role Confusion (teen years)
6. Intimacy vs. Isolation (young adulthood-20s & 30s)
7. Generativity vs. Self-absorption (middle adulthood -65)
8. Integrity vs. Despair (Late adulthood) (Chickering & Havighurst, 1988).

As shown above, each stage presents "a pair of opposing possibilities, one of which describes the optimum outcome of that dilemma, the other the potential negative or less healthy outcome" (Bee, 2000, p. 35). Unlike other stage theorists, Erikson (1980, 1982) did not believe that an individual remained in a stage until he/she had completed the tasks associated with that particular stage. "He argues instead that each person is pushed through this sequence of dilemmas by biological maturation, by social pressures, and by the demands of the roles that he or she adopts" (Bee, 2000, p. 35). In other words, Erikson asserted that everyone experienced the dilemmas associated with each stage at roughly the same chronological time in life, regardless of how well they resolved the dilemmas from the previous stages. He did note, however, that failure to successfully resolve issues from earlier stages would interfere with one's ability to realize true integrity in later life (Bee, 2000; Erikson, 1980, 1982).

The dilemmas of adult life begin with *identity versus role confusion* (Stage 5). During this stage, the young adult must develop a set of personal values and goals. "In part, this is a shift from the here-and-now orientation of the child to a future orientation; teenagers must not only consider what or who they *are* but who or what they *will be"* (Bee, 2000, p. 36) in areas such as occupation, adult roles, politics, and religion.

The next stage in Erikson's model (Stage 6), *intimacy versus isolation*, builds on the previous stage where the individual has developed some sense of identity. This stage deals with the

adult's ability to form interpersonal relations with others without feeling as though he/she will lose his/her own sense of identity. Here the individual may develop intimacy that is marked by "spontaneity, warmth, and real exchange of fellowship" (Erikson, 1980, p. 103) or the individual may experience a sense of isolation or loneliness. The latter may be the case if the individual's sense of identity is weak (Erikson, 1980).

Building on the previous stages of self-identity and intimacy with others, the seventh stage in Erikson's model (*generativity versus self-absorption and stagnation)* deals with the adult's commitment to society, or stated differently, "establishing and guiding the next generation" (Erikson, 1980, p. 103). One element in the stage of generativity is bearing and raising children, but it is not the only one. Other forms or expressions of generativity may include mentoring others or doing charitable work. "Those adults who do not find some avenue for successful expression of generativity may become self-absorbed or experience a sense of stagnation" (Bee, 2000, p. 38).

If the adult has dealt with all the previous six stages reasonably well, he/she may attain the final stage in Erikson's model--*Ego integrity.*

> Only he who in some way has taken care of things and people and has adapted himself to the triumphs and disappointments of being, by necessity, the originator of others and the generator of things and ideas--only he may gradually grow the fruit of the seven stages. I know no better word for it than *integrity.* (Erikson, 1980, p. 104)

Ego integrity is characterized by acceptance of one's own life. Those who cannot accept their own lives as they have lived them and carry forth "a residue of distrust, guilt, diffusion, isolation, self-absorption from earlier stages" (Bee, 2000, p. 39) may experience despair.

Although Erikson paved the way for studying development in adulthood, Levinson and Levinson (1996) noted that "much more is needed" (p. 17). These authors contend that Erikson's childhood stages of development were much more complex and better defined than were his adult stages of development.

Havighurst and the "teachable moment." Informed by Erikson and others, Robert Havighurst (1953) identified a series of developmental tasks that according to him, "are required for healthy and satisfactory growth in our society" (Chickering & Havighurst, 1981, p. 25). They are the physiological, psychosocial, and social demands a person must satisfy in order to be judged by others and to judge himself or herself to be a reasonably happy and successful person" (Chickering & Havighurst, 1981, p. 25). Havighurst's model of developmental tasks covers six age periods including infancy and early childhood, middle childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle age and old age. The tasks associated with each age period address physiological tasks (such as learning to walk and learning to talk in the infancy and early childhood period) as well as the psychological tasks associated with each age period (such as learning to distinguish between right and wrong in the infancy and early childhood period). Havighurst (1953) posits that there are three sources of developmental tasks: (a) physical maturation, (b) cultural pressures of society, and (c) individual values and aspirations. "Havighurst sees the personality, or self, as emerging from the interaction of organic and environmental forces. However, as it evolves, the self becomes a force in its own right capable of detecting the individual's subsequent development" (Sugarman, 1986, pp. 94-95).

Because Havighurst's developmental tasks are age-related, his "teachable moment" is especially important to adult educators. Havighurst (1953) wrote:

> There are two reasons why the concept of developmental tasks is useful to education. First, it helps in discovering and stating the purposes of education in the schools…The second use of the concept is the timing of educational efforts. When the body is ripe, and society requires, and the self is ready to achieve a certain task, the teachable moment has come. (p. 5)

Cross (1981) links Havighurst's teachable moments to learning during life transitions. She asserts:

> The necessity to adapt to changing circumstances of life …constitutes a powerful motivating force for learning. Some changes are almost universal and represent the phases of the life cycle…Other changes may be sudden and traumatic: loss of job, divorce, illness, death of a spouse. Research on the life cycle and on life changes that "trigger" learning…shows that at some periods in life the motivation for learning is exceptionally high. Havighurst (1972) has called these "teachable moments." (p. 144)

Levinson and seasons of adulthood. Influenced by Havighurst's developmental tasks, Daniel Levinson et al. (1978) developed a theory of human adaptation to his or her environment. Levinson et al. developed the theory based on interviews with 40 men ranging from 35 to 45 years in age. The theory holds that "adulthood is characterized by alternating periods of stability when individuals solidify their life structure and periods of transitions when that structure is reexamined and modified" (Naylor, 1985, p. 2). Levinson (1978) and his colleagues viewed the life cycle as a process from birth to death that contained a series of stages or "seasons."

Levinson's et al. (1978) original study involved only men. However, in 1996, Levinson and Levinson expanded this work to include the developmental sequence of women. From this study,

they concluded that "within each era, women and men go through the same sequence periods in adult life structure development, and at the same ages" (p. 413). Levinson and Levinson (1996) outline specific time periods that apply to both men and women (See Table 1 below).

Although Levinson and Levinson (1996) asserted that females and males follow the same developmental periods, they noted that these "periods operate somewhat differently in females and males" (p. 36). These authors pointed out that women and men live in different social worlds and have "differed remarkably in their social roles, identities, and psychological attributes" (p. 38). They go on to identify four forms of what they refer to as gender splitting:

(1) The splitting of the domestic sphere and the public sphere as social domains for women and for men;

(2) The Traditional Marriage Enterprise and the split it creates between the female homemaker and the male provisioner;

(3) The splitting of "women's work" and "men's work";

(4) The splitting of feminine and masculine in the individual psyche. (pp. 38-39)

Stimson (1995) found in his study of executives, job loss, and mid-life that his participants followed a pattern of development described by Levinson. Conversely, Sterrett (1996) in her study of adult job change found that Levinson's model of age-stage related change did not apply to the career progression of most adults today. Based on data from a written survey that used a stratified sample of employed adults in various occupations, Sterrett found that over half of her participants reported they had experienced a radical job change. She also found that women respondents had made more radical job changes than men and that in general both genders perceived “change as predominantly good” even when the change was involuntary (abstract).

Sterrett concluded based on her findings that "traditional theories of career and adult development…such as Levinson et al. (1978) which posit age-stage related change do

Table 1 *Levinson and Levinson's (1996) Adult Developmental Time Periods*

Period	Characteristics
Early Adult Transition (Ages 17-22)	End of childhood and beginning of adulthood. Changing of familial relationships; forming of adult identities
Early Life Structures for Early	Time of key adult choices such as love, marriage, family, occupation, and lifestyle.
Adulthood (Ages 22-28)	One begins to organize his/her adult life.
Age 30 Transition	Time of reappraisal and further work on individuation.
Culminating Life Structure for Early Adulthood (Ages 28-33)	Time of forming a structure to establish a more secure place in society and to accomplish youthful dreams and goals.
Mid-Life Transition (Ages 40-45)	Developmental bridge between early and middle adulthood. One comes to terms with the end of youth and begins to create a new way of being young and old appropriate for middle adulthood.
Early Life Structure for Middle Adulthood (Ages 45-50)	Time of creating initial structure of middle adulthood. Often this structure is dramatically different from that of the earlier periods.
Age 50 Transition	Time to engage in further exploration of self and world. Developmental crises are common during this period.
Culminating Life Structure for Middle Adulthood (Ages 55-60)	Time for realizing one's middle adulthood era's major goals and aspirations.
Late Adult Transition (Ages 60-65)	Concludes middle adulthood and initiates late adulthood. Requires profound reappraisal of the past and shift to a new era.
Era of Late Adulthood (Ages 60-)	

Adapted from Levinson and Levinson (1996) *The Seasons of a Woman's Life.*

not apply to the career progression of most adults today" (abstract). She goes on to say "changes in the work world indicate that radical change may become the new norm" and there is a need for "new career change models which recognize" this "shifting social structure" (abstract).

Gould and transformations. Another developmental theorist, Roger Gould, (1978) proposes a theory of transformation that involves a continuous struggle between childhood consciousness and adult consciousness. Gould defines growth as transformation. He posits that transformation "is an expansion of self-definition" (p. 213). Self-definition, according to Gould is a "license to be" and while operating within the license adults feel minimum anxiety. Once one steps outside the boundaries of this license, tension arises. Gould identifies ten properties of his transformational process that detail how the childhood reality and adult reality collide to cause transformations in adulthood. Crises develop when an adult begins to question false assumptions established in childhood.

Gould (1978) does offer a model containing stages of adult development, however, his stages are somewhat vague. His first stage occurs between the ages of 16-21 and is the beginning of the adult identity formation. The next stage involves the dismantling of false assumptions and occurs between the ages of 16-45. His third stage ends at the age of 50. During this stage, the individual completes his/her new adult identity.

Gould (1978) maintains that we encounter large and dramatic transformations when we make career changes or major changes in our love life. He goes on to say that, while less dramatic than major career or love life changes, we undergo transformations everyday.

Stage Models of Adult Development

Stage models provide a framework of adult development that includes a sequence of phases or stages. Though not necessarily linked to age, stage model theorists assert that all adults develop in a particular series of stages that build on each other. Kohlberg (1976, 1984), Loevinger (1976), Fowler (1995), and Kegan (1982, 1994) have all proposed stage models of development that Bee (2000) links to meaning-making. According to Bee (2000):

> A number of theories and at least some data… [Point] to the possibility that there may be some shared or potential changes in our meaning systems as we move through the adult years, just as there may be shared changes in personality. (p. 307)

She goes on to say that personality changes "may be embedded in a broader shift in meaning systems" (p. 307). Kohlberg et al. (1983) underscore this point that these four models share the embedded concept of meaning-making. When referring to Gibbs' (1979) distinction between "standard Piagetian stages" and "existential stages," Kohlberg et al. (1983) write:

> Leaving aside minor differences, Gibbs' 'existential' or 'self-reflective' structural changes … involve an ego or self consciously making meaning for itself. In each case, the focus is on self or ego, viewed as some form of a totality, a system of meaning that confronts the world or others! This is the assumption not only of Loevinger's (1976) *Ego Development* but also of Kegan's (1982) *The Evolving Self*…and Fowler's (1981) *Stages of Faith.* For each of these authors, self-reflection and totalistic meaning-making are central to their conceptions of development. Furthermore, Loevinger…Kegan…Fowler all acknowledge a moral dimension to self-reflection and meaning-making. (p. 3)

Ledford (1998) observed that "Kohlberg's moral reasoning (1981), Fowler's faith development (1981), and Kegan's evolving self (1982) are some of the strategies useful to help us understand the process of meaning-making in the development of adults" (p. 179).

What is meaning-making? Courtenay and Truluck (1997) concluded after their review of the literature on meaning making that while there are many definitions of it, there are two general concepts embedded in these definitions. According to these researchers:

> One prominent view of meaning and life is purpose or goal. This view holds that meaning in life is understood by identifying and pursuing one's purpose or goal…Giving order and sense to life is another view of meaning. This conception regards the outcome of finding meaning as giving order to one's experience or making sense of events, situations, and encounters in life. (p. 177)

Meaning, according to Gray (1991) is the "process of integrating internal awareness and external reality in a way that facilitates growth and health of the person" (abstract). According to Ruffin (1984), humans have a need to understand the meaning of their existence. Meaning-making answers the important question of "Why?" Bee (2000) equates meaning systems with an individual's worldview and stages within the stage development models. According to Bee (2000), these meaning systems (worldviews or stages) reflect our basic assumptions about the world and our role in it.

In addition to being linked vis-à-vis the concept of meaning making, the four aforementioned models share other characteristics. Each of the four models addresses a specific area of growth. These models are "hierarchical in nature and therefore build on one another" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 103) and each stage within these models is "qualitatively different from the others" (Courtenay, 1994, p. 147). Progression through the stages of these models involves

adoption of more complex and integrating worldviews. While it is possible for all individuals to move through all the stages in these models, very few do so (Bee, 2000; Fowler, 1995; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Kohlberg, 1976, 1984; Loevinger, 1976).

Kohlberg's theory of moral development. According to Bee (2000), Lawrence Kohlberg's (1976, 1984) theory of moral development "has been the foundation of much of the current thinking about adults' evolving worldviews or meaning systems" (p. 333). Based on Piaget's stages on cognitive development and heavily influenced by Erik Erikson, Kohlberg's (1976, 1982, 1984) structural developmental model represented a major contribution in differentiating between how children and adults developed morally. According to Kohlberg and Kramer (1969), "moral development involves a continual process of matching a moral view to one's experience of life in a social world" (p. 118). Kohlberg's description of moral stages reflects two major concepts or themes:

> the concept of empathy or role taking and the concept of justice…Role taking is ` the ability to view situations from another person's perspective. Unless one can realize the existence of different perspectives, a moral conflict can not arise…Each stage of moral reasoning reflects…a different basis for deciding what is the *just* or *fair* or *right* way to resolve a moral dilemma. (Smith, 1978, p. 56)

Kohlberg's (1976, 1984) model of moral development consists of three levels—*Preconventional, Conventional, and Postconventional.* Each level has two stages or orientations. The first level in Kohlberg's model where adults are typically found is the *Conventional Level.* A belief in the Golden Rule best characterizes this level. At the *Conventional* level there are two orientations*: Interpersonal Concordance Orientation* and *Law and Order Orientation*. While in the Interpersonal Concordance stage, the individual internalizes the rules and expectations of her

family or peer group. This orientation expands in the *Law and Order Orientation* to include the rules and expectations of society. Most adolescents and most adults in our society are at this level and will remain here for the rest of their lives.

Within the next level—*Postconventional*-- there are two orientations including the *Social-Contract Legalistic Orientation* and the *Universal Ethical Principle Orientation*. Individuals in the *Social-Legalistic Stage* recognize that usually society's rules are fair and are generally underpinned by moral principles such as impartiality. When, however, society's laws conflict with higher principles, those with this orientation will support the higher principle even if it places the person at odds with the law. Bee (2000) offers the civil rights protesters in the early 1960s as examples of individuals who employed reasoning characteristic of this stage.

In earlier writings, Kohlberg and Kramer (1969) believed that some college students reached the next level--*Postconventional.* However, Kohlberg (1982) later modified his position. According to Kohlberg (1982), development in adults occurs as a result of their life experiences unlike moral development in children and adolescents, which is more closely linked to cognitive development associated with biological maturation. Reaching this level, according to Kohlberg (1982) requires "personal experiences of choice involving questioning and commitment, in some sort of integration with simulation to cognitive--moral reflection" (p. 257). Kohlberg (1982) goes on to say that it is "probably for this reason that principled thought is not attained in adolescence" (p. 257).

The *Universal Ethical Principle Orientation* expands the reasoning of the *Social-Legalistic Orientation* by recognizing "the validity of universal moral principles" (Kohlberg, 1976, p. 35). An individual with this orientation makes a personal commitment to live his or her life in

accordance with these universal moral principles. According to Kohlberg (1982) only a few people will ever reach this stage of moral development.

Kohlberg (1973, 1982) speculated about the existence of a seventh stage. This stage, according to Kohlberg (1973) might emerge when one faced the end of life after having spent "some years living with a principled moral system" (Bee, 2000, p. 314). At this stage, which Kohlberg acknowledges is purely hypothetical; one might ask questions such as "Why be moral?" "Why live?" and "How to face death?" (Bee, 2000, p. 337).

Turiel's (1977) study examined stage transitions within Kohlberg's model. Turiel proposed that disequilibrium, which he described as "a dual process of deformation of the existing stage and construction of the next stage," (p. 636) provides a condition for development. According to Turiel, previous structures that prove to be inadequate for dealing with new moral concepts are transformed to new ones typical of the next stage. This transitional phase is characterized by inconsistency. Turiel drew these conclusions based on his study that hypothesized that "subjects identified as transitional were in the process of moving from Stage 4 to Stage 5 "(p. 635). His study used interviews and only examined the transition between Stage 4 and Stage 5 in Kohlberg's model. Other than describing the period of disequilibrium, Turiel's study offered very little in terms of explanation of the process of transition. Another problem with Turiel's study is that three of the research participants, not identified as transitional, had moved from Stage 3 to Stage 4 during the period between the initial and follow-up interviews.

Moral development and gender. Carol Gilligan (1982) has been one of the strongest critics of Kohlberg's work. Gilligan challenges the generalizability of Kohlberg's model to women because it was "mainly derived from the study of men's lives and reflects the importance of individuation in their development" (p. 18). "She argues that Kohlberg was interested in

concepts of justice and not concepts of care, so his theory and research largely ignored an ethical/moral system based on caring for others, on altruism or compassion" (Bee, 2000, p. 338). According to Gilligan (1982): "Herein lies a paradox, for the very traits that traditionally have defined 'goodness' of women, for their care and sensitivity to the needs of others, are those that mark them as deficient in their moral development" (p. 18). Gilligan (1982) posits:

> When one begins with the study of women and derives developmental constructs from their lives, the outline of a moral conception different from those of Freud, Piaget, or Kohlberg begins to emerge and informs a different description of development. In this conception, the moral problem arises from conflicting responsibilities rather than from competing rights and requires for its resolution a mode of thinking that is contextual and narrative rather than formal and abstract. This conception of morality as concerned with the activity of care centers moral development around the understanding of responsibility and relationships, just as the conception of morality as fairness ties moral development to the understanding of rights and rules. (p. 19)

Essentially, Gilligan (1982) argues that "a woman's moral development begins with a concern for survival, moves to a concern with responsibility (not hurting others), and finally becomes a concern for meriting equal care for self" (Schlossberg, 1986, p. 5). Schlossberg (1986) points out that Gilligan views "renegotiation of interdependence over time as a critical issue of adult development for women" (p. 5).

Reinhart (1985) concluded, based on their study of 526 adult women (ages 21-85) with no postsecondary education, that "their data combined with Gilligan's research indicated that her model is appropriate for study of self development in different populations of women" (p. 3).

These researchers used an instrument they designed, the Relationship Self Inventory (RSI), to measure Gilligan's concepts of connected self and separate self. The four scales on the RSI include: 1) the connected self, 2) self care from need, 3) primacy of other care, and 4) self and other care chosen freely.

Loevinger's model of ego development. A second model that Bee (2000) linked to the concept of meaning-making is Jane Loevinger's model of ego development. Drawing on the psychological theories of Freud and others, Jane Loevinger (1976) proposed a model of ego development that is based upon defining the ego as a "'master trait' that determines how one views the world and responds to it" (Merriam, 1984, p. 10). Loevinger's model spans the continuum from simple to complex and consists of seven stages and three transitions.

The first stage in Loevinger's (1976) model where some adults are found is the *Self-Protective Stage.* The term "self-protective" aptly captures the essence of this stage. While in the S*elf-Protective Stage,* the individual knows and understands rules, but he/she chooses to test the boundaries of those rules. "Don't get caught" is the guiding motivation for the self-protective person (Loevinger, 1976, p. 17). The person in this stage anticipates short-term rewards and punishments and characteristically tends to shift blame to others. Older children or adults who remain in this stage tend to become "opportunistic, deceptive, and preoccupied with control and advantage in relations with other people" (Loevinger, 1976, p. 17).

Some individuals may demonstrate traits of both the *Self-Protective Stage* and the next stage, the *Conformist Stage*, and may linger between these two stages. Loevinger (1976) views this as the first transition in her model and calls it the *Self-Protective/Conformist Level.* This level, according to Loevinger (1976), however, is not well defined because of a lack of empirical evidence.

Other individuals will progress from the *Self-Protective/Conformist Level* to the *Conformist Stage,* where the individual begins to identify with a group. The conformist obeys rules sanctioned by the group to which he/she belongs. Here, the individual is more concerned with compliance to the group's rules than with consequences of his or her actions. While in this stage, the individual tends to stereotype other people based on the perceived group membership of that person. Usually, this judgment is based on some physical characteristic such as race, sex, or nationality. To the conformist, outward appearances, social acceptance, and material things matter. Acceptance by his or her group provides the individual with a sense of belonging. According to Loevinger (1976), most urban late adolescents and adults are either at this stage or the next stage, *Conscientious Stage* or caught between these two stages in the transitional level she calls the *"Self-Aware Level."*

According to Loevinger (1976), the "*Self-Aware Level*" while referred to as a transitional level, is actually a relatively stable period where many adults can be found. During one's time in this level, the individual acquires an increased self-awareness and begins to see alternatives to the conformist viewpoint. At this level, the individual continues to view the world in stereotypic terms. However, unlike a person in the *Conformist Stage,* an individual in the *Self-Aware Level* allows for exceptions to his or her patterns of stereotypical thinking.

When one transitions to the next stage, *Conscientious Stage,* he or she begins to take actions characteristic of adulthood. Goal-setting, conceptualizing ideas, accepting self-criticism, and assuming a sense of responsibility are all tasks that one typically accomplishes in this stage. For the conscientious person, rules are no longer considered absolutes. The conscientious person takes control of his or her destiny, sets his or her standards, and aspires to achieve.

Another transition occurs between the *Conscientious Stage and* the *Autonomous Stage* called the *Individualistic Level.* Marked by an increased sense of individuality and a concern for emotional dependence, an individual at this level of development becomes more tolerant of himself or herself and others. Moreover, the individual's ability to accept ambiguity and contradiction heightens. The individual assumes an expanded view of life and construes life as complex and multifaceted.

When one becomes able to cope with inner conflict, he or she moves to the *Autonomous Stage.* The autonomous individual holds a postconventional worldview and accepts inner conflict as simply a facet of the human condition. He or she respects the autonomy of others while at the same time acknowledges the interdependency of humans with one another. The autonomous individual views reality as complex and adopts "broad, abstract, social ideals" (Loevinger, 1976, p. 26).

The final and highest stage in Loevinger's (1976) ego development model is the *Integrated Stage.* Loevinger acknowledges difficulty in describing this stage because few people ever reach it. Therefore, it is hard to study it. However, Loevinger believes that this stage is tantamount to Maslow's concept of self-actualization. The individual in the *Integrated Stage* has the attributes of one in the *Autonomous Stage,* with one addition—a sense of identity.

Daniels (1990) examined ego development and loss, including job loss and found a statistically significant correlation between levels of ego development and illness/pyschological problems after job loss. However, she found no correlation between level of ego development and use of anticipatory time, perception of coping ability, and perception of additive quality of loss. Daniels' (1990) study population included a non-random sample of undergraduate and

graduate students from Vanderbilt University. She administered the Washington University Sentence Completion Test to determine each participant's level of ego development.

Fowler's theory of faith development. A third theory that Bee (2000) links to the concept of meaning-making is James Fowler's (1995) theory of faith development. Informed by the work of Kohlberg (1976, 1984) Piaget (1965) and Erikson (1982), James Fowler (1995) proposed a theory of faith development. According to Fowler (1995):

> faith is not always religious in its content or context…Faith is a person's or group's way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives. Faith is a person's way of seeing him or herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose. (p. 4)

Fowler (1996) goes on to say that:

> Faith understood in this more inclusive sense, may be characterized as an integral, centering process, underlying the formation of beliefs, values, and meanings that (1) give coherence and direction to a person's lives, (2) links them in shared trust and loyalties with others, (3) grounds their personal stances and communal loyalties in a sense of relatedness to a larger frame of reference, and (4) enables them to face and deal with the limited conditions of human life, relying upon that which has the quality of ultimacy in their lives. (p. 56)

Fowler posits that each of us "develops through a shared series of faith structures" or worldviews (Bee, 2000, p. 316). Fowler (1995) views faith development as a "dynamically connected" process best depicted by a spiral (p. 274). Each stage is linked to and adds to the previous ones.

Like other stage development theorists (Kohlberg, 1984; Loevinger, 1976; Kegan, 1982, 1994), Fowler defines the characteristics of each stage. Unlike other stage theorists, however, Fowler (1996) goes on to define what it means to be in a given stage:

> To be "in" a given stage of faith means to have a characteristic way of finding and giving meaning to everyday life. One has a "world view" with a particular "take" on things. One has a set of values...a person also has a *locus of authority*—a reference point or points resting on external source or sources, or residing in one's own soul's judgment. (p. 68)

Fowler (1995) identifies six progressive stages in his faith development model including (a) *Intuitive-Projective*, (b) *Mythic-Literal*, (c) *Synthetic-Conventional*, (d) *Individuative-Reflective*, (e) *Conjunctive*, and (f) *Universalizing*. He also identifies one prestage, which he calls *undifferentiated* faith. The first stage in his model where some adults may be found is the *Mythic Literal Faith Stage.* This is the stage in which an individual begins to take on for himself or herself the "stories, beliefs and observances that symbolize belonging to his or her community" (Fowler, 1995, p. 149). While in the *Mythic Literal Stage*, the individual is beginning to compose a world that is marked by "increased accuracy in taking the perspective of other persons" not just reflecting the faith of their parents. (Fowler, 1995, p. 149). Most school children are in this stage of development, however, some adolescents and adults may also be found here.

Transition to the next stage, *Synthetic- Conventional*, happens when there is an "implicit clash or contradictions in stories that lead to reflection on meanings" (Fowler, 1995, p. 150). Those in Stage 3 find authority outside of themselves and tend to conform to the "expectations and judgments of significant others" (Fowler, 1995, p. 172). Individuals in the *Synthetic-Conventional* Stage have not totally conceptualized their self-identity. Eventually, most of those

in Stage 3 will begin to question their reliance on external authorities and move to Stage 4—*Individuative-Reflective Stage.*

The *Individuative-Reflective Stage* is "marked by double development" which includes the "self" and "outlook" (world view) (Fowler, 1995, p. 182). Here, the individual composes a new identity, using himself or herself as the source of authority.

> To sustain [this] new identity it composes a meaning frame conscious of its own boundaries and inner connections and [awareness] of itself as a "world view." Self (identity) and outlook (world view) are differentiated from those of others and become acknowledged factors in reactions, interpretations, and judgments one makes on the action of self and others. (Fowler, 1995, p. 182)

"Disillusionment with one's compromises and recognition that life is more complex than Stage 4's logic of clear distinctions and abstract concepts" serve as catalysts that move the individual to the next stage—*Conjunctive Faith* (Fowler, 1995, p. 183).

Normally around midlife, some adults will move to stage 5. Characterized by paradox, those in the *Conjunctive Faith* Stage are willing to accept multiple realities and different points of view. Typically, an individual in this stage will realize that life is half over and will demonstrate a stronger commitment to others (Bee, 2000; Fowler, 1995; Merriam, 1984).

Only a few will yield to the call "of the radical actualization" of Stage 6—*Universalizing Faith*. Those who do ultimately reach this stage, according to Fowler (1995), "shake our usual criteria of normalcy" and "frequently become martyrs for the visions they incarnate" (p. 200). Individuals at this stage are willing to risk their personal well-being to fulfill their principled visions of "*what life is meant to be"* (Fowler, 1995, p. 204) even if pursuing this idealistic path involves actions such as challenging the established authority. Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin

Luther King, Jr., and Mother Teresa serve as examples of those who reach this highest stage of faith development.

According to Fowler (1996) periods of transition are "precipitated either by interruptive events or experiences, or by the realization that many of the ways one has been living and making meaning no longer 'makes sense'" (p. 71). Development, according to Fowler (1987), "occurs…between times of equilibrium and disequilibrium" (p. 101). "We do not make transitions from one stage to another without disruption, pain, confusion and a sense of loss. All growth involves pain" (Fowler, 1996, p. 40). Fowler (1987, 1995, 1996) uses a model advanced by Bridges (to be discussed later in this review) to explain the transition process between stages in his model.

Ledford (1998) in his qualitative study that examined the relationship between crisis such as death, illness, and job loss and faith change in individuals concluded that "there is a process of faith development that is an outcome of the interaction between a life crisis and prior faith" (p. 156). He concluded that this process of faith development was similar to the movement from one faith stage to another described by Fowler. He noted that several models of faith development, including Fowler's "indicate movement between stages as a crisis experience" (p. 173).

Hamrick (1988) examined stage transition in Fowler's faith development theory in his qualitative study whose sample was nine men and four women. Specifically, he looked at "clusters of factors in the lives of middle-aged adults" that successfully made a transition to the conjunctive faith stage (abstract). Hamrick found that there were five clusters. His first set of factors, transitional antecedents, included early church experience and a strong desire for knowledge. He conceptualized his next four clusters of factors as four distinct sequential periods including disengagement and disequilibrium, expansion and exploration, focusing and

equilibrium, and reintegration and involvement. Hamrick found that during the sequential period that he identified as focusing and equilibrium that his participants developed new competencies that helped them embrace a new set of beliefs. According to Hamrick, these new competencies were learned in both formal and informal adult learning settings. Hamrick characterized the informal learning his participants engaged in as "learning projects" stating that their self-directed learning which included "the study of contemplative, theological, and sociological literature; experiencing the spiritual disciplines of prayer, contemplation, and reflection; and psychotherapy" (p. 107). Hamrick's study is significant because he found that these learning projects had a "major influence in the transition process" and he recommended that a study that "focuses on relative effectiveness of these learning projects for sponsoring transition" be conducted (p. 116). While Hamrick's study only looked at transition between two phases within Fowler's faith development, it is important because it suggests that adult learning may play a larger role in transitions than previously acknowledged.

Kegan's evolutionary truces. A fourth stage development theory that Bee (2000) links to the concept of meaning-making is Robert Kegan's (1994) "theory of psychological evolution of meaning- systems or ways of knowing" or stated differently "a theory of the development of consciousness" (p. 6). In an earlier publication Kegan (1982) referred to the stages in his model as evolutionary truces. According to Kegan, (1982) "each stage…is a temporary solution to the lifelong tension between yearnings for inclusion and distinctness" (p. 108). Kegan (1982) posits that individuals move back and forth between these two needs and are never really in balance. Because of this imbalance, the individual may change. When a person makes a shift, his or her meaning systems change. With each shift the individual's meaning system becomes more integrative than the one that preceded it.

Kegan identifies six stages that span from *Impulsive* that is similar to Loevinger's (1976) by the same name to *Interindividual* that is similar to Kohlberg's (1976) *Principled* stage and Loevinger's *Autonomous Stage*. Kegan (1982) depicted his model as a helix that illustrates upward movement between psychologics favoring inclusion to psychologics favoring independence. Kegan (1994) used the framework of this theory "as an analytical tool to examine contemporary culture" (pp. 6-7). According to Kegan (1994), this allowed him to "consider the fit, or lack of fit, between the demands our cultural curriculum makes on our consciousness on the one hand, and our mental capacities as 'students' in this ongoing school on the other" (p. 7). He goes on to say that his theory considers gender difference, diversity, and the postmodern critique of knowledge creation. In short, Kegan (1994) asserts that his theory fuses psychological phenomena with that of cultural phenomena. Kegan (1994) posits that "psychological phenomena is the evolution of consciousness, the personal unfolding of ways of organizing experience that are not simply replaced as we grow but subsumed into more complex systems of mind" (p. 9). He uses the term "orders of consciousness" to describe his developmental stages because this term is tantamount to a principle evident in his model, that of subject-object relationship. This principle, according to Kegan (1994) is one of mental organization or the epistemology of his model:

> "Object" refers to those elements of our knowing or organizing that we can reflect on, handle, look at, be responsible for, relate to each other, take control of, internalize, assimilate, or otherwise operate upon…"Subject" refers to those elements of our knowing or organizing that we are identified with, tied to, fused with, or embedded in. We have *object*; we *are* subject. We cannot be responsible for, in control of, or reflect upon that which is subject. Subject is immediate; object is

> mediate. Subject is ultimate or absolute; object is relative. (p. 32)

As one progresses, his/her *subject* becomes subsumed as *object.*

The first stage where some adults are found in Kegan's model is the *Mutuality/interpersonalism Stage.* Generally, however, it is adolescents who are found in this stage. At this stage, the individual can reason abstractly, think hypothetically and deductively, and begins to see relationships. Moreover, the individual becomes aware of mutual reciprocity, that is, shared feelings, agreements, and expectations. Here, the individual can internalize the point of view of others but cannot distinguish self from his/her relationships. The individual cannot yet comprehend that he/she is in control of his/her "inner psychological life" (Kegan, 1994, p. 31). According to Kegan (1994), those who reach this third order of consciousness are what sociologists refer to as socialized. The individual is now able to identify with and internalize the values of society as they are communicated by others.

Notwithstanding the fact that psychologists and sociologists would suggest that a person who has reached the third order of consciousness would be capable of fulfilling adult responsibilities, Kegan (1994) questions this assumption, given the complexity of the modern world. Kegan (1994) writes:

> Ontogenetically, I would put it this way: the demands of modern adult life may require a qualitative transformation in the complexity of the mind every bit as fundamental as the transformation from magical thinking to concrete thinking required of the school-age child, or the transformation from concrete thinking to abstract thinking required of the adolescent. (p. 134)

According to Kegan (1994), the mental demands of work, parenting, partnering, learning, and as citizens in a diverse society necessitate that individuals possess the attributes of the fourth order

of consciousness, *institution*. At this stage the individual is autonomous, has a well-defined sense of self, and is capable of self-regulation and self-formation. He/she is capable of regulating relationships, establishing personal boundaries, and being psychologically independent of others. The fourth order of consciousness individual is capable of complex thinking and seeing relationships between abstractions. In the fourth order of consciousness, self is subject. When self becomes object, the individual moves to the next order of consciousness—*inter-institutional*. An individual who reaches the fifth order of consciousness is capable of recognizing multiple selves, capable of viewing conflict "as a signal of our overidentification with a single system" and capable of identifying with "the transformative process of our being rather than the formative products of … becoming" (Kegan, 1994, p. 351). The individual can accept paradox and ambiguity. Kegan (1994) writes that "it is rare to see people moving beyond the fourth order, but when they do, it is never before their forties, the very age when life ended for most people at the turn of the last century" (p. 352).

In discussing transitions, Kegan (1982) posits that "all transitions involve leaving a consolidated self behind before any new self can takes it's place" (p. 232). He goes on to say that all transitions involve "to some extent the killing off of the old self" (p. 232).

Critiques of sequential models of adult development. There are some issues surrounding sequential models. First, there is the challenge of universality. The basis for many of these models involved research that only included white, middle-class males. As discussed earlier in the review, Carol Gilligan (1982) questioned the validity of Kohlberg's moral development model because she does not believe that it reflects the experiences of women. Cowden (1992) voices a similar assertion about Fowler's faith development model. She concluded from her study of faith development, moral development and Carol Gilligan's work that "Fowler's theory

would have to accommodate insights from Gilligan's theory of moral development in order to adequately portray the faith development process in women" (abstract). Similarly, Knefelkamp, Parker, and Widick (1978) question the universality of Loevinger's model of ego development. According to these authors:

> The model was built to assess developmental growth of women, and only later adapted for use with men. Yet, it purported to be universal and multicultural. The current rating manual uses examples taken exclusively from female protocols. Although some research has been conducted applying the model to men, much more needs to be done to satisfy the model's *human* developmental assumptions. (p. 77)

Another issue concerning claims of universality of these theorists is the fact that with the exception of Kohlberg's cross-cultural studies, most of the research that underpins these theories used only American participants.

In addition to these issues, as Bee (2000) noted, there is no longitudinal data to support these theories on adults past midlife. Lack of data and vague descriptions of the higher stages in some of these models lead Courtenay (1994) to ask: "Why is it that out of 359 individuals studied, only one case of Stage 6, the highest stage of faith development, is reported by Fowler?" (p. 151).

Bee (2000) also noted that stage developmental psychologists have focused more on the stages than on the process of transitions between stages. She asked: "What is the process by which transitions or transformations from one stage to the next take place? What are the common features of transitions? How are they transversed? (p. 324).

Summary of Sequential Models of Adult Development

Sequential models of adult development provide patterns in which adults develop over the life span. Periods of disequilibrium, which may be triggered by life crisis such as job loss, may lead to transition from one stage to another. Ledford (1998) found this to be the case in his study of life crisis and faith development. Moreover, there is limited research that suggests how individuals deal with a life crisis may be related to their ego development level. One study found a statistically significant relationship between levels of ego development and problems (both physical and psychological) that the individual experienced after job loss (Daniels, 1990). However, there are several issues with sequential models of development including their applicability to groups other than those studied and their failure to define the transition process between stages. Despite these shortcomings, however, these models do provide a basic framework from which to study development in adulthood and how a life crisis may impact that development in individuals.

Life Events Models

One alternative to sequential models is life events models and transitions (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Life events models are not necessarily tied to specific age periods. There are two types of life events that shape development: individual and cultural. "Individual life events, such as birth, death, marriage, and divorce, are events that define one's life. Societal and historical happenings that shape the context in which a person develops, such as wars, the women's movement, and natural catastrophes, make up the cultural life events" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 105).

One of the prominent life events theorists, Bernice Neugarten, "emphasized the influence of age-related life events and social expectations on individual development of the adult" (Hanson,

1985, p. 27). Neugarten (1976) discussed three kinds of time--social, life, and historical, that interacted to affect human development. Social time refers to the culturally determined appropriate time (not necessarily related to chronological time) for the occurrence of certain life events. Life time refers to chronological age, and historical time refers to the calendar time. Neugarten (1976) posits that individuals develop "a life cycle rhythm" based on the interaction of the three types of time.

Neugarten (1976) talks about social clocks, that is, the time the individual is conditioned to believe that certain life events should occur. In respect to certain life events, individuals either judge themselves to be "on-time" or "off-time" (Schlossberg, 1981, p. 9). Being "off-time" carries penalties, both socially and psychologically. "Neugarten points out that the issue of time has become somewhat confused as we move toward what she sees as an emerging 'age--irrelevant' society in which people of all ages engage in activities formerly reserved to one age group" (Schlossberg, 1981, p. 9).

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) note that: "The notion of life events as a process is often equated with the idea of transitions…" (p. 105). "Adults continually experience transitions, whether anticipated or unanticipated, and react to them depending on the type of transition, the context in which it occurs, and its impact on their lives" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 105). Pearlin and Lieberman (1979) define anticipated transitions as normative "gains and losses or major alterations of roles that occur in the course of the unfolding of the life cycle" (p. 220). "These events include marriage, the birth of a first child, a child leaving home, starting a first job, and retiring" (Schlossberg, Waters & Goodman, 1995, p. 29). Unanticipated events are not predictable and usually involve crisis and other “unexpected occurrences that are not the consequence of life-cycle transitions" (Pearlin, 1980, p. 179). Pearlin (1980) offers being fired,

being laid off or being demoted or having to give up work due to illness as examples of unanticipated life events.

Brim and Ryff and Life Events. Brim and Ryff (1980) discuss transitions from a life events perspective. They identify three categories of transition, the first being biological, social, and physical transitions. According to these theorists, individuals, over their life courses, will confront "tens of thousands of naturalistic life events…in the passage from birth to death" (p. 368). They go on to say that life is filled with events that are customary and events that are noncustomary. Customary events include those life roles individuals play during their lifespan including family, work, community, religion and other social roles. Noncustomary roles are deviant acts including crimes, accidents, and so forth.

Their second category of transitions is psychological changes as events. Brim and Ryff (1980) cite religious experience and conversions, "the resolution to devote one's life to one's country" and "the confrontation with one's own mortality at midlife" as examples of psychological changes as events (p. 369). They view psychological events as the "*outcomes* of events in the biological, social, and physical realms" (p. 370).

The third category of transitions that Brim and Ryff (1980) identify is the life event as a social-science concept. According to these theorists: "Social psychology seeks to predict, explain and eventually to understand the contemporary behavior responses to contemporary situations" (p. 370). They go on to say that "life-span development seeks to predict, explain, and it is hoped, to optimize, changes in behavioral responses as a consequence of life events as they occur over a long period of time" (pp. 370-371).

While Brim and Ryff (1980) posit that life events "are becoming increasingly salient variables for life-span developmental researchers," they caution that it is important "to examine a

broad range of experiences covered by life events" (p. 387). They contend that one must consider hidden or unnamed events and emerging or transitional events. They define hidden or unnamed events as "events for which no concept has ever been invented" (p. 379). These theorists assert that events in this category might include job loss that has not been as carefully studied as family events such as plateauing, where one reaches the top of their achieving. Their concept of emerging or transitional events is in some way related to that of Neugarten's (1976) historical time. Brim and Ryff (1980) point out that social change leads to new life experiences. To fully understand life-span development, we must understand the transitions between the emergence of life events as a result of social change and the disappearance of others. However, they assert that one must guard against focusing "only on those events that are the most vivid, recent, large, or simple" (p. 387).

Transitions

Ledford (1998) noted that the terms "change, crisis, development, struggle, themes, and transformations are often used interchangeably in reference to transitions in life" (p. 15). According to Ledford (1998), a transition "is the process of development that begins with a life crisis--an occurrence that triggers a change process in an adult" (p. 15). Job loss has been recognized as a major off-time life transition (Bridges, 1980; Cross, 1981; Gould, 1978; Palmer-Spilker & Reed, 1993; Schlossberg, et al. 1995; Sugarman, 1986). However, Palmer-Spilker and Reed (1993) noted that there is very little research on the transition phase of job loss. Ingle (1999) also made this observation. After completing her dissertation study of involuntary job loss and rebuilding, she recommended that "career transition as it is experienced by non-professionals and blue-collar workers" should be studied further. She also noted that "a more far-reaching study" that examines "how the fast-paced growth in technology influences the learning

and the careers of individuals with limited education and professional resources" should be conducted (p. 151). While there does appear to be a dearth of literature on the transitional process associated with job loss especially that for female textile workers, there are some theorists who have explored transition phenomena. These theories provide a springboard from which to frame a study of the transitional process for female textile workers who have lost their jobs.

Bridges' Model of Transition

One prominent theory of transition is that of William Bridges (1980, 1994). Bridges (1980) views life transitions "as the natural process of disorientation and reorientation that marks the turning points of the path of growth" (p. 5). Transition, according to Bridges (1980, 1994) is marked by three phases: endings, time in the neutral zone, and new beginnings. Bridges acknowledges that although his model is phase-based, the three phases are not distinct and will often overlap.

The first phase in Bridges' model—endings--encompasses four aspects: (1) disengagement; (2) disidentification; (3) disenchantment; and (4) disorientation.

- Disengagement occurs when one gives up connections such as a death, divorce, or job loss that have significantly shaped his or her sense of identity
- Disidentification "results from breaking or losing old connections with the world, which means the loss of important ways of self-definition" (Fowler, 1996, p. 73).
- Disenchantment "means giving up or enduring the loss of some part of our previous constructions of reality" (Fowler, 1996, p. 73). For example, discovering that Santa Claus is fiction may lead to a questioning of a previously constructed reality. This discovery signals that it is time to change. Some transitions may begin with disenchantment.

- Disorientation results from the cumulative impact of the three previous aspects of ending. An individual may feel as though he/she has lost their “mental and emotional maps, charts, plans, and sense of direction” (Fowler, 1996, p. 73).

  According to Bridges (1980) "endings begin when something goes wrong” (p. 109). He compares endings to experiences of dying. "They are ordeals, and sometimes they challenge so basically our sense of who we are that we believe they will be the end of *us*" (Bridges, 1980, p. 110).

From endings, the individual enters Bridges' next phase, the neutral zone. While in the neutral zone, the individual struggles to disengage from his/ her previously constructed reality and attempts to compose a new life and new meaning. Fowler (1996) describes being in the neutral zone as similar to "being out of one's mind" (p. 74). Eventually this search for meaning will lead the individual to "new beginnings" where the individual has a new direction in life and where he/she reintegrates a new identity with some elements of his/her old identity. "Endings and beginnings with emptiness and germination in between" is how Bridges (1980) describes this transition process (p. 150).

Bridges (1994) notes that people resist transition. According to Bridges:

1. They resist saying good-bye to the world that has given them their identity and their feelings of competence.
2. They resist the chaotic and confusing neutral zone, where everything is up for grabs and no one knows what the rules are.
3. And they resist taking the risk of trying something completely unfamiliar and staking so much on an untried way of being and doing. (p. 196)

Ingle (1999) noted:

> Bridges' work is based on an analysis of theory and literature surrounding adult development. His work is also based on his personal and professional experience of working with organizations and individuals in transition. While it is not research based, much of the research on life transitions has used Bridges as a starting point to understand the life transition process…Bridges' work has some important limitations. Bridges reports that his experience has been primarily with white, middle-upper level management and upper-middle class professionals whose experience of job loss is quite different from blue-collar and other lower-class workers. Bridges contends that further research needs to be done that will address the career transition needs of non-professional or blue-collar workers. (pp. 25-26)

Sugarman's Model of Transition

Another theorist, Leonie Sugarman has proposed a seven-stage transition model. According to Sugarman (1986), this model delineates a general pattern of transition, not a rigid, fixed sequence. The transitional phases may vary in both intensity and duration, depending on the individual involved. The first transition in Sugarman's model is *immobilization,* a feeling of being overwhelmed or in shock triggered by an event or nonevent that causes one to question his/her previously held assumptions about oneself or the world. *Immobilization* is followed by *reaction*, "a sharp swing of mood from elation to despair depending on the nature of the transition" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 106). Here, one may minimize his/her feelings and the "anticipated impact of change" (Sugarman, 1986, p. 145). After this initial reaction, one may transition to the next phase, *self-doubt*, when one may experience depression, anxiety, anger, or sadness as he/she grapples with the reality of change that the new reality may cause in his/her life. During the next transition—*letting go*—the individual breaks with the past and begins to

accept the reality of change. For some, this process may be traumatic. Once the individual lets go of the past, he/she then moves to the *testing* phase. Here, the individual begins to explore new options and formulate new identities. Once this has been accomplished and the individual has established bonds and attachments to his/her new world, transition to the next phase—*search for meaning*—occurs. This phase is "characterized by a conscious striving to learn from the new experience" (Sugarman, 1986, p. 145). The individual attempts to make sense of his/her experience and tries to understand the meaning of the change. When the individual begins to feel comfortable in the new, post-transition reality and the "new realities have become part of the person's view of the world," the transition process is complete and the individual enters the last phase—the *Integration* phase. (Sugarman, 1986, p. 146).

Sugarman's (1986) model is based on her analysis of adult development and life transition models. This review of the literature did not yield any studies that had empirically tested Sugarman's theory or any studies that had examined Sugarman's theory in the context of job loss. However, Sugarman's model is similar to that of Kubler-Ross's transition theory that has been examined empirically in terms of job loss.

Kubler-Ross on Death and Dying

In her study that included over 200 patients who had been told they had a terminal illness, Kubler-Ross (1997) found that their reactions to this bad news followed a similar pattern that included five stages. First, the individual went into a stage of *denial and isolation*. Here, individuals try to find other explanations for their diagnosis. Of those interviewed by Kubler-Ross, only three remained in stage one until their death. Kubler-Ross noted that for most patients, this initial reaction of "No, it's not true, no, it cannot involve me" is eventually replaced with "feelings of anger, rage resentment, and envy" (p. 63). During this second stage (*anger*),

the patient may displace his/her anger in all directions. For this reason, coping with the individual by others may prove difficult. Kubler-Ross notes that: "Wherever the patient looks at this time, he will find grievances" (p. 65).

Eventually, most terminally ill patients moved to the next stage, *bargaining*. Kubler-Ross (1997) states that "the stage of bargaining is less well known but equally helpful to the patient" (p. 93). At this stage, the individual attempts to bargain with God for his/her life. The individual holds false hope that if he/she is good, then God will reward his/her goodness by allowing him/her to live.

As the individual's illness progresses and treatments begin to take their toll on the person, he/she begins to feel a deep sense of loss that leads to the next stage, *depression*. Kubler-Ross (1997) identifies two forms of depression--reactive and impending loss. The first type of depression, reactive, results from past losses that the individual has experienced as a consequence of their illness such as job loss, inability to engage in former activities and so on. The second type of depression "is one which does not occur as a result of past loss but it takes into account impending losses" (p. 99) such as loss of his/her loved ones. At this point, the patient recognizes that he/she is in the processing of losing everything and everybody that he/she has loved. Once the individual has worked through this stage, he/she enters the final stage of *acceptance*.

At this point the individual has come to terms with his/her impending loss and begins contemplating the end. Kubler-Ross (1997) cautions that: "Acceptance should not be mistaken for a happy stage. It is almost void of feelings. It is as if the pain had gone, the struggle is over, and there comes a time for "the final rest before the long journey" (p. 124).

Kubler-Ross's (1997) model has been used by other authors to explain human reaction to other unanticipated life events including job loss (Daniels, 1990; Dean, 1989; DeFrank & Ivancevich, 1986; Gordus, Jarley & Ferman, 1981; Palmer-Spilker, & Reed, 1993; Stimson, 1995).

Stimson (1995) confirmed that the stages of job termination for male executives during mid-life "are similar to those described by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross" (abstract). Another author, Gordus et al. (1981) also noted that the stages of transition experienced by one who has lost his/her job appear similar to those articulated by Kubler-Ross.

> Gordus et al. adapted Kubler-Ross's stages to job loss. Gordus et al. noted that there is an internal cycle of adaptation which is coupled to an external cycle of events. The internal cycle consists of the stages enumerated by Kubler-Ross and the external is the series of events related to job loss. Gordus stated that the stages of denial and anger often occur at the time of and shortly after the job loss. Bargaining occurs as the individual or family attempts to live on a reduced income. Depression often follows when attempts to gain employment are unsuccessful and the person is faced with exhaustion of unemployment benefits. Acceptance may occur at about the time of reemployment. (Dean, 1989, pp. 12-13)

Transitional Theory of Schlossberg and Others

Informed by Bridges', Kubler-Ross's transitional frameworks and those of others (Ebaugh, 1988; Louis, 1980; Myerhoff, 1984), Schlossberg, et al. (1995) proposed an integrative transition model based on three premises:

- Adults continuously experience transitions.

- Adults' reactions to transitions depend on the type of transition, the context in which it occurs, and its impact on their lives.
- A transition has no endpoint; rather a transition is a process over time that includes phases of assimilation and continuous appraisal as people move in, through, and out of it. (p. 46)

According to these theorists, the first stage of any transition "can be conceptualized as either moving in or moving out" (Schlossberg, et al. 1995, p. 44). However, as an illustration of this transitional process, they use *moving in* as the starting point of the transition. During this period of transition, people move into a new situation and "need to become familiar with the rules, regulations, norms, and expectations of the new system" (Schlossberg, et al., p. 45). In other words, they must "learn the ropes." Once adults "learn the ropes" they enter into the *moving through* period. This may be a long, sustained period that is marked by the questioning of one's decisions. "Did I do the right thing?" is typical of the type of questioning that occurs during the period (Schlossberg, et al., p. 45). According to Schlossberg et al., this period is similar to Bridges' *neutral zone* period where there is a feeling of emptiness and confusion.

"Moving out can be seen as ending one set of transitions and the beginning to ask what comes next. Grieving can be used as a model to explain this phase in the process" (Schlossberg, et al., 1995, p. 45). People in this period grieve the loss of that which is familiar. The larger the transition, the more it will pervade one's life. Here one disengages from former roles, relationships, routines, and assumptions. When one becomes fully aware of having disengaged from his/her former life and having moved on to a new one, the transition has been integrated.

Schlossberg et al. (1995) use this model to explain work life transitions. According to these authors, one is in the *moving in* phase when they begin a new job. An individual can be said to be in the *moving through* stage when he/she is established in a job. During the moving through

stage, the individual may be "on the fast track," may be plateaued (that is where many may get stuck), or may be "caught in between" where they may encounter confusion while deciding whether to "cling to the comfortable norm of their current job or break away to explore new, more fulfilling opportunities" (Schlossberg, et al., p. 157).

Schlossberg et al. (1995) note that work transitions normally involve leaving a job. When this occurs, the individual enters into the phase they refer to as *moving out.* These authors posit that when workers loss their jobs, they may experience a period of intense grief similar to that identified by Kubler-Ross (1997). Schlossberg and Leibowitz (1980) confirmed that job loss can be an opportunity for either growth or deterioration and that reactions to the job loss change over time. These authors identified five phases of the transition process following job loss including disbelief, sense of betrayal, confusion, anger, and resolution that marked the movement from disequilibrium to a new state of equilibrium. These researchers found that the men in their study initially reported a feeling of numbness and disbelief that was often accompanied by a sense of betrayal. After recovering from their initial shock, the men in the study began to accept the reality of the situation and became immobilized. This was a period of confusion for the men where their emotions vacillated from anxiety and anger to excitement and anticipation. Once the men were able to resolve their confusion, they entered the stage of anger. Finally, the men were able to resolve their reactions to the job loss.

Comparison of Transition Models

The four transition models examined here share some commonalties. Each of these models delineates an initial reaction to an unanticipated transition. This initial reaction is followed by a post-initial reaction characterized by confusion, self-doubt, and testing. Finally, each model describes a period of acceptance whereby the transition is complete. The models differ in how

explicit they are in terms of the various stages involved in the transition process. Both Bridges (1980, 1994) and Schlossberg et al. (1995) most clearly delineate the initial reaction phase. Sugarman's (1986) model more explicitly defines the post initial reaction than do the other theorists. The final stage of each of the models is similar. Table 2 below shows a comparison of the models by initial reaction, post-initial reaction and acceptance phases.

Table 2 *Comparison of Transition Models*

	Bridges	Sugarman	Kubler-Ross	Schlossberg
Initial Reaction	Endings Disengagement Disidentification Disenchantment Disorientation	Immobilization Reaction	Denial and Isolation Anger	Moving Out Disbelief Sense of Betrayal Confusion Anger Resolution
Post-Initial Reaction	Neutral Zone	Self-doubt Letting Go Testing Searching for meaning	Bargaining Depression	Moving Through
Acceptance	Beginnings	Integration	Acceptance	Moving In

Job Loss Effects on the Individual

As discussed above, involuntary job loss is an off-time life event and may involve a major life transition. A number of researchers have documented how job loss affects the individual. After completing a case study of former Smith-Corona workers displaced after their plant moved from Cortland, New York to Mexico, Beneria (1998) noted:

Despite the efforts at making the transition smooth, the impact went beyond individual

> income losses and their multiplier effects. There were also short and long term negative consequences for workers, their households and their communities… Additional costs included health problems (high blood pressure, headaches, stomach problems, depression, and anxiety), economic hardships (difficulty paying bills and meeting mortgage payments), family conflicts (tension and arguments, children's behavior problems) and different types of budget and other adjustments requiring household coping strategies. (p. 5)

Perrucci (1988) echoes the findings of Beneria (1998). In her study of RCA workers who lost their jobs, she found that about one-third of the displaced workers experienced headaches and gastrointestinal problems. Perrucci (1988) also found no differences between the displaced workers and illness in terms of gender. However, she found differences in terms of age. Younger (those less than 34) and older (those over 55) reported fewer physical problems than did middle-aged displaced workers (35-54). Palmer-Spilker and Reed (1993) point out that one reason displaced workers may experience more health problems is that because of a reduction in income, they are less likely to spend money on health matters. Moreover, they are likely to have lost their health insurance benefits when they lost their jobs, causing them not to seek medical treatment when they should. In contrast to other researchers, Merriam (1987) in her examination of job loss and life stage of adults participating in the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) found that the physical health of her study participants "was about the same as when the respondents had jobs" (p. 113). She noted that this was a surprising finding given that the literature suggested otherwise. Merriam's study used mixed methodologies that involved interviewing 12 adults and administering a questionnaire with a sample size of 233 adults.

Psychological effects of job loss are well documented (Brewington & Nassar-McMillan, 2000; Daniels, 1990; Dean, 1989; DeFrank, & Ivancevich, 1986; Hansen, 1985; Jacobs, & Jones, 1990; Kerka, 1991; Palmer-Spilker & Reed, 1993; Schlossberg, et al., 1995). These researchers suggest that job loss may lead to anger, depression, anxiety, sleep problems, loss of appetite and nervousness. Kelvin and Jarrett (1985) posit that the "most profound psychological effects of unemployment are on the way in which the unemployed individual comes to see himself" (p. 42). Feelings of low self-esteem and inadequacy are common among those who have lost their jobs. Palmer-Spilker and Reed (1993) noted that the "loss of a job ranks high in terms of the stress it produces, in the top 9 of 61 stress factors, just behind the death of a spouse" (p. 4). They go on to say when individuals lose their jobs they lose more than just income. "Depending on the level of involvement with their work, the individual may lose friends, structure in their life, a sense of community, and the satisfaction derived from making a contribution" (Palmer-Spilker & Reed, p. 5). Because a job is such a significant part of one's life, loss of it may pose a crisis of identity for some. Ingle (1999) posits that the average American worker spends 2,350 hours per year in the workplace. "This concentration of time and physical and emotional energy shapes a person's sense of 'fit' in the world and has an undeniable effect on his or her value in the world" (p. 5).

Job Loss and Gender

The research on job loss and gender is mixed. Mallett (1982) in her study of 170 workers (86 females and 84 males) who lost their jobs found that "job loss did not affect men and women differently" (abstract). Leana and Feldman (1990) in their study of 198 industrial workers found that gender and age were associated with more negative responses to job loss. According to these authors, females and older workers suffer more adverse affects of job loss. Carey (1993)

found in her study of a plant closing process and its impact on the workforce that females obtained lower wages than men in subsequent reemployment. Conversely, Sterrett (1996) in her study of job loss found that males perceived considerably more reemployment barriers than did females.

Schlossberg and Coping with Job Loss

How an individual copes with job loss depends on various factors. Schlossberg (1987) identifies four variables that impact how one copes with transitions. She refers to these variables as the 4S's. The variables are:

- The *situation* variable--what is happening?
- The *self* variable--To whom it is happening?
- The *support* variable--What help is available?
- The *strategies* variable--How does one cope?

Schlossberg et al. (1995) have adapted these strategies to work transitions by identifying issues related to each variable. According to these authors, issues related to *situation* includes the trigger causing the transition, the timing of the transition and concurrent stress, the individual's sources of control, and the individual's experience with like transitions. Salience and balance are issues that are related to *self*. The balance that the individual maintains between the three domains of life--work, love and play and how salient work is in the individual's life and his/her identity will impact how the individual copes with job loss. Other issues related to self include individual resilience and adaptability, self-efficacy, and how the individual makes meaning of the job loss. Schlossberg et al. (1995) posit that *support* can come from many sources including family, friends, job training centers, and faith. There are numerous *strategies* that may be used by an individual transversing a job loss. One strategy includes changing or

modifying the situation through problem-solving such as taking optimistic action or seeking advice. A second strategy is changing the meaning of the situation through reappraisal such as rearranging priorities, having faith, and so forth. Another strategy is managing reaction to stress through play such as using relaxation skills and doing physical activity.

Graham (1993) found in her study that examined Schlossberg's transition model that this framework proved to be an adequate tool of explaining the transition of older adults from non student to student at a large state-supported university. In her study, Graham found that some components of Schlossberg's model proved to be more important than others. According to Graham, variables that characterized "self" including "commitment and values, ego development, outlook, and coping resources" proved most important to this transition (abstract). She also found that support to include family, friends, and institutions were important factors in the participants' successful transition. Based on her research, Graham designed the following formula to describe the characteristics of the adults in her study who "successfully became undergraduate students: Determination + Courage + Vision = A Successful Transition" (abstract).

State and Federal Assistance for Workers Displaced by NAFTA

As noted above, job training centers may offer one avenue of support for those who lose their jobs. State and federal partnership programs exist to assist workers displaced by free trade with Canada and Mexico. Both state and federal agencies try to assist the workers in finding new employment immediately after losing their jobs. Examples of this type of assistance include North Carolina's Rapid Response Team that goes to the area to aid the affected workers. NAFTA-related assistance is available to those workers once the company they worked for is certified as TAA eligible. Criteria for this certification issued by the Department of Labor are

that the company must have suffered direct or indirect job losses as a result of free trade with Canada and Mexico. The NAFTA-TAA benefit program combines some aspects of the Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Act (EDWAA), a part of Title III of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and the 1974 Trade Act TAA Program. Once the individual's company is certified, the worker may receive state unemployment benefits that generally consist of a portion of the individual's former wages for a period of 26 weeks. After that, the individual may receive Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) for another 52 weeks if he/she is enrolled in a full-time training program. The weekly amount of the TRA is the same as the amount the individual received for his/her unemployment allowance. For example, if the individual's unemployment benefits were $200 per week, his/her TRA will be $200 per week. The individual can only receive the combined state unemployment benefits and TRA benefits for 78 weeks; however, he/she is eligible to receive approved training for 104 weeks in occupational skills, basic or remedial studies, adult literacy training, or English as Second Language Training. During this 104 week period, the individual's tuition, books, other school material and travel to his/her educational site are paid by the federal government (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 2000).

Confronted with the reality that manufacturing jobs were disappearing, many displaced workers have realized that they would need additional skills in order to find employment that paid salaries comparable to those in the manufacturing sector of the economy. Rothstein and Scott (1997) state that while only about 16% of America's labor force works in manufacturing jobs, about 70% of the NAFTA- related job losses have occurred in that sector of employment. They go on to say that despite the low educational levels of individuals employed in manufacturing jobs, they earn more money than any other sector of society. According to these authors, of those who have lost their jobs because of free trade, only 14% were college

graduates, 26% had completed some college courses, 36% had high school diplomas, and 24% did not have a high school diploma. While workers without any college education make up about half of the U.S. labor force, about 60% of the workers affected by NAFTA do not have any college education, according to Rothstein and Scott.

Job retraining and community colleges. There are several sources for retraining for those receiving federal retraining benefits including colleges and universities, private educational organizations, and others. However, the primary retraining source for most federal retraining benefit recipients have been community colleges. Shearon and Tollefson (1989) observed that: "Community colleges in the United States and Canada have evolved into major community-based adult education institutions" (p. 316). Kegan (1994) noted that: "The great majority of students attending our country's community colleges--one of the last great democratizing institutions in America--are adults…" (pp. 271-272). In their analysis of older workers retraining and higher education, Caro & Morris (1991) posit that "community colleges appear to be the country's most important resource for employment training for older adults" (p. 7). They cite the following facts to support their assertion.

- Community colleges are numerous and widely dispersed and for this reason most people live near one.
- Occupational training is emphasized at community colleges.
- Half of the community college enrollment is in non-degree programs usually designed to lead directly to jobs.
- Community college tuition is half that of colleges and universities.
- Community colleges traditionally have served economically disadvantaged groups including women and minorities.

- Community colleges have experience with working closely with area employers.

Many of those who lose their jobs and receive federal job training financial assistance opt to retrain for high tech jobs. High tech jobs are appealing to those making a career change due to job loss for several reasons. First, there is an increasing number of high tech jobs available (Jaschik & Young, 1998; Selingo, 1998). Recent information suggests that this trend of fast growth of jobs in the technology sector will continue into the 1990s and beyond (Jaschik & Young, 1998; Olsen, 1999). Second, there is a worker shortage in the high tech fields. Therefore employment opportunities after the completion of training are abundant. Third, the working environment of high tech jobs is generally better than that of factory work. Bill Gates, CEO of Microsoft, noted that community college can help fill the gap between the demand for technology workers and the limited supply of them (Jaschik & Young, 1998).

Factors that affect participation in job training programs. Deciding to participate in a job retraining program can be a major life decision for an adult who has been out of school for a significant period of time or for adults who have had limited success in educational endeavors. From his review of the literature, Dean (1989) identified the following factors that affected participation of displaced workers in job retraining programs:

> (1) ability to work through psychological stages of loss; (2) higher self-esteem; (3) encouragement from family and counselors; (4) a future orientation; (5) having an understanding of the reason for job loss; (6) having a higher internal motivation for career change; (7) being in the "late establishment" stage of career development; (8) having career aspirations; (9) awareness of the process of career planning; (10) having a high value placed on education by family of origin; (11) success in previous educational activities; (12) participation in previous adult education; (13)

> additional sources of family income; (14) having lower- level skills; (15) having information about training sources; and (16) being younger and less educated worker. (abstract)

Dean (1989) also identified some barriers to displaced worker participation in job retraining programs. These included educational cost, "inconvenient scheduling of classes, lack of information about training, a perceived lack of responsiveness on the part of institutions to individual needs, perceived inability to succeed in training (often related to age), and strong attachments to previous occupation" (pp. 31-32).

Jacobson and LaLonde (1997) in their study of retraining after job loss in Washington state found that men were "far more likely than women to return to work rather than attend college when work is available" (p. 5-16). They also determined that unemployment insurance benefits were a major factor in attending retraining programs for both men and women.

Effectiveness of job training programs. Participants in job retraining programs expect to find employment and earn salaries comparable to their previous earnings at the conclusion of their job retraining program. However, the literature concerning job retraining for individuals who lost their jobs on future employment prospects and earnings is mixed. Jacobson and LaLonde (1997) found that retraining was associated with higher earning in subsequent employment when the individuals took technical courses at community colleges. General education courses did not have a positive impact on future earnings. This trend held true for both men and women. Winders (1989) observed in her study of midlife women who had lost their jobs that retraining was the only factor for which there was clear evidence of reducing the loss of earnings in subsequent employment. Beneria (1998) in a study of former Smith-Corona workers who participated in job retraining found that both men and women earned less in the subsequent jobs.

However, women suffered the greatest losses in income, a finding that Beneria attributes to the fact that women were encouraged to seek retraining in human service fields rather than technical fields like men. In another study that examined displaced workers in Massachusetts and job retraining, Kodrzycki (1997) found that retraining allowed workers to make some fundamental changes in their type of employment resulting in greater satisfaction with work but their future earnings did not exceed those who immediately found employment after job loss and did not opt to participate in retraining.

Cultural Studies and Female Textile Workers

This section provides a context to better understand how textile and apparel industries shaped the development of southern towns, their societies, and the individuals who lived and worked there. By examining the historical and cultural context of southern towns whose economies are linked to the textile and apparel industries, one is better able to understand the impact that the massive closings of plants of these plants has had on these communities and the people who are displaced by these closures.

Haberland (2001) noted that: "By virtue of its size, its reliance upon female labor, and its broad geographic scope, the southern apparel industry provides an opportunity to connect the often disparate concerns of southern cultural history, labor history, and women's history" (abstract).

Studies that have examined the textile and apparel industries in historical and cultural contexts have largely been conducted using what sociologists term the paternalistic framework. According to Anderson (1997), "paternalism refers to a system wherein one group dominates another under the guise of kindness, duty, and benevolent obligation" (p. 4). She goes on to say that "in terms of textiles, paternalism refers to company control of land, buildings, goods, and

services in mill villages as well as the ideology that overlays the relations between workers and mill owners" (p. 4).

Paternalism in the textile industry was a product of the historical and social context in which the industry emerged. While there were scattered textile mills throughout the South prior to the Civil War, it was this war and its aftermath that changed the nature of Southern society. Prior to the Civil War, the South had been a primarily agrarian society, where most white southerners earned their living by working family farms or running plantations. After the war which shattered the southern economy, the South was forced to build a new, more industrialized economy (DeNatale, 1985; Gilman, 1956; Mainwaring, 1988; McHugh, 1981; Moore, 1999). Tippett (1931) writing for the Appalachian Movement Press describes the transformation like this:

> The South began a new way of life. Cotton mills were built with an enthusiasm that was thrilling. The completion of a mill was marked by patriotic celebrations. Subscriptions to erect a factory were circulated in an atmosphere that now accompanies a Red Cross drive. Everything in the old South was overshadowed in the wake of the cotton mill. (p. 3)

Cotton mills dramatically changed the lives of those who found employment there. With the cotton mills came the emergence of the company town, where the mill owners owned the houses where the workers lived, the schools their children attended, the stores where they shopped and the hospitals where they received medical treatment (De Natale, 1985; Mainwaring, 1988; McHugh, 1981; Moore, 1999; Simpson, 1948). Broadus (1921) described the people who came to work in the mills as "desperately poor" and went on to say that there were more women and

girls than men because the "war had taken the men" (p. 190). Gilman (1956) describes the southern piedmont people who provided the initial labor in textile mills in this manner:

> They were not "poor white trash," though they were certainly poor white women and men. They were people who had been crushed by war and reconstruction…. They were people who had been left stranded by the partial collapse of a society; they were not outcasts from a flourishing and continuing society. They had been impoverished by cotton culture; but it had been cotton they had grown themselves, and to begin with, on their own land. They were not people bereft of standards and values, they were, on the contrary, a people who had little left of their heritage except its systems of values. They clung to that system fiercely, hoping by means of it to build a bridge from the past into the future—they were searching for a future that would justify their retention of the democratic ideals of the Piedmont frontier. (p. 128)

For the most part, mill villages endured from the post Civil War period until 1930s (Moore, 1999). Several factors contributed to the dismantling of these villages. First, labor shortages eventually required mill owners to recruit workers from the mountain regions of southeastern states. The mountain folk came to work in the mills but retained the farmlands that they had been able to hold on to after the civil war because the mountain lands were not tied to the cotton culture. As the textile industry continued to suffer labor shortages, newly recruited workers not from the piedmont also began opting to retain their farms and either divide their time between their farms and the mills or commute to work. Another factor that contributed to the demise of the mill village was the invention of the automobile which allowed people to be more mobile (Gilman, 1956).

Though mill villages disappeared in the 1930s, remnants of them remain. Southern towns still bear the names of many of mill village owners. Houses that once were owned by the mill owners are now privately owned by those who continue to work in the mill. Moreover, as noted by Anderson (1997) many of those enriched by the textile industry and their families continue to exert political and financial power in these former mill towns.

The paternalistic society that existed in the textile industry prior to the 1930s has been interpreted as both a benevolent one where the mill owners took care of the needs of their workers and conversely as an exploitive one where the mill owners used and controlled workers to reap the economic benefits of their labor. Frankel (1984) in her examination of southern textile women explains:

> Mill owners declared a higher moral purpose in providing work for impoverished white rural families and building community prosperity. The other side of this ideological coin, however was the high degree of control the paternalistic system allowed over the workers' labor and private lives. (p. 45)

Equally controversial has been the nature of the workers themselves. Although the southern mill workers were often portrayed as docile, evidence documenting labor protests and movement toward unionization which began in the 1920s suggest otherwise. Demands for higher wages and reduced workloads led to a series of violent strikes around the time of the Great Depression (Frankel, 1984; Gilman, 1956; Moore, 1999). During this time, workers joined labor unions in record numbers and protests and strikes stretched from the Carolinas to points further south. Moore (1999) in his examination of the dismantling of the mill village asserts that it was the turbulence of this time rather than other factors that caused the demise of the mill village. According to Moore (1999), mill owners substituted a "mortgage note" for a company-owned

house in an effort to “curtail a growing place-based form of class consciousness” that was manifesting itself in violent protests and strikes (abstract).

The number of women working in textiles continued to increase after 1930 and accelerated even more after World War II. Frankel (1984) attributed this increase to a number of factors including: 1) They needed the income to help support their families; 2) Lack of education and marriage “restricted their opportunity and mobility” (p. 51); 3) Compared to other low-skill jobs at the time, textile work paid well; and 4) Millwork was familiar to them because many of their family members and friends worked in textile plants. In addition to the increased number of women workers, another significant change in the textile workforce occurred--the composition of women workers changed from one of predominantly young single girls to one of predominantly married women.

Other events occurred during the 1930s that would also change the workplace in the textiles plants. Automation that increased productivity was introduced into the textile mills. This automation led to the introduction of “piece rate” work as owners tried to increase their profits. Piece rate work led to closer monitoring by typically male supervisors aimed at improving production.

For the women who worked in the textile mills at the time, their work lives changed dramatically. In addition to closer monitoring of their work, they also had to work longer hours. During the time when the mill society was a paternalistic one, it was normally younger females who worked in the mills. Married women continued to run the households like they had done on the farms. Now these married women who worked in the mills worked an eight hour shift in addition to running their households. While the mills did provide these women a social network

that they had not had on the farms, their opportunities for advancement were limited because the higher skilled, better paying jobs were still held by men (Frankel, 1984).

Paternalism, dissent, automation, and historical factors such as wars and a national depression all helped shape the modern textile industry. Deeply rooted in the economies and politics of small towns and cities in the Southeastern states, textile plants and their owners still help define the culture and society and influence the lives of those who live there. Women continue to constitute the primary workforce in these plants because men moved on to higher paying jobs in the manufacturing sector. Today, there are more minority women working in these factories due to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and more immigration to the U.S. to smaller towns and cities. Piece rate work continues to be the measure of production for these workers, although the plants have undergone more automation in recent years. Women working in textiles continue to balance work and family responsibilities and the plants continue to be their social network. For some of these women, the church provides another social network as is the case in many small southern towns and cities (Anderson, 1997; De Natale, 1985; Smith, 1988).

What has changed for those women working in the textile industry has become a volatile environment where job loss is common. Although the textile industry in America has been declining for decades, NAFTA is likely to hasten this downward spiral. Women textile workers can no longer assume that this industry will provide them a lifelong job. These women working in the textile industry are likely to experience job loss and therefore transition. This reality is likely to change the lives of the women who lose their jobs as well as the communities in which they live (Anderson, 1997; Smith, 1988).

Adult Learning and Job Loss

Aslanian and Brickell (1980) assert that: "Transitions require learning" (p. 35). They also note that: "A job change can be a transition significant enough to require learning" (p. 35). They go on to acknowledge that there are many different types of adult learning including formal or informal, adult education or college classes, and job training. Other authors including Boulmetis (1997), Cross (1981), Knox (1977), Merriam and Clark (1992), Merriam, Mott and Lee (1996) have all noted that transitory periods during adult life are potential times for learning.

Merriam and Clark (1992) noted that learning during bad times such as a period of job loss is more likely to be transformative. "In other words, the more difficult the transition is perceived to be by the learner, the more potential this transition may have for learning, and especially for changing how learners see themselves and their worlds " (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, pp. 107-108).

Not all learning during periods of crisis or transition is positive. Merriam, Mott, and Lee (1996) noted:

> Whether occurring formally in an institutionalised settings, or informally through engagement with life experiences, learning results in changes in behaviour, knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. An underlying assumption, or perhaps bias, about such changes is that they are growth-enhancing and affect the learner in a generally positive way." (p. 1)

These authors contend that "while the majority of adult learning experiences do lead to changes that are positive and growth-enhancing, there are some that inhibit growth" (Merriam, Mott & Lee, p. 2). These experiences may lead to negative outcomes such as "becoming angry or

hostile, more vulnerable and less trusting, less willing to risk, less tolerant and less open-minded" (p. 2).

These researchers base this conclusion on their study involving 18 adults ranging from 22 to 64 years in age who had undergone an experience (such as being a crime victim, losing their spouse, or losing their jobs) that they had identified as "having a growth inhibiting outcome" (p. 10). These experiences had occurred as "little as two months before" and "as much as 27 years before" the conduct of the interviews (p. 11).

Knox (1997) writes when discussing life transitions:

> One component of successful adaptation is educative activity. Participation in an educational program can enable an adult to increase understanding and competence to deal with a change that has already occurred….Educational programs can also increase understanding of likely future changes…. (p. 391)

Bennett (1995) in her study of adult learning and job loss found that the study participants (14 men and 8 women) noted a variety of learning outcomes including learning about:

> (1) the process and experience of change and making changes;
>
> (2) the issue of control, its limits and developing control for themselves while negotiating change;
>
> (3) aspects of themselves, their styles of communicating, working and values; and
>
> (4) their careers, reframing their views of work, and taking responsibility for managing their careers in the future. (abstract)

While each of these studies contributes significantly to the understanding of the types of learning that occurs as a result of life transitions, they do not specifically address how adult learning influenced the transition process. Does adult learning enhance or impede the transition

process? What types of adult learning influence the transition process? These are questions that need to be addressed to advance of our understanding of the transition process. It was anticipated that the study participants in this study would help illuminate how adult learning impacts the transition process.

Contexts for Adult Learning

According to Merriam and Caffarella (1999) adult learning is not limited to formal training in a classroom setting with a teacher. Merriam and Caffarella note that there are "three major types of opportunities in which learning occurs for adults: formal settings, nonformal settings, and informal or self-directed contexts" (p. 43). The community college, where the participants of this study completed their job retraining is an example of formal training that is a classroom setting with a teacher. Nonformal contexts for learning are "less structured, more flexible, and more responsive to localized needs" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 29). Nonformal education is concerned with "social inequities and often seeks to raise the consciousness of participants toward social action" (p. 29). Examples of nonformal learning include community-based adult learning programs and indigenous learning. The third opportunity for learning identified by Merriam and Caffarella is informal or self-directed learning. These types of learning share the characteristics of occurring in the "learners' natural settings and is initiated and carried through primarily by the learners themselves" (p. 32).

In her qualitative study that examined displaced homemakers undergoing retraining at a community college, McMurry (1996) found a relationship existed between nonformal learning and college success. McMurry equated adult learning projects such as "programs for moms outside marriage; programs for recovering alcoholic/addicted women, programs for battered and sexually abused women" (p. 204) and so forth with nonformal adult learning. According to

McMurry "by acknowledging the role of non-formal learning, others can be encouraged to use the resource as a supplemental aid to student success" (p. 210).

It was anticipated that the participants in this study would use all three of the aforementioned adult learning opportunities in making their transition from displaced worker to high skilled worker.

Summary

This literature review has examined adult development theories, life events theories and transition theories. The adult development models provide frameworks that describe how adults develop over the life-span and how life transitions may lead to development. The life events models explain how events, individual and cultural, impact adult development. This literature review found some transition models, however, the literature suggested that there is a dearth of research on job loss as a transition, especially as it pertains to women previously employed in blue-collar jobs. The phenomenon of job loss was also explored, along with literature related to the North American Free Trade Agreement and its impact on American workers. A historical and cultural context regarding female textile workers was also provided. Job retraining after job loss was also discussed. Finally, adult learning as it applies to life transitions was examined. A number of theorists have noted that transitions often are time of adult learning. Moreover, some theorists have identified specific learning outcomes that may occur as a result of transition. However, there was a dearth of literature regarding how adult learning influenced the transition process. Only one study was found that addressed how adult learning influenced transitions. This study examined transition between stages in Fowler's model of faith development. Finally, this literature review examined the contexts in which adult learning occurs including formal, nonformal and informal.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand how displaced female textile workers make a successful transition to skilled employment. This chapter describes the methodology used to conduct this study to include the research design, sample selection, data collection and data analysis. It also discusses research validity and reliability, limitations of the study, and the researcher's assumption and biases.

Design of Study

When selecting a research methodology, the study design should be appropriate for the phenomena being examined. Because the purpose of this study was to understand how displaced female textile workers make a successful transition to skilled employment, a qualitative methodology was appropriate.

Qualitative research "refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data--people's own written or spoken words and observable behavior" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 7). In qualitative research, the emphasis is on process, meaning, and understanding. The qualitative researcher attempts to uncover "the meaning of a phenomena for those involved" (Merriam & Simpson, 2000, p. 97). Qualitative research is inductive and descriptive (Merriam, 1998). The qualitative researcher uses induction to develop hypotheses, abstractions, or theories and is interested in the total context of the phenomena. Because of the dearth of research relative to the research topic, this study can best be described as an exploratory one. While there were studies that addressed transitions and adult learning, the literature review produced no studies that

specifically addressed how adult learning impacts transitions. Therefore there was no research base to draw from to test or validate an existing hypothesis or theory on this research topic.

Merriam (1998) delineates five basic characteristics of qualitative research. According to Merriam (1998), the first is *understanding the meaning people have constructed.* Because the goal of this research was to capture and describe how adult learning impacted the transition process for female textile workers who lose their jobs, retrain and subsequently gain employment in a technical field, it was essential that the research capture the meaning of this experience from the research participants' perspectives. A second characteristic of qualitative research identified by Merriam (1998) is that *the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis.* In qualitative research, data are mediated through the researcher. Since the goal of this research was to uncover and identify the impact of adult learning on the transition process for the group of participants identified above, not to test an existing theory, it was imperative that the researcher had the flexibility to probe emerging issues that may arose during the conduct of the interview. Qualitative research allows the researcher to probe research lines of inquiry that may not have been identified prior to the conduct of the interview.

Qualitative research *usually involves fieldwork.* The qualitative researcher "must physically go to the people, setting, site, institution …in order to observe behavior in its natural setting" (Merriam, 1998. p. 7). For this study, the researcher set up interviews at the local community colleges where the participants attended retraining or at the place where the participants currently worked. It was anticipated that this would be a comfortable setting for the participants because they are familiar with the environment at these locales. By arranging for the majority of the interviews to be conducted at the local community colleges, the researcher was able to observe the participants in an environment where much of the transition occurred for them.

According to Merriam (1998) "qualitative research *primarily employs an inductive research strategy" (*p. 7). She goes on explain that "this type of research builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than tests existing theories" (p. 7). While there were transition theories and adult development theories that informed this study, the researcher could not locate any actual studies that addressed how adult learning impacted the transition process. It was anticipated that this study would produce themes and categories that might be inducted from the data which have not been previously explored. "Finally, since qualitative research focuses on process, meaning, and understanding, *the product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive"* (Merriam, 1998, p. 8). The final product of this research does contain a rich description of the study context, the participants, and participant quotes to support the study findings.

Sample Selection

This study used purposive sampling to select participants. Patton (1990) writes: "nothing better captures the difference between quantitative and qualitative methods than the different logics that undergird sampling approaches" (p. 169). He goes on to say that "qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on small samples, even in single cases (n=1), selected purposefully" (p. 169). According to Patton (1990), "[the] logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting *information rich cases* for study in depth" (p. 169). Patton defines information rich cases as "those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research…" (p. 169). According to Merriam (1998), "[To] begin purposive sampling, you must first determine what selection *criteria* are essential in choosing the people or sites to be studied" (p. 61).

Purposive sampling is also referred to as criterion-based sampling. Criterion-based sampling requires the researcher to establish criteria or standards for the purpose of selecting participants.

These criteria guide the researcher in identifying information rich cases. When using this approach to sampling, not only do you spell out the criteria but you also indicate why the criteria are important (Merriam, 1998). The following criteria were used in selecting the sample for this study: (a) The participant must be female; (b) The participant must have been employed as a textile worker for a period of three or more years; (c) The participant must have lost her job due to NAFTA as evidenced by the fact that she has received federal Transitional Adjustment Assistance (TAA); (d) The participant must have enrolled at a community college and completed a technical degree, diploma or certificate; and (e) The participant must have obtained employment in a technical field unrelated to her previous employment.

There were three reasons for the first selection criterion. First, the majority of textile workers are women (Mittelhauser, 1997). Second, studies on job loss transitions have mainly focused on males. Third, the research that has examined job loss transitions and female workers has largely ignored nonprofessional female workers.

The rationale for the second criterion is to ensure that the participants have spent enough time as a textile worker prior to their plant closing to have developed relationships and ties to that industry and their co-workers. It was anticipated that the transition process might be different for individuals who had worked in the textile industry for a significant amount of time than for those who were more recently employed in that industry.

That the participants were in fact displaced due to NAFTA and not other reasons is important to ensure that the participants were required to make an abrupt life change from full-time worker to full-time student. Moreover, NAFTA-TAA criteria mandate that the recipient of these benefits retrain for an occupational or technical job.

The fourth criterion was selected because most individuals receiving NAFTA-TAA benefits retrain at local community college due to several reasons. First, community colleges are widely dispersed and therefore accessible to most people. Second, community colleges are generally more affordable than are four-year colleges and universities, and third, most community colleges offer programs that lead to employment in occupational and technical career fields.

The criterion that participants have received a degree, diploma, or certificate was selected to ensure that the individuals completed the academic requirements necessary to become successful in a technical occupation. By establishing this criterion, the researcher hoped to eliminate participants who experienced difficulty in a new career field because they had not completed their program of study and possibly were not adequately prepared for their new job. Moreover, nearly all technical degree, diploma, and certificate programs offered by community colleges have some general education requirements that may prove challenging for students who have been out of school for several years. It was of interest to the researcher as to how overcoming obstacles such as completing general education courses or being required to take remedial courses in order to complete general education courses impacted the transition process for these individuals.

Finally, the criterion that the individuals find subsequent employment in a technical field unrelated to their previous employment was selected because for this study it is viewed as the endpoint of the transition examined. Also as part of this criterion, the researcher selected participants who had been working in their new jobs for at least six months. This ensured that the participants had time to form an opinion of their new job.

All of the study participants lived in south central or southwestern Virginia. The reason for this was that for many years, employment in this area has chiefly been limited to the textile and

furniture industries. Since the enactment of NAFTA, this area has been especially hard hit in terms of plant closings directly attributable to free trade. To negate the impact of the loss of textile jobs, this area's economic development efforts have focused on attracting high tech industry to the region. The goal of the economic developers in these areas was to retrain textile workers to fill technology jobs. For these reasons, the researcher did not experience any problems locating participants for this study. The researcher identified four of her initial participants from staff at two community colleges. These college personnel contacted the individuals to ensure that they would be willing to participate in the study. After they confirmed this, they provided the researcher contact information for the participants. However, because the study sample was being drawn from a specific population, the researcher employed snowball sampling to locate participants. Snowball sampling involves asking each participant to identify other possible participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The first four participants all identified other potential participants. These four participants checked with these potential participants and confirmed that they would be interested in participating in the study and after doing so, provided the researcher contact information. This proved to be an effective sampling technique given the fact that many of these individuals were employed by the same employers and attended college at the same time.

The researcher asked the participant to contact any potential participant(s) that she recommended to determine if the potential participant was willing to speak with the researcher. If so, the researcher contacted the individual recommended by the participant to determine if she met the study criteria. Then the researcher arranged an interview.

It was not anticipated that any of the research participants would demand payment for their time. However, the researcher paid a small payment ($30.00) to offset any expenses (such as travel to a mutually suitable site) that the individual incurred as a result of the interview.

There are no hard and fast rules concerning sample size. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended sampling until the researcher reached a point of saturation or where what you are hearing becomes redundant. Informational considerations determine the size of the sample. "If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sample units…." (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 202). Although data saturation can not be predicted beforehand, the researcher expected that the study sample would consist of approximately 12-15 participants. The researcher conducted 13 interviews. At the conclusion of the 13th interview, the researcher felt she had reached data saturation.

Data Collection

Wolcott (1992) asserts "that the full-range of data gathering techniques employed in qualitative research can be subsumed under three categories of activity" (p. 19). He goes on to identify these three categories using the everyday terms of "*watching, asking* and…*reviewing*" (Wolcott, 1992, p. 19). Merriam (1998) terms these three categories: "interviews, observations, and documents" (p. 69). According to Merriam (1998), data "are nothing more than ordinary bits and pieces of information found in the environment" (p. 69). "The data collection technique used, as well as the specific information considered to be 'data' in a study are determined by the researcher's theoretical orientation, by the problem and purpose of the study, and by the sample selected" (Merriam, 1998, p. 70). This study used one form of data collection--interviews.

Interviews

"An interview is a purposeful conversation usually between two people" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 96) that is conducted to "find out what is in and on someone else's mind" (Patton, 1990, p. 278). The purpose of interviewing is to "assess the perspective of the person being interviewed" (Patton, 1990, p. 278).

> We interview people to find out from them things we cannot directly observe. The issue is not whether observational data is more desirable, valid or meaningful than self-reported data. The fact of the matter is that we cannot observe everything. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter the other person's perspective. (Patton, 1990, p. 278)

According to Merriam (1998), interviewing "is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It is also necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate" (p. 71).

Interviews were the most appropriate data collection method for this study because the researcher was interested in understanding how adult learning influenced the transition process for displaced female textile workers from the perspective of the individual experiencing the transition. Only the study participant could provide this information which could not be observed. Moreover, data collected for this study consisted of retrospective accounts of how adult learning influenced the transition process.

After deciding to use interviews as the data collection technique, the next concern in qualitative research was to decide what type of interviews to employ. The type of interview one uses depends on the research goal (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). According to Merriam and Simpson (2000), interviews can range from "highly structured where specific questions and the order in which they are asked are determined ahead of time," to "unstructured where neither the questions nor the order are predetermined" (p. 100). According to these researchers most interviews fall somewhere in between highly structured and unstructured interviews and are known as semi-structured interviews. The most commonly used interview format, the semi-structured interview, was appropriate for this study because this format allowed the researcher to collect comparable data from all participants yet at the same time permitted the researcher to explore new ideas as they emerge during the interview process. Given the lack of research that had examined how adult learning impacts the transition process for female blue-collar workers, the researcher was not confident that structured interviewing would yield the in-depth information concerning the phenomena that the researcher was attempting to uncover. Conversely, a highly open-ended or unstructured interview might not have produced the answers to questions that were germane to the study and could be framed on the available research conducted relative to transitions and to adult learning. Semi-structured interviewing, however, allowed the researcher the opportunity to capture similar information from all research participants as well as the flexibility to explore new ideas, concepts, hypotheses, and themes that emerged during the interview process. This study used the semi-structured format to explore the following topics with the research participants:

1) The participants' demographics and work history including the circumstances surrounding their loss of their jobs in the textile industry.

2) The participants' initial reaction to losing their jobs.

3) How adult learning influenced the transition process for these individuals.

4) Why the participants opted to return to school for retraining.

5) Participants' reactions to their changing roles from full-time workers to full-time students.

6) Participants' reactions to the change from textile worker to skilled employment.

These topics of interest evolved from this study's literature review that included adult development theories, transition literature, adult learning literature, and literature on the changing American economy and the need for workers to retrain to find employment in this new economy. A list of specific questions used in these interviews is included as Appendix A.

The researcher conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Face-to-face interviewing allowed the researcher to observe visual cues that could not be observed in a telephone interview. Visual cues helped the researcher to get a sense of when to probe, that is, follow-up on questions that have already been asked and a sense of when the research participant was becoming uncomfortable with particular questions during the interview process.

All research participants interviewed completed the University of Georgia Human Subjects Consent Form (Appendix B) prior to the conduct of the interview. Consent obtained by this form permitted the researcher to tape each interview. Each interview lasted for approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The researcher transcribed each interview and used the transcription for the purposes of data analysis. Research participants were given pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality.

The researcher has been and is currently an adjunct instructor at a community college which has experienced a high enrollment of TAA recipients. It was anticipated that the majority of the research participants would have completed their program of study at this community college.

However to ensure that the participants felt as free as possible to talk with the researcher, none of her former or current students were included in this sample.

Data Analysis

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) describe data analysis as a:

> process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. Analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them down into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others. (p. 153)

According to Merriam (1998), the data analysis process is also "highly intuitive" (p. 156) Merriam (1998) identifies some data analysis strategies including ethnographic analysis, narrative analysis and constant comparative analysis. The constant comparative method of data analysis is a data analysis strategy proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). When using this data analysis strategy, "the researcher simultaneously codes and analyzes data in order to develop concepts" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 137). "The basic strategy of this method is to do what the name implies--constantly compare" (Merriam, 1998, p. 159). In this study, the researcher compared one particular incident from the data source (interviews) with "another incident in the same set of data or in another set" (Merriam, 1998, p. 159). From this comparison, the researcher developed tentative categories that were compared to each other and to other instances. The researcher continued to make these comparisons within and between levels of conceptualization until exhaustive, mutually exclusive, sensitizing, and conceptually congruent categories that reflected the purpose of the study emerged.

The researcher followed these steps during the data analysis process. First, the researcher carefully read each piece of data (interview transcripts; field notes) as they were collected. While reading each document, the researcher made notes in the margin as insights occurred to her. After following this process throughout the entire transcript or document, the researcher sorted and grouped the notes. The researcher then attached a memo containing a running list of categories and themes to the transcript. This step was especially important because there was some time lapse between interviews. The interviewer repeated the same process for the second interview. A comparison of the two lists of categories and themes was made to determine if groupings from the first interview were present in the second one. Merriam (1998) states that the "two lists should be merged into one master list of concepts derived from both sets of data. This master list constitutes a primitive outline or classification system reflecting the recurring regularities or patterns" (p. 181) in the study. From these patterns or regularities, categories or themes emerged into which subsequent data were sorted.

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998) the researcher must force him/ herself to "search through [the] data for emerging themes or patterns" (p. 143). They advise to not "be afraid to identify tentative themes" and not to "develop a stake in any particular idea until you have had a chance to hold it up to experience and check it out" (p. 143). They go on to say that some patterns will be apparent, while others will not. Throughout the data analysis process, the researcher remained open to the possibility that new insights would emerge at various stages in the data analysis process.

Research Validity and Reliability

According to Merriam (1998) all "research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner" (p. 198). Eisenhart and Howe (1992) define validity as the

"trustworthiness of inferences drawn from data" (p. 644). Merriam (1998) states that research results "are trustworthy to the extent that there has been some accounting for their validity and reliability, and the nature of qualitative research means that this accounting takes different forms than in more positivist, quantitative research" (p. 198). Given that the goal of educational research is to improve practice, it is "imperative that researchers and others have confidence in the conduct of the investigation and in the results of any particular study" (Merriam, 1998, p. 199).

The methodology for ensuring reliability and validity may differ depending on the type of research. While contrasting the issues of validity and reliability in quantitative as compared to qualitative research, Firestone (1987) noted that the

> quantitative study must convince the reader that procedures have been followed faithfully because very little concrete description of what anyone does is provided. The qualitative study provides the reader with a depiction in enough detail to show that the author's conclusion "makes sense." (p. 19)

Merriam (1998) noted that

> regardless of the type of research, validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to the study's conceptualization and the way in which the date were collected, analyzed, and interpreted and the way in which the findings are presented. (pp. 199-200)

She goes on to note that there are strategies can be used to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative studies.

Internal Validity

Internal validity is concerned with "how research findings match reality" (Merriam, 1998, p. 201). In qualitative research, reality is viewed as "holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing" (Merriam, 1998, p. 202). While recognizing that reality is a subjective term whose definition may vary from individual to individual, what is important in qualitative research is that the research findings accurately capture the participant's construction of reality. As noted earlier in this chapter, in qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. Because this is the case, interpretations of reality are assessed directly through the researcher's observations and interviews. Qualitative researchers are thus "closer" to reality than if a data collection instrument had been interjected between [the researcher] and the participants" (p. 203). Merriam (1998) writes: "Most agree that when reality is viewed in this manner, internal validity is a definite strength of qualitative research" (p. 203).

Based on her extensive qualitative research experience, Merriam (1998) offers six basic strategies that can be used to enhance internal validity. These strategies include: (1) triangulation, (2) member checks, (3) peer examination, (4) long-term observation, (5) participatory or collaborative modes of research, and (6) researcher's bias. The researcher used three of these six strategies to enhance the research internal validity.

The first strategy that the researcher used was member checks to validate research findings. Member checks involve taking the tentative findings back to the research participants to determine if the results are plausible (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam; 1998; Patton, 1990; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The researcher telephonically checked with several of the research participants to determine if the researcher's perceptions and conclusions accurately described the experience of the research participant. This was accomplished by the researcher explaining her

findings to the participants and then asking if her interpretation of the data was consistent with the participants' perceptions of certain phenomena. The participants contacted concurred with my conclusions.

Peer examination, a second strategy that enhances internal validity was also used in this study. This strategy involves "asking colleagues to comment on findings as they emerge" (Merriam, 1998, p. 204). No dissertation study is truly a solo endeavor. Throughout the dissertation process, from the initial idea generation of a possible dissertation topic to the final defense of the dissertation, the doctoral student is mentored, guided and coached along by his or her committee chair and committee methodologist. During the data collection and data analysis processes, my chair and methodologist frequently conversed with me to ensure that I was appropriately analyzing the data. Moreover, before the final defense of the dissertation, the committee chair and methodologist reviewed the emerging findings to ensure that they were valid and presented correctly. In addition to these reviews by the committee chair and methodologist, the committee members themselves reviewed and commented on the study findings prior to the dissertation being approved.

Later in this chapter, I will state my assumptions and biases. Stating my assumptions and biases is the third strategy that I employed to ensure internal validation.

External Validity

"External validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to another situation" (Merriam, 1998, p. 207). While qualitative research does not produce generalizable findings in a statistical sense, it does provide rich, thick descriptions which can be used by other researchers "to determine how closely their situations match the research situation and … whether findings can be transferred" (Merriam, 1998, p. 211). This is

called *reader* or *user generalizability* which “involves leaving the extent to which a study's findings apply to other situations up to the people in those situations" (Merriam, 1998, p. 211). The reader or user must determine how applicable one case is to another. However, Merriam (1998) points out that "the researcher has an obligation to provide enough detailed description of the study's context to enable readers to compare the ‘fit’ with their situations" (p. 211). To enhance reader or user generalizability, Merriam (1998) suggests three strategies that can be used. The first, *rich, thick description*, entails providing enough description to enable the reader to "determine how closely their situations match the research situation" (p. 211). The second strategy, *typicality or modal category,* involves "describing how typical the program, event or individual is compared with others in the same class so that users can make comparisons with their own situations" (p. 211). The third strategy, *multisite designs,* involves "using several sites, cases or situations" to maximize diversity in the phenomenon of interest" and to "allow the results to be applied by readers to a greater range of other situations" (p, 211). To enhance external validity, I employed the first of these strategies, the preparation of rich, thick description of the study phenomena, study methodology, the participants, and the study findings. I also provided a detailed description of the study phenomena including an extensive literature review and study methodology that was approved by my committee prior to the conduct of the research. In the findings section of the dissertation, I described each participant and her individual circumstances as they related to the study. Moreover, I used extensive quotes from the participants to underpin the study findings.

Reliability

According to Merriam (1998) reliability "refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. In other words, if the study is repeated will it yield the same results?" (p. 205). If

this study was repeated by a different researcher, even using the same research participants, it is doubtful that the findings would be the same. The reason this is the case is that all data was processed through me and I interpreted it based on my life experiences. Qualitative researchers know that replications may not result in the same findings so therefore a different standard for reliability is used for qualitative research. This standard is consistency. In other words, are the results consistent with the data collected? Do the findings make sense in terms of the data collected? (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To ensure that the data met these consistency and common sense tests, I employed two strategies noted by Merriam (1998). Merriam (1998) refers to the first strategy as *researcher's position*. I employed the researcher position in my study by acknowledging my assumptions regarding the group being studied and my basis for the sample selection. Moreover, I provided in the research findings detailed descriptions of the research participants and the conditions under which the data were collected. Another strategy I used was maintaining a detailed and accurate *audit trail* to record "how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry" (Merriam, 1998, p. 207).

Limitations of the Study

There are some inherent limitations to any qualitative study. When discussing subjectivity and qualitative research, LeCompte and Preissle (1993) noted that those "who study human beings are themselves human beings" (p. 86). They go on to say that qualitative "research is distinguished partly by its admission of the subjective perception and biases of both participants and researcher into the research frame" (p. 92). These comments underscore two important limitations of a qualitative study. First, because all data are processed through and by the researcher in qualitative research, the data are filtered through the researcher's worldview,

values, and personal biases. In an effort to be as objective and dispassionate as possible, I acknowledged my assumptions and biases prior to the start of data collection. Moreover, I conducted periodic self-examinations in terms of my reactions and emotions to the participants and the data in an effort to confront and uncover any biases that may have impacted the outcome of the study. I accomplished this by recording my reactions to the participants and the data after the conduct of each interview and by listening to each interview tape to identify any incidents of bias.

A second limitation of a qualitative study is the sample size. Although I continued to conduct interviews until data saturation, that is, until I began hearing the same comments over and over, the sample size was still small (13 interviews). Because of this, the study findings cannot be generalized in the statistical sense to other individuals making the same transition as the study participants. Whereas this might be possible in a quantitative study with a larger random sample, in this case, generalizability to other populations meeting the sample criteria was not a research goal. However, as discussed earlier in the external validity part of this chapter, I did provide enough detail to enable other researchers to discern if the findings may be applicable to their specific research situations.

A third limitation of qualitative research when interviews are the primary source of data collection involves the possibility that the participants may not be completely truthful. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) noted that: "Interviews are subject to the same fabrications, deceptions, exaggerations, and distortions that characterize other conversations between persons" (p. 98). Because the participants provided a retrospective account of their transition (that may have occurred over a two-to-three year period), there was a possibility that their memories might not have been accurate and complete despite their best intentions to provide an accurate accounting

of their transition process. I used probing and member checks to help negate participant memory lapses and to afford the participant the opportunity to correct their original statements after a period of reflection.

Researcher's Assumptions and Biases

Because in qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and data analysis, it is imperative that the researcher state his/her assumptions and biases prior to the conduct of the study. The researcher must provide the reader a sense of who he/she is and what he/she brings to the research (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Peshkin (1988) encourages qualitative researchers to identify "the subjective I's" when conducting qualitative research (p. 21). Jansen and Peshkin (1992) contend that there are personal values and commitments that will guide the story the researcher writes. The following reflect some of this researcher's assumptions and subjective I's.

The first assumption that I brought to this research was based on her personal experiences of teaching and mentoring female textile workers who returned to college for job retraining. From August of 1997 to November 1999, I worked as a college administrator and adjunct faculty member at a community college that over the past six or seven years has retrained large numbers of female textile workers. Since November, 1999, I have continued to serve as an adjunct instructor for this community college and am currently under contract with the college to conduct institutional research and assessment. The location of this community college is in what Virginians refer to as "Southside Virginia." For years, the largest employers in Southside Virginia have been the textile and furniture industries. The closing of the majority of the area's textile factories due to NAFTA and foreign competition have left many of the area's residents

unemployed because of the area's inability to attract new industry due to the low educational level of the area's population.

Based on my frequent personal contact with many of these displaced textile workers, I brought two major assumptions to this research. First, my personal encounters with this group of women (who in many cases have discussed their personal problems and insecurities after losing their jobs with me) have caused me to recognize that the transition from full-time worker to full-time student is indeed a difficult one. Moreover, I believed that any transition involving loss such as job loss is a difficult one. I know this from a personal experience that led to my selection of this dissertation topic. After being a crime victim, I lost my sense of security and went through a transition process that in many ways mirrored those described in the literature review. This transition also involved moving to a new area where I not only had to deal with the experience of being a crime victim but also with establishing new support systems. Based on my personal experiences with loss, albeit a psychological one, I empathized with those in similar situations.

My second assumption was that education in a technical field is the key to future long-term employment for these women. The economic development picture for the area suggests that the days of high pay, low-skilled jobs will not return. To even approach their previous earning levels, textiles workers will be required to retrain for high skilled jobs that are experiencing worker shortages.

A third assumption that I made was that these individuals will benefit from this research process because this research essentially tracks their progress from displaced worker in a low-skilled position to worker in a field unrelated to textiles. By "reliving" this process, the participant may be able to reflect positively on the progress she has made. A final assumption I made is that adults can and do overcome adversity through adult education and adult learning.

Like any other human being, I have my biases. The following details my personal biases and subjective I's. First, I view myself as a teacher and mentor. For this reason, I perceived this transition process as ultimately a positive one for the individuals involved. I had to monitor this bias during the interview process to avoid becoming a cheerleader for the participants. It was highly plausible that some research participants might view this transition in a negative light. To accomplish this, I reviewed my list of assumptions prior to the conduct of each interview to help me remain mindful of them. I also maintained a journal of my impressions of my objectivity immediately after the conduct of the interview. Later, I listened to each tape for the sole purpose of uncovering any researcher bias.

Another bias I held was that the plight of blue-collar female workers has largely been neglected by researchers. Having lived primarily in working class communities for most of my life, I appreciate the life circumstances of the working class. Here again I had to avoid interjecting my own opinions concerning the plight of blue-collar workers into the research. Moreover, I had to accept the fact that my perceived notions concerning the life and working conditions of blue-collar female workers may be different from those of the research participants.

Summary

This chapter captured the research design for the study and provides details regarding the research process. I chose a qualitative design because it best matched the purpose of the study. A description of the sample and sample criteria was given. Data for the study were collected through interviews and analyzed using the constant comparative method. From the data, emerging themes and categories were documented and reported in the research findings. Finally, the chapter provided information concerning validity and reliability and identifies my assumptions and biases.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents a description of the study participants and the findings from a qualitative inquiry that uncovered participants' view of how they made a successful transition from displaced textile worker to skilled employment. I purposefully selected and interviewed thirteen participants. These interviews ranged from 45 minutes to one and a half hours in duration. I recorded and transcribed each interview and from the transcription coded and analyzed the data using the constant comparative method. From this analysis, I developed common themes and categories that reflected the participants' perspective of their successful transition and how adult learning and other factors influenced this transition.

Study Participants

All thirteen participants were women and twelve of the thirteen were white; there was one African American participant. The participants ranged in age from 31 to 55. Nine of the participants were married, two were divorced, one was a widow and one was legally separated from her husband at the time of the interview. The number of years they had worked in the textile industry prior to losing their jobs ranged from three years to 32 years. College majors of the participants included Accounting (3), Nursing (3), Information Systems Technology (3), Administration of Justice (1), Administrative Systems Technology (1), Business Administration (1), and Electronics (1). The participants currently work in a variety of jobs. Some work in jobs related to health care. Others work for the state or federal government or in the private sector. The descriptions of the participants are presented in the order that the interviews were conducted. These descriptions provide brief demographic information on each participant, the circumstances

surrounding their job loss, and actions they took afterwards. To protect the identity of the participants, a first name pseudonym is used in reporting the content of the interviews. Participant demographics are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 *Participants' Demographics*

Name	Age	Martial Status	Years Worked In Textiles	College Major	Post College Career
Nancy	32	Married	6	Accounting	Project Assistant
Phyllis	50	Divorced	21	Administration of Justice	Project Assistant
Gloria	52	Married	25	Information Systems Technology	Computer Specialist
Sabrina	54	Married	23	Nursing	Registered Nurse
Carolyn	47	Divorced	3	Nursing	Registered Nurse
Cynthia	39	Divorced	11	Accounting	Accounts Assistant
Linda	44	Married	19	Accounting	Business Manager
Cheryl	52	Married	32	Information Systems Technology	Gift Shop Clerk
Julie	31	Married	10	Business Administration	Public Relations
Pam	55	Married	20	Information Systems Technology	Federal Housing Administrative Agent
Marie	39	Separated	15	Administrative Systems Technology	Office Assistant
Angie	37	Widowed	15	Electronics	Purchasing Agent
Sara	34	Married	7	Nursing	Licensed Practical Nurse

Nancy

Nancy is a 32- year-old project assistant at a community college in Virginia. She grew up in Georgia but moved with her family to North Carolina when she was 16 years old. Immediately upon graduation from high school, Nancy went to work at a grocery store stocking shelves because her parents could not afford to send her to college. She worked at the grocery store until it closed four years later. Nancy then went to work at a textile factory in Virginia where she worked for six years until the factory closed due to foreign competition. At that time, Nancy describes herself as "depressed." She stated that she "cried for a week." One month after losing her job, Nancy took another job with a different textile company in the area. Although she indicated that she wanted to go to college at that time, the state employment commission led her and her co-workers to believe that receiving Trade Act benefits to finance college was not an option due to the availability of other textile jobs.

Nancy worked as a sewing machine operator doing "piece rate" work. According to her, the job was fine and the pay was good. The work environment was conductive to only limited interaction with other workers which was fine with Nancy, a self-described introvert. Three years after beginning this job, Nancy received word that the factory was closing. This time, she said she was "excited" about the plant closing because the workers had received word that they would be eligible for Trade Act benefits. In fact this time around, the workers were strongly encouraged to enroll for Trade Act benefits because there were few textile jobs left in the area.

The availability of the Trade Act benefits allowed Nancy to enroll at a local community college where she earned an Associate Degree in Accounting thus fulfilling one of her "main goals in life." After receiving her degree in accounting, Nancy was hired as a project assistant at

the same community college she attended. She believes she qualified for this job because of the computer and accounting courses she took while a student.

Phyllis

Phyllis is a 50-year-old African American woman who has lived in the same community in Virginia all of her life. Prior to completing high school, Phyllis got married. She completed high school and was accepted by three colleges but she was unable to attend college due to family responsibilities. Phyllis was married for 27 years and has two grown daughters. She worked at the same textile factory for 21 years before losing her job.

Prior to losing her job, Phyllis experienced a very stressful work environment. Her company was a subsidiary of a major textile employer in the area that had closed down several years earlier. The expectation was that the company she worked for was on the verge of closing down as well. To avoid layoffs the company began moving employees around to other jobs. Phyllis was physically relocated to another job site and was assigned to a job that involved lifting 75-100 pound pallets. In addition to the physical demands of her job, Phyllis stated that the hours were long (normally 12 hours a day) and she experienced resentment from co-workers with less seniority. Given these working conditions, she was ready for the change from full-time worker to full-time student.

Initially upon enrolling at the local community college, Phyllis was undecided on her major but finally decided to enroll in the Administration of Justice program. Phyllis enjoyed her community college experience although she suffered financial hardships during this period. Loss of a significant portion of her income coupled with her divorce that occurred three years earlier left her is a situation whereby she could not meet her monthly financial obligations. She

overcame the financial hardships by working closely with her creditors to restructure her payment schedules.

In addition to raising a family and working full-time for most of her adult life, Phyllis performed volunteer work in her church and community including working with the rescue squad, organizations working with troubled teens, and other youth and church groups. She had always wanted a job where she worked directly with people. This opportunity presented itself when a counselor, who had mentored her since her arrival at the college she attended, recommended her for a job there. This job allowed her to work directly with other students who had lost their jobs due to NAFTA and were attending college using Trade Act benefits.

Gloria

Gloria was the oldest of six children who grew up in a military family that moved six times during her childhood. She is currently 52 years old and has three grown children ranging in age from 18-34 years old. Gloria dropped out of high school while in the 11th grade to get married. She has remained married to the same person for 35 years. Since her marriage, Gloria has lived in Virginia.

At the age of 17, Gloria began working in a textile factory. She worked off and on at various textiles factories in the area until they closed. For a two and a half year period, she worked at an army arsenal in the area but left there to open her own business, a fabric store. Due to competition from a large national retailer, Gloria was forced to file bankruptcy and return to work at a textile factory that made pajamas and uniforms. The plant she worked at closed in December 1997.

Gloria passed the GED in 1970 and for three years (1981-1983) had taken one class per semester at the local community college. She had always wanted to attend college full-time so

Gloria was excited by the possibility of receiving Trade Act benefits when the factory she worked at closed. She decided to pursue an associate degree in computer technology despite the fact that she had had no previous training or experience using computers.

An admitted "self-learner" and avid reader, Gloria adapted to college very well. She found the college faculty, staff, and other students very supportive and helpful. Gloria excelled at her studies and gained an increased sense of self-confidence resulting from completing her program of study. After graduating, she accepted a full-time position at the college she attended, working in the Information Technology Department. She remains active in helping others learn computer skills and encouraging young women to pursue technology-related careers.

Although Gloria realized her academic and career goals, the road to achieving them was not easy. Her husband proved to be less than supportive. According to Gloria, he expected her to continue running the household and managing the apartments he owned in addition to her studies. He also expected her to continue to contribute financially to the family although she received only $137 a week in unemployment benefits. Moreover, he placed demands on her time that interfered with her studies and refused to attend her graduation. This lack of support from her husband remains a source of enormous emotional conflict for Gloria and one that she had not reconciled at the time of the interview with her. She feels a huge sense of guilt because she feels that her example of subordinating her interests to those of her husband's and allowing him to "control" her all these years has caused her daughter to remain in an abusive situation.

Sabrina

Unlike Gloria, Sabrina's husband and family were a source of continual support for her throughout her transition from textile worker to becoming a registered nurse. Raised in Virginia, Sabrina completed high school and then planned to go to college to become a nurse. However,

her father became ill and her family could no longer afford to send her. Sabrina went to work to help her family and then married when she was 21 years old. She is currently 54 years old, has been married for 33 years, and has two grown children. After her children were born, Sabrina quit work to stay at home with her them and then later returned once they began attending school. For five years she worked at a textile factory that made blue jeans. This factory closed in 1988. She then went to work for another textile factory that produced sweat shirts and pants and worked there until she received word that the plant was closing. She admits that she was angry at the government when she received the news the plant was closing because of the number of workers that were displaced and, for a variety of reasons, would not be able to retrain for a better job.

With the strong encouragement of her husband and her children, Sabrina decided to pursue her lifelong dream to become a nurse. She entered a Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program at a local community college. Sabrina admitted to being "scared to death" when she first walked into the college to enroll in classes but stated she met a college counselor who offered her support and encouragement that continued throughout her time at this college.

Sabrina completed her LPN program and began working at a local hospital. Later, she completed a registered nursing program at another community college. She currently works as a Clinical Supervisor at the same hospital where she first obtained employment after completing the LPN program. She finds her work very rewarding.

Carolyn

Carolyn is also a registered nurse at a local hospital who works in critical care and serves as the house supervisor. She is 47 years old and grew up in a military family that eventually settled in Southwest Virginia. Carolyn says that she had always wanted to be a nurse but after high

school she got married instead. Carolyn worked a series of jobs, mainly at convenient stores prior to her deciding to go to work at a textile plant. Both she and her husband at that time worked at the same plant. After working at the plant for three years, she received notification that the factory was closing. Both she and her husband lost their jobs.

The plant Carolyn worked at was one of the first in the area to be closed due to NAFTA. Initially, the workers from this plant were denied Trade Act retraining benefits because the company claimed that their jobs had not been relocated to Mexico. Believing this was unfair, Carolyn and her co-workers photographed boxes containing "their work" that were addressed to businesses in Mexico. They took this "evidence" to their Congressman, who aided them in securing Trade Act benefits four months after they had lost their jobs.

Once she received Trade Act benefits, Carolyn enrolled in a Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program at a local community college. Carolyn enjoyed her community college experience and attributes her success there to her own determination and the encouragement of a college counselor and her mother.

Like Sabrina, Carolyn went to work at a local hospital and while working there completed additional college work to qualify her as a registered nurse. Throughout this transition, Carolyn received very little help from her husband with managing their household and raising their daughter. She felt that he was "jealous" of her success because he had the same opportunity to attend college but opted not to. Eventually, they divorced after 26 years of marriage because of his infidelity.

Carolyn relied heavily her faith in God to sustain her throughout this period of transition. She firmly believed that "God had closed one door to open another." According to Carolyn, she is the "happiest" that she has ever been in her life.

Cynthia

A thirty-nine-year-old divorced mother of a nine-year old daughter, Cynthia worked in textile factories for most of her adult life. She grew up in a small town in central Virginia and left there only for a brief period while married. After she divorced her husband, she moved back in with her parents and was living with them when she received word that her plant was closing.

Initially upon hearing that the plant she worked at was closing, Cynthia stated that she was "shocked" because she and the others working in the plant had been led to believe that the plant was doing well financially. They were told that while some plants owned by their parent company would be closed, their plant would not. According to Cynthia, the plant employees left for Christmas break thinking everything was fine only to return after the New Year to be told that the plant was closing.

Cynthia stated that her initial shock turned to anger as the company "dragged out" the closure date for her plant. When the plant finally closed at the end of April, Cynthia said that she had accepted the fact that she no longer had a job.

While the majority of her co-workers had already decided by the time the plant closed to undergo job retraining, Cynthia had not. Cynthia hated high school and had “always felt inferior" to her classmates. She feared that college would be like high school. However, when confronted with the choice between going to work in a furniture factory and going to college, Cynthia chose the latter. Cynthia asserted that this decision was a very difficult one for her.

Despite Cynthia's initial fears about returning to school, she did very well in college. She graduated with an Associate Degree in Accounting with a 3.886 Grade Point Average (GPA).

One major source of support for Cynthia was the friends she made who were also Trade Act students. In fact, one of her fellow students hired her for her current job as an administrative

accounts assistant with a health care agency. Another major source of support Cynthia had while attending college came from her parents, especially her mother who not only provided her and her daughter a place to live but also assisted her with the care of her child.

Cynthia says that this transition has taught her a belief in self. She says she is "very proud of herself" and is now the happiest that she has ever been in her life.

Linda

Linda has spent her entire life in a mid-size town in central Virginia. She is 44 years old, has been married for over 25 years and has two grown sons. Linda loved high school and made all A's but opted not to go to college upon graduation because of financial reasons. She married her current husband before graduating from high school. Linda worked at several textile plants for over 19 years.

When Linda first heard that her plant was closing, she had only been back to work for about a week following an injury. Having already gone through several plant closings and several surgical procedures that were job-related, Linda decided that she could no longer deal with the physical demands of a textile job or the emotional uncertainty of losing her job again. According to Linda, she had to take pain pills to get through each workday (her scars from multiple surgical procedures are still visible on her arms). Linda decided to take advantage of the Trade Act benefits, attend college, and study accounting.

Before attending college, Linda had never turned on a computer. In addition to her accounting courses, she took all the computer classes she could fit into her schedule and is currently planning to continue learning more about computers and eventually attempt to obtain some computer certifications.

While attending college Linda visited her mother who was in an assisted care facility several times each day. On one visit, (approximately a year after she had begun college) an employee of this facility approached her and asked her if she would be interested in a job in the business office. After confirming that she could still receive Trade Act benefits (as long as she attended college full-time) and work part-time, Linda began her job as an administrative accounts assistant. Attending college full-time and working part-time proved challenging for Linda; but with the support of her family, she was able to do both well.

During her last semester in college both Linda's mother and her brother died. She was so overwhelmed with grief that she almost quit college. She stated that "when my brother died, it was almost the end of me." Encouragement from her family and her friends helped her get through this difficult period and subsequently graduate from college. Returning to work, knowing that her mother was no longer at the facility she worked at was really difficult for Linda; but she loved her job, so she continued to work there.

Shortly after graduating, Linda received a promotion. She was hired as the facility's Business Office Manager. She loves her job and believes that it helped her get through the grieving process of losing her mother and brother.

Cheryl

Except for one year that she spent in another state, Cheryl worked at the same textile plant for 32 years. She began working at the plant at the age of 17, after she quit high school. Cheryl came from a “broken home” and in her words had an "unhappy childhood." Her mother and father separated when she was nine years old. At that time, her father joined a religious cult and moved to Texas. Cheryl's teen years were characterized by turmoil. She attended many different public schools, eloped, and married when she was 15 years old, and then divorced at age 16.

When she was 17 years old, Cheryl quit high school (she was in the 11th grade) and began working at a textile plant. Two years later she married her second husband, whom she remains married to after 35 years. They have two grown children. Cheryl enjoyed working in textiles until her last few years there when the conditions changed. During this period, management changed and so did her job. For about two years, her job changed from one of sewing bottoms of sweatshirts and sweatpants to one of sewing sleeves, work she described as physically difficult.

Prior to being notified officially that her plant was closing, Cheryl stated that rumors of closure had flourished for about eight months. During this period, Cheryl said that she prepared for the closure both mentally and financially. When the official notification of the plant closure finally came, Cheryl related that she was "overjoyed" because she had been told that the displaced workers would be able to attend school. Cheryl stated that she was ready for a change because the last couple of years working at the plant had caused her to change her priorities.

For Cheryl, obtaining authorization from the state employment commission proved to be challenging and remains a source of bitterness to her even today. The state employment commission office that she originally dealt with was reluctant to approve her for retraining benefits. Because of the information that her former employer had provided her before losing her job, Cheryl believed that she was eligible for Trade Act benefits and decided to check with another employment commission office in another city. This agency treated her well and qualified her for the benefits she believed she was entitled to.

Cheryl enrolled at a community college and earned an Associate Degree in Information Systems Technology. She graduated with a 3.8 Grade Point Average though she admitted learning this new skill "did not come natural" to her. She enjoyed all of her classes and attributed her success in them to her ability to read well.

Although Cheryl wanted a technology-related job in an office setting, she ended up working as a cashier in a tourist gift shop. This remains a source of disappointment to her and a situation that she believes was related to her age. However, ultimately, the job at the tourist gift shop worked out better for her because of the flexible hours. Shortly after accepting this job, Cheryl found out that her daughter had a severe chronic illness and needed her family members to help with the care of her young daughter. Soon after that, her son who at the time was attending a state university was involved in a devastating accident that has permanently rendered him disabled due to a severe head injury. Initially after he left the hospital he required 24-hour care and though he has improved some he continues to require intensive monitoring and familial support.

Throughout these life-changing events, Cheryl says she has learned much in addition to her formal learning. She has learned to participate in the physical, mental, and emotional care of both her children including how to navigate through bureaucracies to help improve their quality of life. She has learned that work can be more than just a source of income. Most important, Cheryl stated she has learned to value her family and her contributions to improving their welfare.

Julie

Attending college had always been a dream of 31-year-old, Julie. Julie grew up on a tobacco farm in North Carolina and moved to Virginia after her father bought a business there during her senior year in high school. When Julie graduated from high school, she had every intention of going to college once she had saved some money. Though she did take some college classes, she continued to work in textiles for nine years at two different plants. She left the first

plant where she made baby clothes after the factory changed their product line and she suffered a significant pay decrease. She worked at the second plant until it closed down.

Julie was elated when she heard that her plant was closing and she could now pursue her college degree in Business Administration. She did so well in college that she was asked to serve as a paid tutor for other students. Julie was also named "Student of the Year," an honor that was especially important to her because she said that even though she was an honor student in high school, she perceived that she was a "nobody."

Julie obtained a job as a bank teller shortly after she graduated from college. Within six months after beginning her new job, she received a promotion to relationship banker that requires her to work very closely with bank customers to promote bank services and resolve problems. Initially, this job change was difficult for her because for the first time during her working career, Julie had to make decisions. She feared making the wrong decision and getting fired. To overcome this fear, Julie taught herself a decision-making process that involved lots of questioning. This process has proven effective for her and she fully expects to receive another promotion soon.

Faith and family helped Julie get through this transition process. She was thrilled about the opportunity to pursue an education, but the period of unemployment proved to be financially challenging for her and her husband who has a low-paying factory job. Julie fully intends to pursue a Bachelor's Degree once she resolves some medical problems that she is currently experiencing. Julie developed a love for teaching while tutoring other students when she was in college and ministering to prisoners, volunteer work that she and her husband do together.

Pam

Entering college for the first time while in her early fifties was not difficult for Pam. In fact, she found it "kind of exciting." One of eleven children, Pam grew up in a coal mine town in Virginia. Her father, a coal miner, wanted her to go to college immediately after high school because she was one of only two of his children who completed high school. Instead, Pam married and had two children who are currently in their thirties. Pam and her husband moved around the Northeastern United States searching for work during their early years of marriage. Eventually they returned to their home in Virginia where her husband worked in the coal field mines for ten years. When the coal field mines began shutting down in the late 1970s, Pam and her husband relocated to another town in Virginia where he found work in a furniture factory and she began working at a textile plant. She continued to work at the same plant for 20 years except for a brief period of several days when she quit due to a disagreement with her boss.

Pam and her co-workers were told in August 1997 that their plant would be closing in October 1997. When Pam and others were notified that their factory was closing due to NAFTA, she admits that she was happy for herself but sad for others. Pam had begun encountering problems with her boss because in her capacity as inspector she had refused to send work back to other employees. She perceived that because the workers were paid "piece meal" rates that her bosses were trying to reduce their pay thus reducing the amount of unemployment pay that they would be able to draw after the plant closed. Her boss threatened to fire her. When she found out the plant was closing, Pam believed that she was "lucky… because it had gotten so rough everyday" that she had considered quitting her job.

With the strong encouragement of her husband and her two children, both who had graduated from college, Pam entered a local community college and began a program of study in Information Systems Technology. Because she had been out of school for so long, Pam had to take remedial courses. She enjoyed the courses and found that they helped her in on level courses in English and Mathematics.

While at the community college, Pam encountered problems with two male instructors who she found to be "uncommunicative." She also believed that these two instructors intentionally tried to intimidate older women in their classes. Other than problems with these two instructors, she enjoyed her community college experience.

Shortly after earning her degree, Pam found a job with Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as an Administrative Agent. Her duties include recommending qualified applicants for rental assistance and home repairs. She loves her job because she "doesn't have to stay in the office all day." Moreover, she is her own boss and enjoys setting her own work priorities and work schedule. Pam believes that she qualified for her current job because of a computer language that she had learned while at the community college that was a requirement for her current job.

While undergoing this major life transition, Pam believes that the support and encouragement of her husband and her children made it possible for her to succeed. Her husband assisted with all household duties including cooking meals. Her two children tutored her on both her general education as well as technical courses. Pam says that she is now much happier and feels better physically because she is no longer subjected to the lint and dust in the plant. The only drawback that she encountered during the period she was in school was that she had no health insurance.

Marie

Marie is a 39-year-old mother of a 11-year-old girl. The daughter of a tobacco farmer, Marie has lived in the same small community in Virginia her entire life. Marie began working in the textile industry immediately after graduating from high school. At that time she wanted to go to college but her family did not have the financial resources to send her. She worked in the textile industry for 15 years and had begun taking college classes at night. She enjoyed her job but had become concerned with declining wages the workers were experiencing due to lack of work.

The 250 employees where Marie work had begun hearing rumors of plant closure months prior to the actual announcement. On receiving the news, Marie was excited about the opportunity to attend college full-time, but she admits that she had to undergo a lot of adjustment when she transitioned from full-time worker to full-time student.

Marie chose Administrative Support Technology as her college major. She enjoyed the small class sizes at the community college because they allowed for more student-instructor interaction, more student-student interaction, and more "hands-on" training. The most difficult course that she took while attending college was the requisite speech class, although she now believes that the class prepared her to better interact with others and helped her overcome her shyness.

After earning her degree, Marie worked part-time for the same college she attended as a computer instructor for a short while. Soon after that she found full-time employment as an office assistant for a construction company that had been awarded a large state contract. Her current job requires her to interact with local and state government officials as well as other employees from her company. The computer

classes that Marie took while at college as well as the organizational skills she learned there have proven valuable in her current job.

According to Marie, the network of friends she made with students who were also former textile workers receiving Trade Act benefits is what helped her the most in making the transition from full-time worker to full-time student. She and a small group of students attended many of their classes at one of the college's off-campus sites. This group became close and supported each other. In fact she and her group of friends were the first eight students to graduate from this satellite campus.

Marie encountered several difficulties during the transition including financial and relationship problems. During the time she was attending school her husband was recovering from an automobile accident and was able to only provide limited financial support to the family. This, coupled with Marie's loss of income, made it difficult for the family to meet their financial obligations. Prior to losing her job, Marie and her husband had experienced martial difficulties that evolved around her husband's unwillingness to spend time with his family. They had separated prior to this time and then reunited. However after their reunion, their relationship continued to decline. According to Marie, her husband did not support her while she was attending college, begrudged attending her graduation, and belittled her after she graduated and went to work and began making more money than he did. At the time of this interview, Marie and her husband were separated, and she planned to remain so because she wants to show her daughter, by example, that she should never remain in a mentally and emotionally abusive situation.

During her separation, Marie has drawn strength from her strong religious beliefs. Moreover, Marie spends time with her daughter involved in academic and athletic

activities. Marie plans to continue college and earn her Bachelor's Degree as soon as she is financially able to do so.

Angie

Unlike most of the other participants, Angie had no prior warning of the impending closure of the textile plant where she had worked for 12 years. Angie had spent 15 years working in the textile industry. She had worked in textiles since graduating from high school. The news that the plant where she worked was closing came almost one year after Angie's husband died unexpectedly from a brain mass. Losing her job was especially difficult for Angie because she was still recovering from the loss of her husband and adjusting to living on one income. Angie lost her job in October 1999 and was not able to begin school until January 2000 because the state employment commission wanted the displaced workers to find work rather than attend school. This period between losing her job and beginning college was psychologically tough for Angie.

Because of the dearth of jobs in the region and her determination to attend college rather than accept a low paying factory job, Angie was eventually approved to receive Trade Act retraining benefits. To Angie the chance to attend college was "uplifting." It provided her a chance "to focus and get going again." She admits that returning to school was tough in the beginning because she had to "relearn study habits." Angie was 35 when she entered college, so she had been out of school for 17 years. She admits that she had never had good study habits while in high school.

Angie chose to pursue a degree in Electronics because she believed that there would always be jobs in that field. She was the only female in the class but indicated that she

bonded well with her male counterparts although initially she "felt out of place." Angie earned a 4.00 Grade Point Average (GPA) and quickly found employment upon graduation as a purchasing agent for an electronics components company. Angie credits the technical skills she learned in her program such as robotics and circuits as the primary reason she got this job. Moreover, she indicates that she uses the mathematical and technical skills she learned in her program daily at her current job. Angie also thoroughly enjoyed her English classes because she loves to write. In her spare time, she writes songs and short stories.

The community college experience proved to be an excellent one for Angie. She found all of her instructors to be very helpful. She enjoyed the small classes and getting to know her classmates. She befriended both other Trade Act students close to her own age as well as younger students who entered college directly from high school. Angie describes herself as being "saddened" when she neared her degree completion but realized that there was "a different road ahead."

Angie enjoys her new job. According to her, she meets and talks with people from all over the world. Moreover, she stated that she is making more money than she did before. One of the best aspects of her current job is she "gets to make decisions," something that she never was allowed to do when working at the textile plant.

What Angie is most proud of is the that her grandmother, who raised her and her sister after their mother was killed in a car accident and their father moved away, lived to see her graduate from college. Throughout this period, her grandmother stood steadfast beside her, encouraging her to never give up. According to Angie, her grandmother has been a tremendous inspiration in her life.

Angie faced many moments of uncertainly while attending college. She second-guessed herself constantly regarding her program choice. There were times when she believed that she would never be able to find employment in her field of study because it was male dominated. However, in the end she feels that her struggles have made her stronger. A devoutly religious person, Angie clings to hope that life will always get better. She feels that she has been given a new life through education. Angie asserted: "…I think that school was finally the outlet that I needed to get my life back focused. I don't know how to explain it; if it had not been for the opportunity to go to school, I don't know what I would have done….it gave me a goal." Because she spent most of her and her late husband's life savings on attending school, she is not currently able to begin working on a Bachelor's Degree, but she plans to do so in the near future.

Sara

Originally from New York, Sara moved to Virginia when she was in elementary school after her parents divorced. Sara is now thirty-four years old. She married her current husband immediately after graduating from high school. They have two children, ages 14 and 7. Sara worked on and off for a total of seven years in the textile industry. According to her, she loved her work and had a number of good friends who also worked there.

Both Sara and her husband worked at the same textile plant that produced flags and coffin liners. Sara and others had sensed that their workload was decreasing and were not completely surprised when their plant reduced its workforce. While she knew she wanted to attend college and pursue a career in nursing, she had some reservations about her decision. According to Sara, she was a poor student in high school. She now attributes

her academic problems in high school to an attention deficit disorder. Moreover, she lacked the parental guidance and support that she felt she needed at that time. She admits that she "really didn't care about school" and that mathematics always "gave her problems."

Because of her problems with mathematics, Sara had to take remedial courses when she enrolled at the local community college. She encountered problems with her instructor who she felt embarrassed students when they asked a question. She did successfully complete her remedial mathematics course because, in her own words, Sara is "stubborn" and "could get hateful right back to get [her] point across."

Having her husband attend school along side of her helped Sara psychologically deal with the challenges of college. Sara and her husband "have been together" since she was 14 years old. Together they worked out a financial plan to cover their household expenses and they also "did a lot of praying." To ease some of their burden in terms of child care and household responsibilities, Sara's mother moved from New York to live with them. According to Sara, her mom helped her a great deal since she had to spend most of her time studying.

For Sara, the transition from full-time textile worker to full-time student was not a difficult one. She simply viewed the process as one of switching jobs from worker to student and, for the most part, she enjoyed her nursing program.

After completing her nursing program, Sara accepted a job at a 90-day rehabilitation center in the local area. Since working as a nurse, Sara has come to question her career choice and at the time of this interview did not appear to be happy in her current job. She stated that she is disappointed in the quality of health care her company provides to

patients as well as the attitude of many of the employees who don't seem to really care for the patients. At this point, Sara is not sure if she will continue to work as a nurse although she plans to seek a job in another setting before leaving the profession entirely.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to understand how displaced female textile workers make a successful transition to skilled employment. Three questions guided this research: a) what steps were involved as these individuals made the transition from displaced textile workers to workers involved in higher skill employment?; b) how do female textile workers describe the role that formal, nonformal, and informal adult learning experiences played in their transition?; and c) what other factors influenced these successful transitions?

The Job Transition Process

To understand how displaced female textile workers make a successful transition to skilled employment, it was first necessary to describe the steps involved in this process for these participants. As shown below in Table 4, the job transition process began with a period where nine of the thirteen participants anticipated their job loss. This period was followed by an initial reaction where the participants experienced a wide range of emotions. For the nine participants who had anticipated their job loss, their initial reaction to their job loss was characterized by relief that they had finally received the official notification. These participants viewed their job loss as an opportunity to return to school and retrain for another career. The second group of the study participants did not foresee their job loss and experienced an initial reaction that was characterized by emotional distress.

The catalyst that propelled the study participants into action beyond their initial reaction was a need for job security. For financial reasons, all of the participants needed to work full-time. In light of the numerous textile plant closings in the area, most of the participants believed that they needed to retrain for higher-skilled employment to avoid having to accept other low-paying factory jobs. After deciding to attend college in lieu of seeking other employment, the participants had to negotiate some bureaucratic obstacles to make enrollment in college a reality. For some of the participants, this was a difficult process. After receiving authorization to enter college, all of the participants experienced an initial adjustment period as they became full-time students. After this adjustment period, the participants settled into a routine and began to view student life as a job. Finally, all of the participants were reintegrated into the workforce in jobs unrelated to their employment in the textile industry.

Table 3 *Job Loss Transition Process*

Anticipation of Job Loss
Initial Reaction
Job Security: Catalyst for Enrollment
Community College Experience
Negotiating the Enrollment Bureaucracy
Adjusting to Student Life
Replacing Worker Role with Student Role
Reintegration into the Workforce
Variety of Job Seeking Strategies
Transformed Attitude about Work and Self

Anticipation of Job Loss

Due to numerous textile plant closures in the area and a general decline in the workload at their plants, nine of the thirteen participants were generally aware of the possibility of their job loss prior to receipt of the official notification. These participants spoke of rumors regarding worker layoffs that were prevalent among the workforce months before they actually received official notification from their plant management. This general awareness of possible job loss coupled with the wait for official word on their status caused concern for some of the participants. Phyllis explains:

> They kept saying we have "x" amount of months and you will know something then … They just kept putting us off and putting us off. We had some people leave before this time came…At first, I got concerned, but I never did get sad. I was really concerned, but I didn't react to the point where it got me to where I didn't want to go to work. I said that this was another day. Maybe they will tell us something today…I enjoyed my job and did the best I could with the job that I had. I knew that was my livelihood. Being single, I knew what I had to do. It was really bad there for awhile.

Cheryl underscored how rumors flourished among workers about potential plant closures before they received any official notification.

> What made us all realize that something was going on when we came back from our vacation, July fourth, they had a meeting and told us that for us "to get this cloud off our shoulders that the plant was not going to close" but then all the major people in the office started being transferred to other places. Our plant manager was transferred to another job and they brought in a plant manager that had been at two

> plants that had closed previously. So we knew then for sure that something was not right. And then they came and told us that [the plant was closing] on August the 4th…and that was when I learned from hard experience that you cannot be a manager and be a Christian because you have to do so much lying. And you know, there he…stood up that week and told us the plant was not going to close when he knew all along that it was going to close.

Rumors of her plant closing also preceded the official notification where Marie worked. She stated:

> It was just rumors. They wouldn't tell us anything definite. I mean, other plants had closed while we were working there and then we just heard some rumors and then they eventually met with everyone…250 employees lost their jobs there or they had to transfer to another place or take advantage of going to school.

While waiting for official notification, some of the participants began preparing for their job loss. Cheryl and her husband "had already started talking about" what they were going to do if she lost her job. According to Cheryl, she and her husband "were not deep in debt for cars or anything like that" so "it wasn't as hard" on them as it was for others. In preparation for their job loss, Marie and Julie began taking college courses. According to Marie, she took advantage of a company-sponsored tuition program to take a computer class "one day a week." She stated that this was "really hard" for her because she had to leave her young daughter with her mother while she attended school at night. Julie had attended college for two semesters before losing her job. Like Marie, she worked full-time during the day and attended classes at night. Julie stated that she planned on getting

her degree even if "it took me every night of the week." When she learned that she had lost her job and could attend school full-time, Julie stated she was "a happy soul."

Initial Reaction to Job Loss

The participants' initial reaction to their job loss largely depended on whether or not they had anticipated it. As noted above, some participants had anticipated their job loss and already began preparing for this eventuality. They appeared more stressed by the wait for the official closure notification than the actual job loss itself. However, for those participants who had no forewarning of their impending job loss, their initial reaction was one of emotional distress. These contrasting initial reactions to job loss are explained in more detail below.

Sense of relief. The participants who anticipated their job loss had heard from previous displaced textile workers that if their plants closed they would be eligible to attend college for retraining. When asked what her initial reaction to the news of her impending job loss was, Gloria replied "I heard we could go back to school." Likewise, Marie indicated when she heard rumors her plant was closing, she was hoping that she could "take advantage of going back to school." Sara, Julie, Linda, Nancy, and Pam all reacted similarly when confronted with the news of their job loss. Sara explains: "Well, we knew it was coming [job loss] because business had been slow and I knew that TRA would pay my way back to school." Julie reiterated this sentiment:

> Well, there were rumors for a long time…They took all of us to one side of the plant and they told us…I was a happy soul…I saw it as a blessing because…I knew that I could go to school full-time without having to work.

Likewise, Linda viewed her job loss as an opportunity to return to school. Asked her reaction to the news her plant was closing, Linda stated "relief." Linda went on to explain that she had been out of work due to an injury and had just returned one week prior to the plant closure announcement. She stated that her first thought was "I'm going back to school…because my body can't take this anymore." Similarly, Nancy viewed her job loss as an opportunity to return to school. Nancy explains: "…I know this sounds terrible, but I knew that I would be able to go to school…When they said the plant was closing, I was probably the only happy one in the plant." Likewise Pam was happy when she finally received official notification that her plant was closing. According to Pam: "…I was one of the blessed ones, it had gotten so rough everyday I said 'I'm going to quit today.' She went on to describe her reaction to the news her plant was closing:

> they came over the intercom…and said they wanted everyone to meet upstairs… I don't remember what his name was, he said: "I have the privilege of telling you all that October 3rd will be your last day." …people just started crying and I wanted to be so happy…I was so happy, and I thought…it hurt a lot of people but I was one of the lucky ones.

Emotional distress. Despite a general awareness of textile plant closures due to NAFTA, some participants stated that they were "shocked and depressed" when they learned they were losing their jobs. Those study participants who had not anticipated their job loss would eventually come to recognize it as an opportunity to return to school but initially they experienced a period characterized by emotional distress. Sabrina and Carolyn, who were among the first to lose their jobs due to NAFTA, described themselves as being "bitter." In regard to learning the news of her plant closing, Carolyn

stated: "It came up all of sudden. We were booming right along and putting out work and we were happy." The workers were told that the plant was closing because there was "no work." Sabrina echoed Carolyn's sentiment: "we had been working overtime, six days a week. We couldn't get enough orders out." Carolyn went on to say:

> I was bitter….because I was thinking that our government would let our factories in the U.S. take our jobs to another country….I was just bitter at the law that would allow factories to close down and move across the border and then bring those goods back into this country without them being taxed very heavily.

Another participant, Angie, was also "shocked and depressed" when she received news that she was losing her job. Her co-workers at the plant had helped her get through a difficult period after her husband died unexpectedly less than a year before receiving the news of the plant closure. Angie describes the importance of her job to her at the time: "I loved it ...the people were great….I loved the people and losing that job was one of the hardest things I faced. It was like losing a part of my family." She went on to say that she was terrified. Angie asserted: "for the last year, I was already having to learn to survive as one, where I had been used to an income of two. And here I was faced with just me and without a job, yes, I was terrified." Cynthia described learning of her job loss as an "initial shock." She went on to say: "I didn't know what I was going to do. Everybody was talking about college. I said "no, I'm not going to college. I hated high school and I'm not going to college."

Job Security: Catalyst for Enrollment

After receiving notification of their impending job loss, each of the participants faced a period where they had to decide their next step in life. The period between the official

notification of their job loss and the time the participants had to decide what to do next was generally a month or two, largely due to federal legislation that required employers to give employees at least a month notice prior to closing a plant. This necessity of having to make a decision within a short timeframe caused most of the participants to move beyond their initial reaction to a more future-focused orientation.

The first and foremost concern the participants had after learning of their job loss was what to do next. For most of the participants, their choice was one of finding another low-skilled job or retraining for another career in order to make a living. Because of economic reasons, none of the participants desired to end their working careers when they learned of their job termination. Although returning to school to train for another career would initially amount to a loss of income, the participants were willing to sacrifice some money in the short term for future higher earnings and job security.

The participants purposefully chose college majors that they believed would enhance their future job security. For example, Sara decided to retrain as a nurse because she "knew that there is a demand for it and a shortage" and she "wouldn't have to worry about being laid off." Similarly, Linda chose accounting as her major because she felt she could find a job in that career field. Linda explains: "everyone told me that I was crazy because accounting was the hardest thing to take. I said that I was going to do it because I know that there is something out there in accounting." Likewise Angie decided to major in electronics because she:

> just felt like this would be one area that never come a case of this was going out of country or you would lose your job again. I just felt like it would be something that would be there…I just felt like it would a secure area to seek a job.

Fear of accepting another job and subsequently losing that one also figured largely into these participants' decision to pursue retraining rather than remaining in the textile industry. The participants had witnessed the volatility of the textile industry and feared that in the long term there would be no jobs left. Three of the participants had already experienced multiple job losses while employed in the textile industry. For these participants the decision to return to school was an easy one. Linda's previous experiences in the textile industry illustrate this point of multiple job loss. When she first started working in the textile industry, she worked at Textile Company A in Town A. Another textile company in Town B closed and Textile Company A bought that plant. Linda transferred to Town B since it was closer to where she lived. The plant owned by Company A in Town B closed in the early 1990s so Linda transferred back to Company A in Town A and worked there for 14 months. Fourteen months later, Company A reopened their plant in Town B so once again Linda moved back to Town B and worked there until they closed down again in 1999. According to Linda, "When they closed in 1999, I said that I had been up and down that road too many times. So, I decided that I was going back to school." Nancy, another participant who had previously experienced job loss in the textile industry underscored this point: "I knew when they announced the plant was closing, I was going back to school and getting my Accounting Degree. No more textile plants for me! Good thing, because there's none left."

Community College Experience

Once the participants made the decision to return to school for retraining, their task then became one of negotiating the state and federal government bureaucracy and college enrollment structure. After admission to college, the participants reported that they

experienced a period of adjustment to college which lasted for the first semester. After that, the participants adjusted to the rhythm of college and began to equate being a full-time student to that of being a full-time worker.

Negotiating the enrollment bureaucracy. Although all but one of the participants arrived quickly at the decision to return to school, the road to turning this desire into reality was easier for some than for others. Phyllis, Cynthia, Linda, Marie, Julie, and Sara encountered no problems when they related their decision to attend college to their respective state employment commission representatives. For these participants the bureaucratic path from full-time worker to full-time student was a smooth one without obstacles. Because these individuals encountered few obstacles during this process, any negative feelings they experienced shortly after losing their jobs seemed to dissipate quickly. Cynthia was impressed that state employment representatives came directly to her plant to qualify the workers for their state unemployment and Trade Act benefits. She stated: "They were wonderful." Likewise, Linda found that "everything went really smooth" when she dealt with state employment representatives. She went on to say that she "never had any problems" with qualifying for benefits or receiving her unemployment checks.

However, this was not the case for other participants who decided to attend college. Gloria had some difficulty initially qualifying for benefits. She explains:

> It was debatable as to whether or not I had enough time in. That one girl said that I didn't, but then they looked back through the records and found out that I did. I went through that edginess when I felt that I wouldn't get to go.

Sabrina and Carolyn had a strong desire to become nurses; however, they did not initially qualify for Trade Act retraining benefits because the federal government did not acknowledge that their job loss was due to the fact that their company had transferred its operation to Mexico. After the workers presented evidence to their Congressman that proved the products they previously made were being assembled in Mexico, they then qualified for Trade Act benefits. However there was a six month lapse between the time they lost their jobs and when they began attending college to study nursing. According to Carolyn, the plant she worked at employed between 300-500 employees. This particular factory was one of the few textile or other plants in the area that was unionized. Until Carolyn found out that she had been approved to receive the benefits, she stated that she "waited" and "worried." Despite these obstacles that Carolyn faced when trying to qualify for Trade Act educational benefits, she remained determined to return to school.

Other participants such as Angie and Pam were initially encouraged by the state employment commission to seek other low skilled jobs rather than attend college. The state employment commission would not allow Angie to apply for Trade Act benefits initially. According to Angie:

> they came and talked to us at the plant once we knew they were shutting down. The VEC people were adamant that we were to try and find a job. "They just couldn't send everyone to school." I was very adamant that I was going to school…I went to places that I knew weren't going to hire me because I wanted the chance for this education, places I knew I wasn't educated to get a job. Say for instance, I would go to an automotive place and apply for a mechanic. At least I was able to say I applied.

After three months of being unemployed and unable to locate a job, the employment commission relented and allowed Angie to attend college.

Cheryl encountered problems with one state employment commission office. She stated: “the employment people acted like it was pulling their teeth to give this to you.” She went on to describe the state employment commission representative that she initially dealt with was “very rude and very hateful…and just tired of fooling with people.” Cheryl decided to go to another state employment commission in another city and was immediately granted Trade Act benefits.

Adjusting to life as a student. After receiving approval by the state employment commission to attend college, the participants all spoke of an adjustment period when they first began their studies at their respective community colleges. Prior to their job loss, none of the participants had ever attended college full time. Only four of the thirteen participants had ever taken any college classes. Moreover, all of these participants had graduated from high school at least ten years before entering college and a few of them such as Cheryl, Pam, and Phyllis had completed high school over 30 years before they entered college. For these reasons, the community college entrance process of taking placement tests, deciding on a major, enrolling in classes and so forth was unfamiliar and "intimidating" to the participants. When discussing her initial appointment with a college counselor at the community college, Sabrina stated that she was "scared to death." Angie spoke of initially "feeling out of place." Other participants such as Sara, Phyllis, and Cynthia admitted to being scared because they had not been good students in high school. Phyllis said she kept asking herself "can I do this?” I had been out of school for over 30 years. It was all new to me. I had no insight as far as what to look forward to…I

changed my curriculum three times." Carolyn, who admitted to being "scared," talked about the first day of class. She asked herself "what have I gotten myself into?" Carolyn went on to say:

> The first day they gave us papers and lots of reading. I'm not one of those people that can read a book in a day…It just scared me to death. You're expected to do this and that. Syllabus after syllabus after syllabus. I left…and I went to mama's. I sat there and I cried. I told her that I didn't know if I could do this… she said that I would be ok.

Scheduling time around their classes and homework to meet familial and household responsibilities was another significant challenge and adjustment for all of the participants. The participants were accustomed to reporting to work, receiving their work assignments from their supervisor, completing their work, and leaving work at the end of their workday. After their standard workday was complete, the participants had no other job related responsibilities. According to Nancy, the difference between being a full-time textile worker and a full-time student was "you could leave work at work but with school, you have to take it home with you." Another participant noted that "it was hard to get a regular schedule…it was hard to schedule my time around my family and everything else." Now the participants were faced with class schedules that did not conform to their previous work hours and the task of completing homework in addition to attending class. Because they were required to attend college full-time, this task was initially daunting for all of the participants.

Another adjustment the participants had to make was a financial one. Although most participants reported earning only $8-$10 per hour while working, these earnings were

substantially more than their unemployment benefits. Moreover, all participants lost free medical coverage and other benefits when they lost their jobs. Julie stated that the biggest adjustment for her was "not having enough money." She went on to explain:

> I had to live on less, plus no insurance. That was a scary thing. If I got on my husband's, it would cost so much, well, I can make it without it. I would say that was one of the difficult things…traveling up and down the highway and at one time my gas money was cut off. That was difficult.

Lack of health care benefits also proved problematic for Sara. Both she and her husband lost their medical benefits when they lost their jobs. Shortly after losing their jobs, Sara's husband experienced an irregular heartbeat that required medical attention. The bills for his treatment exceeded $10,000. Unable to pay this bill, Sara arranged with the local hospital to write off the bill since neither she nor her husband were employed.

This financial adjustment that directly impacted the participants' standard of living was more difficult for some than for others. Single parents and those who were the primary earners in their family were most financially impacted. According to Cynthia, a divorced mother with a child, she "made only $98 per week." The only way she could afford to attend college was to live with her parents.

The participants indicated that after the first semester they had, for the most part, adjusted to life as a full-time student. Moreover, they indicated that during this period they had finally come to terms with losing their jobs and began focusing on earning their degrees. Once moving out of this phase, they reported entering a period where college life became a routine similar to a job.

Replacing worker role with student role. These participants began to view college in terms of a job. This conceptualization of college as a job provided the participants a mental and psychological framework that helped them turn an unfamiliar setting into one that was more familiar and thus more manageable. Moreover, these participants viewed their income, albeit a significantly reduced one, as tied to their success in college. If they were successful, they continued to receive benefits, if not they didn't. Sabrina explained it like this: "being a student was like a full-time job to me. I took it very seriously. I had myself a schedule…It was like a full-time job to me. It was a commitment that I had made." Sara underscored this view: "you just don't work…you go to school."

The participants' class schedules varied from semester to semester. Moreover, some of the participants attended classes at more than one campus in order to complete their programs of studies within the allowed period of time. For example, Cynthia and Linda had to take accounting classes at a local four-year college during their second year of college because the college they were attending was unable to offer these classes. Cheryl, Julie, Pam, and Marie attended some classes at the college's satellite campus which was closer to where they lived. However, due to the limited course offerings at this site, they had to travel 60 miles to the main campus for the majority of their classes.

Despite varying class schedules and time spent traveling from one campus to another, the participants ordered their lives to allow for class time, for studying outside of the classroom, and for fulfilling other adult responsibilities. In essence they developed routines similar to those they had as workers even though the schedules were markedly different. Though she admits, "it was hard to schedule my time around family and everything else," Gloria, managed to do this by remaining on the college campus between

classes to study each day, completing household duties in the evening, going to bed at 10:00 p.m. and getting up at 3:00 a.m. to study and complete her homework. According to Gloria, 3:00 a.m. was "just the time I didn't have anything bothering me. I could read. I'd do quiet things. I didn't want to wake anyone else up. I've always gotten up early." Sabrina attended school until 3:00 p.m., went home, prepared dinner, and then studied. She had "a little place in the basement with a desk" where she studied. Sabrina said that she did this everyday. Both Sara and her husband attended college and majored in nursing at the same time so they devised a schedule outside of class that allowed both of them to spend time with their children and to study. Sara's husband studied immediately after coming home from school. She began studying after the children went to bed and studied until 2:00 a.m.

Reintegration into the Workforce

Reentering the workforce was a priority for these participants because their Trade Act and state unemployment benefits ran out after they completed their college degrees, and they needed the income and job-related benefits. The participants all had long standing familial ties to the local area and did not want to leave there despite a depressed economy and high unemployment. In preparation for future employment, all of the participants worked hard while in college, earning Grade Point Averages (GPAs) of 3.00 or above. Within a month after completing their degrees, all participants found employment. All but one of the participants found a job that was related to their college major, and all but two are satisfied with their current job.

Variety of job seeking strategies. The participants found jobs unrelated to their previous employment in a variety of ways. Some networked with students, college

personnel, and others while students. Others applied for jobs through the college job placement center. Still others applied for jobs through traditional methods such as applying for jobs announced in various media.

Nancy, Phyllis, and Gloria impressed college officials while students and each was hired by the community college they attended. Nancy stated that she "got an inside scoop" on her position. She considers herself lucky for finding this job because according to her, "a lot of the girls that graduated when I did still haven't found something" and "some are even applying to places like they worked before."

Linda found her job through networking at a health care facility where her mother was a patient. Officials learned of her accounting skills through conversations with her while visiting her mother. They asked Linda to work part-time at the facility while finishing her second year of college. According to Linda, she had learned enough accounting skills during her first year in college to qualify for this job. After completing her degree, she was promoted to business manager. She then, in turn, hired Cynthia as a full-time bookkeeper.

Julie also learned about her job with a local bank from a fellow Trade Act student. According to Julie, her friend "told me there was a position opening at the bank, so it was working for a bank and closer to home and this bell went ding, ding, ding and so I put my application in."

Sabrina, Carolyn, and Sara all quickly found work as nurses. Sabrina and Carolyn both work at a community hospital where they did their clinical work as students. Both have received promotions since beginning work there and currently work in supervisory positions. Sara applied for and got a job at a rehabilitation center for the elderly.

The college workforce center assisted Pam in finding her current job. Pam stated that the day she received notification to come in for an interview for her current job, she also had two additional interviews. According to Pam one was with a local high school that "wanted a secretary assistant" and the other one was with a small company that makes airplane parts. She opted to take her current job because she wanted to use the computer skills she had learned while attending college. As Pam explains it: "I knew that I didn't want to be a typist and type all day, I thought I could do data entry cause I took data entry, but I don't know if I want to be pushing data entry all day either." The job she accepted allowed her to use the programming skills she had learned in college as well as her interpersonal skills.

Cheryl, Marie, and Angie found jobs through more traditional methods of applying for available jobs. Because she was having trouble finding a job related to her major, Cheryl accepted a job at a tourist gift shop located close to where she lives. Marie found her job as an office assistant with a contractor working for the state department of transportation through the state employment commission. Angie applied for jobs with local companies that she knew, based on information from others in her field, employed electronic technology majors.

Linking college major to job opportunities. All of the participants took purposeful action to find jobs related to their college majors because they desired to use their newly acquired knowledge. All but two of the participants were successful in this endeavor. As noted above, Pam used the programming skills she learned in her computer classes. Sabrina, Carolyn, and Sara found jobs as nurses and use the nursing skills they learned in

college. Angie, an electronics major, works for an industrial electronics service company where according to her:

> you have to know something about electronics about the current, amps, and volts and all that because the technician will come to me and I say, 'I need this part' well, it's not like I go and look it up and match it up in a catalog. I have to sit down and do a lot of math calculations….You have to do a lot of math calculations to see if this one will work in this circuit.

Linda, Nancy, and Cynthia, all accounting majors, use the accounting skills they learned in college in their jobs. According to Cynthia, the accounting skills she learned in college are "the basis for everything" she does. She explains: "At work, everything I do has to do with balance…there is a debit and a credit." Likewise, Marie, Gloria, and Julie landed jobs related to their majors and use skills they learned at the community college in their current jobs. Marie, an Administrative Support Technology major found work as an office assistant for a construction company where she "performs a lot of office duties" as well as uses "all the Microsoft office programs" to "create payroll" and so forth. Gloria, an Information Systems Technology major secured a job as a Computer Technician at the college she attended. According to Gloria "the classes I took prepared me for the computer work." Julie, a Business Administration major, was hired by a local bank where she "opens and closes accounts." Since acquiring this job, she had received a promotion to Assistant Manager which allows her to better use the business administration skills she learned in college.

Two of the participants, Phyllis and Cheryl, did not find jobs directly related to their college major. Phyllis, an Administration of Justice major, obtained a job as a Trade Act

Project Assistant at the college she attended. Although this job is not directly related to her college major, Phyllis feels that she uses some of the skills she learned in her major. Eventually, Phyllis says that she would "like to work in a prison" because she wants to show prisoners that "there's always a bright side to every dark side." She goes on to say that she "wants to help them see the bright side." Cheryl, an Information Systems Technology major, had no luck finding a job related to her major. She currently works at a tourist shop as a cashier. According to Cheryl:

> I had big hopes of getting a job doing that [computer work], using my skills when I got out, but every time I went for an interview they would say "well, you're just what we need," and then you never heard another word from them.

Cheryl went on to say that she "still would like to have an office job."

Transformed attitude about work and self. Except for Cheryl and Sara, all of the participants are satisfied with their current jobs. Nancy finds her new job as a project assistant in the college's continuing education division "very rewarding." She said she felt like she "is accomplishing something" and feels "useful." According to Nancy, she did not feel this sense of accomplishment when she worked in textiles. She explained: "you were just there to make clothes. If you didn't do it, somebody else would." Nancy went on to say that she is "happier" in her current job than she was while working in textiles because she now has an "office job."

Similarly, Gloria finds her new job to be more rewarding than her previous one in textiles. Gloria explains:

> I really didn't mind the work, but it was just work. There was no good feeling about it. You go to work, earn some money and you go home. It was a job to earn money

> It wasn't (I don't know the words to use) but it wasn't like here. I didn't feel like I could make a difference. Rewarding, yeah, rewarding is the word.

Phyllis also enjoys her new job. Phyllis works as a Trade Act Project Assistant for her college; and although she would like to pursue a bachelor's degree at some point in the future, she finds her current job fulfilling. She asserts:

> I am so happy! I really am. I'm happy in what I'm doing. I'm happy when people call me and need information. I'm happy to help them in anyway that I can. I love to see the smiles. I love to hear them say "thank you" and smile when they leave my office. It gives me another milestone in my life to know that I've helped someone.

Brenda went on to say that "if I had it to do over, I'd do it again and I would encourage anyone that had that opportunity to do it."

Sabrina and Carolyn are both happy with their career choice as nurses. Sabrina said that "in nursing you feel satisfied and you feel you make a difference." According to Sabrina, she did not feel that way about her previous job in textiles. Sabrina explains:

> I can honestly say that I didn't enjoy what I did. It was a job to bring home a paycheck. I enjoyed the people I worked with. I made a lot of wonderful friends but it is not like doing nursing.

Carolyn says that nursing was always something she wanted to do but "never thought" she "was smart enough to do it." Carolyn stated that she went to work in the textile industry because she "just wanted to go to work" and she "didn't have any skills." According to Carolyn:

> They had openings at…I applied there. I applied for production. I'm not a production person…I worked there for three years. I didn't like it but I liked the people I

worked with…Now if I had a choice I would not have chosen that for the rest of my life…that's just not my cup of tea.

She went on to explain the rewards and challenges of nursing:

I will say this. If you are going into Nursing for the money and prestige then you might as well go into another career. You will never get paid for what you do and there is no prestige in Nursing. You put your life on the line every shift that you work. You take a chance at getting stuck and contracting something in other ways than being stuck…We have patients who cuss us and call us everything but a child of God. Those are few and far between. We have those that respect us and thank us and are very, very precious. That's what makes nursing what it is. I didn't go into Nursing for the money or prestige. I went into Nursing because I enjoy taking care of people. The money is just icing on the cake.

Linda and Cynthia enjoy working in the business office at a health care facility for the elderly. Linda asserts: "I love my job!" She goes on to say that she "would get involved in all of the accounts and figure out what was booked wrong…to wrong patients." According to Linda her job is "like working a jigsaw puzzle. I love working jigsaw puzzles…this job has kept me focused." Linda stated that while "she had more time" for herself while working in textiles, "when she got home" she "was so tired from just the physical work." She goes on to explain: "I was just so tired and burnt out that I couldn't do anything. Now I go home and I'm not physically tired." Like Linda, Cynthia enjoys her job at a health care facility. Cynthia stated:

I'm very proud of myself. I go to work now. I have a key to the front office. I go in there. I know what I'm doing. People come to me all day asking me questions and I

> can answer them. I'm proud of myself for that…I'm happier now than I have ever been in my life.

Julie, Pam, Marie, and Angie all indicated that they are satisfied in their current jobs. Julie stated that she "fit in real well" at her new job. Pam stated she was happier and healthier in her new job than she was working in textiles. According to Pam, she loves her new job because "you don't have to stay in the office all day, you can get out and enjoy the fresh air and enjoy the countryside." She went on to say:

> I work in an office and I'm my own boss…I open and close my own office. I answer my own telephone. There's nobody there looking over my shoulders to see if I'm doing it right because I already know how to use the program. I tell my husband, I don't know how I got this job. It is so neat. It's so wonderful knowing you can go in open your own door and know what you're going to do when you get there.

Pam believed she was healthier because she no longer had to endure the "lint and dust in the factory." Marie viewed her job in textiles "as a job" and knew that while working in textiles she wanted "something in different in my life. " According to Marie "she wanted an office job" and enjoys her new job because 'they're a real good bunch of people to work for." When discussing her new job, Angie said:

> Yes, this is much more me. I've never had a job where I actually had to dress up and go into work. I feel kind of business like now. And it's a good feeling. Getting to talk with all the people, all over the United States…I love getting up and going to work now.

Although disappointed that she did not find a job related to her major, Cheryl enjoys her job because it gives her an opportunity to "deal with the public…and I enjoy that."

Cheryl goes on to say "you just meet some of the nicest people…I don't know what it is but everybody has just been really nice to me."

Sara is less satisfied with her career choice of nursing. She thought she wanted to work in geriatrics when she completed her Nursing Degree. She found a job in a rehabilitation center for the elderly but has found her job "nothing at all like [she] thought it would be." She is disappointed in what she perceives as lack of provision of good healthcare for the elderly and a lack of caring on the part of her nursing colleagues. Sara states that she is "shocked" that she has not met "more nurses that care." She goes on to assert that her parents "will never step a foot in a nursing home." Sara stated that she "loved" her job in textiles. She went on to explain: "I had a lot of good friends and we just sat around and inspected cloth all day. Sit down job and just goofed off all the time."

In summary, the participants in this study described a transition process that included an anticipatory period of job loss for some, an initial reaction which for some was a sense of relief and for others a period of emotional distress, a period where the need for job security served as catalyst to cause them to decide to attend college and propelled them out of the initial reaction. The participants characterized their community college experience as including a period where they navigated a bureaucracy to receive authorization to enroll in college, an initial adjustment period followed by a period where they viewed college as a job thus replacing their role of full-time worker with that of full-time student. After completing their degrees the participants were then reintegrated as full-time workers into the workforce. All participants found jobs unrelated to their previous ones either prior to graduation or within a month after graduation. Except for

two participants, all participants found jobs related to their college major. Moreover, all but two of the participants are satisfied with their current jobs.

Role of Adult Learning Experiences in the Transition Process

Now that I have defined the transition process for these participants, I want to present findings that reflect how adult learning influenced this process. These findings are summarized in Table 5 below and are organized according to what the participants learned including options for future employment or education, how to negotiate the enrollment bureaucracy, basic skills in preparation for college work, personal development, and skills for future employment. Also, the findings are organized to reflect formal, nonformal, and informal adult learning experiences that influenced the transition process for these participants.

Formal adult learning discussed in the findings below include formalized classroom instruction such as computer, general education and technical studies classes. Nonformal adult learning discussed in the findings includes self-initiated actions that the participants engaged in that served the purpose of meeting the needs of this population such as self-initiated research to understand Trade Act benefits eligibility and then taking political action to acquire the benefits for themselves and their co workers. Informal adult learning refers to learning initiated by the participants in their natural settings. Examples of informal learning in this study included self-initiated efforts to qualify for retraining benefits, to improve study and time management skills, and to improve interpersonal skills through interaction with other people.

Table 4 *Adult Learning Experiences That Influenced the Transition Process*

What the Participants Learned	Through Formal Adult Learning	Through Informal Adult Learning	Through Nonformal Adult Learning
Options for future employment or education	Employer sponsored information sessions	Self-directed efforts to learn more about Trade Act benefits	
How to negotiate the enrollment bureaucracy		Sessions with state employment commission representatives Follow-up research on information provided by the state employment commission	Employee actions to qualify for Trade Act benefits
Basic skills for college	Remedial mathematics and English classes	Study and management skills	
Personal development	Basic computer classes	Enhanced confidence in capabilities	
Skills for future employment	Technical classes as part of college major	Improved interpersonal skills	

Options for Future Employment or Education

After learning about, or in some cases in anticipation of, their job loss, the participants had to decide what to do after losing their jobs. Essentially their choices involved one of seeking other low-skilled employment or retraining for a higher-skilled job. For nine of the thirteen participants who anticipated their job loss, their formal adult learning experiences began even before they were officially notified of their job loss. In anticipation of their job loss, several of the participants enrolled in community college classes to help prepare them for a future career.

For example, Marie took advantage of a company-sponsored tuition assistance program that allowed employees to take a few credit hours of computer training each semester. Gloria took one course per semester while working full-time. She stated that she "wanted to go" to school full-time but "just couldn't afford" to do so. Julie had also begun taking classes at the local community college because she was "just trying to get out of there [the plant she worked at]." According to Julie, the possibility of being able to attend college full-time "just overtook me because it was something I'd been dreaming of for a long time, just to get my education."

Additionally, some of the participants who anticipated their job loss and some of those who did not engaged in formal adult learning shortly after receiving official notification of their plant closures. Upon learning this news, some of the participants' former employers arranged classes or "information sessions" to inform the participants of the options available to them under the provisions of the Trade Act. For many of these participants, these information sessions propelled them into action in terms of planning for the future. One participant noted: "…I learned from the company …They were very thorough. They let us know exactly what they were going to do. They made sure that we knew what was going on with Trade Act." For those participants who received these classes, the information acquired from them ameliorated, to some degree, their anxiety and fear concerning their job loss. Moreover, the new information that they had acquired in these classes helped them begin planning for their future. In some cases, these classes inspired the participants to self-initiate further inquiry with the state employment commission to help solidify their future plans to attend college.

Some of the participants engaged in informal adult learning while they awaited the news of their job loss and after they received the official notification. In anticipation of their job loss, some participants initiated self-directed efforts to explore their options in the event that the

rumors of their job loss proved to be true. For example, Marie researched her options in the event her plant closed and learned that job retraining was a possibility. According to Marie while she anticipated her job loss, she "was hoping" that she and others "could take advantage of going back to school" that "they would offer that to us."

According to the participants, informal or "self-directed" adult learning also played a significant role in the transition process for them after official notification of their job loss and before they entered college. For example, Phyllis found the information sessions to be useful, but incomplete so she sought to learn more about Trade Act retraining benefits her own. Phyllis explains:

> They didn't know everything but when I took it upon myself to learn about the Trade Act, I read on it. I went to the VEC and made sure that I talked to the right person… I made sure that they gave me all the information that they possibly could about the Trade Act.

For the majority of the participants information they learned during the company sponsored information sessions or through self-initiated research aided them in making their decision to return to school.

How to Negotiate the Enrollment Bureaucracy

After receiving information from their employers and the state employment commission regarding their options as displaced workers, the study participants opted to pursue attending college using their retraining benefits. However as previously discussed, in this chapter, before officially enrolling in college, some of the participants had to first overcome some bureaucratic obstacles. This was the case for Cheryl, Angie, Sabrina, and Carolyn. These participants engaged

in informal and nonformal adult learning to successfully negotiate their way through these bureaucratic obstacles that stood between them and their authorization to attend school.

Cheryl and Angie both engaged in informal adult learning to ultimately qualify for Trade Act Benefits. When trying to qualify for Trade Act benefits, Cheryl encountered problems with representatives of one state employment commission office. Cheryl perceived that these representatives were uncooperative, unhelpful, and not providing her with accurate information concerning Trade Act retraining benefits. Cheryl explains:

> The unemployment people acted like it was pulling their teeth to give this to you but when you work for 30 some years and you pay taxes and you watch other people around you draw…welfare benefits and food stamps and everything, working right beside you, it's my turn to get a little bit of this back.

Fearing that she was in jeopardy of not qualifying for these benefits, Cheryl (rather than abandoning her plans to attend college) initiated a self inquiry to learn more about the Trade Act benefit eligibility process. As part of this self inquiry, she went to another state employment commission two hours away from the one she initially went to in order to learn more about obtaining retraining benefits. There, Cheryl learned more about the process as well as received authorization to receive retraining benefit. According to Cheryl:

> It was such a good experience to go to…when I sat down and told them my problems, I had five or six people come and stand around and they all worked together to figure out how to work out my problems and get my paperwork and everything done. I got my paperwork done in a half a day…When I took my paperwork down to the lady at the college she was dumbfounded. She said it was taking everybody else up to 10 days to get everything and there I had done that in

> one afternoon. I told her that the man at …gave me a number and said that if I needed any help or whatever that I could call him. She called him right then and there cause she had some questions and the ones at …didn't want to answer her questions. He gave her a personal number to …so that she could get some help… As a general rule the people at …are not real helpful; they're not nice…Anytime you think about being rude, you need to think that you could be standing in the person's shoes. It could be you asking for help instead of being asked to help.

Angie encountered similar problems with state employment commission representatives. Through self-directed inquiry that included talking with other displaced workers who had successfully negotiated the Trade Act retraining process and researching her rights as a worker displaced by foreign competition, Angie learned that she if she could not find another job then she would be eligible for retraining benefits. Therefore she applied for jobs that she was not qualified for, knowing that she would not be hired.

Carolyn engaged in both nonformal and informal adult learning to obtain Trade Act benefits that allowed her and her co-workers to go to school. Sabrina and Carolyn faced a situation dissimilar to that of the other participants. In the cases of the other participants, their company had received federal recognition that their plants were closing due to foreign trade. This recognition authorized the workers displaced from the plant closures to qualify for federal and state benefits. However, in the case of Sabrina and Carolyn, their former employer did not request this federal certification, and therefore, the workers displaced from the plant closure were not entitled to Trade Act retraining benefits. To rectify this situation of non qualification for Trade Act benefits, Sabrina and her co-workers began a grassroots effort to seek federal recognition that they had lost their jobs to foreign competition. To obtain this recognition,

Carolyn and her co-workers through self-inquiry involving researching the trade laws and talking with state and federal officials learned that they had to "prove" that their work "was going abroad." To prove their work had been transferred to Mexico, Carolyn and her co-workers took pictures of boxes containing their work that were addressed to a business there. They presented this evidence to their local Congressman and eventually received federal recognition that their job loss was due to foreign competition and subsequently qualified for retraining benefits.

Carolyn explained: "…our particular product was moving to Mexico. They were going to make people make it for a dollar and something a day. We were unionized and they were paying us more than a dollar and something a day." She goes on to explain: "We contacted Congressman…and we had evidence of some of our work being put in boxes with addresses of such and such in Mexico. So, we had pictures of that and it turned out that he got us our benefits."

Basic Skills for Taking College Courses

After qualifying for retraining benefits, the participants had to develop some basic skills to improve their chances of succeeding in college. These basic skills that the participants needed to develop to enhance their chances of successfully completing their college work included remediation in English and Mathematics (in some cases due to the time lapse since they had been in school) and study and time management skills.

In preparation for taking college classes about half of the participants, based on placement testing, were required to take formal remedial classes in English and/or Mathematics prior to enrolling in college level classes. Some of the participants such as Pam, who had been out of school for over 30 years stated that taking remediation courses was "good" for her because she had been out of "school for so long." According to Pam, she "needed it." Although she scored

high enough on the placement test to avoid taking remedial courses, Angie "opted to go back and take algebra" because she "didn't want to jump right into pre-calculus." Angie had taken algebra 17 years prior to enrolling in college and felt she needed "a little background in math again." However, other participants whose test scores indicated that they needed remediation initially became discouraged but went on to become successful in both their remediation and college level courses. Carolyn described her initial feelings after receiving her placement test results:

> I felt so dumb. I thought this is not going to work. I got through it…basic addition, subtraction, multiplication. Taking the remedial English bothered me a little bit. My sister majored in it. She teaches it in high school. But I didn't like the literature part of English. I like the diagram of the sentences because I like to draw. That bothered me because I could do well on the English Placement Test. But if you don't use it, you lose it. That's true. I did have to take it. It's a pass-fail thing. It doesn't affect your GPA.

She received a "B" in both her college level English and Mathematics courses. According to Carolyn, "once you get in the mood to read, write, and study it comes back into place. It's like riding a bicycle."

For others the fact that they did well on these tests bolstered their confidence in their ability to complete college work. Cynthia, who had not made good grades in high school and had never planned to attend college was especially pleased with not having to take remedial courses. According to Cynthia, "I did pretty well…I was really proud of myself." Cheryl and others believed that they did not have to take remedial courses because they are avid readers. Cheryl stated "I like to read and I think that made a difference."

Although only about half of the participants had to take remedial classes before enrolling in college-level classes, all of the participants indicated that they had to learn or relearn study and time management skills. As discussed previously in this chapter, none of the participants had been full-time students for at least ten years and some had been out of school for over 30 years. One participant, Phyllis who had not attended school for over 30 years and who described herself as "not a good study person" in high school explains the challenge she faced her first semester in college:

> it was difficult at first…I had to get in that mindset of studying…I had to readjust…I had five classes the first semester…I had to make sure that I applied myself. I'm a procrastinator…I knew that I had to change that…I would get up early in the morning because that is when I do my best work. I knew that I had to limit my time.

Time management and study skills also initially posed problems for Sabrina. According to Sabrina:

> It was difficult because I had been out of school for so long. I had always been an easy learner in high school. I didn't have to study very hard. But I found that young kids could look at something for 30 minutes to an hour and I had to double my time. I don't know if I needed to put that much time in it or if I didn't have the self confidence. But just getting into the routine of studying was hard.

Sabrina went on to say that during her first semester she "got very anxious" because she "didn't know how the test would be." According to Sabrina, "it took one test with every instructor to get an idea of what type of test that they would give" and "after the first test with each instructor, you knew what they expected."

All of the participants devised schedules that allowed for study time and aided them in getting through this initial adjustment to college life. As noted above, Phyllis allocated study time in the early morning while Sabrina studied after the evening meal with her family.

As also noted above, some participants had to engage in formal adult learning to relearn or hone their skills in mathematics and English in order to prepare themselves for college courses. After completing these courses, all participants felt they were better prepared for college work as exemplified by their comments noted above. Also as noted by the participants, learning or relearning study and time management skills during the initial phase of their college experience also proved crucial in helping them adjust to college and ultimately completing their college degrees.

Enhanced Confidence in Capabilities

All of the participants described their community college experience as one of intellectual and personal development. As the participants mastered their general education and technical college coursework, they developed increased self confidence in their own abilities as learners. This increased self confidence in their own abilities helped convince the participants that they could successfully make this transition. During the interviews, the participants described specific adult learning experiences while at the community college that enhanced their view of themselves as learners thus increasing their self confidence in their ability to successfully make the transition from displaced worker to a worker in a field unrelated to textiles.

Sara explains it like this: "it builds your confidence and confidence was something I didn't have a lot of." Nancy underscores Sara's remark: "I never had much confidence before I did it [attended college]." Cynthia elaborated this point: "I learned that I could do it. I could do what I set my mind to. If I set my mind to something, I can do it. I think that I have proven that."

She went on to say that losing her job "was the best thing that ever happened." According to Cynthia, if she had not lost her job she would not have gone to college and that would have "probably been the worst thing that ever happened." Phyllis stated that she had "learned that nothing is too big to handle if you put your mind to it and use the right steps." Gloria felt that what she learned that helped her most was "learning that I was capable of doing that type of work." She went to assert that telling others who lose their jobs "that it can be done" and "how to do it" is now her "mission."

Both formal and informal adult learning experiences while at the community college bolstered the participants' self confidence. In terms of formal adult learning experiences, the participants indicated that their general education skills such as learning basic computer applications and improving their public speaking skills helped them gain confidence in their ability to successfully make this transition.

Prior to attending college, the participants all acknowledged that they had limited technology skills. Except for Phyllis, none of the participants used computers in their jobs as textile workers; so they believed they had no reason to learn to use them. Linda stated that she "didn't even know how to turn a computer on before" she went back to school. She went on the say: "I didn't have a computer and I had no idea what a computer was about. I've learned a lot with computers." Gloria had a computer in her home but she acknowledged that before she entered college she had "never turned a computer on." Nancy knew how to turn on a computer but that was the extent of her knowledge. She admits that she resisted learning how to use a computer when her father offered to teach her because "it seemed liked too much trouble to write your letters." Nancy further explains: "I just wasn't interested in it. But now, I have to be interested in it." Nancy went on to say that she "found it fascinating that you could do all of that

stuff with a computer." She feels that she is now proficient with computers. By mastering these basic computer skills, many of the participants felt that they now had a solid foundation to enhance their success in their core major courses because many of the participants selected college majors that were technology intense.

Other participants gained confidence in their abilities as a result of taking their required speech class. Sabrina described herself as "terrified" when she realized she would have to speak in front of the class. Though nervous about getting up in front of a group and speaking, Angie gained confidence when she did so. According to Angie, "getting up on stage and having to speak before a group, as nervous as I was, after I did it that one time I realized, "hey" I can do this!" Marie also developed self confidence after taking her speech class. She stated that she got "a whole lot better" at public speaking and is no longer "as nervous about speaking to a group" as she was before. Sabrina echoed the importance of speech class to her self confidence:

> …speech class…it helped me a lot because I was scared to death but it made me to where if I have to, I can get up in front of a class. It made me more outgoing…it helped me develop self confidence.

Skills for Future Employment

According to the participants, they learned skills they needed for future employment through formal and informal learning. Formal adult learning experiences that helped prepare the participants for future employment consisted of technical classes in their college majors. All of the participants were enrolled in a technical program of study that prepared them for employment in their chosen career fields. As a result of taking the technical classes associated with their major, these participants not only learned the technical skills they need for employment in their respective career fields but also gained confidence in their ability to succeed in a new career

field. For example, Sabrina, Carolyn, and Sara gained self confidence after mastering courses in their nursing curriculum and the "hands on" training they received during the clinical practice. Carolyn indicated that she also learned a lot from her nursing-related coursework. According to Carolyn "if it had to do with medicine and the body, I enjoyed it the most."

For Cynthia, mastering Accounting I and II convinced her that she could succeed in the accounting field. Linda, also an accounting major, who admitted that she "didn't know how to turn on a computer" before attending college, "took a lot of computer classes" related to accounting. She found that her knowledge of how to perform accounting functions using computer applications such as Excel prepared her well for her current job. Nancy, another accounting major, also found the combination of accounting and computer skills helped her obtain and retain her current job.

For Angie, learning fundamentals associated with her major such as electrical circuitry, robotics, and computer languages convinced her that she could succeed in the male-dominated field of electronics. Angie found that her electronics classes in addition to preparing her for her current job also satisfied a curiosity and interest she had held since childhood. Angie explains: "When I was a kid, I used to like to take my granddaddy's old radios apart when he was getting ready to throw them away but I never knew how to put them back together." She went on to describe what she had learned in her electronics classes:

> The areas that we focused on that were more toward the growing trend, of course we had to cover the old basic stuff. You've got to know your regular DC/AC fundamentals to know anything about electronics. Robotics, we studied some robotics during my classes there, a lot of programming. I've learned probably seven different computer programming languages and I feel like it is endless possibilities

> with what we've learned…I always felt like the doors could be opened in a lot of different areas, you're not just limited to working on circuits; there's a lot of things an electronics degree can take you into.

Pam, Gloria, Marie and Cheryl learned advanced computer skills that prepared them for future employment in technology-related jobs. Pam learned a computer language that helped her obtain her current job as a government agency administrator. She acknowledges that this programming class was her most "terrifying class" but she eventually mastered it and now her co-workers rely on her to help them with problems related to this program. Gloria stated that the computer classes she took prepared her for "computer work" she now performs at a community college. Marie, an Administrative Support Technology (AST) major found her computer skills, especially her advanced computer classes prepared her to perform office functions she does in her current job. According to Marie, she has successfully completed "a Microsoft Officer User certification in Excel and "wants to go back and get" other applications-related certifications.

Phyllis found the skills she learned in her Administration of Justice courses which she found complemented her "investigative nature" have helped her in her job as a Trade Act project assistant at a community college. She asserted: "I am a very investigative. I love people." She went on to say that the investigative techniques she learned helped her to excel at her current job. According to Phyllis:

> I learned that being precise and you save everything. I know that when we were doing Criminal Justice, we had to refer back. I know that if I have to refer back, I use my folders and I save it…I had twenty-five students to look up. My investigative methods came into being because I had to look them up and find out where they worked. I called them and got in touch with them. I used some methods that …

> taught us as far as looking up people and making sure we find out the different places that they were. You had to keep records and make sure everything was written down and the notes were correct…In ADJ you had to be an investigator and a counselor. You have to be open-minded. All of that has helped me…

In addition to the skills they learned from their formal classroom instruction the study participants engaged in informal adult learning through interaction with others that helped them develop better interpersonal skills. These newly acquired skills proved critical in their new career fields. In their previous work as textile workers, these participants were not required to interact with others to perform their jobs. In fact due to the nature of their job which most described as "piece meal" work, there were actually isolated from their co-workers.

Nancy elaborated on this point:

> in a textile job, you're there to make money. You're not there to get along with people. I was there to make money. I went in, sat down, did not get up except for lunchtime. I didn't associate with anybody. I sat there and did my job. In piece rate you gotta make that money. That's what it does to you. All you can think about is money, money, money. You see, they push you to make so much anyway and that's all you can think about while you are there.

Gloria reiterated this point: "In the factory you don't really have that much time. You are usually isolated. The only time you really talk is lunchtime or break time. It's constant work."

While in college, the participants learned to interact more with others and to work with others to solve problems. For example, Cynthia stated she "worked real close" with another Trade Act student. According to Cynthia, "they helped each other" with their studies. Angie got to know other students who she had worked with at the textile plant but whom she hardly knew.

She stated: "I got to become friends with those people that I probably only spoken to maybe once over the 12 years. It was a real good experience" Gloria described how individuals worked to help one another where she attended college and now works. "From students to faculty and staff, everybody helps each other. I don't see any person being on their own here where you got that in the factory." Marie stated she "used to be a little shy but" she had "opened up more" in terms of interacting with other people. She says she now "knows you have to have contact with a lot of people." Marie, whose current job involves a lot of interaction with others such a "calling different people from around the counties" believes that she "learned a lot of techniques while taking classes that dealt with office situations, scenarios, and stuff like that" that have helped her in her in current job. She also believes that she learned how to "approach herself in a professional way" and "to speak properly," both of which helped her acquire and excel at her current job.

Like Marie, Nancy's current job as a Project Assistant in the Continuing Education Division at a community college in Virginia, involves dealing with other people, a skill she believes that she lacked prior to attending college. Nancy explains: "in this job, you deal with a lot of people out there in the public. I just wasn't used to that. I was used to dealing with people right there, you know, at the textile plant." Nancy elaborated:

> When you work in a plant, people you work with can get hateful but you can get hateful right back. The public, you cannot do that because if you do, you're out the door. If you got a bad temper, you got to learn to control it.

Nancy admits that dealing with people is still difficult for her but she thinks that she is doing "a whole lot better."

Other Factors that Influenced the Transition Process

The study participants identified a few factors that influenced the transition process for them. In addition to influencing the transition process, these factors (shown in Table 6 below) also influenced adult learning.

Table 5 *Other Factors that Influenced the Transition Process*

Support Network
Interactive Instructional Techniques
Readiness for Change
Personal Commitment
Financial Support

The participants identified five factors that enhanced their ability to make the transition from displaced textile worker to full-time student and from full-time student to employment in a higher-skilled career field. These factors included: a) a support network; b) interactive instructional techniques; c) readiness for change; d) personal commitment; and e) financial support. For these participants, support from others including family members, former employers, college counselors and instructors, and other students proved to be a significant factor that enabled them to successfully make this transition.

Support Network

According to these participants, familial support from their spouses or other family members proved to be the most influential factor for them throughout the transition process. The participants stated that familial support manifested itself in both words and deeds. Those participants whose spouses supported them in their endeavor stated that their husbands assumed

more household responsibilities and provided continual encouragement. For example, Linda's husband assumed the household responsibilities of cooking and doing laundry, chores he has continued to do after she had completed school and gained full-time employment. Linda explains how important her husband's support has been to her:

> My husband has been really supportive of me…my family support has meant a lot… When I went to college, my husband learned how to cook, wash clothes, clean. He learned to do a lot. I laugh at him. He still does it. He didn't quit just because I got through school. I still work long hours here. He still will throw a load of clothes in wash or cook supper. It has meant a lot. It has given me the freedom to do what I want to do.

Likewise, support from her husband was a significant factor in Sabrina's ability to successfully complete college and become a registered nurse. While she was initially upset about losing her job, her husband was "real upbeat" and told her "we'll get by." He also encouraged her to go to school although she doubted her own abilities. Sabrina stated: "my husband said if you go and flunk out, you can always go back to the factory. "What is the big deal?" According to Sabrina:

> He was very supportive. I would have been satisfied with being a LPN. He said "you need to go on to get your RN. LPN's don't make as much money… He said "you need to look at the big picture." He said "that our kids are grown. If something happens to me, you need to be able to support yourself." He was there for me…I went to school with a lot of girls who had husbands that fussed because they had to stay at home. I don't think that I could have handled that pressure.

Similarly, Pam found her husband to be supportive. Pam described her husband who was retired from work as "so excited" that she was returning to school. According to Pam, "he's a great

chef" and it was wonderful coming home to "a house that was cleaned and have somebody waiting on you to eat." Nancy also stated that her husband "pep talks me" and "helps me around the house."

Spousal support provided a source of comfort and encouragement for seven of the ten married participants. However, three of the participants (Gloria, Carolyn, and Marie) all experienced martial problems as a result of their decision to attend college. These women directly attributed these problems to their husbands' feelings of jealousy and insecurity at the prospect of their wives attaining more education and potentially becoming the higher wage earner in the family. Carolyn stated the following regarding the lack of support from her husband at the time. According to Carolyn:

> He never told me that he was proud of me…he didn't pay one red cent…he was jealous because I was going to school and he was standing still…I was proud of myself and I didn't need him to be proud of me…He comes from a family that doesn't give encouragement. He didn't know any better.

Moreover, these men resented the time their wives spent studying, feeling that it took time away from their familial responsibilities. Gloria spoke of having to get out of bed and study at 3:00 a.m. in order to complete her homework because otherwise her husband "would not leave her alone." Moreover, she spoke of what she believed were obstructionist tactics designed to interfere with her studies perpetuated by her husband. She cited an example of how he would plan "family vacations" that happened to coincide with her mid-term and final examinations. Gloria explained:

> He had me to take care of everything for him for 35 years. He has this jealousy thing going on. He felt that I was spending too much time doing something else

> so he likes to interfere…I worked it out to where I could take care of him and school too…He didn't come to my graduation…He wasn't interested.

Marie and her husband had experienced martial problem before she lost her job. She feels that his lack of support was a continuation of problems that they had previously experienced. According to Marie:

> we were separated for a year, it really broke my heart a lot. I love him to death but we got back together and I really tried, and I went to school and everything and he just didn't support me like he should and be there like he should. He is just not a family oriented guy. He doesn't take much time with family or do things with us. There was always time for his friends, but not his family

The martial problems these women reported continued after they had completed college and returned to work. At the time of the interview, Carolyn and her husband had divorced due to his infidelity; Marie was legally separated from her husband; and Gloria was seriously reassessing her marriage, fearing that her example of allowing herself to remain in a psychological and emotional abusive situation had in someway contributed to her daughter being in a similar situation. What helped these participants successfully make this transition, despite the lack of spousal support, was the support they received from others (discussed below) and their determination to finish college and work in a new career field.

Parents, especially mothers, and children provided another source of familial support for some of the participants such as Sara and Cynthia. Their mothers helped them with child care and household responsibilities which made it possible for them to go to school. Sara explains: "My mother moved all the way from New York to stay with us, to help us with the kids, to take them to school, to pick them up from school." Cynthia, who lived with her parents which

enabled her to attend school stated her parents "were very helpful." She goes on to say that "mama helped me a whole lot…Mom was a godsend."

Marie's teenage daughter proved to be a source of inspiration for her. According to Marie her daughter "thought it was really something, me going back to school. She'd try to help me with my homework, help me study for a test. She was so tickled that I went back to school." Sabrina's adult children helped out while she was attending school by doing the grocery shopping and laundry. Pam's children, both college graduates, assisted her with her homework. Gloria, whose husband proved to be unsupportive while she attended college, found her two daughters to be "very supportive."

A second source of support for some of the participants came from their employers. In terms of employer support, some participants stated that their employers set up information sessions that outlined their benefits afforded to them by the Trade Act. According to Cynthia, her former employer "was very cooperative and helpful." She went on to say that "we had to take tests, they let us off from work to do that." When discussing her former employer, Cheryl stated "they did everything they could…in helping us get our employment benefits and everything fixed. They gave us good information." Phyllis also found her employer to be "very thorough" in assisting the plant employees.

Support from college counselors emerged as a critical source of support for most of the participants during their community college experience. Phyllis, Sabrina, and Carolyn all stated that they may have abandoned their plans to attend college if they had not encountered supportive college counselors before they began their classes. When speaking of a counselor who was especially helpful to her, Phyllis stated: "…has been such a great mentor…he has helped me grow. He let me know that my strengths are greater than I thought they were."

Sabrina also encountered a supportive counselor at her community college. According to her, this counselor "was always there. She was so encouraging. She was a real motivator." Likewise Carolyn found a counselor a major source of inspiration when she doubted her ability to successfully complete her nursing program. According to Carolyn:

> the first day that I walked through those doors at…was the day I applied and talked to…It seemed from that day forward…that I was going to be a success. She gave you vibes or whatever you call it…After you talk to … you say hey, I can do anything…it doesn't matter what kind of student I was in high school. If I want to learn and go forward with it, then I can do that. She puts forth confidence and gives you that confidence. It's popping out all over her.

Others such as Angie spoke of how certain instructors had positively impacted their community college experience. Angie was especially impressed with one particular instructor who opened the electronic labs beyond normal operational hours so that students could get "hands on" experience with electronic equipment vital to their program of study. Angie believed that this instructor would open the labs and assist students "because he was that interested in the students and their education." Angie went on to say that she "found that most every teacher" she had while at the community college "seemed to be really interested" in their students. Julie encountered an instructor that "was encouraging." According to Julie, he told her that she "was so smart and worked so good with people." He also told her that she could "make something great" of herself. Nancy felt that the best part of her community college experience was her instructors. She stated "I've had some great teachers here." Likewise, Phyllis felt that her instructors "made all the difference" in her community college experience because they helped her so much. Gloria also found her instructors to be a source of support. According to her "they

would go the extra mile to help you." Sabrina stated that 'all the instructors were never too busy and were always there for me…if I had a question about the assignment, they were always there to answer them." This interaction with their instructors helped the participants not only with course subject matter but provided opportunities for them to improve the study skills and their interpersonal skills.

Other students provided another support system to the participants. The participants believed that the younger students accepted their presence in the classroom and valued their contributions in class. Gloria underscored this point: "it didn't matter if you were 18 or 80 in these classes…these 18 year old computer geeks as we called them…helped me and now I can help other people." Carolyn and other participants stated Trade Act students formed study groups that helped them significantly during their time in college. When discussing her interaction with other, younger students, Carolyn indicated that she

> felt like the big sister. If you don't understand or if they don't understand, they would ask me. We got along. I had some young friends in school and enjoyed their company. We all just kind of mixed together.

Marie found other students whom she had previously worked with at the textile plant to be a source of support. According to Marie:

> We did a lot of stuff. Everybody knew everybody. Mostly who we had in our class were people that we worked with at…That was fun. We helped each other out, we'd call on the phone and say 'hey did you figure out this problem?" That was fun, helping each other out.

Cynthia also found a former co-worker to be a source of support while attending college. Cynthia explains: "There was a woman that I worked with at …We worked real close together

for three years. We took every class together. We called each other and helped each other." She and this woman belonged to a small group of "five or six" students. Cynthia stated that "our little group of people supported each other." Angie, the only female in her program who acknowledged initially feeling out of place, came to think of her fellow students as family. She explains:

> We all became a little family because we went through the whole program, the whole two years together and I think they finally accepted me and when they needed help they didn't hesitate to come to me if it was something I could help them with and the other way around. They would help me if I needed help.

In addition to helping the participants with their coursework, interaction with other students also helped them hone the interpersonal skills.

Interactive Instructional Techniques

The participants identified a number of interactive instructional techniques that enhanced their learning experiences and thus the transition process for them. These techniques included instructor-student interaction and student-student interaction. The participants also cited small class size and "hands-on" learning as enhancing their learning experiences while at the community college. Small class size was important to these participants who felt they needed individualized attention from their instructors and who valued interaction with other students in their classes. Gloria explains: "I'm sure that you all have classes with 300 people in the bigger schools. The teachers can't be one-on-one with 300 people." Cynthia disliked high school because of the "huge amount of people there." She enjoyed her college classes because there were fewer people in them. Another participant, Sabrina explained the importance of small classes to her:

> that was what was so great about…it was like being in high school. It was about forty people and that was good for me. If I had gone into a big auditorium with many people, that would have overwhelmed me.

These participants indicated that they learned best through "hands on" training or in other words, learning by doing whether it was part of their general education or technical college curriculum. As already discussed above, some of the participants gained self confidence in their public speaking ability after doing presentations in their speech class. Moreover, all of the participants learned their basic computer skills by performing computer operations and functions in the classroom. One participant, Cheryl improved her ability to use punctuation correctly because her English Literature instructor taught students how to write by having them turn in papers and then showing them how to correct their mistakes. According to Cheryl, "he would mark what was wrong" and then "show you how to correct it." Cheryl stated that through this method of learning by doing, she learned how to properly use "two or three forms of punctuation" that she "had trouble understanding." She went on to say that because her instructor used this type of learning technique she "enjoyed writing" essays.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the participants who were nursing majors learned the most in their clinical practice. Angie stated that she "loved the hands-on work" that she performed as part of her class assignments. As previously noted, Marie learned from the practical exercises involving office scenarios. Marie explains the importance of the use of active learning techniques to her:

> Being in a community college I think was a lot better than going to a four year university cause it more…the classrooms are smaller, the instructors seems to do more hands on, be with the, actually, the student closer, help them out

> better if they have a problem than it would be in a university cause there are so many students there.

Readiness for Change

Readiness for change was a third factor that emerged from the data that enhanced the transition process for some of the participants. For these participants, readiness for change meant they had arrived at a point in their lives where they wanted to change occupations and were committed to doing so. This readiness for change for some occurred because of their recognition that there was little or no future in the textile industry due to plant closures. For others, the physical demands of their textile job were becoming too great. Cheryl underscored this readiness for change:

> I was ready for a change. The job had become so hard physically and I'm an old woman now. As you get older, I don't know if its experience you have of life or whatever, but your priorities take on a difference perspective. Things that were so important to you when you were in your 20's and 30's mean nothing to you now ….when you're young, you want a nice house, a nice car you want nice things on the inside and as you get older you realize that these things don't bring you happiness and weren't that important.

Marie echoed Cheryl's sentiment regarding the physical demands of textile work: "It got to your body a lot. As you get older you can tell a lot. It was repetitive work. Lots of ladies got carpel tunnel and stuff like that" Gloria also stated that she "was ready for a change." According to her, she had always "wanted to go to school but had never had the opportunity to do it." Likewise, Pam stated that she had "got to the point in life" that she was "going to do something" besides working in the textile industry.

Personal Commitment

Personal commitment in part due to life experience and maturity also enhanced the transition process for these women while attending community college. All of the participants were over 30 years old, and all of them had worked most of their adult lives. These participants were able to draw on their life and work experiences such as a strong work ethic, regular work attendance, producing quality work, commitment to goals and perseverance in developing their approaches to college work. Sabrina underscores this translation of life experience to college. According to Sabrina, "college was a commitment. I got up, I got ready. I was in class on time and there all the time…I missed only one day when my father died." Carolyn echoed Sabrina's commitment to her school work.

> I went everyday and sat in the front row. I didn't want to be distracted by someone moving or turning a page. I wanted to focus directly on the instructor. I guess because I was older, I was there to learn. Your younger people just out of high school are there for a good time so that would be the difference in your older students and younger students. You have some younger students that are serious but they are few and far between.

Life experience and maturity had also taught these participants to value education. Most of these participants had opted to get married right out of high school rather than attend college to pursue their career interests. For example, Carolyn stated "that as far back as I can remember, I wanted to be a nurse." She goes on to say that at the time "I was interested in one thing and that was marrying my now ex-husband. Mom tried to get me to go to school and I told her 'no, I can't go to school,' I just wanted to marry…" Likewise, Pam chose to get married despite parental encouragement to go to college to learn to be a designer. According to Pam, "my father wanted

me to go to college but at that time, I thought I was in love…he really wanted me to go…but I didn't go. I got married, raised two kids, and worked hard." Angie also opted to marry instead of going to college but has now learned the importance of an education. Angie asserted:

> I think that the main thing I learned, and I would tell anybody…that education is a very important thing. I've always known that but of course when I was 18, I was more interested in getting married and getting out on my own. But I would tell anybody, get your education. That needs to be something you focus on early in life. It's hard to lose a job and I don't know that it won't ever happen again to me but I still think I've learned that education is very important in our world today. You're not going far without it.

As underscored by Susan, life experience and maturity helped these participants recognize the value of education in terms of obtaining skilled employment. For that reason, these participants were determined to succeed in college and in a new career field. Angie explains: "I knew that I had to get this education, I had to do this. I just didn't feel like I stood a chance in the world of getting a decent job if I didn't." Cynthia who was reluctant about returning to school at first stated that "once I got in it, I wanted to finish it." She said she told herself: "You've started this and by God, you are going to finish it." Despite an unsupportive husband, Carolyn stated that she had "such a burning desire to be an RN" that "nothing was going to get in her way" of finishing school. Carolyn related a conversation she had with her mother upon her graduation. According to Carolyn she had confided in her mother her first day of class that she "didn't know if" she "could do it." After graduation, her mother told her that "she knew the very first day when I came from school that I would make it because I wanted it so bad…so it was determination…I was determined." Gloria, who felt her husband did not want her to attend

college, said that she decided he was not "going to make" her "quit." According to Gloria: "Before he has made me quit." She went on to say "he doesn't control me anymore."

Financial Support

The participants reported that their Trade Act benefits and financial aid covered their tuition, books, and some transportation costs. Moreover, they received unemployment benefits that averaged $400-$600 per month. Although their unemployment benefits were substantially less than what they earned as textile workers and their health coverage ended when they lost their jobs, the participants managed to cope financially. Nancy, Linda, and Sabrina who were not the primary earners in their families and enrolled on their husband's health care plan and their reduced income impacted mostly their family's discretionary spending. For example, Sabrina stated that the unemployment benefits she received "was enough to pay for [her] to get back and forth from school, buy groceries and pay for a few extras at home." She went on to say "it was less than [she] normally made, but you just cut back." Other participants such as Angie and Sara noted how they used all their savings and cashed in investments to compensate for the loss of income. Sara stated that she and her husband "refinanced their house to pay for their car and credit card debt" and then withdrew their 401K funds to meet their financial obligations while they were in school.

However, for some participants, loss of job income and benefits represented a major change in their standard of living. Phyllis had to restructure her payment schedule on her debt to meet her monthly financial obligations. She explains how she took action to restructure her debt when confronted with mounting bills and a loss of income:

> I had to at some point, I had to really, really make sure that I managed my money so that it could work out. I called a lot of people and let them know that I was laid

off and going to school on Trade Act. I asked them to please work with me. I got great response from a lot of my creditors.

Yet other participants such as Pam, Julie, and Sara who did not have the funds to pay the premiums for health insurance during this period went without medical coverage. Loss of income and health care benefits "terrified" some of the participants. Julie who is now experiencing some medical problems stated: …I haven't been very well. But I am very happy to have gotten my education and in the position I'm in because as soon as I got my job at …insurance kicked right in then. I started in July. I had to have emergency surgery. The whole time I was in school, I had no insurance." As noted earlier in this Chapter, Sara had to ask the local hospital to forgive a medical bill that her husband incurred as a result of an emergency room visit because they had no medical insurance after they lost their jobs.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand how displaced female textile workers make a successful transition to skilled employment. In this chapter, I have presented findings from interviews with thirteen participants who lost their job, enrolled in a degree program at a community college, graduated from community college, and then found a job unrelated to their previous one. These findings suggest that these participants experienced a common transition process that was influenced by adult learning and other factors.

For nine of the thirteen participants, this process began with a period where they anticipated their job loss. During this anticipatory period, both formal and informal adult learning played a role for these participants. Some participants, anticipating that they would be making a career change began taking a limited number of college courses at their local community colleges. Others, during this period, engaged in self-directed efforts to learn more about their options in

the event they lost their jobs. One factor that influenced both the process and adult learning during this period was the participants' readiness for change either because of the volatility of the textile industry or the physical toll that working in textile plants was beginning to take on them.

The next step in the transition process, initial reaction, occurred after the participants received official notification of their job loss. Those participants who had anticipated their job loss were relieved that they had finally received the official notification. Those participants who did not expect this news initially experienced some emotional distress upon hearing the news that they had lost their jobs. During this period, some of the participants from both of these groups received formal classes or "information sessions" that helped them move beyond their initial reaction to the news of their job loss. Moreover, during this period, some of the participants engaged in self-directed efforts to learn more about their benefit entitlements. These employer sponsored-information sessions and other employer support during this period proved to be a factor that helped the participants move forward after their job loss.

Study findings revealed that need for future job security propelled the participants out of their initial reaction. For financial reasons, all of the participants needed to work full-time but all of them were reluctant to remain in the textile industry due to the volatile nature of that industry. Previous job loss and the non availability of other jobs that did not require additional skills convinced these participants to pursue further education.

After deciding to enter college, some of the participants encountered bureaucratic obstacles that prevented them from enrolling immediately. To overcome these obstacles, some of these participants engaged in self-directed learning to better understand the Trade Act entitlement process and how to navigate it. Another participant, along with some of her co-workers, initiated

a grass roots effort to receive federal recognition that their job loss was due to foreign competition and subsequently qualify workers at her plant for retraining benefits. These efforts eventually proved successful and these women were allowed to attend college. During this period of uncertainty for these participants, the help and encouragement of college counselors proved invaluable.

After qualifying for retraining benefits and enrolling in college full-time, all of the participants experienced an adjustment period during their first semester of college. About half of the participants had to take remedial courses in Mathematics and English to prepare them for their on level courses. Though some of the participants who were required to take these courses were initially discouraged, they later overcame this disappointment and were successful in both their remedial as well as their on level courses. Because none of the participants had been full-time students for over ten years (three of them had been out of school for over 30 years), all of the participants had to learn or relearn study and time management skills.

Soon after their first semester in college, the participants entered a period where college life became routine. In other words, they replaced their worker role with that of a student role. During this period, these participants began feeling higher self confidence in their ability as learners. This newly enhanced, self-actualized view of themselves as learners bolstered the participants' confidence in their ability to successfully complete this transition. While at the community college, there were some particular learning experiences that contributed to the participants' increased self confidence. These experiences included learning computer skills, public speaking, and learning skills directly related to their college major. The participants also believed that they significantly improved their interpersonal skills while attending college as a result of informal interaction with other students and college personnel.

In addition to adult learning the participants identified some other factors that contributed to their success while at the community college. Support from college counselors, instructors, and other students, interactive instructional techniques as well as the participants' personal commitment enhanced the transition process for these participants while they attended community college.

The participants used a host of job seeking strategies to find employment. All of the participants found employment before or soon after earning their college degrees. Except for two participants, they all found jobs related to their college majors. All but two of the participants are indicated that they have a transformed view of work in that they now enjoy their jobs.

Familial support enhanced this process from beginning to end. Seven of the ten married participants received continuous support and encouragement from their spouses. The three participants who did not receive spousal support and the three participants who were either divorced or widowed received support from other family members.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand how displaced female textile workers make a successful transition to skilled employment. Specifically, this study identified a transition process for displaced female textile workers who earned college degrees and then found employment in career fields unrelated to textiles. The study also discussed what these participants learned and how this learning influenced the transition process for them. Finally, it examined other individual and social factors that influenced both the process and adult learning for the study participants.

In earlier chapters, I presented a discussion of the research topic, a literature review that helped frame the study, the study research design, and a summary of the findings. This chapter presents my conclusions based on analysis of the data, discusses some practical implications for research and practice, and provides some suggestions for further study.

Conclusions and Discussions

There are three conclusions that can be drawn from the data analysis of my in-depth interviews with thirteen female displaced textile workers. First, there is an identifiable job loss transition process that is similar to and different from existing transition models. Second, formal and informal adult learning influenced this transition process. Third, the transition process was influenced by a number of individual and social factors.

Conclusion One: There is an identifiable job loss transition process that is similar to and different from existing transition models.

Study data revealed that there was a transition process for displaced female textile workers who trained for higher skilled employment. This process shared some commonalities with other transition models described in the literature review. However, there were also some significant differences. This section begins by discussing these similarities and ends with a discussion of how the job loss transition process differed from other transition processes.

This study identified a transition process for these participants that began with a period of anticipation of job loss for nine of the thirteen participants, followed by an initial reaction that occurred for all participants. The initial reaction of the nine participants who anticipated their job loss was one of relief. With the official notification of their job loss, they were now positioned to pursue attending college. Those who did not anticipate their job loss initially experienced some emotional distress.

Some theorists distinguish between anticipated and unanticipated transitions. For example, Pearlin and Lieberman (1979) and Schlossberg et al. (1995) view anticipated transitions as those normal events that occur over the lifetime such as marriage, the birth of a first child, and so forth. These researchers characterize transitions such as being fired or laid off from work as unanticipated transitions. Generally, these theorists agree that unanticipated life transitions are more likely than anticipated life transitions to precipitate a crisis (Neugarten, 1976; Pearlin & Lieberman, 1979; Schlossberg, 1987; Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 1980). Findings from this study did suggest that participant initial reaction to their job loss was different for those who anticipated it and those who did not.

Schlossberg (1981) noted that: "Transitions whose onset is gradual are usually easier to adapt to because the individual can prepare for them" (p. 9). She goes on to say that "through getting to know people who already occupy a given position and thus serve as role models, one can 'rehearse' for these future roles" (p. 9). The participants in this study who anticipated their job loss had began to prepare for the future. In preparation for their lives after job loss, most of them had talked with other textile workers who had lost their jobs earlier and were already retraining for higher skill jobs. These other former textile workers who were successfully making this transition served as role models for these participants. This interaction with other former textile workers combined with conversations regarding the future with their co-workers, who were also facing job loss, helped the participants better cope when they were officially notified of their job loss.

The four participants who did not anticipate their job loss characterized this period as one of emotional distress similar to Sugarman's (1986) period of *immobilization*, Kubler-Ross' (1997) stage of *anger*, Schlossberg et al. period of *moving out* and Bridges' (1980) *endings.* Participants described this emotional distress in varying terms to include shock, disbelief, anger, and confusion. Moreover, some participants described feeling a sense of betrayal by their former employer as well as their country for allowing foreign competition that they believed caused the loss of their jobs.

A need for job security served as a catalyst that caused the participants to move beyond their initial reaction. All of these participants needed to work in order to earn money to support themselves and their families. Moreover, based on their own experiences or those of others, these participants had become convinced that their survival depended on securing employment in an occupation unrelated to textiles which would involve retraining. Although this finding is not

consistent with the transition models examined in the literature review, it is consistent with those of a number of other theorists (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980; Bendick & Egan, 1982; Beneria, 1998; Blaxter & Tight, 1995; Caro & Morris, 1991; Jacobson & LaLonde, 1997; Kerka, 1991; Kim, 1996) who have acknowledged that displaced workers often must confront the fact that they need to acquire new skills in order to secure future employment. These researchers say that this might involve earning college or technical degrees.

Bridges (1980, 1994) in his transitional model describes a phase that followed his first phase (endings) which he refers to as time in the "neutral zone." According to Bridges, while in the neutral zone, the individual struggles to break from the past and compose a new life. Sugarman (1986) refers to this time in transition as "letting go." According to Sugarman, this is a period where the individual breaks with the past and begins to accept the reality of change. Schlossberg et al. (1995) notes that disengaging from former roles, relationships, routines, and so forth is part of the transitional phase they refer to as "moving out."

As the participants begin negotiating the enrollment process, the data does suggest that they experienced a period that somewhat parallels those described above. Their job loss caused them to have to let go of the past which involved disengaging from their role as textile worker and disengaging from the relationships they had made while working in the textile plants. Although the participants looked forward to retraining, many of them acknowledged leaving their co-workers was difficult.

Transitional theorists acknowledge that assuming new roles such as full-time student while making a major life transition can be difficult. Sugarman (1986) identifies this phase in her transitional model as "testing." According to Sugarman (1986), it is during this phase that the individual begins to explore new options and formulate new identities. While in this phase, the

individual begins to establish new bonds and attachments to his/her new world. Similarly, Schlossberg et al. (1995), in what they labeled as "moving in" describe a transitory period where individuals making transitions begin to assume new roles, relationships, and so forth.

Data analysis from this study revealed that the study participants experienced an adjustment period similar to the one described above. According to the participants, this period where they had to learn how to be a student lasted for most of their first semester.

Although entering community college was not the endpoint of the transition process for these participants, the study data does suggest after their first semester there, they entered into a period that is similar to Sugarman's (1986) "integration," and Schlossberg et al. (1995) "moving through" phases. According to Sugarman (1986), integration occurs when individuals become comfortable in their new roles. Schlossberg et al. (1995) noted that entering the "moving through" phase begins once the individual has "learned the ropes" (p. 45). After successfully completing their first semester, study participants began to view their role as student similar to that of a worker. In other words "they had learned the ropes." They were now confident that they could succeed in college.

According to Bridges (1980, 1994), beginnings occur when the individual has a new direction in life and he/she reintegrates a new identity with some elements of his /her old identity. For these participants, their new direction in life involved career change. Career change was now possible for them because they now possessed a skill set that matched requirements of higher-skilled employment. This skill set was acquired through both formal and informal adult learning.

Another researcher, Kodrzycki (1997) found that retraining afforded workers the opportunity to make some fundamental changes in their type of employment that resulted in greater

satisfaction with work. This study supported Kodrzycki's finding in the sense that all, except one, of the participants reported a higher level of satisfaction with their current job compared to their previous ones. The participants also reported enjoying aspects of their new jobs that were not present in their previous one such as learning to make decisions, cope with the public, and so forth. Their new jobs provided the study participants additional learning opportunities as they "learned the ropes." They now had a *transformed view of work* because they viewed their new jobs as purposeful and meaningful. They were no longer just "making clothes."

The job loss transition process proved to be relatively similar to those of Bridges (1980, 1994) and Schlossberg et al. (1995). This is not especially surprising given the fact that both of these theorists had examined job loss when constructing their models. However, the participants in this study did not appear to experience all four of the aspects that Bridges (1980, 1994) associated with his first phase, endings. For example, the participants did experience what might be termed disengagement and disidentification. However, there was no evidence that the participants experienced disenchantment or disorientation. Likewise, while the transition model of Schlossberg et al. explained some aspects of the job loss transition process but there were several differences. Schlossberg et al. do not specifically address catalysts that determine the direction of a transition. In this study, job security proved to be a strong catalyst that influenced the participants' decision to retrain for higher-skilled employment. This study also identified a transformed attitude about work and self as part of the job loss transition process. Schlossberg et al. do not address this in their transition model.

The job loss process also closely paralleled that of Sugarman's (1986) transition process in that the participants experienced periods that closely resembled immobilization, self-doubt, letting go, testing, and integration. However, there was no evidence that the study participants

experienced a period similar to Sugarman's (1986) search for meaning. It is possible that the participants did not experience this period because all of them had opted to return to school and retrain, therefore they understood why they were making this change.

Of the four transition models examined in the literature review, Kubler-Ross' (1997) transition process proved to be the least similar to the job loss transition process. One reason that may explain this is that Kubler-Ross' (1997) model addresses one specific transition, that of terminally ill patients. The transition process for this group might be somewhat different than processes that address other transitions such as job loss. As previously noted, the only stages in Kubler-Ross' (1997) process that proved similar to those of the job loss transition process were stages she called anger and acceptance. None of the participants reported initially feeling a sense of denial and isolation, the first stage in Kubler-Ross' (1997) transition model. One reason that might explain this lack of feeling a sense of isolation is that the textile plant closings affected large numbers of people, not just the study participants. Therefore they were not alone when making this transition. There also was no evidence in this study that suggested the participants experienced periods of bargaining or depression, two other stages in Kubler-Ross' (1997) transition process. Here again, a plausible explanation may be that the job loss transition process is different than the process experienced by terminally ill patients.

In addition to the transition theorists discussed above, Palmer-Spilker and Reed (1993) and Dean (1989) noted that job loss may cause a lack of self confidence in displaced workers. Data from this study did suggest that the participants experienced low self confidence immediately after losing their jobs and beginning college. However, all of the participants reported that they gained self confidence as they successfully proceeded through the process. These participants attributed their increased self confidence to positive adult learning experiences.

Conclusion Two: Formal and informal adult learning influenced the transition process

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) identify "three major types of opportunities in which learning occurs for adults: formal setting, nonformal settings, and informal or self-directed contexts" (p. 26). They go on to describe each of these contexts. Formal adult learning normally involves a classroom setting with a teacher. Nonformal adult learning settings are "less structured, more flexible, and more responsive to localized needs" (p, 29). "Informal or self-directed learning occurs in the learners natural setting and initiated and carried through primarily by the learners themselves" (p. 32). Data from this research suggested that the participants in the study engaged in learning experiences in each of these contexts and that this learning positively influenced the transition process for them.

Formal adult learning. Formal adult learning began for some of the participants shortly after they received official notification of their job loss. For these participants, learning in a formal setting included employer-sponsored information sessions, remedial classes in English and mathematics, general education classes such as basic computer courses and speech, and technical courses in their major.

While anticipating or not anticipating their job loss impacted the participants' initial reactions, beyond this response the most salient factor in determining the duration and ease of the transition from displaced worker to full-time student was adult learning. Employer-sponsored programs that included formal information sessions regarding retraining benefits enabled those participants who attended to better prepare for enrollment in college and to avoid the bureaucratic obstacles encountered by those who did not receive this training. The transition from full-time worker to full-time student for these participants was quick and for the most part easy regardless of whether or not they had anticipated the transition. For example, Cynthia who

described her initial reaction as “shock” after being informed of her job loss quickly moved beyond her initial reaction after attending formal, employer-sponsored sessions where she learned her options as a displaced worker. Fully understanding her options for the future combined with economic realities that suggested she needed to retrain for a better job caused Cynthia to move quickly from displaced worker to full-time student, despite initially being hesitant about returning to school. Conversely, Cheryl who had anticipated her job loss experienced difficulty moving forward because she had difficulty acquiring accurate information regarding retraining benefits. Although she would acquire the information she needed to enroll in college through her self-directed efforts, the process for her was more agonizing.

Educators and other professionals who deal with adults have long recognized the relationship between receiving information about training resources and participation in adult learning activities (Dean, 1989). Conversely, educators of adults have long recognized lack of information as a barrier to participation in adult education activities (Cross, 1981; Dean, 1989). Learning about their entitlements as displaced textile workers helped these participants chart their future course and disengage from their past role as textile worker. This learning not only influenced the transition process for these participants, it helped define the next step in their transition.

Another way that one could view this in attempting to understand the role of adult learning in this transition from displaced worker to full-time student is to look at the situation in terms of the likely outcome if the participants had not learned what they were entitled to as displaced workers and the steps involved in qualifying for these entitlements. One of these study participants offers us an idea of what this transition might look like. Nancy was one of the study participants who had experienced a previous job loss. During this first job loss experience, she

received confusing and contradictory information. On the one hand, she was led to believe, based on information from her employer, that as a displaced worker she was entitled to retraining benefits. However, when she tried to acquire these retraining benefits she was told she had to return to work at another textile plant, which she did. Later she learned that some of her former co-workers, through self-directed efforts, had discovered they were entitled to retraining benefits and had subsequently qualified for them. These individuals went on to enroll in college as opposed to accepting another job in textiles. Nancy described the transition process from this first job loss as one of an initial reaction of depression that ended once she became reemployed. According to Nancy, she "didn't feel like it was a transition…it was just switching companies." She went on to say: "in both companies, I made clothes so there was really no transition." Unlike her first transition, this transition process for her and the other participants took another direction and was more prolonged because they decided to retrain for a new career unrelated to textiles.

For these participants, formal adult learning occurred throughout their time while students at the community college. A number of authors have identified America's community college as being a primary resource for adults requiring job retraining because they emphasize occupational and technical training, and they have traditionally had adult students. (Caro & Morris, 1991; Kegan, 1994; Shearon & Tollefson, 1989). For the reasons noted above, most job retraining for low skilled displaced manufacturing workers does take place in community colleges. Merriam, Mott and Lee (1999), while noting that not all learning during transitional periods is positive, stated that "the majority of adult learning experiences do lead to changes that are positive and growth enhancing" (p. 2). The participants reported that their formal learning experiences at the

community college were generally positive. Moreover, all of the participants indicated that they experienced increased self-confidence as they mastered basic college courses.

There was one surprising finding relative to formal education and participation. Dean (1989) noted that participation in previous adult education was a factor that affected participation in job retraining program. However, he also noted that "the extent to which present and future participation in adult education by displaced workers is influenced by previous participation in adult education, success in elementary and secondary school, and attitude toward education is not clear" (p. 30). Prior participation in adult education does not appear to have impacted participation in job retraining programs for these participants. Of the thirteen participants, only four had participated in any form of formal educational activities since high school. Two of the participants completed General Equivalency Diplomas (GED) after dropping out of high school, and one of these participants and two others had taken some course college courses. The reason that prior participation in adult education was not a factor in deciding to attend college for this group of participants might be because they understood that their future employment and ability to earn a livelihood was tied to their ability to acquire new skills. All of the participants indicated high situational awareness relative to the economic woes of the textile industry in America. None of them believed that continuing to work in textiles or other low-skilled employment was a viable career option. In other words, they had to retrain out of necessity.

Nonformal adult learning. This research revealed only one incident of nonformal adult learning. This nonformal learning experienced occurred when a participant collaborated with her former co-workers to conduct research related to qualifying for Trade Act benefits to collect evidence to support their qualification for these benefits, and to obtain support from elected officials. Through this grass roots effort, these displaced workers who had formerly worked at a

large textile plant were able to convince the Department of Labor (DOL) to certify their plant closure as NAFTA related and obtain Trade Act Benefits. McMurry (1996) in her case studies of community college women found that nonformal adult learning, whether it occurred before the women enrolled in community college or afterwards, impacted formal adult learning. According to McMurry, nonformal learning helped these women cope with life circumstances that would have otherwise interfered with their formal adult learning. In the case of the participants in this study, their nonformal learning grassroots project aided them in qualifying for retraining benefits. Without retraining benefits, they would not have been able to attend college.

Informal adult learning. The study findings were replete with examples of informal learning that influenced the transition process. Examples of informal learning that participants engaged in range from actions by some participants to learn more about qualifying for job retraining benefits to improvement of interpersonal skills that occurred as the participants interacted with other students in their natural setting at the community college. As noted above, small class size afforded these participants the opportunity to develop relationships with other students that led to adult learning experiences outside the classroom. It was also in informal settings that these participants learned time management and study skills that enhanced their success while attending college. For example, some of the participants who did not initially acquire the information they needed from formal, employer-sponsored information sessions regarding qualification for retraining benefits, initiated action on their own to do so. Moreover, some of the participants joined study groups with others to improve their study skills. Others conferred with college counselors to learn how to better manage their time. All of the participants believed that they improved their interpersonal skills as a result of interaction with college faculty and staff and other students outside the classroom. As noted by Merriam and Caffarella (1999),

informal adult learning is "well accepted today as the way most adult learning happens" (p. 32). The participants in this study did indeed engage in informal adult learning that resulted in the acquisition of new skills required for both success in the classroom and their new jobs.

Findings from this study showed all types of adult learning did influence the transition process for these participants from beginning to end but nonformal learning played a very minor role compared to formal and informal learning. Hamrick's (1988) study found that adult learning, both formal and informal, influenced transition between two stages in faith development. This study which examined job transition further underscores the fact that adult learning plays a larger role in transition than previously acknowledged. This finding is important because while researchers have long known that transition is a potential time for learning, there is a dearth of evidence on how adult learning influences the process.

This relationship between adult learning and successful job transition process for these study's participants might best understood in the context of "what if the participants had not learned at critical junctures in the process?" For example, if they had not learned either through formal and self-initiated learning about their entitlements as displaced workers, would the transition process for them have been the same? Learning about the opportunity to retrain determined the direction that this transition took for these participants. If they had not learned basic skills in formal and informal settings that enabled them to successfully complete their college work, would the transition process have been different for them? The answer is, probably not, because learning these skills was critical to this process. If they had not learned a skill set that included general education competency, technical skills, interpersonal skills and in the process of this formal and informal learning gained increased self-confidence, would they have qualified for their current jobs? Again, the answer is, probably not, given the fact that the jobs

they landed were highly related to the skill set they learned in college. For example, consider the participants who became nurses. To qualify as a nurse requires completing a formal nursing program and then passing a licensure examination. The three participants who became nurses could not have done so without successfully meeting these requirements of the nursing profession. When one considers the influence of adult learning on the transition process in this context, it is easier to understand the relationship between adult learning and the transition process. Moreover, it is easier to understand how adult learning or absence of adult learning might change the nature of a transition for individuals who lose their jobs. This is a significant finding given the national expectation that more displaced low-skilled workers will require training as evidenced by President Bush's new $120 million initiative to give community colleges more money to retrain America's workforce (USA Today, 2004, January).

Conclusion Three: The transition process was influenced by a number of individual and social factors

In addition to adult learning, this study identified a few individual and social factors that influenced the transition process. These factors are consistent with the literature that examines transitions and systems that support transition.

Schlossberg et al. (1995) classified support according to sources: "intimate relationships, family units, network of friends, and the institutions and or communities of which the people are a part" (p. 67). Dean (1989) found that encouragement from family and counselors affected participation of displaced workers in job retraining programs. McMurry (1996), in her study of displaced homemakers who trained at community colleges, found that support from family, and support, validation, and encouragement from college counselors and instructors as well as other students were crucial to the success of these women while attending college.

This study offers more evidence to support the findings of the aforementioned researchers. In this study, support from others including family, employers, college counselors and instructors, and other students enhanced the process for the study participants. In regard to support, spousal and other familial support proved to be the most significant. This is a finding that is supported by previous research examining adults making transitions (Dean, 1989; McMurry, 1996; Schlossberg et al, 1995). In this study, three participants did not receive support from their spouses as they made this transition. However, support they received from others including other family members, college counselors and instructors, and other students and their determination to succeed combined to help ameliorate this lack of spousal support. Finding support from multiple individuals rather than a single person whom they relied on in the past was a strategy recommended by Schlossberg et al. (1995) in their discussion on helping those experiencing job transitions. These authors noted that those in transition "often see support only in terms of individuals who can meet all of their needs" (p. 155). When individuals in transition fail to receive support from those they believe should provide it, they must then look to others for assistance.

Interactive instructional techniques proved to be another factor that influenced the transition process for these participants. According to these participants, factors such as small class size that afforded them the opportunity for more interactions with their instructors and fellow students and opportunities to engage in hands on learning enhanced their experience while attending community college.

Dean (1989) noted that "perceived inability to succeed in training" was a barrier to displaced worker participation in job retraining programs (pp. 31-32). Some of these participants indicated that they would have been overwhelmed if they had been required to attend classes with

hundreds of other students. One participant linked her lack of achievement in high school to the size of the school, which she described as large with large classes. Moreover, small class size afforded the participants the opportunity to improve their interpersonal skills by conversing with other students both in and out of class.

Cross (1981) noted that life changes such as job loss often trigger learning. She goes on to say that during these periods of change that "the motivation for learning is exceptionally high" (p. 144). Havighurst (1953) calls these "teachable moments."

Data from this research revealed that these participants were ready for change. For some of the participants, their jobs in the textile plants were becoming too physically demanding. Other participants had simply reached the point where they wanted to do something else. For these reasons, their motivation was high to retrain for new jobs different from their previous ones. In essence, they were ready for change. They had reached their "teachable moment."

Dean (1989) identified having a high internal motivation for career as a factor that affected participation in adult learning. For these study participants this factor appeared to not only have influenced their decision to participate in retraining but also proved to be a factor in their successful transition. Because of their life experience and maturity these participants had reached their "teachable moment."

Personal commitment emerged as another factor that influenced the job loss transition process. After years of working in textile plants, these participants had come to value education and regret not attending college earlier in the lives to prepare them for careers of their choice. They viewed attending college as an opportunity to fulfill unrealized career goals. For this reason, these participants worked hard to do well in their college studies. Moreover, they drew on their previous experience as textile workers to enhance their success in college. For example,

they integrated lessons they had learned as textile workers such as a strong work ethic, regular work attendance, producing quality work and so forth into their new role as a student. They were committed to making a career change and clearly understood that retraining was a critical step in realizing this goal.

These individuals wanted to make a career change and were determined to do so once the opportunity presented itself as evidenced by Carolyn's concerted efforts to obtain retraining benefits for herself and her co-workers and Gloria's willingness to rise at 3:00 a.m. to study for her classes. Graham (1993) found in her study of the transition process for adults from non student to undergraduate students at a large state-supported university that determination was one of three major characteristics of those who successfully made this transition. Although it was not mentioned in the findings, determination did appear to be a major coping mechanism for the three participants in this study who did not receive spousal support as well as for those who did receive it. Carolyn, whose spouse did not support her, stated that her determination was the most important factor is making this successful transition. According to Carolyn: "I was determined and I was scared." Carolyn went on to say "I was proud of myself and I didn't need him [her husband] to be proud of me." Another participant, Cynthia stated that "once I got into, I wanted to finish." She told herself "you've started this and by God you are going to finish it."

Researchers have long recognized financial strain as a major consequence of job loss (Anderson, 1997; Beneria, 1998; Dean, 1989; Jacobson & LaLonde, 1997; Palmer-Spilker & Reed, 1993). Moreover, these researchers have documented that job loss is likely to result not only in loss of income but also loss of health insurance. Once the individual loses their company paid insurance benefits, many displaced workers are no longer able to afford it because of their simultaneous loss of income (Beneria, 1998; Palmer-Spilker & Reed, 1993). All of the

participants indicated that they experienced a significant loss of income but the impact of this loss proved more detrimental to some participants than others. For some of the participants the loss of income affected only their discretionary spending. Loss of health insurance for these participants was not significant because most were covered on their spouse's insurance policy. However, for other participants both the loss of income and inability to afford health insurance were significant.

The literature suggests that displaced workers often experience health problems as a result of job loss. Beneria (1998), Perrucci (1998) and Palmer-Spilker and Reed (1993) found in their research that displaced workers experienced an increase in health problems. However, Merriam (1987) found that the average health of participants in her study involving 233 participants was about the same as it was prior to their job loss after a two-year period. Like Merriam's research, this study did not uncover any evidence of increased health problems for these participants as a result of losing their jobs. In fact, some participants noted that their health improved because they were no longer exposed to the lint and dust in the textile plants and they were no longer engaged in physically demanding work.

In summary, this section discussed factors that influenced the transition process and adult learning for these participants. These findings are consistent with previous research conducted by a number of theorists and were not surprising. The most significant finding in was that these displaced workers did not suffer increased health problems related to either their job loss or as a consequence of their inability to afford health insurance after losing their jobs. This finding contradicted most of the literature in terms of job loss and health related issues.

Implications for Theory and Practice

This section discusses the implications of this research on theory about transitions, adult learning, and factors that influence transition. Moreover, it discusses implications on adult education practice.

This study contributes to the literature base is by providing some evidence that the job loss transition process, while sharing some similarities with the transition processes of Bridges (1980,1994), Sugarman (1986), and Schlossberg et al. (1995), does have some unique aspects. There was some evidence that the participants did experience of periods of endings, being in the neutral zones, and beginnings as noted by Bridges. Moreover, the participants periods of immobilization, letting go, testing, and integration as articulated by Sugarman (1989). Finally, the participants also experienced periods similar to moving out, moving through, and moving in as noted by Schlossberg (1995). However, the study found that the participants experienced only two of the five periods of transition in Kubler-Ross's (1997) transition model that describes the transition process for terminally ill patients.

In terms of unique aspects, this study identified a catalyst (a need for job security) that determined the direction of the transition for study participants that had not been identified in other transition models. However, it had been acknowledged in other literature bases such as that of adult and vocational education. This study also identified a transformed view about work and self as part of the job loss transition process. Here again, this was not addressed in the transition models examined in the literature review but was acknowledged in other literature.

This study also confirmed that participant initial reaction is different when the transition is anticipated than when it is not. Those participants who had anticipated their job loss prior to receiving official notification were better prepared to deal with it then were the participants who

had not. However, whether or not the participant anticipated or did not anticipate their job loss did not appear to be a factor past the initial reaction step in the transition process.

This study also contributes to the literature base of adult learning. Findings from this study showed that not only do transitions provide a time for learning but also that adult learning influences the transition process itself. It also offers some evidence that adult learning may help determine what direction that transition takes as well as influence the duration of the transition. This finding combined with those of Hamrick (1988) who found that "individual and group growth or learning projects" (p. 116) had a major influence on the transition process for his participants who made a successful transition to the Conjunctive Stage of faith in Fowler's (1995) faith development model provides some preliminary evidence to help researchers frame future research that examines the relationship between transition and adult learning.

This study has implications for practice as well as theory. Recently, President Bush announced that his administration would provide $120 million to community college for retraining America's worker displaced due to a national move to an economy that requires higher skilled workers. Since he took office the economy has lost 2.3 million jobs ("Bush to Tout," 2004). This presidential announcement combined with the significant loss in jobs America is currently experiencing underscores the likelihood of an increase in displaced workers flocking to community college for retraining. Findings from this study suggest a number of ways that professionals who work with adults can assist this growing population.

This study underscores what researchers who examine factors that affect participation in adult education have long known. Accurate information about adult learning opportunities enhances participation and conversely, lack of information is a barrier to participation in adult educational programs. As more and more displaced American workers require retraining, trainers

and educators of adult as well as community college counselors and those state and federal agencies that fund retraining programs need to ensure that information about programs for displaced workers is readily available and easily understood for those who need it.

This study also confirmed the importance of support from others including family, employers, college counselors and college instructors. It is important that adult practitioners understand the importance of this support when dealing with displaced workers. Adult students, especially displaced workers, need assistance in making this transition. As evidenced by the participants in this study, many of these workers have never attended college and are initially confounded by the process of qualifying for retraining benefits and the college enrollment process. To successfully make the transition from displaced worker to full-time students, these individuals need assistance as they negotiate this process. Practitioners who are aware of this can devise ways to make this initial contact more manageable for these adults and to help establish support for this group of students throughout their time in college.

In addition to clear guidance on the qualification and college enrollment process, study data showed that many of these workers are likely to need remediation in order to prepare for college level courses. While these workers may initially view having to take remediation courses to improve their basic skills as a setback, if successful in these classes they will eventually come to realize the importance of them in their future success in college.

Displaced workers are likely to require assistance as they learn how to be a student. Specifically, they may require assistance in developing study and time management skills in order to be successful in college. For some of the participants in this study, there had been a 30 year lapse since they were last students. Moreover, some of the participants noted that they had never learned study skills. Providing opportunities either formally or informally to learn study

and time management skills may enhance the success of displaced workers in retraining programs.

Another aspect of learning that proved important to these study participants was small classes that allowed for instructor-student interaction, student-student interaction and "hands on" training is important to this population. Not only did small class size improve formal adult learning, it also provided a context where these learners connected with other students and continued interaction outside of the classroom. This informal interaction outside the classroom helped these participants hone their interpersonal skills, which proved to be an important factor in their future employment. Interpersonal skills have long been recognized as an important factor in success in many career fields. Educators have long grappled with how to help students develop interpersonal competence (Torbert, 1981). Based on the experience of the participants in this study, one effective way to enhance interpersonal skills is to create classroom situations where students are free to interact and encourage further interaction outside the classroom. Educators in community colleges need to be especially cognizant of the need to develop interpersonal competence in populations such as the one in this study. These individuals have worked years in jobs that required little interaction with others but are retraining for job that require good interpersonal skills.

Finally, this study also identified a transition process that can help practitioners better understand critical points where intervention may be needed. Of particular interest in terms of this process is the adjustment period that the participants indicated they experienced when first entering college. The study participants stated that they were initially frightened when they entered college due to their unfamiliarity with college life and personal fears that they would not

succeed. By understanding these concerns of displaced workers, practitioners can better develop strategies to help these individuals better cope as they make this adjustment.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to understand how displaced female textile workers make a successful transition to skilled employment. In-depth semi-structured interviews were used to identify the transition process for these participants and how adult learning and other factors influenced this process. The following recommendations for future research are made based on findings from this qualitative inquiry.

1. A study replicating the methodology used in this inquiry could be conducted using displaced textile workers who did not successfully complete this transition from displaced worker to full-time student and from full-time student to full-time worker in a field unrelated to textile. A better understanding of why other women in the same situation as those in this study do not successfully make this transition, may help us better understand the significance of adult learning and other factors in successfully making this transition and provide insight to adult educators and practitioners on how to better assist this group of adult learners.

2. A study similar to this one using female participants should be conducted with male participants to determine if the transition process is the same across gender and how adult learning and other factors influence the process for men.

3. Further research that examines the relationship between adult learning and life transition could be conducted to examine how adult learning impacts transitions other than job loss. Questions that might guide this research might include: a) Does adult learning influence the nature of the transition (i.e., the steps involved in the transition, the amount of time spent in transition and so forth) and b) How significant of a factor is adult learning in transitions?

4. A study that more closely examines factors that enhanced or impeded the transition process and adult learning for displaced workers should be conducted to determine the saliency of each of these factors.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Questions

Background

1. Please tell me a little bit about yourself in terms of your age, where you grew up and where you attended school.

2. Are you currently married?

3. Do you have children? If so, how old are they?

4. How many years were you employed in the textile industry?

5. What was your job in the textile industry?

6. How satisfied were you with your job in the textile industry?

7. What is your current job?

8. How satisfied are you with it?

9. What similarities are there between your current job and your previous one in the textile industry?

What steps were involved as these individuals made the transition process from displaced manufacturing workers to workers involved in high skill employment?

10. Thinking back upon hearing the news that your plant was closing, what was your initial reaction?

11. What happened that allowed you to move out of this initial reaction?

12. During that period before your termination date while you were still employed, what actions did you take to plan for the future?

13. Thinking back, how did you feel as you made the transition from full-time worker to full-time student?

14. How did your feelings change over time?

15. How do you now feel about losing your job?

The Role Adult Learning Played in This Transition Process

16. Describe your community college experience.

17. Can you remember what you needed to know to become a full-time student?

18. What difficulties did you encounter when you became a full-time student?

19. What other things did you learn that helped you become a full-time student?

20. To what extent, were your courses helpful to you in becoming a full-time technician?

21. Other than your technical training, what other things did you learn that have helped you in your current job or in life?

22. As you think about the learning that you engaged in from the time you knew you were going to be unemployed until the time you regained employment, what do you remember that helped you most?

23. As you think about the learning that you engaged in from the time you knew you were going to be unemployed until the time you regained employment, what difficulties did you encounter?

Factors that enhanced or retarded this transition

24. Thinking back on this process of moving from being unemployed to becoming employed in a technical field, what do you recall as being most helpful to you?

25. Thinking back on this process of moving from being unemployed to becoming employed in a technical field, what difficulties did you encounter?

Appendix B

CONSENT FORM

I give my consent to be interviewed for the research study on "How Adult Learning Influences the Transition Process for Female Textile Workers Who Lose Their Jobs" which is being conducted by doctoral student, Debra Lynn Roberts Templeton (Phone number: 540.731.0224) of the Adult Education Department at the University of Georgia (Phone number 706.542.2214). I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary; I can withdraw my consent at my time without penalty and have the results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified as mine returned to me, removed from the record, or destroyed.

The following points have been explained to me:

1) The reason for this research is to better understand how adult learning influences the transition process for female textile workers who lose their jobs.
2) I understand that I will participate in an interview roughly 60-90 minutes in duration, possibly followed by a second interview of 30-45 minutes in duration. Each interview will be tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher.
3) I understand that there are no foreseen discomforts or stresses during the research.
4) I understand that there are no risks involved in this research.
5) I understand that my identify will be kept confidential and any personal responses or personal documents will not be released in any individual identifiable form without my prior consent unless required by law. The tape of my interview will be destroyed at the completion of the study's data collection and analysis, June 2002. For purposes of data analysis and reporting, a first name only pseudonym will be used to protect my identity further.
6) The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator Date Signature of Participant Date

PLEASE SIGN BOTH COPIES OF THIS FORM. KEEP ONE AND RETURN THE OTHER TO THE INVESTIGATOR.

The Institutional Review Board oversees any research-type activity conducted at the University of Georgia that involves human participants. For questions or problems about your rights please call to Human Subjects Office, Office of the Vice President for Research, The University of Georgia, 606A Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411 Telephone: 706/542-6514 or IRB@uga.edu.
