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Julie Anne Jacob



Expectations and Experiences of Students on Welfare Assistance Attending  
Short-term Training at Community and Technical Colleges

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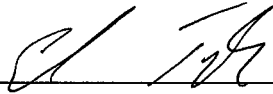
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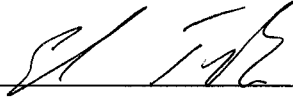
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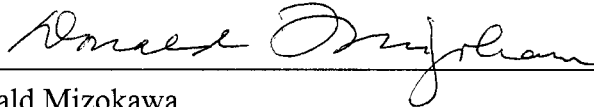


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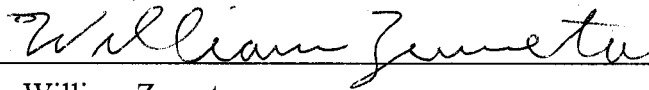
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**Abstract**

Expectations and Experiences of Students on Welfare Assistance Attending  
Short-term Training at Community and Technical Colleges

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This study investigates the expectations, goals, and connections to broad educational opportunities for community and technical college students who are receiving welfare assistance. Welfare reform provides training for eligible welfare recipients to support their employability and self-sufficiency. In Washington State and in most other states, welfare recipients enroll in community and technical college short-term training programs that focus on entry-level skill development designed to increase the participants' chances of becoming self-sufficient. While a number of studies (Mathur, 2002, 2004; Mayfield, 2001; Wolfe & Gittel, 1997) have attempted to determine factors influencing employability and self-sufficiency of welfare recipients, few have provided in-depth knowledge of the participants' expectations and experiences while in these college training programs. This research project was designed to collect and analyze observations of this student population. By providing an increased understanding about student experiences and

perceptions of and responses to existing programs as well as their perceived experiences within those programs, this study will potentially broaden college administrators' knowledge of this student population and positively influence program design and implementation.

The primary source of data for this research is qualitative, utilizing information collected in interviews with the participants. The fourteen participants in the study are adult students with dependent children, on welfare assistance, attending college and working toward short-term vocational certification or credentials. The small size of the sample provided the researcher time to conduct open-ended, in-depth interviews that allowed respondents to fully describe expectations, experiences, and perceptions.

The major findings of this study were: Educational experiences in the short-term training programs played a large role in increasing students' belief in their ability to be successful; students received more than they anticipated in skill acquisition, self-esteem and self-confidence as a result of their college experiences; programs offered little connection to the larger campus environment, thereby reducing students' exposure to further educational opportunities and auxiliary services; and students were aware that they needed more education but were not clear on how that would happen. Findings serve to inform colleges about this population and how programs for welfare recipients can support students' expectations and goals.

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One person in particular who deserves many thanks is my brother Scott Miller. It was you who enabled me to efficiently manage and draw from the research data. By tapping into your creativity and expertise, your outstanding organizational skills, and your cool-headed can-do approach to designing and managing the data system, I have been able to make meaning, establish patterns and identify emerging themes out of the volumes of qualitative data. Thank you, Scott, for the many hours you put into this.

## **DEDICATION**

First and foremost, I want to thank my husband Narayan for his endless support of my pursuit of this goal. His sacrifices, patience, and his willingness to stay the course with me were phenomenal. Thank you so much.

To my daughter and my son, Ayla and Aaron. This was for you, for your futures, for what you decide to make of this world.

I also want to dedicate this work to my colleagues and to our collective work at the Center for Learning Connections at Highline Community College. If it were not for the work that we do there, this could have never been.

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

With the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) legislation, all states began implementing welfare reform to reduce welfare assistance. Under the act, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) provided a maximum of five years of assistance to families with children whose head-of-household was unemployed and either actively seeking work or engaged in work-related activities. The act supported the development of programs that mandated “work first” and that would result in readiness for a specific job category; it discouraged post-secondary education programs that were “academic” (and thus less practical) for those receiving state support. Contrary to laws governing the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) welfare assistance program, the new TANF restrictions did not allow full-time higher education enrollment to be counted as “work.”

Numerous studies of low-income families, the impact of welfare reform policies on these families, and the dilemmas facing those who live in poverty have attempted to provide analysis of intents versus impacts of the federal legislation (Anderson & Gryzlak, 2002; Bloom & Michalopoulos, 2001; Butler, Deprez & Smith, 2003; Cox & Spriggs, 2002; Danziger, Kalil & Anderson, 2000; Gueron & Hamilton, 2002; Hamilton, 2002; Hamilton et al., 2001; Mathur, 2002; Matus-Grossman & Gooden, 2001; Michalopoulos & Schwartz, 2001; Nicolas & JeanBastiste, 2001; Scarbrough,

2001; Scott, London & Edin, 2000). Other research has informed the development of policies around reducing the number of families on welfare assistance by supporting full-time employment as a means of reducing welfare caseloads (Gittell, Schehl & Fareri, 1990; Gottshalck, 2003; Gourevitch, 2002; Greenberg, Strawn & Plimpton, 1999; Harris, 1996; Heckman & Lochner, 2000; Loprest, 1999; Pouncy, 2000; Spalter-Roth, Burr, Hartmann & Saw, 1997). Resulting policies affecting the role of higher education in welfare reform have focused on providing short-term programs and coursework that prepare individuals for employment. Policies in general have supported a minimum of training and have focused on strategies that would result in immediate employment.

Most states have responded to welfare reform legislation by developing training programs for those eligible under TANF. Such programs are oftentimes provided by the community colleges and are relatively short in duration, designed to provide students with the entry-level skills needed for employment. Many of these college programs have been established since the welfare legislation was enacted and have included means for tracking employment and earnings of students completing the programs (Mathur, 2002; Mayfield, 2001; Wolfe & Gittell, 1997).

While a number of research studies have contributed to the development of policies and practice around welfare reform and welfare recipients' access to educational opportunities through community colleges and other training providers, there has been little attention paid to the students' beliefs about their ability to

succeed and how their college experiences influence their ultimate success or failure. A richer understanding of this student population's expectations, experiences, and goals can increase the reliability of predictions about the impact of these programs on this population. While employment barriers for those on welfare have been chronicled (Lein & Edin, 1996; Morris, 2004; Scarbrough, 2001), and the potential increases in employment and income levels have been documented for those completing college programs (Mathur, 2002, 2004), relatively little is known about the effects of student expectations, about their personal and educational goals, or about their college experiences while enrolled in programs designed to provide them with skills to move from welfare assistance to self-sufficient employment. Educational research (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Schlossberg, Waters & Goodman, 1995) indicates that student expectations and perceptions impact what students learn and how they change as a result of their college experiences. However, there is little documentation about this particular student population's expectations as they enter college training programs and their perceived outcomes as they exit. Further, there is little evidence regarding if and how students on welfare assistance attending college connect to the larger, mainstream college campus related to their expectations and goals, and how they do or do not discover pathways within their college experience to broader educational opportunities.

This qualitative study contributes to the knowledge base by reporting on this specific population of college students as they enter and exit programs. College program directors and coordinators may benefit from the research results in that they can be better informed in developing programs and services to positively influence student expectations and beliefs in their ability to succeed. Specifically, colleges may want to develop program linkages with the broader campus, such as with academic advising, to increase participants' knowledge of and planning for continuing their education. College programs would also benefit from assessing students' sense of self-efficacy upon entry and upon completion to document increases in their beliefs in their ability to succeed. Bandura (1977, 1994) suggests this belief is critical to an individual's success, thereby warranting careful assessment and tracking within the college system.

The focus of the study was on describing (1) students' expectations and goals as they entered programs, (2) students' college experiences related to their expectations and goals, and (3) the level of students' connections to the campus and to broader educational opportunities. This focus was framed by the implications of welfare reform, conflicted interests of moving welfare participants into jobs and offering them higher education opportunities, and consideration of ways to increase the cultural capital of welfare recipients through higher education.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine this community and technical college student population's (1) expectations for college training programs in which they are enrolled, (2) college experiences within the context of their expectations and goals, and (3) sense of connection or lack of connection to the campus and to broader educational opportunities, related to their goals and expectations. Student expectations for the purposes of this study were defined as what students expect to gain from the programs in which they are enrolled. This study recognized that students on welfare assistance benefit in some ways from short-term college programs designed for them; however, few programs provide connections for continued educational opportunities. Further, this study assumed that students benefit from connections to and knowledge of broader educational opportunities when those connections exist for this student population at college campuses.

The majority of single head-of-household parents with dependent children receiving welfare assistance are women. "Welfare moms" or "welfare women" are frequently used terms to describe these head-of-household parents with dependent children receiving welfare assistance. While these terms are commonly used, they often carry negative connotations suggesting that women with children who are on welfare assistance are dependent upon *long-term*, state-supported welfare assistance. For purposes of this study, women on welfare assistance attending college will be referred to as "students on welfare assistance." While gender is considered a factor

in adult development theory and critical in the context of higher education programs and their design, the research focused exclusively on students who are welfare recipients and also enrolled in college. Women comprise the sample in this study.

### Conceptual Framework

The research conducted draws upon the theories of Bourdieu and Passeron and upon Bandura's work. Bourdieu and Passeron address the social theory around culture, class, and reproduction of class and how culture and class contribute to the individual's ability to succeed in society. Bandura contributes concepts of self-efficacy and how self-efficacy contributes to an individual's ability to succeed. Social reproduction and self-efficacy theories are applicable to understanding students in welfare programs at community and technical colleges as elements in these theories provide (1) a contextual background to social reproduction through social institutions and (2) further inform the analysis of phenomena and perceptions that affect or contribute to student success in this population.

A college degree represents a socially recognized path to employment and contributes to increases in material and symbolic cultural capital, i.e., cultural knowledge or resources. (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) Cultural capital provides certain class advantages, applicable to an educational context. Students from socioeconomic classes lacking educational backgrounds often come to college with the disadvantage of unfamiliarity with the environment, e.g., lack of understanding

of how to study, how to select courses, how to find tutoring assistance, how to apply for financial aid. Further, students from low socioeconomic groups are less likely to start or finish college than groups from higher socioeconomic families (Levine & Nidiffer, 1995), and if they do attend college, they are more likely to attend colleges that have high dropout rates or low prestige (Hearn, 1984). While not specifically reporting on the welfare population, Bailey (2004) indicates that in general community college students when compared with other college students are "...more likely to enter postsecondary education with weaker academic and economic backgrounds, and to have other major life responsibilities like jobs and families" (p. 1). Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) suggest that a lack of cultural capital limits choices and adversely affects individuals. This may be evident in the student's inability to navigate through the educational system.

An example of the lack of cultural capital may also be demonstrated through language competence. Those from lower and working classes who reach higher education have generally gone through selection processes heavily dependent upon their linguistic capital. Linguistic capital, according to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), is not simply an instrument of communication and the possession of a rich or a poor vocabulary. Language also provides the individual with the capacity to decipher and manipulate structures. Such capital is heavily dependent upon an individual's family social origin as well as contingent upon the individual's early educational opportunities, but it is critical capital to possess in higher education.

Students on welfare assistance who lack cultural capital upon entering college programs may have significant barriers to educational success and to earning college degrees. Bailey (2004), in an analysis of the National Education Longitudinal Survey, confirms that community college students tend to be involved in complex situations which require juggling of academic, family and work commitments, making it difficult for them to succeed in college. Overall students enrolled in a wide variety of vocational programs at community colleges show significant barriers to access and success in postsecondary education.

Bourdieu's theory on social reproduction (class reproducing itself through social institutions or agents) provides a useful framework for an analysis of students on welfare assistance who are enrolled in college programs. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) on social reproduction:

...in America no less than in Europe, credentials contribute to ensuring the reproduction of social inequality by safeguarding the preservation of the structure of the distribution of powers through a constant re-distribution of people and titles characterized, behind the impeccable appearance of equity and meritocracy, by a systematic bias in favour of the possessors of inherited cultural capital. (xi)

Within constructed social organizations such as educational institutions, the dominant group or class directly or indirectly expresses its material and symbolic interests, thereby dominating the institution's culture, e.g., entrance requirements,

prerequisites, curricular content, and length of program. The reproduction of this power ensures "...the structure of the distribution of cultural capital among [these] groups or classes, thereby contributing to the reproduction of the social structure" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 11). Within this construct, colleges transmit content, i.e., "...impose its reception and test for the inculcation by means of socially approved or guaranteed sanction" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 20). This bears some significance for the training programs that specifically serve students who are on welfare assistance, in that colleges may be, by virtue of the program design (short-term courses preparing participants for entry-level jobs), creating the reproduction of a low-income, low-status class of the incoming welfare recipient.

Individuals on welfare assistance are representative of low power groups that are often in subordinate relationships and frequently lack the political, economic, and social power to be independent enough to create or optimize opportunities. As this population enters the college system through welfare programs, social theories such as constructed social systems, social reproduction, and cultural capital provide useful contexts through which student expectations, experiences, and goals may be viewed.

College programs are presumably designed to support the development of individuals and influence choices and the ultimate outcomes for students, including those students receiving welfare assistance. Bourdieu and Passeron have suggested that the ways in which schools organize knowledge, transmit that knowledge, and

assess the learning of that knowledge are factors in the reproduction of class relationships. In addition, the dynamics of class, gender, and race and their interconnections will in all likelihood play a powerful role in influencing educational expectations and experiences of those on welfare assistance.

Bandura (1977, 1994) asserts that people's beliefs about their capability to perform have influence over events in their lives. Defining this belief as self-efficacy, Bandura suggests that a strong sense of efficacy contributes to accomplishment and personal well being. From the theoretical perspective of Bandura (1986), human functioning is the result of personal factors (cognition processes, the affect domain, and biological events), environmental factors, and behavior. This perspective is in contrast to an interpretation of behavior as solely reactionary, based on genetic factors, environmental forces and inner impulses. Bandura's theory on self-efficacy suggests the individual will benefit from changes in their capacity to think about and interpret events, thereby altering perceptions of their role in those events.

People who do not believe in their capabilities are averse to taking on difficult and challenging tasks. They exhibit lower aspirations and have a weak commitment toward their goals. They tend to dwell on deficiencies and interpret adverse outcomes as a reflection of their inabilities. When facing difficulties, they are slow to recover from setbacks or the sense of failure (Bandura, 1994). Individuals who possess self-efficacy have high assurance that difficult tasks can be accomplished;

they view such tasks as challenges rather than threats. Further they demonstrate both an intrinsic interest and full engagement in activities, setting challenges for themselves and working hard toward meeting them. They are able to maintain commitment and tend to increase effort when faced with the possibility of failure. In addition, they tend to recover quickly when they experience setbacks (Bandura, 1994).

Influences on an individual's belief in his or her abilities, according to Bandura (1994), stem from four sources. First, self-efficacy increases when an individual achieves mastery through perseverance. Second, the observation of other people succeeding contributes to engendering a sense of capability. Third, people can be persuaded that they can master activities, thereby mobilizing them and minimizing the focus on self-doubt and deficiencies. Lastly, minimizing stress and altering the individual's negativity can support the individual's beliefs in his or her capabilities.

The individual's level of self-efficacy is a determinant of whether behavior will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and how long effort will be maintained when obstacles are encountered (Bandura, 1990). This dynamic aspect of the self determines what an individual will do with the strengths and skills he or she possesses. Self-efficacy is a factor impacting the development of the individual in an academic environment, determining whether or not the individual can, for example, construct a new understanding of his or her welfare dependency and the connections to education and the workforce.

This research considers the influence of college programs on the experiences of students on welfare assistance, examining the subjects through the theoretical frameworks provided by Bourdieu and Passeron and by the work of Bandura. The design of the research is also based on the concept that having exposure to college experiences and new learning in formal and informal college environments influences overall student expectations and goals, as suggested by Taylor & Marienau (1995):

For a reentry woman, providing she has the courage, tenacity, and support to stay in school, almost any educational program is likely to promote development. Being in an environment where she is seen as an individual and not just as someone's partner or mother (or manager or secretary) helps her define herself that way. Similarly, the sense of accomplishment and confidence that comes with each successfully completed course also leads to greater self-esteem and hence to a clearer sense of self. (p. 91)

To better understand the college students on welfare assistance enrolled in short-term training programs at community and technical colleges, this research chronicles student expectations and goals as they enter college programs, how their subsequent experiences while enrolled in college shape their long-term goals, and whether or not students experience connections to campus and broader educational opportunities.

A number of questions about this population of students on welfare assistance guided the research for this study. What are students' expectations about the programs they are entering? How do students' educational experiences in these college programs affect the formulation of goals and expectations? Do students become aware of the larger campus and connections to broader educational opportunities? This study was undertaken with the assumption that discovering the nature and context of student expectations and experiences while enrolled in college programs will be helpful to college administrators not only for better understanding this student population but also to inform processes including the development of student supports within the context of training programs, consideration of effective interventions, and the initiation of new linkages for this population.

Chapter 2 presents a review of related research and scholarship across disciplines, and Chapter 3 provides a description of research methodology, the selection of participants, and the approach to data collection and data analysis.

## Chapter II

### Review of Related Research and Scholarship

This study includes a review of research and scholarship developed among several disciplines, including education, student and adult development, sociology, and studies on workforce development and welfare reform. This review will focus primarily on the role of higher education in welfare reform, with a focus on students on welfare assistance -- their expectations about college and subsequent employment, and the effects of the college experience on these students. Research and scholarship suggest that college students on welfare assistance are best served by strong college support systems and by institutions that provide strong linkages to additional long-term educational opportunities (Butler, Deprez & Smith, 2003). The intent of this review is to summarize research on three factors that influence or could influence the design of college programs: (1) the role of higher education in welfare reform efforts, (2) the effect of higher education experiences on the development of students on welfare assistance and (3) the exposure of students on welfare assistance to broader educational opportunities.

#### Role of Higher Education in Welfare Reform Efforts

The economic viability and long term prosperity of a nation depend largely on the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities of its workforce. In an increasingly global marketplace, an intelligent, skilled workforce requires highly developed

human capital, which is largely based on levels of education and training. Although the current knowledge age requires a workforce that is better educated and more skilled than any previously, federal funding levels for workforce education and training have decreased in the past decade. Hence, state and regional education and training systems are seeking new ways to build capacity in colleges and universities, to ensure a skilled and flexible workforce.

Driven by new economic realities, the Clinton administration passed Public Law 104-193, welfare reform legislation that promised to end welfare as it then existed. The former Great Society welfare system put in place during the Johnson Administration was considered too expensive to sustain. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) pronounced welfare no longer an entitlement for needy families needing temporary assistance. Under the act, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) provides welfare assistance for a maximum of five years to families with children when the head-of-household is unemployed and actively seeking work. Without progress toward self-sufficiency as defined by the new legislation, those receiving welfare assistance lose their benefits.

Such efforts at welfare reform reflect two critical and sometimes contradictory objectives – reducing poverty and ending dependency on welfare assistance. Welfare program designs implemented by the individual states vary depending on which objective is considered the higher priority. Programs that focus on ending

poverty tend to look to education and training for strategies and solutions. A focus on ending welfare dependency tends to generate strategies and actions to enforce immediate employment. While these goals are not mutually exclusive and much overlap exists in programs, the emphasis adopted tends to shape states' welfare programs and thereby influences options for individuals on welfare assistance.

The United States federal and state governments are unprepared to provide the sort of support those on welfare assistance need to upgrade their skills. (Heckman, Lochner, Smith & Tabor, 1997) Assumptions are made at all governmental levels that it is relatively inexpensive and easy to prepare unskilled workers for the new economy. The reality is that training undereducated and unskilled workers to raise their income levels permanently is extremely costly. Individuals on welfare assistance often need credentials and auxiliary supports to be employable, and subsequently to become and then remain self-sufficient. (Prince, 2005)

Since the passage of welfare reform legislation, college enrollment of welfare recipients has dropped sharply. Although allowable under the former welfare legislation, enrollment in college degree programs under PRWORA became a rare option for those on welfare assistance. Most state welfare policies encourage rapid entry into the workforce and, just as the federal government emphasizes in its reform measures, work comes first. With very few exceptions, post-secondary education toward a degree does not count as work, and is therefore not an option to students receiving welfare assistance. According to Morris (2004), the U. S.

Department of Health and Human Services' position is that people will be allowed to complete general equivalency diplomas (GEDs), but higher education is not considered as a fulfillment of the work requirement. The philosophical shift reflects a fiscally conservative trend in goals of social services--to prepare clients go to work as quickly as possible. The accessing of welfare assistance to continue one's higher education is no longer federally funded under welfare reform.

Educational opportunities built into TANF legislation often include short-term training, a strategy based at least in part on research that suggests that retooling this population is most inexpensively achieved through short-term, job-specific training, to assist participants in obtaining entry-level employment without undue delay (Gueron & Hamilton, 2002; Bloom & Michalopoulos, 2001; Hamilton, 2002). The community and technical colleges in many states offer various types of short-term training to the welfare population under TANF funding.

Kane and Rouse (1995) find that community college students who complete as little as a semester of training will earn enough to warrant the tuition costs. Even those who leave with only a few credits will experience some small financial gain in the job market. Public and private investment in two-year colleges warrants the expenditure; educational attainment and economic attainment appear to be closely linked. This view becomes less optimistic, however, in light of the research of Morris (2004), who suggests that while participation in college shows returns on employability, much of the shift under welfare reform indicates colleges tend to

focus more on GED and remedial work than on longer-term higher education goals. Further, while lawmakers and others responsible for policies may consider training inexpensive, Butler, Deprez and Smith (2003) and Mathur (2004) suggest that decreases in funding for training and education programs, resulting in short-term training programs, may in fact be counterproductive toward reducing poverty. “Longer certificate programs [60 units or more] have greater economic pay-offs than shorter certificate programs...” (Mathur, 2004, p. 22).

Additionally, a question remains as to the specific long-term benefits to the participants receiving welfare assistance who want to end poverty for themselves and their children. Gueron and Hamilton (2002) and Hamilton (2002) examined existing welfare-to-work programs to determine optimal use of education and training. Their research results lead to analysis of desirable programmatic components, setting the groundwork for examining the specific role of the community and technical college. Both job- and education-focused approaches, depending on the welfare recipient’s situation, were reported as successful in some instances, both in terms of ending poverty cycles and ending assistance. According to the research, the government and the taxpayers benefited through reductions in expenditures realized through reduced caseloads.

According to Gueron and Hamilton (2002), however, although the passage of welfare reform has resulted in large percentages of women with children going to work, many of those on assistance end up in low-paying jobs, remain poor, and in

the worst-case scenario, return to TANF. Gueron and Hamilton therefore question what role education and training might play in ensuring a way out of poverty for this population. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) suggest that educational institutions may in fact perpetuate the reproduction of class. That is, programs at community and technical colleges designed for the welfare population, typically designed to prepare students for entry-level employment, appear to have marginal effectiveness in supporting career pathways out of poverty.

Halsey, Lauder, Brown and Wells in *Education: Culture, Economy and Society* (1997) assert that with the expansion of middle-class jobs and access to education, it is assumed that everyone can get a middle-class job, based on merit. Since the 1950s and 1960s, working class jobs have continued to be available to the undereducated, whereas those with educational backgrounds continue to get the middle-class jobs. Reproduction of both the working class and the middle and upper classes continues through the education/work cycle. Colleges, given the task of training and re-tooling a population whose social and cultural capital presents limitations, struggle to provide programs on behalf of welfare reform that hold some promise for student success in terms of social mobility, finding jobs, and ending poverty. Similarly, research (Halsey, Lauder, Brown & Wells, 1997) around higher education and welfare legislation suggests that our institutions may be reproducing class, thereby contributing to cyclical poverty for families whose cultural and social capital leaves them marginalized.

### Effects of Higher Education Experience on Student Development for Those on Welfare Assistance

This section reviews the literature that 1) describes the typical student receiving welfare assistance and current opportunities for employment, 2) documents the effect of higher education and training on students' self-perceptions and also on subsequent employment, 3) describes current higher education programs available to this population and the needs of this population of students for success in reaching their educational goals.

*Who are the students receiving welfare assistance and what employment is available to them without education?*

When compared with other women, women receiving welfare assistance experience barriers to success including being unprepared for the world of work, unlikely to see themselves advancing within a career, unlikely to expect to receive medical benefits, lacking stable childcare arrangements, and being quickly overwhelmed by the typical juggling that comes with holding down a job and taking care of the family. They are also less likely than women who are not on welfare to have the support systems with friends or family that might help them through difficult times (Harris, 1996).

Students who are enrolled in community and technical colleges and receiving welfare assistance often possess characteristics of Bailey's (2004) description, e.g.,

disadvantaged background and characteristics. Nationwide, the average person receiving welfare assistance is a 30-year-old woman (94.1 percent of welfare recipients are women). Women on welfare assistance have an average of 1.9 children. Forty-one percent have no high school diploma or GED; 36.8 percent have never worked full time with one employer for six months or more (Hamilton et al., 2001; Michalopoulos & Schwartz, 2001). Hamilton (2002) reports that those who have a high school diploma or GED are likely to be able to obtain entry-level employment and are therefore less likely to enter education and training programs under welfare programs.

Examination of those on welfare assistance who are able to find employment suggests (1) they tend to stay at the low end of the labor market, (2) for a variety of reasons such as family financial crisis or job lay-offs, about one-third return to welfare within one year (Loprest, 1999), and (3) those who have engaged in non-credentialed short-term job training programs make more hourly wages than those without training but tend to remain too poor to lift their families out of poverty (Mathur, 2002, 2004).

Because the subjects interviewed in this study are all women on welfare assistance who have made the decision to enroll in a college program, it is useful to review the literature on the outlook regarding the intellectual development of this population. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986), through their focus on the concept of voice as a powerful metaphor for women's intellectual

development, influenced curriculum and teaching practices for individuals who are not part of the academic mainstream. Their research on the five epistemological perspectives of women's ways of knowing suggests that silence is a disbelief in one's capacity for knowledge, often the perspective of disenfranchised women. According to the epistemology of Belenky et al., the student who is on welfare assistance may have been "silenced" previously in life, particularly if they have been victims of domestic violence. This makes the transition to a college environment difficult, since the truly silent woman is not likely to claim her place. In the final epistemological perspective called 'knowing' students discover that knowledge comes from them and to them. Constructed learning integrates experiences and thought, reason and intuition. Educational opportunities that acknowledge and use prior learning allow students to apply skills to a new situation with new tasks, thereby supporting learning and self-discovery.

Scott, London, and Edin (2000) identified perceptions of women on welfare assistance about their futures in relation to work and education. Notably, women in the study aspired to jobs that were low-wage, low-skill, class-bound, and gender-bound, such as day care teachers, store clerks, fast food servers, factory workers or other female-dominated, low-skill, low-wage jobs without benefits that are concentrated in the service and manufacturing sectors. The aspirations of the women interviewed were limited by their educational and occupational experiences, labor market constraints as in high rates of unemployment, and their access to

opportunity. “Although they dreamed of lives different from and better than the ones they lived on welfare, the jobs they aspired to and would likely be able to get were unlikely to provide them with the economic security and advancement that they want and expect” (Scott, London & Edin, 2000, p. 739). The women in the study also realized that in order to pursue more stable, higher-paying jobs, they would need to get more education and training. Those who had dropped out of high school realized they would need to get their GED and then go on to college enrollment and/or long-term training. The high school graduates similarly realized high wage employment was connected to continuing education. Those in the study also realized the severe limitations to educational opportunities through the new welfare reform legislation. These realities for participants in welfare programs and for the colleges who support learners create dilemmas and limit options for long-term, on-going articulated educational opportunities.

*What effect does higher education have on women’s self perceptions and on subsequent employment?*

Given the relative disadvantages of many individuals on welfare assistance embarking on a college experience, the college may provide a context that contributes to agency for these students. In a study of the perception of personal responsibility by women on welfare assistance, Scarbrough (2001) describes changes reported by those on assistance who had community college experiences as

having reshaped their concept of personal responsibility. The changed attitudes experienced through their participation in college contributed to their receiving counseling for domestic violence, drug and alcohol addiction, and other barriers to entry into the workforce. Participants reported they had to rethink their dependency, reconsider their subordination to individuals and events, and their support system for times of crisis. Participants in the study reported that during their college experiences, they were redefining themselves and reconstructing new selves and new goals. Some noted that in the past they felt they needed permission to be smart and to cease being the victim; now they began to see themselves as successful and having new opportunities in their lives. Self-esteem increased as they experienced more possibilities and took action. Additionally the women noted that they became more determined to succeed as they progressed through college programs, even if others were expressing doubt that they could turn their lives around. Participants in the Scarbrough study reported that college courses encouraged them to question their assumptions about class and gender and to redefine who they are and to access agency. While this study did not specifically identify the type of college courses or programs the participants experienced, results show that women on welfare assistance began to view their lives with a deeper sense of hope, based on their experiences at the community colleges.

Development theories proposed by Chickering and Reisser (1993) support the concept that higher education is oriented toward the individual and his or her

development. The principles guiding the development of programs designed for the nontraditional learner include validation of the student's experiences and support for the evolving self. In the 1980s higher education began to embrace the concepts of both contextual learning and the notion of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) to support the development of the learner.

Kegan (1982, 1994) focuses on meaning making in which development is a function of perspective transformation. Perception changes as we learn about others and ourselves. Kegan's five developmental stages of consciousness suggest the third and fourth stages of the adult women's development may change from guilt, anxiousness and discomfort with spending time on herself and on her education to realizing it is now in effect her turn, thereby conceptually placing herself in a new position in society.

Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman (1995) provide an integrated view of the effect of education for students receiving welfare assistance. They consider education a means to employment, productivity, creativity and fulfillment. This adult development theory provides a lens for examination of adult transition and how one makes meaning of experiences such as college and training. Schlossberg, et al. noted that situation, self, support, and strategies influence an individual; the individual's ability to cope with transition depends on resources in these four areas. Coping skills are due in part to one's perception of the transition itself and one's resources for coping with change. Critical characteristics such as socioeconomic

status, gender, age, stage of life, health, and ethnicity determine how one looks at change. Support for adults in transition can come from relationships, family units, and networks of friends, institutions and communities. Useful interventions include reframing, or changing the individual's interpretation of the meaning of the situation, conducting assessments of the individual's assets, referring the individual to a support system, and helping the individual generate problem-solving strategies. Applications to assist individuals in reframing experiences can take many forms, such as counseling programs, orientation workshops, consulting advocacy, and connections to groups such as through cohorts. Orientation programs for students entering into transition programs and programs for students "graduating" can provide support for successful transitions.

Nicholas and JeanBastiste's research (2001) demonstrates that college has a positive effect (hopefulness and more sense of control over their lives) on low-income populations such as women receiving assistance. Researchers studied women on public assistance. Results indicate that the women who took the initiative to go back to school felt more hopeful about their future than those who were not in school or in training. Scarbrough (2001) interviewed women on welfare assistance completing community college programs. The women, all mothers with children, identified feeling a new kind of personal responsibility as a result of the college experience. They reported setting and working toward long-term goals rather than focusing on day-to-day survival. Research studies which identify

specific behavioral and attitudinal changes that those receiving welfare assistance may experience in the college context and the program attributes leading to this are important in furthering an understanding of the characteristics and needs of this population.

Butler, Deprez and Smith (2003) note student welfare recipients participating in the Maine Parents as Scholars Program reported that returning to school positively affected “self-esteem, employment opportunities and family relationships” (p. 3). Receiving a degree was reported as “life changing.” Subjects noted they experienced increases in self-esteem; they felt more like role models for their own children; and they reported that through their education program, they gained skills that increased their employability.

While the above cited studies show that those on welfare assistance who have access to educational experiences generally have increased self-esteem, a number of studies indicate that those on welfare assistance also increase their capacity for earning, potentially ensuring higher likelihood of becoming self-sufficient. Butler, et al. (2003), Kane and Rouse (1995), Nicolas and JeanBastiste (2001), and Scarbrough (2001) show that women with associate degrees and bachelor’s degrees earn more than women with only a high school diploma, anywhere from nineteen to thirty-three percent more, according to Kane and Rouse. While the population studied is not the welfare population, indicators show that more rather than fewer educational opportunities are beneficial toward the goal of ending poverty. Cox and

Spriggs (2002), using data from welfare recipients in 1997-1999 that suggested a significant drop in college enrollment for individuals receiving welfare assistance during those years, made recommendations that college attendance and working toward a degree be considered legitimate work activity under welfare reform.

While the Spriggs study did not specify length or type of college program welfare recipients were enrolled in, overall results continue to show that earning differences between college-educated and non-college women are significant. Even more important, the educational attainment of the parent is a predictor of their child's attainment. Educational attainment then has the potential of minimizing trends toward generational poverty (Cox & Spriggs, 2002).

While certain disadvantages exist for individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds, researchers (Mathur, 2004; Bailey, 2004) show that degree completion, whether it is a vocational credential, associate of arts/sciences, or a four-year degree, contributes economically to the individual. Bailey (2004) notes that analysis shows occupational education at the community college level generates more economic returns than does academic education at colleges if not followed by transfer to baccalaureate institutions; however, the critical factor appears to be completion, rather than the specific degree program. If we look at transfer degrees, the pay-off occurs at the point of degree completion at four-year institutions; occupational degrees pay off upon completion at the two-year colleges. "Thus, program completion measured with either a credential or transfer is a necessary and

important objective for community college students to achieve. Moreover, credentials are particularly important for occupational students in order to reap the economic benefits of postsecondary education” (Bailey, 2004, p. 3).

Prince (2005), in researching low-income students at community and technical colleges under a Ford Foundation grant, finds that the tipping point toward long-term employment for this student population enrolled in occupational programs is one year of college and a certificate. Prince’s research shows that a year of college plus a credential results in increased future earnings. Further, the jobs in the greatest demand are those that require one year of college accompanied by a credential.

Butler, Deprez, and Smith (2003), Carnevale (1999), and Bloom and Michalopoulos (2001) also suggest that access to higher education determines whether or not employee health and retirement benefits and job advancement are available for those on welfare assistance. Welfare reform legislation assumes that an entry-level position will lead to sustainable employment. They point out, however, that without access to continued educational opportunities and linkages, entry-level jobs are not likely to lead to wages above the poverty threshold. The 1999 U. S. Census Bureau and many other studies confirm that education level is a predictor of median earnings.

*What educational programs are available to this population, and what support services are needed for success by these students?*

Community colleges provide higher education access for over 11 million Americans annually. These colleges are the entry point to higher education for half of all undergraduates. Further, they contribute to access for many first-generation college students, including those who are from low-income families (Bailey, 2004). Community colleges also absorb most of those who are receiving welfare and also seeking education.

Even while such open access for students provides opportunities for many who would otherwise be unable to attend college, fewer than half of the college students attending earn degrees (Bailey, 2004). Bailey reports that students attending community colleges come from families who have lower incomes, tend to be first-generation college students, are older, have children, and show lower achievement in high school when compared with students at baccalaureate institutions. Further, these students demonstrate a pattern of frequently interrupting progress toward degrees or credentials.

In light of these characteristics and the relative lack of success by this population of students, it becomes critical to understand the barriers faced by these students. This will then potentially inform the design of programs and support services that minimize barriers and engage students so that they will persevere in completing their educational programs. College activities, experiences, and support

experienced by the student on welfare assistance may contribute to student engagement in further educational opportunities, thereby increasing chances of movement out of poverty. Higher education programs that serve diverse populations including the underserved have, since the late 1970s, been designed to support the development of the individual. While students receiving welfare assistance may not immediately transfer into a four-year college or university, one of the primary missions of most community and technical colleges is to prepare students for such transfers, a demonstration of commitment to the long-term development of the student.

Interventions to support student success in completing credentials and degrees might include support for traditional full-time enrollment, regular contact with students by both faculty and support staff, and the development of activities that involve the non-traditional student in the mainstream campus. The commitment of resources by states and by individual colleges toward low-income, non-traditional students is critical to the success of this population and should be a high priority for colleges (Bailey, 2004). Innovative funding and the leveraging of various funds and services can serve to maximize student success for those students who are enrolled. Colleges vary regarding how student support services are delivered for students on welfare assistance. College student services under welfare reform are established to supplement, not supplant, existing student services.

Danziger, Kalil, and Anderson (2000) suggest supports needed by individuals on welfare assistance include "...consistent, universal quality assessments and ongoing case management services for physical-health and/or mental-health problems" (p. 651). States offering well-integrated welfare systems provide short-term counseling and referrals, vocational rehabilitation, and workplace accommodations for those with physical or mental disabilities. Given that students receiving welfare assistance may be lacking a high school diploma or GED and have barriers to employment, services identified above may be required to ensure student success in college programs. Colleges with support systems will be more likely to ensure student success leading to full employment and access to lifelong learning and other educational opportunities. Today between 21 percent and 35 percent of those leaving TANF are likely to recycle back into the system within one year (Anderson & Gryzlak, 2002, p. 309). Transitional support may decrease TANF returnees and move participants into developing long-term educational and training opportunities.

To summarize, student development research and theories provide a context in which to study students receiving welfare assistance while enrolled at colleges. The population to be studied is marginalized by limited access to higher education, even while completing a degree or credential is critical to economic advancement. Interventions indicate that students are more likely to complete degrees and programs by being involved with mainstream campus activities, even though students on welfare assistance are likely to be marginalized on campuses. Strong

student support and engagement in higher education positively affects student transitions and self-perceptions. Scott, London and Edin (2000) found that women in their study realized they need more education and training to ensure they can take their families out of poverty. Indeed, education has been shown (Butler, Deprez & Smith, 2003) to increase self-esteem in women on welfare and increase hopefulness and the ability to set long-term goals (Nicolas & JeanBastiste, 2001; Scarbrough, 2001). Kane and Rouse (1995) suggest that the benefit of a degree is indisputable. While research tends to validate the positive effect of degrees and credentials earned at the college, and shows that strong student support programs and linkages encourage degree completion and continued education, programs structured for welfare reform recipients may demonstrate limited access to longer-term degrees, and in all likelihood using a short-term training approach with this student population.

#### College Program Design and Linkages to Broader Educational Opportunities

This portion of the literature review focuses on 1) the challenges to welfare training program design within the community colleges, 2) opportunities and recommendations for successful program design and the offering of linkages to broader opportunities for students, and 3) a discussion of specific program designs, particularly in California and Washington State.

Community colleges face several challenges in attempting to meet the needs of students receiving welfare assistance. These include the possible perpetuation of the class system by community colleges generally, the implications of welfare reform legislation, and the students' reports of the lack of support services at the colleges.

One of the major challenges facing the nation's community colleges is contained in the criticism that the community college fosters a culture that emphasizes vocational training over preparation for transfer to a four-year college or university. The community college's role in educational attainment for its students has long been ambiguous and open to criticism. Clark (1960), Karabel (1972), and Zwerling (1986) suggested that community colleges might be providing disincentives to students who might otherwise choose to pursue degrees. Karabel asserted the community colleges are part of a class-based tracking system. Clark suggested that community colleges lower student aspirations for baccalaureate degrees, essentially creating a "cooling out" of aspirations. Zwerling's research showed that colleges may provide and promote vocational programs at the expense of transfer education. For some minority populations and low socioeconomic status student populations, attending community college decreases likelihood of obtaining a bachelor's degree (Wilson, 1986; Cohen & Brawer, 1989). Some populations may find limitations to social and economic mobility as they navigate through college.

A second challenge faced by community colleges is implementing welfare reform legislation that emphasizes "work first" over the attainment of a degree.

Under welfare reform legislation, the individual states have some latitude in designing training programs for those who receive welfare assistance under TANF, although full-time higher education is not counted as “work” under the “work first” federal requirements of welfare reform. The “work first” philosophy of the law emphasizes rapid entry into the labor force, hence development of short-term training programs that qualify as pre-employment training for welfare recipients lacking employability skills. While most states utilize the community college system to provide training to welfare recipients, the nature and shape of the programs vary from state to state, e.g., Washington State utilizes short-term training programs coupled with a work requirement of either work-study employment or other part-time employment.

Another challenge faced by community colleges in welcoming students on welfare assistance is developing programs and services to meet the needs of this unique population. In *Opening Doors to Earning Credentials: Impressions of Community College Access and Retention from Low-Wage Workers* (Matus-Grossman & Gooden, 2001), researchers reported that low-income participants receiving state-assisted tuition at the colleges in the study found admissions and financial aid processes “overwhelming” at the institutional level. Further they experienced poor academic and career counseling. Some felt their college re-training programs were largely disconnected from the realities of the local economy; participants felt they did not have access to employers. These students also reported

issues with childcare; stable childcare was viewed as "...an integral support for their ability to either attend college, or as a way to allow them to consider attending college in the future" (p. 14). Colleges usually offered some form of childcare to college participants with children; however, those interviewed as part of the *Opening Doors* study reported long waiting lists, limited capacity, and a lack of childcare in the evenings and on weekends, thereby not accommodating the needs of many students receiving state-funded assistance.

Other participants reported discrimination (gender, race/ethnicity, age, parenting status) as an issue, questioning whether increased education would minimize discriminatory practices in education and employment. When questioned about their motivation to participate in college programs, this student population said they valued postsecondary education and a degree. Others saw college as a means to career advancement, saying that the skills received in college are more important than completing the program or getting a degree. Some noted that as they approached the end of a program, they were tempted to quit, since "potential employers wouldn't care about the credential itself, only certain courses" (p. 16).

In the *Opening Doors* (2001) study, students from low-income backgrounds were queried about their perceptions of support services at the community colleges. Overall they felt supported through programs specifically designed for them that offered services such as case management, financial assistance, and support in navigating other resources like financial aid, tutoring, and peer support.

The *Opening Doors* research indicates, however, that many welfare-to-work students are unaware of special programs or services available to them. In most cases, they learn of these programs only through word of mouth. Participants noted that the campus information about these programs was hard to find, requiring an active search. Other support such as counseling and academic advising were, according to participants, critical to their success but rather hit or miss. Some of the participants considered they had sufficient counseling. Others noted they had not received enough counseling, or the timing of the counseling had not been helpful (counseling was provided only after they went on probation or after they discovered they had taken the “wrong” class).

Financial aid was, overall, seen as a critical component for low-income students in the study; however, financial aid services were perceived by many of the participants attending community college as limited. Participants reported that students believed that they were not eligible for financial aid, that they became ineligible through unforeseen circumstances, or that they assumed that owing on financial aid loans prohibited them from returning to school to complete programs or degrees. The *Opening Doors* study suggests services required for the student on assistance at community and technical colleges should minimally include the following: child care, academic advising, career counseling, financial aid advising, and programs designed specifically for the welfare-to-work population.

Individuals receiving assistance face many barriers to employment and may also be averse to participating in education or training activities. Mathur (2002) notes the need for student support services for this population attending colleges: employment services, childcare, work-study, and job placement services. Notably, employment services provided through the college is a key factor in students' ability to become employed.

Based on the research conducted by Matus-Grossman and Gooden (2001), facilitation of enrollment and educational success for low-income populations may be best achieved through development of effective student supports such as tutoring, career counseling, and where needed, child care. Programs leading to credentials and curriculum that integrates basic skills with vocational skill development may serve this population in pursuing educational and career goals. Further, creating innovative approaches to financial aid will open additional doors for those pursuing degrees and additional credentials. Colleges represent a tremendous potential for low-wage workers; however, a high proportion do not apply, and many of those who enroll drop out.

Students receiving welfare assistance pursuing opportunities to attend colleges for short-term training make immediate, critical career choices by choosing which program they wish to enter. Such decisions are ideally well thought out, based on experiences, interests and strengths, current labor market information, wage projections in a chosen field, what it will take to maintain employment (such as

continuing education and training), and opportunities for advancement. Programs designed for students receiving welfare assistance are generally short-term and linked to industry specific entry-level employment based on local economic indicators. Specific linkages to other educational opportunities may vary, depending on the individual college's resources available and the response to the needs of this population. Academic and career counseling are critical to the individual's ability to make effective career decisions; however, these services are rarely made available to students on assistance, given that college training programs designed for this particular population are frequently separate, isolated programs.

While certainly not universally available, desirable college support systems for students receiving welfare assistance include: advocacy and counseling to assist welfare recipients in 'redefining' themselves; skill and employability assessments and on-going case management; academic and career counseling; special programs such as transitional support for those leaving welfare assistance and integrated bridge programs that connect this population to other college opportunities; innovative approaches and broader access to financial aid; childcare or childcare referrals; vocational and academic coursework that integrates adult basic education and English as a Second Language into coursework.

Research conducted on specific program models provides a context for considering which college programs may be most helpful to students on assistance. Hamilton (2002) compared and contrasted three welfare program models found in

11 programs in seven sites across the country: those that placed welfare recipients in education programs first; those that focused on getting welfare recipients into jobs; and those that combined work and education and provided options based on the needs of participants. Their research findings suggest that those welfare programs that are largely education-focused typically engage participants who need adult education credentials (40 percent of all participants in the study) as opposed to those serving participants with such credentials enrolled in vocational training (28 percent of all participants in the study) (Hamilton, 2002). Hamilton, however, notes that when adult education is not a mandatory welfare assistance activity, participants are more likely to prefer enrolling in vocational training. At community colleges, enrollment in such courses is generally not open to those who lack high school or GED credentials, except through specialized programs that integrate basic skills and/or English as a Second Language with vocational skills curriculum.

The benefits of education-focused welfare programs, according to Hamilton, are at least in part dependent upon the characteristics of the education program. For example, the experience and education level of faculty may be a determinant of the degree of student success in advancing to employment. Further, long-term coursework in basic skills positively affects student outcomes. Hamilton notes, “Enrollment in basic education classes for less than one year did not measurably improve reading skills” (p. 23). Gains in employment were, however, realized for most participants who attended GED classes, when compared with groups that were

not enrolled in education-focused programs but were rather involved in employment-focused programs.

Hamilton compared the education-focused program with the employment-focused programs and found when comparing welfare dependence that the employment-focused programs were more successful in getting people into jobs and off welfare much more quickly than were education-focused programs. Earnings rose earlier for this group, too. “In subsequent years, however, the gap between the two lines narrows and ceases to be statistically significant” (Hamilton, 2002, p. 32). Employment-focused programs are likely to be 40 to 90 percent less costly to operate than education-focused programs, making them more attractive to some stakeholders.

Hamilton’s national study (2002) identified a model for program effectiveness, after examining both education- and employment-focused programs. The “Portland model” uses a mixed-strategy approach to welfare reform programs, requiring the case manager to determine, based on participant’s characteristics and the case manager’s judgment, whether the participant is better served by education and training or job search. Hamilton’s research shows that Portland outperformed the other ten programs in the study, increasing participant five-year earnings by 25 percent and increasing employment stability. Most notable characteristics of the Portland model are: “...an employment focus, the use of both job search and short-term education or training, and an emphasis on holding out for a good job” (p. 36).

Hamilton reported that by the welfare department partnering with local community colleges in designing and implementing the education and training program, participants were provided exposure to postsecondary education. For students entering with a high school diploma or GED, completers were 21 percent more likely than non-completers to take a credit course at a two- or four-year college within 2.5 years after program completion, demonstrating a delayed positive participation impact. Hamilton (2002) identified this program as likely to increase college participation, but the timing of its impacts on this outcome make it highly unlikely that they were related to its large earnings impacts earlier in the follow-up period.

Hamilton suggests that improvements in education and training components in welfare programs might include obtaining a GED coupled with vocational training, to optimize the educational experiences of welfare recipients. Another way to heighten benefits is to retain students for a period of time, allowing them to earn a GED and then obtain access to other postsecondary programs. Hamilton suggests fostering linkages between adult education programs and postsecondary programs will encourage those with a GED to earn more in the long run. The Portland model exemplifies this approach. Critical to note, however, is that many of the best programs still fail to lift people out of poverty.

PRWORA-required short-term, vocationally oriented programs that lead to entry-level employment typically bind college-based strategies for students who are

receiving welfare assistance. Such short-term training programs are a direct result of the welfare reform legislation, reductions in federal funding levels, and the overarching goal of reducing the welfare rolls. The duration of an individual's engagement in education reflects class and status (Bourdieu, 1998), i.e., long-term education such as four-year degrees versus short-term training programs represents a social response to educating and preparing different classes for jobs. Not everyone has the means to access long-term education beyond what is minimally required for low-wage jobs. This reality tends to perpetuate social reproduction of class divisions since the length of time an individual is engaged in educational activities has a direct impact on his or her ability to acquire capital. This remains true for students at all stages of their development – obviously well-off families can afford to invest in education for their children to a higher degree than can families who are less well off. The acquisition of cultural capital is directly related to the length of time available to the student, which is in turn dependent upon the cultural capital of the parents.

The connection between cultural capital and the acquisition of human capital is evident in programs such as those designed for students who are on welfare assistance. Short-term training programs for this student population have been implemented in colleges to accomplish two goals: ending their need for welfare assistance and preparing students to be self-sufficient. A key factor influencing educational program design is the cost to accomplish the goals identified, based on

the duration of the program. While evidence suggests that longer-term educational experiences ultimately benefit disenfranchised individuals (Cox & Spriggs, 2002), the federal and state funding limitations define the scope of educational opportunities for welfare recipients, particularly when the focus is principally on immediate employment. The political economy influences social organizations, supporting social reproduction of class, thereby limiting access to resources for those receiving welfare assistance.

Welfare programs designed for students on TANF in California and Washington State were created to provide relatively short-term training leading to full-time employment at jobs that provided a living wage. These are discussed below as they have been generally successful in meeting employment goals, although providing only limited opportunities for students to connect to longer-term educational opportunities.

California's community college programs for students on welfare assistance have demonstrated success in preparing students for employment, as reported by the Center for Law and Social Policy (Mathur, 2002). California colleges created CalWORKS as a response to federal welfare reform. The program provides welfare participants access to the state's 108 community colleges contingent upon their college enrollment and satisfactory progress in coursework leading to unsubsidized employment. The CalWORKS community college student on welfare assistance engages in educational activities for a maximum of 32 hours of weekly coursework

and related study. According to Mathur (2002), in the year 2000 approximately 28 percent of TANF participants were enrolled in at least one course in a state community college.

CalWORKS reports the following services at the community colleges:

- Service coordination including assisting students to access academic support services, counseling, and community services and assistance with placement in jobs or work-related activities.
- Short-term vocational curriculum development and program design to allow for open entry and exit, work-based learning, adult basic education and English as a Second Language as needed.
- Work Study opportunities to provide work experience that reinforces classroom learning.
- Job development and job placement services include both part-time and full-time employment, depending on the needs of the student.
- Childcare services are provided on-campus free of charge. (p. 1-2)

The outcomes achieved through CalWORKS demonstrated that students increased their annual income by 42 percent one year after completing college coursework when compared with earnings during the last year of college (used as a baseline, since earlier earnings data was unavailable) (Mathur, 2002). After three years out of college, of the students who were working year-round, annual earnings were increased by 88 percent. The research (Mathur, 2002, 2004) shows that the

more coursework students complete, the greater their earnings. This held true even for California TANF students who entered the college without a high school diploma.

Washington State's TANF program, called WorkFirst, was created to help people on welfare get "a job, a better job, a better life." The state's community and technical colleges offer vocational programs for the students receiving welfare assistance under TANF. Many of the students on TANF enrolling in Washington State colleges have limited social, economic, and cultural capital. Approximately half of welfare participants have fewer than 12 years of education. About 20 percent have limited English skills. One in five has no work experience in the two years prior to training (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, 2002). The typical participant is 30 years old, female, and has received benefits continuously for the preceding two years. Fifty-three percent are people of color. Thirty-five percent of the participants have limited English proficiency. In 2001-2002 the colleges enrolled 1,676 individuals in college welfare programs (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, 2004). Under the college WorkFirst programs, most individuals referred to the colleges by the Department of Social and Health Services case managers have not been able to find work and have had significant difficulty meeting welfare assistance requirements, or the participants have specifically requested training programs of their case managers

and their case managers have determined programs are critical to their future employability.

The pre-employment and job training in Washington's colleges is geared toward gaining entry-level job skills. Work study, work-based learning and on-campus as well off-campus part-time jobs are often components of the college WorkFirst programs and count under the work requirement. In the fourth year of WorkFirst (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, 2002), separate program components (Families That Work, Tuition Assistance and Workplace Basic Skills) were collapsed into Customized Job Skills Training (CJST).

The Washington community and technical colleges designed CJST programs for short-term job training and tuition assistance so that students on TANF funding could find permanent jobs, after having been unsuccessful in the job search phases of enrollment in WorkFirst. In *Job Skills Training for Employment Success* (2003), the CJST programs are described as intensive 30- to 40-hour weekly sessions that continue for 12 to 20 weeks. Programs often include classroom-based and worksite vocational/technical training. Literacy and English as a Second Language instruction may be part of the course, depending on the student needs. The specific vocational training content and format depend on local employer demands for workers, specific skills needed for specific jobs, and participant eligibility for training.

More than 6,000 participants in Washington State have completed CJST at community and technical colleges since June 1998. Job training completion rates for participants are approximately 76 percent (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, 2002). The combining of training with the Work Study component providing WorkFirst students with work experiences has been found to be particularly successful, leading to higher starting wages when compared to wages for those without work experience.

Eligible WorkFirst participants at the state's community and technical colleges are working parents with incomes under 175 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. For a family of three, the monthly income is under \$2,225 (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, 2003). Marieka Klawitter (2004), conducting a longitudinal study of 3000 Washington State TANF families, documents that welfare families are leaving welfare rolls at high levels (approximately 45 percent of leavers are shown to be employed). In *WorkFirst Celebrates Six Years* (2003), the authors report that welfare recipients who completed short-term training earned an average of \$209 per month more than those who lacked training. According to a report prepared by the Education Services Division of the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (2002), low-income parents who received tuition assistance and earned a certificate or degree increased hourly wages by 20 percent within a year after completing training when compared with their earning capacity coming into the program.

However, only 20 percent of low-income parents completed degrees or certificates. The majority leaving college without credentials earned only 10 percent more than their pre-college capacity for earning. Several important conclusions in the State Board report suggest that short-term coursework may be advantageous for those new to WorkFirst, whereas welfare recipients who have been on welfare assistance for a longer period of time and have little or no work history will require longer training to realize the training benefits.

Under current TANF programs, California and Washington State community and technical college programs are focusing on adult basic education, ESL, and short-term job-specific training. The labor market however is increasingly requiring training beyond high school or GED credentials. The Aspen Institute predicts an increasing need for postsecondary education in the next 20 years when compared with previous decades (*We Grow Faster Together. Or Slowly Apart*, 2002). Women with community college 1-year vocational certificates or 2-year associate degrees are more likely to be hired when compared with those with a high school diploma or less. Additional benefits of longer-term postsecondary education for job seekers include shorter periods of unemployment (Gottshalck, 2003) and the likelihood of receiving healthcare benefits and other employment benefits (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1978-1998). Prince's research (2005) on working age, low-income adults suggests that the key to economic attainment for this population is one year of college credit coursework and a credential. Prince notes that the job candidate with

these educational qualifications is in demand in the marketplace; the payoff in terms of increased earnings is high when compared with those who have less than one year of college and lack credentials.

When TANF legislation provides only limited GED, Adult Basic Education (ABE), and English as a Second Language (ESL) or Low English Proficiency (LEP) courses, students may feel prohibited from accessing educational training benefits that they think they need to become employed. Further, students required to first take ESL and/or ABE may run out of welfare benefits before they are able to access vocational coursework needed for employment. Stand-alone basic education programs that are not connected to vocational or academic programs can deny students access to longer-term programs leading to associate of arts or baccalaureate degrees, since work requirements and family obligations limit feasibility of pursuing degrees. With TANF past due for reauthorization since fall 2002, Congress has been extending the current program with no policy changes. It is however likely that if TANF is reauthorized, Congress and the President will consider several key policy changes including tighter work requirements and changes in child care funding.

Educational leaders and administrators in higher education as well as leaders in social and human services continue to be faced with dilemmas around short-term training options: (1) Should college programs focus on participants' immediate employment or the long-term goal of self-sufficiency? (2) How do colleges meet the needs of students lacking GED/high school diplomas, ESL and ABE proficiency?

(3) How can colleges expand student options and access beyond short-term vocational training for those who would benefit from longer-term higher education opportunities? and (4) Are there ways to support students' higher education goals by extending time limits and allowing welfare work requirements to be satisfied by enrollment in college?

Prior to welfare reform in 1996, individuals on welfare assistance were able to access higher educational opportunities more easily. Such opportunities were found to contribute to a change in how participants interpreted their value and authority and influenced the re-conceptualization of their personal and familial goals. Gittel, Schehl, and Fareri (1990) observe, "...in addition to the economic benefits of graduation, [low-income single mothers] reported improved lifestyles, better standards of living and greater self esteem, and most said they planned to encourage their children to attend college" (p. 14).

Danziger & Waldfogel (2000) and Scott, London & Edin (2000) suggest college opportunities for welfare recipients contribute toward career and personal advancement in a variety of ways. If individuals are not ready to work, classroom skills and vocational training work best to prepare them for jobs (Pouncy in Danziger & Waldfogel, 2000). In a study of 80 women from two urban populations, researchers (Scott, London & Edin, 2000) found that 36 percent in Cleveland and 67 percent in Philadelphia had less than a high school education. The women in the study believed that their ability to move up in income was dependent upon further

education. They were aware of the work requirements under welfare reform and realized that they were less able to devote time to further education than had been the case with Aid for Families with Dependent Children, the predecessor to TANF. Women who were close to completing higher degrees or had more schooling than others expressed higher educational goals, with more defined future plans than those who had less schooling. Women with less than a GED or high school diploma had goals for lower wage jobs and less clear plans for reaching their goals. The study indicates that those individuals who had educational opportunities recognized the need to continue their education. The study also suggests a high need to assist this student population with identification of education and career plans leading to employment in careers that will keep them off welfare assistance.

Part of the rationale for connecting this population to other educational opportunities is to develop and sustain long-term career pathways that will assure living wage employment. While programs such as Washington's WorkFirst programs can contribute to the student's securing an entry-level job, these same programs are not currently designed for longer-term efforts toward wage progression and lifelong learning through continuing education.

After welfare reform was enacted, Maine was one of two states that continued to provide postsecondary education options. Maine separated state dollars for low-income families with children (the "maintenance of effort" obligation under welfare

reform) from TANF funded programs and was thereby able to continue to provide postsecondary education for low-income parents.

The Parents as Scholars Program, a student aid program funded with “maintenance of effort” funds is separate from the TANF program. Since the program is not part of TANF, participants who qualify for TANF receive cash assistance when enrolled in the state’s educational institutions and are not subject to federal time limits and work requirements. The program has limited enrollment: those who do not already have a marketable bachelor’s degree; those who do not have the skills to get a job that pays 85 percent of a median income in the state; or for those seeking a degree that is likely to make the family self-supporting (Center for Community Change, 1998). The program has not been fully enrolled (Butler, Deprez, & Smith, 2003).

Data from Maine’s Parents as Scholars Program has demonstrated that welfare participants who completed a two-year or four-year degree increased their hourly median wages from \$8.63 per hour to \$12.13 per hour immediately after leaving college, representing a 40.66 percent increase in wages (Butler, Deprez, & Smith, 2003). This program model suggests that welfare programs with a postsecondary focus can assist individuals in being self-sufficient, not merely in leaving the welfare rolls. Maine’s unique approach considers college class time and course preparation time to be “work” under TANF restrictions. While the federal law discourages states from focusing on postsecondary education and prefers to support

job-focused programs, Maine has shown considerable effectiveness in (1) moving individuals off of welfare assistance and (2) reducing the number of individuals living in poverty (Butler et al., 2003).

In Washington State, a number of programs have been developed to provide extended higher education for welfare recipients. In 2001, Washington State implemented the one-year educational option that allowed a select group of WorkFirst students to choose either of the following: 1) a one-year information technology or health care vocational certificate, or 2) degree completion in a high-wage, high-demand field for those who already have coursework toward a two- or four-year degree (Mayfield, 2001). While the population of these programs was small (N=74) and a full evaluation of program effectiveness has not been possible, Mayfield recommends expanding one-year limitations for degree completion programs where possible, allowing up to 18 months of higher education participation and broadening the choices beyond information technology and health care fields. Mayfield also suggests reconsideration of referral protocols thereby allowing increased numbers of TANF recipients to enter such programs. Program evaluation of such programs would compare eligible non-participating clients with participating students to determine program effectiveness.

Implemented in 2001-2002, an Information Technology Training pilot program combined longer training and Work Study, indicating positive results for job seekers. Eighty-one percent of completers became employed the quarter after

training, with a median hourly wage over \$13.00 per hour. Results from the pilot indicate that degree and certificate program completers had the higher earnings and greater first year gains compared to the general caseload. The *Fourth Year Accountability Report for WorkFirst Training Programs Conducted in 2001-2002* (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, 2004) concluded that participants' difficulties balancing school, work, and family made degree completion impossible for many enrollees. Washington State's results compare to national trends in which welfare participants with higher levels of educational attainment have greater likelihood of obtaining employment at higher wages than non-completers. "Ultimately, completing longer programs with certificates and degrees added the most value" (p. 4). The report suggests the colleges' challenge is to use cost-effective strategies to streamline programs and integrate WorkFirst into other college programs, putting increased focus on certificate and degree completion.

Evidence that students receiving welfare assistance are not connecting to broader educational opportunities demonstrates the limitations of many states' welfare programs. In the Washington State system, results from the *Fourth Year Accountability Report for WorkFirst Training Programs Conducted in 2001-02* (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, 2004) show that training levels reached by 4,209 participants in June 2001 were: 79.5 percent had some college courses; 4.5 percent earned a two-year degree or one-year vocational

certificate; 1.6 percent a GED or high school diploma; and 17.1 percent a one-quarter vocational certificate or a customized, individualized plan. While students earning 'some college' (79.5 percent of the population studied) have higher earning potential compared to those who receive only job-focused case management services, the goal of self-sufficiency is more likely to be realized through more substantial educational opportunities.

Washington State's efforts to extend time limits and open up program options for students are indicators that the state supports strategies that address long-term self-sufficiency goals as well as caseload reduction goals. Washington's integration of adult basic education and literacy programs into college professional technical coursework demonstrates strategies for working with students who may lack educational background for success in college. Extending educational time limits, creating a range of field choices, and articulating programs to degree and long-term certificates would also go far to support students' successful transition to self-sufficiency.

In a field survey conducted in 2002, as part of this present study, 17 Washington State community and technical college WorkFirst programs were examined specifically to determine how they report connecting WorkFirst students to the regular campus services and programs. Students were not studied in this field survey. While many college administrators stated in the study that they provided information to WorkFirst students on financial aid, student services, and degrees

and programs within and outside of the college, some stated that the WorkFirst restrictions do not allow students to articulate to degrees because of time limits. All 17 colleges in the study reported that WorkFirst students have access to other services on campus.

A national study of six community colleges (Matus-Grossman & Gooden, 2001) reported that many TANF students were not aware of campus services available to them, or they learned of them only through word-of-mouth, or they found out when it was too late to access the services. Hanson (2002) from the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges noted that while a number of pilot projects have been designed to provide vertical services that follow the student through the system, the reality is that various WorkFirst agency partners have different roles, such as case management, training and education, or employment, and they communicate different messages to the participant, sometimes preventing the student welfare recipient from moving through college certificates and degrees and into articulated baccalaureate programs. WorkFirst, in this regard, does not have a clear message, guidelines are not defined, and the campus WorkFirst training programs as a whole have neither the on-campus stability (due to funding fluctuations) nor the campus-wide connections needed for student success. Hanson acknowledged funding levels are adequate but program design limits student support and program articulation. Colleges, she notes, are neither motivated nor funded to integrate workforce development into mainstream programs and college

offerings. On campuses WorkFirst is a separate, isolated program, according to Hanson, lacking integration of students on welfare into other campus programs such as transfer programs and mainstream academic courses (Hanson, 2002). As the current system exists, students on welfare assistance attending colleges in Washington State have difficulty moving from program to program, articulating to Associate of Arts degree programs, and obtaining other transfer degrees.

In an examination of ways to improve linkages between basic skills programs and programs leading to economic self-sufficiency, researchers (Mazzeo, Rab, & Alssid, 2003) identified ways that colleges could organize to provide appropriate linkages for students. Successful bridge programs go beyond traditional adult education in the following ways: Developmental and academic content can be integrated to engage students; new curricular materials and instructional support can be provided to assist faculty in reaching diverse populations; linkages can be created with local and regional employers and industry to provide potential work-based learning and future job possibilities; new funding sources for program development can be leveraged; and practices can be evaluated based on student learning outcomes as well as in terms of job placement and earnings (Mazzeo, et al., 2003). While colleges generally find the task of making necessary changes in programs difficult, particularly in light of complexities of this student population and limited earmarked funding, many institutions are seeking ways to rethink how they connect basic skills with college credentials, degrees, and high skills high wage careers.

In Washington State, the college system has worked to align vocational programs with high wage high demand occupations, making those available to WorkFirst students. This effort is highly coordinated with statewide identification of industry clusters that support long-term economic viability while providing living wage employment. Washington is one of the few states that blended ESL and adult education with vocational training programs. Such programs as those at Renton Technical College, North Seattle Community College, and Edmonds Community College provide contextualized learning opportunities for students and create some linkages to higher education and to employment. Because research suggests participants will be disinclined to self-select adult basic education, preferring to go into vocational training, Washington colleges have had some success in successfully integrating curriculum.

Welfare reform legislation limits options for welfare recipients even though education and training may lead long-term to high paying jobs. “If economists can agree on anything, it is probably that investments in education and training have a large and significant impact on the future labor-market outcomes of workers” (Lynch, 2000, p. 19). The process of earning postsecondary undergraduate and graduate degrees can break the cycle of intergenerational poverty (Gittell et al., 1990; Greenberg et al., 1999; Kahn, 1998; Kates, 1998; Lein & Edin, 1996; Spalter-Roth et al., 1997; and Wolfe and Gittell, 1997). College experiences are likely to change the way marginalized students think, write, speak and act. Kane and Rouse

(1993) and Ashenfelter and Krueger (1994) further suggest evidence that schooling results in higher earnings for welfare recipients. Unemployment rates for those with less than a high school degree are, according to Lynch (2000), four times higher than those with a college degree. Education and training can potentially lift individuals out of poverty by contributing to their successful employment.

### Summary

The review presented here provides a background for the role that higher education plays in welfare reform, an overview of research on student development in higher education and factors that influence development, and examination of program designs (short-term and long-term) and linkages to broader educational opportunities. While extensive research has contributed to the discussion of moving welfare recipients to full employment and ending poverty, limited opportunities exist for students on welfare assistance to link to degrees. Many existing programs for this population lack high quality and extensive support services. Further, current short-term training programs may be limited in how effectively they provide long-term financial self-reliance for participants. Programs that offer and focus on long-term education with an option for postsecondary degrees have been shown successful, provided they combine GED/ESL/Basic Skills into vocational and academic programs, are able to connect to employers and future employment

possibilities, and provided they establish ways for single parents to satisfy the work requirements and access tuition aid.

In today's climate of public opinion, criticism and discontent with the nation's welfare system may be growing. While there is a focus on rising costs, caseload reduction through rapid employment, and enforcing time limits, participants (families with children in poverty) lack self-esteem and experience low self-efficacy. Consequently many of these women choose low-paying service occupations, thereby becoming part of the marginalized working poor, i.e., those who cannot maintain self-sufficiency for their families.

Research and scholarship around welfare reform and the implications for higher education have been documented. However, little has been done to better understand this student population's expectations, to learn more about their experiences while enrolled in college, and to better understand how they are linked to broader educational opportunities. Without a sense of control over their situation and ultimately their lives, this population is unlikely to fully benefit from existing programs. Understanding the participants and how they are affected by their college experiences will assist in understanding more about the connection between public assistance, college programs, and participation in the workforce.

The assertions included in the conceptual framework used in this study stem from theories and research suggesting that long-term programs are more likely to contribute to increases in cultural capital and to the acquisition of capital. Further,

students who have access to excellent student services and student supports will have increased self-esteem, confidence and self-efficacy, making them more likely to persist.

Existing research suggests some important points that should be addressed in future research. First, college programs designed for this student population have failed to fully examine educational and psychological perspectives of individuals as they influence student success. Second, most existing studies have focused on reducing welfare costs and creating a fully employed, self-sufficient welfare population. Few have focused on ways to capitalize on educational offerings and create strong campus linkages to other educational opportunities, based on what students say they want and need. Third, qualitative research focused on student experiences will complement much of the quantitative research focused on college completion, employability, and participant earnings and will further inform the discussion on ways to improve access and opportunities for this population. Qualitative research examining the perspectives of this student population on their expectations and college experiences, and an exploration of how they are or are not connected to the campus to access broader educational opportunities may complement quantitative reports on results of such programs and their effect. Benjamin and Stewart (1989) proposed that the self-efficacy construct is useful and critical to the understanding of factors affecting long-term welfare dependency and the connections to workforce development. Data on student perceptions of their

college experiences may ultimately assist with policy and program improvement by providing the student perspective.

## Chapter III

### Method

A number of studies on college welfare programs have focused on whether or not welfare recipients exiting programs transition to employment and earn living wages, yet, few (Matus-Grossman & Gooden, 2001; Mathur, 2002; Scarbrough, 2001; Scott, London & Edin, 2000) have considered participants' beliefs, thoughts, attitudes, and ideas in general around their welfare-to-work activities.

This qualitative study examined the expectations, goals and experiences of community and technical college students receiving welfare assistance while participating in college programs designed to prepare them for employment. In colleges' attempts to influence the employability of students who are on welfare, some evidence indicates that optimal linkages to other broader educational opportunities have been obscured by the focus on short-term training. Prince (2005) suggests that while colleges provide a "jump start" with short-term training, the system fails to provide links to long-term educational and career goals. Bandura's study (1977, 1994) on self-efficacy proposes that our expectations and beliefs about our abilities influence future success. When applied to the student on welfare assistance, chronicling students' reports on their expectations and beliefs about their abilities might help us further comprehend how training programs at two-year colleges might impact potential future success. Data from this study might assist colleges in identifying students' unmet needs for support and the need for

connectivity to campus, in order to access information on additional educational opportunities, as through campus academic advising services. Information about and awareness of the expectations, goals and experiences of the individual students, as they engage in learning at the college level, is largely absent from the studies reviewed.

Interview data gathered from participants was synthesized and analyzed to determine patterns in their perspectives toward their college experiences and goals. Data collected on participants included information on their age, dependents, and on their educational level coming into the programs; what they expected from the college programs related to personal and career goals; their sense of connection to campus related to their goals and expectations; and the program outcomes as participants reported upon exit, i.e., what they say they got out of the program. This section includes a discussion of the settings, participant selection, methods used to collect data, and techniques for data analysis.

### Setting

The settings for the study were three colleges in populated suburban areas near a large metropolitan city in the Pacific Northwest. The region's colleges serve eligible welfare recipients referred by health and human services case managers, based on factors influencing the individual's ability to gain employment. Participants who looked for a job but did not get one were referred back to their case

managers. At this point, participants either asked to enter a community or technical college short-term training program or the case manager recommended they enter such a program to increase the participants' employability for entry-level positions.

Programs for students on welfare assistance at Washington State community and technical colleges are funded through TANF. These institutions have some discretion in program design including: (1) vocational field and targeted entry level job, (2) offering a work component as either part of or separate from the curriculum, (3) type and extent of job placement services, and (4) program entrance requirements. The three colleges selected for the study had TANF training programs representing some variation in: (1) vocational area, (2) approaches toward the work requirement, (3) job placement services, (4) entrance requirements for participants, and (5) length of program. A major objective in the design of this study was to choose programs that are generally representative of other state community and technical college programs, with some variations on program features as those identified above. Programs features of the three sites are found in Appendix A. The three colleges selected for the program allowed for comparisons of participant responses and experiences across programs. Program components, when they surfaced as influences and factors in students' success, were identified in findings and analysis.

A second consideration in the site selection was to include both community and technical colleges in the study, since they are different in program offerings and in

campus culture. This variation of sites is critical for practitioners and college administrators and may influence the degree to which the study is useful to them. The three sites selected represented colleges with programs in three different vocational areas willing to participate in the study.

### Selection of Participants

The primary sample was comprised of students receiving welfare assistance and enrolled at the three colleges. The sample was small by design (N=14), to allow for in-depth interviews during the 15-20 week period of the college programs. Strauss and Corbin (1998) state, "...qualitative methods can be used to obtain intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn through traditional research methods" (p. 11). This type of research allowed the investigator to secure detailed rich descriptions from the participants, producing deep data contributions. While the resulting data cannot be generalized to a larger national population, findings may be helpful to colleges that work to improve programs, facilitate student success, and consider ways to limit attrition for this particular student population.

The students in the study were all eligible for and receiving welfare assistance through Washington State TANF criteria; they were determined eligible for short-term training based on criteria established by the individual community and technical colleges. After gaining cooperation from the three college's WorkFirst

administrators, the researcher contacted college personnel to determine the best way to reach and recruit this population, including providing flyers announcing the study and recruiting participants by attending the colleges' orientation meetings to recruit students for the study. Recruitment flyers were distributed to the potential population; at one site the researcher was able to talk with participants about the project and describe the commitment required in volunteering for the study; for other participants, initial contact was via telephone.

Once students at the three sites agreed to participate in the study, the researcher made initial contact with them via telephone, to elicit commitment, identify procedures and establish an appointment for the first interview. Participants were informed that their participation was completely voluntary and that strict confidentiality would be maintained. They were informed by the researcher that they could withdraw from the study at any time for any reason without any penalty. Further, the researcher notified them individually that their participation or nonparticipation or any withdrawal at any point during the process would not adversely affect their grades or class standing, nor would it affect their status on welfare assistance.

All participants were women. One was an African American; one was Kenyan; 12 were Caucasian. Table 1 presents a summary of participant pseudonyms, number of dependent children, and the participants' educational backgrounds.

Table 1: Demographic summary of participants in the study

<b>Name*</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Number of children</b>	<b>Education Background (Highest level achieved)</b>
Arimmy	37	2	Some college coursework
Ashley	25	3	Some college coursework
Cindy	40	4	Some college coursework
Diane	41	2	Some college coursework
Dolly	47	2	AA
JP	42	1	High school diploma
Penny	41	3	High school diploma
Sally	41	1	GED
Sam	29	3	Some college coursework
Sammi	51	1	Vocational courses
Sammy	44	4	GED
Sandra	43	2	AA
Sasha	31	1	BA
Susan	34	3	Vocational courses

\*All names are pseudonyms

When the researcher met for the first interview with each of the volunteers, students were asked to read, study and sign the student consent forms (Appendix B).

### Data Collection

The main research questions were (1) What are students' expectations for the program, upon entering the training programs? (2) How do their current college experiences relate to their expectations and goals? and (3) What is the level of student awareness of or connections to the campus and to broader educational opportunities? The analysis of student expectations and college experiences

included examination of perceived and experienced linkages between programs designed for WorkFirst students and broader educational offerings.

For purposes of collecting the data on student expectations, goals and experiences, two interviews were conducted to elicit information from participants. Data was collected over a span of 15-20 weeks for each individual, at the beginning and at the end of the training, during a nine-month period in 2004 and 2005. The first interview generated a story of how the participant came to the program, identification of their personal expectations for the program, how they came to have those expectations, and what career and education goals they had. The second interview collected the accounts of experiences they had during their course of study at the college, what they felt they gained from the programs, and how their career and education goals and expectations may have changed over the course of the program. The open-ended questions in the second interview focused on participant changes in expectations for the program, changes in career and educational goals, and whether or not participants experienced a sense of connection to the campus related to their goals and expectations. The interviews were conducted at the beginning of the program and again at the end of program just as participants exited. The first interview for each participant was 30-45 minutes in length; the second interview ranged from 15-35 minutes. The interview data, source documents about the programs, the researcher's field notes, and demographic information collected from participants comprise the data collected for this investigation.

Seidman (1991) contends that interviewing provides a way for people to make meaning of their experiences, thereby influencing how they carry out their experiences. The interviews in this study provided the investigator with a context for understanding the participants' situations upon entry into the program as well as a method for collecting participant data on their college training experiences. Further, the interviews provided a forum for participants' analysis of changes experienced over a period of time and under certain circumstances, while enrolled in the programs.

The interview questions provided a way for participants to tell about how they came to be in the college program and what experiences they had while in the program. The first interview gave participants a way to communicate past personal, work and education experiences as they related to their entry into the program. The final interview concentrated on the details of the participants' experiences in and perceptions of the program as they related to their personal lives. Questions were accompanied by prompts that resulted in richer, more in-depth responses such as "Can you tell me more about that?" "Can you elaborate on that?" "What do you mean when you say...?" Throughout the interviews participants were given opportunity to analyze and interpret the meaning of their college experiences and identify if and how they changed as a result of their participation in their program. The intent of the interview process was to identify the meanings of participants' experiences as they relate to existing programs and campus connections. The

interviews provided for use of a process identified by Creswell (2003), using the data to establish patterns and develop theories.

Yin (1994) asserts that semi-structured interviews are useful for gaining insight into interpersonal motives. This information could not be gathered solely from a questionnaire or survey. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim for coding and analysis. According to Gredler (1996), the quality of interview information was based on the development of good rapport to eliminate or minimize fabrication, crosschecking the individual's statements when necessary with follow-up questions, asking the same questions in the second interview, and confirming information between the initial questionnaire administered and program information available through the colleges. The investigator's field notes were jotted during the interviews and entered into the Field Notes database table.

### *First Interview*

The first interview with each of the fourteen participants took place either on the day of or within four days of their entry into their respective programs. The interviews were held at a location of convenience to the participants, most frequently at the college in an empty classroom, office or library study room. Several interviews were at coffee shops, restaurants, or at the homes of the participants.

The first interview was structured to provide a context and foundation for data collection around experiences and events in participants' lives. Using the questionnaire, participants were asked to provide information on age, number of children, marital status, education level, and enrollment status. The questionnaire is found in Appendix C. Each of the participants was asked to select a pseudonym for the study. Following completion of the questionnaire, the investigator asked the following guiding questions such as how they decided to enter the program, what they hoped to get out of the program, what their future education and career goals are, and how they anticipate the college can support them in realizing their goals. Interview questions for the first interview are in Appendix D.

### *Second Interview*

The second interview occurred in the last two days of the program or immediately after participants' completion of their program. In the case of the one individual who did not complete the program, the second interview occurred during the same period of time when completers were interviewed. The goal of the second interview was to gather details about participant perceptions and experiences while in the college programs, and to give detailed descriptions of their significant experiences. Further, they were asked to identify what they got out of the program, how they may have changed during the program, and to describe their connection or lack of connection to the larger campus. As with the first interviews, the location of

the interviews varied, depending upon the participants' scheduling and convenience. Interview questions for the second interview are in Appendix D.

### *Field Log and Field Notes*

In addition to the questionnaire and transcriptions of interviews, other notes included in the study were the field log and field notes. The field log included participant pseudonyms, dates of interviews, time intervals for interviews, and other factors in the documentation and recreation of the interviews. The field notes were handwritten notations taken during the sessions and recorded immediately after leaving the interview session. These notes were later entered into the database table named tblFieldNotes. Field notes represented a record of everything that happened before, during, and after the interview, including participants' expressions, tones, inflections, and any occurrences outside of the recorded interview that might affect the data collection. Field notes also recorded participant behavioral nuances and reference to pertinent events or activities outside of the boundaries of the study. Field notes consisting of the researcher's opinions, perceptions and general feelings were coded as such, not to be confused with actual observations recorded during and after the interview sessions.

### Data Management System

Specific file folders were established for each of the participants in the study, using pseudonyms. Transcriptions from the audio taped interviews were placed in the individual participant folders. The individual participant questionnaire administered at the first interview and the field notes from each interview session were filed in the participant folders. Folders were kept in a locked file cabinet in a secure location accessible only to the investigator. Each folder with its full content was read and reviewed in entirety a minimum of three times.

For purposes of this study, a database using Microsoft® Access® was created. The list of tables and fields is included in Appendix E. Data from the questionnaire, field notes and interview transcripts were entered into tables in the database. Words and responses to interview questions corresponded to specific fields within those tables, allowing the researcher to maintain the integrity of both the actual statements as well as the context as expressed by the participants. The purpose of data analysis in a qualitative study is to capture adequate description and explanation of individuals' essential experiences and meanings in their lives. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Data management in this investigation was designed to accurately capture this data.

Data analysis consisted of data reduction, data display, verifying the data, identifying and analyzing patterns, and drawing conclusions. (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Data derived from the questionnaires, interviews, and field notes were

entered into the database to reduce and reorganize information. The database data management functions and its capacity for report generation facilitated the process of identifying themes and patterns across data sets.

### *Data Reduction*

Data reduction is a continuing process of selecting data based on the study's focus, simplifying data, and entering it into fields in the database. Data reduction allows for the filtering, first by determining which participant comments and phrases capture the essence of responses to the interview questions and which field notations are essential to the context of participant responses. The data reduction process enables the investigator to reduce the magnitude of data and to substantiate the final conclusions of the research (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Using the transcribed interviews and the field notes generated from the interviews, the information was reviewed and entered into appropriate corresponding tables and fields in the database system. The investigator filtered participants' words and descriptions, based on the category of information being collected. That is, if the participant digressed into extraneous dialogue, that data was screened out at the data entry stage. The database structure allowed for clustering or grouping participant data within fields and across fields. The database also provided a way to compare and contrast data across and within database tables and fields. This process permitted reduction of large amounts of data into manageable,

smaller units, lending data to analysis field by field. Further, through this process, the investigator was able to narrow focus of analysis during data entry stages and in the later data analysis stages.

The design and building of the database table and field structures was initiated prior to beginning the process of data entry. Tables and creation of fields were modified as needed, as data continued to be entered over time. Reports were created to verify and consider relevance of data represented in the data management process. Additional reports displaying the individual fields in a matrix format were added on an as-needed basis to focus data results and to consider themes emerging. The table of comparison reports is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Research database comparison reports

<b>Transcript 1 Response versus</b>	<b>Transcript 2 Response</b>
Anticipation	Program Connections
Anticipation	Results
Challenges	Challenges
Decision	Further Education
Decision	Goals
Desired College Support	College Support or Failure to Support
Perceived College Support	College Support or Failure to Support
Five Year	Results; Goals

### *Data Display*

Data displays are used to organize information to enable the drawing of conclusions. In the case of this study, the sheer volume of narrative text gathered from the interview process required first reduction and then graphs and charts to

make the data meaningful visually. The process of developing displays and the resulting displays provided the researcher with a reasonable means for accessing the data, thus facilitating the analysis and drawing of conclusions.

Interview data was entered into corresponding fields representing interview questions, e.g., Interview Question: “Describe your key experiences while enrolled in the program” is coded as “KeyExperience.” T1 and T2 signified Interview 1 and Interview 2 data sets respectively. A report display is presented in Appendix F. The list of question/field mapping is presented in Appendix D.

#### *Drawing and Verifying Conclusions*

Qualitative analysis traditionally involves one of two strategies: (1) code data, analyze data, test conclusions, and (2) code, re-design and reintegrate conclusions as material is reviewed. Glaser (in McCall & Simmons, 1969) suggests constantly comparing the data, combining the two methods identified above: explicit coding and the development of conclusions, jointly applied to generate conclusive findings systematically.

Qualitative research should demonstrate that the researcher has, throughout the data collection process, been making meaning of what is seen and heard (Miles & Huberman, 1984). That is, conclusions are not final until all data has been reduced, coded and analyzed. Conclusions must be verified throughout the analysis stages, to ensure they can be confirmed, i.e., they are valid. While the stories collected may

be interesting, the usefulness of those stories requires validation of the conclusions drawn by the researcher. Standards for the analysis process were maintained by ensuring (1) reliance on relevant evidence, (2) inclusion of rival interpretations, (3) focus on the key research questions, and (4) without bias using prior knowledge of issues and subject matter (Yin, 1994). The analytical strategy selected here allowed for deep understanding of participant experiences, expectations, and resulting goals and changes in goals.

Conclusions in this study focused on discovering how students experienced college programs, what their goals and expectations were, and whether or not they experienced a connection to the larger campus and to broader educational opportunities. The conclusions developed in the study required the researcher to find and identify patterns in data sets, both among individuals in the study and across data fields. Implications for future research and practice generated from the study results were also part of the development of conclusions.

### Summary

This chapter has provided an outline of the research methodology used in this study. Drawing heavily upon research scholars and established practices used in qualitative studies, an overview of the research design, questions, data collection and management systems has been provided. Research findings from data collection and analysis are discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Findings**

The main research questions were (1) what are students' expectations entering college programs, (2) how do their current college experiences relate to their expectations and goals, and (3) what is the level of student awareness of or connection to the campus and to broader educational opportunities. This study assumed that students on welfare assistance benefit from college programs designed for them but that such programs might not provide connections for continued educational opportunities. Such connections might include access to financial aid counseling, academic support services such as counseling and tutoring, and other student services offerings on college campuses. The study assumed that this student population benefits from connections to and knowledge of broader educational opportunities when those connections exist on campuses.

The findings and analysis from the study are presented in subsequent sections, one for each theme that emerged from the data analyses. Emerging themes were: (1) Students' experiences in the college programs increased perceived skill acquisition, self-esteem, and confidence beyond their expectations; (2) Students in college programs designed for welfare assistance perceived minimal and limited access to the main college campus; and (3) Students exiting programs uniformly said they need to continue their education; however, most were not able to articulate

the vehicle for doing so. Data from interviews, questionnaires and field notes are presented thematically, in order of prevalence.

### Increases in Skill Acquisition, Self-esteem and Confidence

A main recurring theme in the study was that college programs contributed significantly to participant improvements in perceived skill acquisition, self-esteem and feelings of confidence when compared to participant entry levels of skill, self-esteem, and confidence and also when compared to participants' expectations in those areas as expressed by them during the beginning of their enrollment. Such gains in skills, self-esteem and confidence are likely to contribute to an individual's cultural capital by providing a broader range of choices as students became familiar with the educational environment. Further, increases in skills, self-esteem and confidence contributed to increases in self-efficacy, positively affecting participants' potential for success in education.

Participants consistently reported that the program contributed to improvements in skills, self-esteem and confidence, with a marked emphasis on improved self-esteem and confidence. Participants had expectations that they would improve skills upon entry into programs; follow-up interviews indicated participants' perceptions that they had indeed done so. Participants did not, however, anticipate improvements in self-esteem and confidence upon entry into programs; yet, they experienced these improvements by the end of the programs.

Increased skills coupled with increased self-esteem and confidence were tracked in the data as “capability,” “employability,” and “validation.”

T1Confidence/SuccessImage/Decision reports showed that participants, upon entry into programs, articulated the desire to become employable, to be prepared to get a job, and to complete the program. T2Goals/ProgConnections/ResultsIdent reports showed exiting participants reported increased ability to “learn and grow,” to succeed, and to complete the program, beyond their previous expectations. They referred to “abilities I didn’t have before,” and one stated, “. . .in the past I wouldn’t have been able to [complete the program].” One participant said, “I can look an employer in the eye and tell them I can do the work.” Another said, “I knew I didn’t have the capabilities that I have now.” Data suggests participants believed that, overall, they increased their abilities as a result of the program. Reporting of the data collected in three categories (skills, self esteem and confidence) follows.

### *Skill acquisition*

Bandura (1994) notes that the most effective way to create a strong sense of efficacy is through gaining mastery experiences. When participants in the study entered college programs designed for welfare participants, their stated purpose was to gain access to jobs. As participants mastered certain skills during the program and then persevered to complete the program, they also made gains in their personal efficacy.

The data indicate that when initially questioned about what they expected to get out of the program [T1Anticipation], most of the study's 14 participants responded that they specifically wanted a job or a career. Responses included:

- “A career – that’s what I am looking for – a career...”
- “I didn’t know what I wanted. I haven’t worked, so I didn’t know but they offered it and it sounded interesting...it’s an opportunity.”
- “...to get my resume typed out and go out and present my resume and get interviews, to try to see if I can try to get me a job in that area.”
- “Something that says I can do things I can do.”
- “A career that I love.”
- “A certificate and a new career.”

Participant responses indicated a preliminary focus on job or career preparation and on the prospects of finding a job by enrolling in the program.

In contrast, when students who had completed the college programs were asked what they got out of the program, they reported benefits including but also beyond increased prospects of getting a job. Participants reported:

- “[I changed] a lot because you’re learning so much, not just in the class but at work [this student had an on-campus work study position]. You learn different things, and so learning – anytime you learn something new, I think you change a little bit.”
- “...knowing that I can do these things now....”

- “And then just growing into – I’m not sure how to say it but like I’m employable – I feel more secure going out into the [job market]. . . .”
- “...I know a lot more...than I did before I went in there...because when I first started the program I knew nothing about [field].”
- “Obviously I have more confidence in my skills and I certainly will walk away with a certificate stating that I have these abilities which I didn’t have before. . . .I find things are getting done a lot faster. I’m not finding as many frustrations because I go, wait a minute, I think we covered this. I think we do this. And then it works. That makes a difference.”

When asked about what they got out of the program [T2Results], some participants specifically discussed their perceived acquired skills and what the acquired skills and knowledge had done for them.

- “I didn’t have the capabilities that I have now.”
- “From this program, I got all the updated information, all the new relevant changes.”
- “I have gotten a great education...I don’t have any doubt that I can pick up technical skills and basic knowledge, or even intricate knowledge...I have the background.”
- “I think specifically I’ve received the certification...We learned...[list of specific content areas learned].”

- “Oh gosh. I’ve gotten experience. I’ve got knowledge that I can apply... And I feel like I have a choice ... not just limited to one certain position. I can go into a lot of them...”

Clearly, participant responses to questions about the results of the program indicated that acquiring skills had been important to the participants.

The evidence around skill development suggests that individuals in the study who completed the program perceived themselves as capable and employable in a way not experienced prior to their entry into the program. Upon their exit from the program, they considered themselves qualified and able to apply for jobs. They uniformly across programs felt assured that they knew more than formerly about the field, and they knew that they had employment choices they did not have before.

Consistent with Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), the possession of choices and familiarity with the educational environment is critical to gaining cultural capital. The research data suggested that while participants may not have been uniformly clear about their reasons for entering the program [T1Decision], they were cognizant of their increased skill development related to gaining employment. While increased skills are presumed to be the outcome of educational programs, when coupled with increases in self-esteem and confidence, they present a potential for the development of self-efficacy. When individuals have a strong sense of self-efficacy, they possess the potential to rely on their own initiative to accomplish future goals (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1991, 1994).

*Increased self-esteem and confidence*

Self-esteem and confidence are essential components of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). Increases in self-esteem and confidence were particularly critical for this population, given their self-reported lack of self-esteem and confidence upon their entry into the program. The participants' average age was 39; seven of the participants were single and had an average of two dependent children. Half of the women had experienced domestic violence that had directly contributed to their need for welfare assistance. Others had health-related circumstances such as drug and alcohol abuse, work-related physical disabilities, or children with disabilities that had caused financial hardship. These pre-existing circumstances tended to negatively impact their self-esteem and confidence levels at the time they entered the college programs.

Another impact affecting self-esteem and confidence was access to or lack of personal resources (individuals in their personal lives that participants could turn to when they needed help) during the length of the program. Most reported they had no personal resources coming into the program, although one of the 14 participants said she had a large, supportive family. Some of the participants were receiving counseling, but most felt they were alone and could only rely on themselves to get through the program. Even upon completion of the program, they confirmed that they had been unable to draw upon a personal support system during their time in the program. Several participants acknowledged they relied upon and valued the

other women in their cohort. Their ability to complete the program contributed to the self-reported increase in self-esteem and confidence. “Successes build a robust belief in one’s personal efficacy” (Bandura, 1994, p. 72).

Upon exiting the programs, all fourteen participants in the study reported increased self-esteem, increased confidence, or related personal changes regarding how they saw themselves specifically as a result of their completion of the programs. Participant responses related to increased self-esteem and confident surfaced in the interview question, “What have you gotten out of this program?” [T2Results]:

- “...the program ... [has] totally boosted my confidence, knowing that I can do these things now. And now knowing that if I get a job, I can eventually get off welfare and all that? That’s awesome.”
- “When I first started I was very apprehensive. I hadn’t – it has been a long time since I’ve been through school. I wasn’t sure that I could fit in, for one.... I’ve had the ability to work with...people who have made [me] feel very comfortable.”
- Penny stated she changed significantly, “The classes made me realize some things about myself that I never realized before. Some ways that I come across, knowing it all – I wasn’t trying to come across that way, it was more of a question... so with that part of it, it’s really made me come to grips with how I’m saying things to people and the tone that I’m using. I’ve learned to

say things more [in a way that] I would want to be talked to. It has taught me a lot. It's taught me to grow up. My confidence level with interviewing – it's done a great deal.”

- Another participant reported, “The program has helped me change a lot. It helped me realize that I can do something and finish it. If I can finish my GED, then I can finish this. ...And I know there's no stopping me now.”

Other participants also expressed increases in self-confidence:

- “...two years ago for me to realize that I would be certified in an area of any sorts, to have my children back...I think that I've solidified a lot of my self-confidence. ...the fear – I can let that go more. I feel more confident. I feel more bona fide... I feel really good.”
- “...so it has obviously increased my confidence in job hunting. I can look an employer in the eye and tell them I am able to work in this and I can – I know how. That's really, really good.”

The study's participants recognized not only that they had increased self-confidence and self-esteem but also that such increases would potentially impact their ability to become employed.

Additional responses further substantiated that, overall, participants experienced increased self-esteem and confidence as compared to levels of self-esteem and confidence upon entrance into programs. One participant reports, “I think from where I started to where I am, I'm a lot more confident. Because I wasn't sure I was

going to be able to do it, and my confidence is up and now even getting in to interview, I feel – I’m very proud of myself, I really am. So I think that was a big thing – confidence and knowing I can do it.” Diane responded to the interview question in this way:

Feeling psychologically ready to move forward. You have to feel comfortable with your knowledge before you step out into the workforce, and I didn’t have that before [starting the program]. I got little bits and pieces of training before, and then I went out for interviews and I felt – I was nervous. I was more scared then because I didn’t really – I knew I didn’t have the capabilities that I have now.

Other participants noted:

- “What I got out of the program was confidence and to be dependable and a hard worker and honest.”
- “Well, more confidence in my abilities, knowing that I can [specific skills identified]...having the ability to navigate through....That’s probably the biggest thing.”
- “I guess the confidence because these are probably jobs I would have applied for [before taking the program] but I can actually feel strong and confident that I can do the best that they [employers] can expect.”
- “Self-esteem, knowledge, camaraderie, and a way to make a living in something that I love. That sums it up.”

- “Self-esteem is the biggest. And the confidence that I’m not insignificant.”

This theme of increased self-esteem and increased self-confidence was predominant throughout the data.

Increases in self-esteem, confidence, and skills are all components of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1994). The combination of these components in an individual suggests that the individual possesses a belief in his or her capability to succeed in achieving his or her goals. According to Pajares (1996), studies on self-efficacy show that the higher the individual’s sense of efficacy, the greater the effort toward achieving goals. Further, this greater effort is accompanied by greater persistence and resilience. When the study’s participants reported improvements experienced during college programs, they also unanimously substantiated that improvements identified, e.g., increased self-esteem, self-confidence and skills, were directly attributable to their participation in the college programs, rather than due to external factors in their private lives.

#### Access and Connections to the College Campus

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) contend that expanded educational options and increased familiarity with the educational environment are essential for those who lack cultural capital. The transmission of cultural capital through education is critical to increasing one’s economic and cultural means, even though the transmission tends to be, according to Bourdieu and Passeron, censored and

controlled through mechanisms, e.g., entrance requirements, prerequisites for programs, and financial aid access. By serving increasing numbers of non-traditional learners from middle and working class families, educational institutions imply it is possible through such programs to equalize competitive conditions among students irrespective of their social background. Although these programs appear to be open to all, the social contexts in higher education tend to dictate how and to what extent cultural capital is acquired (Bourdieu, 1986). Access or the lack thereof to college services and expanded educational opportunities for students on welfare assistance may represent the degree to which students can increase their cultural capital.

In community and technical colleges, educational options might be supported by connections and access to financial aid, academic support services to identify further educational opportunities, and a range of student services typically offered on campuses. However, students in college programs designed for welfare recipients are unlikely to experience connections to the broader college campus. Further, they are unlikely to consider such connections as particularly valuable. They consistently reported that they received all the college support they needed through the program. Participants were usually unable to think of ways the college could have supported them further. They showed little evidence of having accessed broader college resources during the time they were in their programs and generally saw no reason to access such resources.

The question in the second interview designed to capture responses on participant experiences of connectedness to the broader college campus was: In what ways have you felt connected to the larger campus? [T2Connections] Participant responses indicated that seven students felt somewhat connected to the campus; the other seven felt disconnected from the larger campus. Responses indicating some feelings of connectedness:

- “Definitely through work [work-study position] and being part of – I’m an instructor’s aide so I get to work with students a lot.”
- “Well, on a personal level, I’ve had help with my work-study people....Really, when you look at my situation, they did everything they could. And they really have gone the extra mile for me.”
- “We went up there several times, watching films, using the library, going into the WorkFirst office and speaking with them, etc. And they were great at graduation. I mean, the President showed up....”
- “I felt like pretty much a student there.”
- “Yes, through working [on-campus work-study position] in this program...this class is sad that I’m leaving...”

Several individuals who reported sensing a connection to the larger campus stated they intend to continue their education, identifying future goals or steps taken to continue, e.g., I want to be a teacher; I have a Pell grant in place; I want to get my

license; I will take night classes; I will get certified; I am applying for financial aid.

[T2FurtherEducation]

Participants who did not feel a sense of connection to the larger campus reported:

- "...they have a disability office...but [the college program] didn't integrate with different programs...which really blew me away. And I talked to [staff] about that, and she said, well, I don't think that you need to go to the disability office – we'll get you a tutor...by the time I got a tutor, it was too late."
- Cindy stated she did not feel connected, never having been on the main campus and not even getting her student identification card. "The college as a whole - I haven't really reached out to many of the programs. I don't know what's available."
- "As far as from a classroom perspective, no [I was not connected] simply because I think that our class was later in the day at the time that most classes were leaving. So we didn't have a lot of involvement with the students."
- "I don't know about the larger campus...Actually with the rest of it I don't have a lot of interaction. I never have to go to the library to work."
- "No, I don't feel connected to the campus in any way. No, not at all."
- "No, not at all. We're separated over here."

Some participants who reported a lack of connection with the larger campus also reported uncertainty about continuing their education [T2FurtherEducation], even while they noted they know they will need more education. Comments included: “I want to take a break. I have no goals for further education, even though I think I will need more education.” “I will focus on going to work.” “I don’t like going to new places.” With few exceptions, as with three students who had on-campus work-study positions and felt connected through those jobs, most students in the study did not have connections to the larger campus and, further, they did not see the need for those connections.

While participants’ experiences and exposure to college were assets to them, the study suggested that the colleges might have, to some degree and in some cases, limited access to broader connections for this student population. Some students may have felt limited in access to and in becoming more familiar with the broader educational environment, thereby suggesting some limiting of future choices in higher education. Such limitations perpetuate a lack of cultural capital, potentially reproducing a class structure through the institution.

### Need for Further Education

Students who completed college programs unanimously agreed that they need further education, even in the case of one participant who already had a four-year degree. However, even while they know that this is so, most were not able to

articulate how further education would happen in their futures. This disconnect suggests that students in short-term college programs have not learned enough about the educational environment to know how to pursue advanced educational goals. This limitation may signify the perpetuation of a lack of cultural capital in this population by limiting cultural knowledge or resources and limiting choices (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

Responses in T1FiveYear, T2Result, and T2Goals suggest participant awareness that they will require or that they desire additional coursework. Most participants in the three college programs acknowledged that they will need to further their education. Participant comments include:

- “For education I want to continue ...I think really that I’m leaning toward medical law...”
- “School wise, I would really love to be a teacher so I’ve been applying for teaching programs.”
- “...according to the job, this one I’m looking at, you can take extra classes and I wouldn’t mind doing that either, even though I’m not the greatest student, I enjoy doing it. I wouldn’t mind going back to school to try something, you know. I’m not exactly sure where I’d go or what direction I’d go in, but I wouldn’t mind trying it again.”

- “I need to go out and get a job, but yet I’d like to go further – and go into legal assistant. I hear they’re going to have an evening legal assistant program here.”
- “My career goals is to find a job....as an entry level position to learn more than what I know about [field], and to further my education as I learn and progress in that area.”
- “I imagine I would just look into the six month program...I certainly wouldn’t want to enroll in that two year program to find out I hate it.”
- “I would actually like to maybe come back here and get some type of degree-type program, but short term...”
- “I’d love to pursue a bachelor in nursing – I’d like to become a gynecologist/obstetrics nurse.”
- “I would very much like to continue my education. It’s just that I don’t know how I’ll be able to do it and support my daughter...”
- The participant with the four-year degree said, “And obviously at any point in my life, any point I have the chance to go back to school and get an education I’ve always taken it and I always will because I think education is something that no one can ever take away from you.”
- “I want to continue getting my certificates...”

Most participants realized through their enrollment in the program that they need more education.

When participants were asked about what they got out of the program and what their future goals were, most responded they wanted to go back to school for courses, certificates, and sometimes baccalaureate degrees. Very few had taken specific steps toward these additional education goals, with the exception of one student who had applied for a Pell grant and another who had applied to a number of four-year institutions to pursue a teaching certificate. Others presented vague ideas of what they might do to continue attending college or they identified leaps, such as earning a four-year degree while having little knowledge of what that required. Most were unaware of transferability of their coursework and were not knowledgeable about financial aid processes. They uniformly stated further education had not been discussed as part of the college program. They all, however, expressed that their first goal was to get a job as a requirement of WorkFirst; therefore, consideration of their technical skills, resume, and interview skills were prominent in their responses to questions about the future.

Given the welfare reform realities with a focus on employment, responses from participants revealed the conflicted interests involved in moving individuals off welfare assistance and offering them expanded higher education experiences. Participants stated that their first intent was to find employment, even while they fully realized that longer-term higher education experiences were critical to their future success. Programs can be credited with improving students' chances of becoming employed at an entry level. However, even if welfare participants are

successful in increasing their self-efficacy about getting a job, programs have contributed little toward providing them the knowledge and resources to be able to continue their education beyond short-term programs.

### Summary

Research findings from the participant questionnaire, first and second interviews and field notes were presented in this chapter. Three major themes were revealed in an analysis of the data generated by this research study: Students on welfare assistance enrolled in community and technical college short-term training programs report that they experience increases in skills, self-esteem and confidence in their ability to succeed; most students in the population studied did not feel or experience a connection to the larger campus, and some believed there needed to be a connection; almost all students identified more education as a need; however, few reported specific or realistic plans to make this happen. The research questions in this study focused on student expectations, college experiences, and the level of awareness of the greater campus and broader educational opportunities. Included was an examination of perceived or experienced linkages with other programs at the colleges. Findings confirmed that students' experiences and learning go beyond what they anticipate upon entry into the programs; that increases in skills, self-esteem and confidence factor into their future goals; and while they are aware of the need for further educational opportunities, they are not knowledgeable about how to

realize those opportunities and the training programs in which they were enrolled made little effort to remedy this.

In Chapter V a summary, discussion, and recommendations for future study are presented.

## Chapter V

### Summary, Discussion, and Recommendations

This chapter includes a summary of the main findings of the study based on the research questions and the data presented in the last chapter. Next, the findings are discussed within the context of the previous research and scholarship presented in Chapter 2. This discussion is followed by an analysis of why the study is important and how it contributes to the body of research on workforce development, colleges, and programs designed for welfare recipients. The next section identifies what was not accomplished in the study and how that might limit the application of findings. Finally, suggestions on improving the study and recommendations for future studies on participants on welfare in college programs will be offered.

#### Summary

This study examined the expectations, experiences, and goals of 14 female students on welfare assistance who are participating in short-term (15-20 weeks) college training programs designed for welfare recipients. Data were collected from participant interviews, questionnaires, and field notes over a nine-month period in 2004 and 2005. The study was conducted at three colleges near a large metropolitan area in the northwest part of the United States. One of the sites was a technical college while the other two sites were community colleges. One of the participants was African American; one was Kenyan; all others were Caucasian. Thirteen

participants included in this study completed their programs; one exited prior to completion but participated in the study.

Analysis of the data showed that the programs positively affected students on welfare assistance attending short-term college programs well beyond the participants' expectations and goals. Participants agreed they had strong support from the college staff involved with the program but that they experienced few connections to the larger college campus. The data also revealed that students not only increased their skill base and increased self-esteem and confidence, but they also perceived themselves as more capable of succeeding than they had reported as they entered the program. Data showed strong agreement across all three programs and among different participants about the effects of the program.

The main findings of this study were:

- The educational program played a large role in increasing students' belief in their ability to be successful, even within the short-term span (15-20 weeks) of the programs. The permanence or resilience of this belief could not be determined, however.
- Students received more than they anticipated in skill acquisition, self-esteem and self-confidence as a result of their college experiences.
- Programs offered little connection to the larger campus environment and limited students' exposure to further educational opportunities.

- Students were aware that they needed more education to progress in careers but were not clear on how that would happen; further, training programs did not address this.

Findings illuminate a tension between students' increases in self-esteem, their sense that they need more education, and the lack of institutional supports and connections to assist students with achieving more education.

### Discussion

This study's findings are useful in that they voice the students' experiences and impressions as they transitioned through community and technical college training programs. This can be particularly useful when viewed within the context of other research on the welfare populations, including studies on employability and future earning potential (Mathur, 2002, 2004; Mayfield, 2001; Wolfe & Guittell, 1997). Studies on welfare populations (Butler, Deprez & Smith, 2003; Nicolas & JeanBastiste, 2001; Scarbrough 2001) receiving training or college opportunities suggest women participants experience modest increases in earnings as well as increases in their self-esteem. Adult and student development scholars (Bandura, 1977, 1994; Schlossberg, et al, 1995; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) suggest that education positively impacts individuals and contributes to their development. Studies specifically examining community college low-income populations and services received on campuses (Matus-Grossman & Gooden, 2001; Prince, 2005)

show that similar low-income populations often found college navigation “overwhelming” and confusing. These studies agreed that the transition to college could be difficult for disadvantaged populations and women; those who persevere benefit in increased self-esteem and in employment.

The educational setting played an instrumental role in increasing the students’ belief in their ability to be successful, according to data collected from the participants in this study. Bandura’s (1977, 1994) definition of self-efficacy as expectations and beliefs about one’s ability to successfully perform inform the discussion of participant outcomes. Individuals’ self-efficacy beliefs powerfully influence attainment (Bandura, 1977). This study of students on welfare assistance showed that when they complete and exit the programs, they experience feelings of increased self-esteem, confidence and a belief that they are capable, as compared to their entering experiences and expectations. Resiliency may be sustained, according to Bandura (1994), through continued opportunities to master new skills.

Bourdieu (1997) has suggested that time limits to educational opportunities reflect differences in class, economic wherewithal, and cultural capital. This study suggests that the participants have been positively affected by the short-term college training experience, and further, they sense the need to continue with their education. While they have not achieved the optimal in increasing their cultural capital, they have, however, experienced some benefit toward attainment and consistently show they are cognizant of the need for more education. The Maine as

Scholars program (Butler, Deprez & Smith, 2003) documented that a four-year degree was optimal for moving this population beyond existing limitations. The findings here would suggest that the 13 participants in the study who did not have a baccalaureate degree are keenly aware of the need for moving in this direction. Additionally, the one participant with a four-year degree expressed her intention of participating in continuing education opportunities after becoming employed.

Participants in the study exhibited changed attitudes and behaviors that were consistent with the notion that college experiences contribute to increased skills, self-esteem, and self-confidence. However, while the findings in this study confirm what researchers have found to be true with other low-income participants (Kates, 1998; Mathur, 2002; Matus-Grossman & Gooden, 2001; Scott, London & Edin, 2000), the findings go beyond previous studies to reveal that participants' educational experiences, even in short-term training programs lasting from 15-20 weeks, contributed greatly to the belief in their capability to succeed. Results were particularly dramatic because the participants entering the program showed initial low expectations for their own success when compared to results reported upon exiting the program.

According to Bandura (1994) women with children who have a strong sense of self-efficacy are able to manage the multiple and changing demands of family and work; however, those who have self-doubt in their ability to perform in both roles are likely to suffer from physical and emotional stress. A robust sense of efficacy

may not be sustainable over time unless this sense is reinforced by successes as well as on-going opportunities to develop and master new skills.

Four sources of influence (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1991, 1994) that have been shown to support individuals lacking self-esteem, confidence, and a belief in their ability to succeed are:

- Mastery experiences, i.e., success builds belief in one's personal efficacy;
- Vicarious experiences provided by similar people who succeed through sustained effort;
- Social persuasion, i.e., verbal persuasion that individual possesses capabilities;
- Modification of self-beliefs through the re-interpretation of events to reduce stress and negative interpretations of events.

When viewing the participant data in the study through Bandura's lens, a number of the influences may be present. Students reported they acquired skills, and they felt accomplished having completed the program, i.e., they felt they had mastery experiences. They said they were more skilled and more capable than before entering the program. While not prominent in the data, there may be some indication that students were able to share experiences through the program cohort. Several students reported they experienced a sense of support as they entered the program together, spent time each day with each other, independently formed study groups and support groups, and then graduated together. Some said that they had

bonded with the other women in their group. No particular evidence was revealed to determine if social persuasion was present or if students were supported in modification of their belief systems to reduce stress and encourage re-interpretation of events in their lives. Further research into these two factors would be of benefit to the field, to determine if self-efficacy in this population could be further enhanced.

A third finding was that college programs in the study offered little connection to the larger campus environment. The disadvantages of this lack surfaced in interview questions about the participants' future plans in regard to education. Participants in the study were unable to identify concrete "next steps" in their education, even though they acknowledged that they would need to have more courses, certification, credentials and even degrees to realize their goals. Most students were not aware of financial aid processes. Two participants reported that program coordinators discouraged them from pursuing further education, noting that it was not allowable under TANF funding. Two of the 14 completed financial aid applications; one had applied to four-year colleges. Few knew about other services offered on campus, including student services, career centers, and counseling services. Few knew about other academic or vocational programs or courses offered on campus. The absence of this type of connection limits students' movement on career paths, potentially creating the likelihood of dropping out, a shared characteristic of students in marginalized programs, such as GED completion, basic skills, ESL, and WorkFirst training programs (Prince, 2005). The

lack of connections, the students' sense that they need more education, and their increases in self-confidence and self-esteem provide a complex tension around the community and technical colleges' role in supporting and offering higher education opportunities across socioeconomic classes.

The fourth finding in the study bears a relationship to the third finding. Data revealed that students had low expectations of college support and were satisfied with the support they received. According to Matus-Grossman & Gooden and Hanson (2002), many TANF students were unaware of services, they learned of them too late to use them, or they only found out about them through word-of-mouth. Findings from this study similarly indicated that the participants did not know about services that might otherwise be available to them. They were confined to their specific program (one person reported feeling "claustrophobic") and their primary interactions were with one another and with their instructor rather than with other students outside the program or with services beyond the program. In all three training programs, students in the study had occasional and limited access to a counselor, job developer, and program coordinator.

Upon exiting the program, the participants reported they were aware that they needed more education to grow in their careers. Few were able to articulate how this might happen, even when asked to describe how that might occur. Two individuals had applied for financial aid "on their own" indicating they had not done that at the suggestion of anyone on campus. The others had not taken steps to do

that and had little knowledge of the process. Individuals who had given some thought to further educational opportunities hoped to be employed by a company that provided educational benefits and continuing education opportunities. Prince (2005) and Matus-Grossman & Gooden (2001) suggest that the absence of college services for this population, as well as the lack of campus-wide integration of programs and services, contribute to misinformation and lack of information about how to continue college.

### Significance

As our nation's leaders and policymakers apply increasing pressures on welfare recipients to become economically independent, our community and technical colleges play an on-going and critical role in assisting people in their transition from poverty to living wage careers, to engage in lifelong learning, to stay abreast of changing job markets, and to maintain employment that allows them and their families to be financially self-sufficient. This requires that colleges design educational programs and support systems that assist students in being successful while engaged in college programs and after they leave the community and technical college environment.

This investigation is significant in that it focused on student experiences, expectations and goals as they entered and exited short-term college programs. This approach was taken in order to hear directly from the students themselves. The

study was unconventional in that these women's voices are often not heard in the literature and are rarely accounted for in efforts to consider, for instance, the potential earnings of trained welfare participants, cost-benefit analyses of training versus immediate entry-level employment, and consideration of ways to reduce expenditures in human services. Instead of others speaking for them, in this study the women spoke for themselves. In doing so, they were able to articulate a newly discovered control over their lives and a belief in their ability to influence events outside themselves.

This study is significant in its presentation of gender-specific data on women with dependent children who were on welfare assistance, enrolled in short-term training programs at community and technical colleges. Gender-specific issues related to the women in the study may include their enrollment in training programs which prepare them for female-dominated, low-wage occupations; the impact of competing interests of taking care of their children and succeeding in training programs; and the possibility that student aspirations may be leveled by gender and class constraints of the labor market, as well as by family, education and work backgrounds.

Another significant aspect of the research was clarity achieved on the disconnection between these programs and the broader campus. While this was referenced in a number of studies on low-income students, no study had specifically examined programs for welfare participants and isolated their experiences and

perspectives on connections or the lack of connections to the broader campus. Even those participants who had some connections had little more than a thread of what is available to all other community and technical college students. This disconnection is to some degree affirmed by Prince (2005), whose research examines all low-income students, without separating out the welfare population. In his examination of educational achievement, he notes particularly those populations who access educational services and then drop out permanently, due in part to the lack of connection to broader educational opportunities. The findings in this research help us in better understanding, from the student's perspective, how they are or are not connected to the larger campus.

A third significance to this study's findings is the potential for documenting changes in self-efficacy for participants on welfare attending colleges. Because of the importance of self-efficacy in individuals' status in society, colleges would benefit by assessing self-efficacy of students throughout their educational journey, to determine influences and potential program design changes that may contribute to increases in self-efficacy over time. A number of research-based tools, such as Employability Readiness Scale™, could be helpful to colleges in 1) assessing self-efficacy in participants and 2) evaluating program effectiveness in contributing to self-efficacy in participants.

### Limitations

The study's limitations are inherent in the basic structure of the research design. Limitations of sample size, sample selection, and researcher effects could not be completely controlled regardless of the amount of careful preparation and design of the study. This small, qualitative study took place in three colleges and covered only three vocational fields. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized beyond specific participants in the study or the themes drawn from the findings. Although the sample was made up entirely of women, the results may be beneficial to men in training programs for students who are low-income adults, in that the data here provided a rich descriptive data source on student experiences in short-term training programs at colleges. They could be instructive to other researchers studying other low-income groups attending similar training programs.

A second limitation of the study was the limited span of time spent in collecting data. Obviously a longitudinal study over several years would have contributed some significant results regarding the futures of the participants. The impact of increased self-efficacy and levels of education could potentially be measured beyond the college environment. Longer-term studies could produce very different results and would be very valuable.

The third limitation is that the primary investigator was solely responsible for the data collection and analysis. To control for researcher bias in data collections and analysis, a number of controls were implemented during the course of the study:

audio-taping interviews, recording detailed field notes during and immediately after all interviews, and checking and cross-checking for consistency in the data, using the data management system (tables, fields, and data display charts).

### Recommendations

This study provided findings that suggest programs for student on welfare assistance could be improved by:

1. Creating direct linkages connecting programs for students on welfare with services and programs available to the broader campus, particularly to expose students to further educational opportunities and auxiliary supports;
2. Assessing students' self-efficacy and providing students with strategies for further building their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1991, 1994) through providing (a) mastery experiences, (b) social models that students can learn from, (c) social persuasion that encourages students to believe they have what it takes to succeed, and (d) methods for students to modify beliefs and re-interpret events;
3. Supporting the development of the students' sense of agency by providing connections to other services on campus, so they can better determine their own needs and goals; and
4. Supporting the development of the students' sense of agency by assisting with long-range education and career planning and establishing a clear

career path connected to “next step” educational options that are realistic to people in their situation.

Findings suggesting the students’ lack of connection to academic advising and related campus services, while not surprising given program sponsorship and support levels, are important as well. Therefore, a further recommendation, although not strictly substantiated in this research, would be to create opportunities for students who are enrolled in short-term training programs at community and technical colleges to have access to academic advising. This may serve to provide students with a clearer understanding of what ‘further education’ might mean for them and would serve to assist them in considering their next steps.

Related recommendations are to locate short-term training programs on campus whenever possible, as opposed to an off-campus location; to provide a comprehensive introduction to campus during the orientation phase of the program, with ample opportunities to access services provided throughout the program; and to consider providing on-campus student work-study, volunteer or internship positions, to provide connections to the broader campus and its offerings whenever programmatically possible, appropriate or feasible.

Several future studies would be useful in creating expanded higher education opportunities for this population. First, a follow-up study with the 14 participants in this study would provide additional, longitudinal data that would help substantiate the long-term impact of their college experiences. Such a study would assist in

determining whether or not these individuals return to college for additional training, skills, certificates and degrees, as they said they wanted to do or felt they should do. Further, a follow-up study could delve more deeply into potential connections and linkages on campuses by identifying developing needs and potential interventions that could have occurred, based on events in participants' lives during the program. Conducting a pilot intervention program, based on the participant needs, with an evaluation component to determine successful models for welfare recipients would go far in improving the community and technical colleges' ability to deliver more successful training programs for welfare recipients.

A second possible additional study would expand the existing research base to more colleges in other regions of the country, thereby increasing the scope of the study. Additional future sites and a larger population would provide for further comparisons of participant career and educational needs in training programs for TANF recipients at two-year colleges, through data collection on participant experiences and expectations while enrolled in these programs. A study such as this would allow for the results to be generalized beyond those who participated in this study. Results might also contribute to identifying successful program design characteristics across states and regions.

A third recommendation is to study the effect of higher education experiences on the children of welfare recipients. While this current study was not designed to gather this data, many participant comments reflected a deep commitment to their

children, often causing competing interests within the participants. A future study might help us understand the impact of college training programs for welfare recipients on future generations: Does the enrollment of participants contribute to the enrollment of their children? Does student enrollment in college training ultimately impact future generations? Such a study would potentially provide data to determine strategies to eliminate generational poverty.

The final recommendation for further study is to consider college training program design and effectiveness in linking with other related programs on campuses, including such programs as academic advising and other support services. A study like this has the potential for informing the development of successful models, thereby increasing access and articulation for students from special populations such as welfare recipients. Research indicates the linkages are weak; further research on how to strengthen and expand linkages in practice may contribute to improvements in program design in TANF training at two-year colleges.

### Final Statement

Work that contributes to the success of students who are on welfare assistance is extremely important if we are to realize full employment of the nation's population. This can be achieved by increasing our understanding of the students, studying the existing programs and identifying successful models, finding creative and cost-

effective ways to lengthen and deepen educational programs, and expanding students' sense of connectedness to the larger college campus by creating strong linkages. In these ways colleges can help support participants' long-term education planning and lifelong learning and contribute to their ability to flourish in future careers. The research results encourage consideration of development of articulated educational options for the underemployed and unemployed attending colleges to facilitate long-range education and career planning, beyond short-term vocational programs.

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### Appendix A: Program Features of Three Sites

<b>Features</b>	<b>Site A</b>	<b>Site B</b>	<b>Site C</b>
Duration of coursework	17 weeks	20 weeks	15 weeks
Vocational area	Medical assistant	Office assistant	Plant care technician
Work requirement	Included in coursework	On-campus work study	Internship
Job placement services	Resume writing, interviewing, employer contracts	Resume writing, interviewing, employer contracts	Resume, work-site internship
Entrance requirement	High school diploma / GED / interview	High school diploma / GED	High school diploma / GED

## **Appendix B: Consent Form**

### UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON College Experiences of Women on Welfare CONSENT FORM

Researcher: Julie Jacob, College of Education, University of Washington,  
206-522-9918 Human Subjects application #04-3857-E/C 01

#### Researcher's Statement

I am asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what we would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When I have answered all of your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called 'informed consent.' I will give you a copy of this form for your records.

#### PURPOSE AND BENEFITS

We want to understand how the goals and expectation of student on welfare at the colleges are affected by their college experience. We want to interview welfare women about their experiences in college courses as part of their welfare program. We hope the results of our study will help colleges better understand students on welfare who are enrolled in these programs. You may not directly benefit from this study. However, we hope this study will improve programs such as the one you are enrolled in.

#### PROCEDURES

If you choose to be in this study, I would like to interview you two times, once at the beginning of your program, and once at the end. In the first interview, I will ask you about your goals and expectations for the college program you're enrolled in. For example, I will ask you, "What special challenges do you have in your personal life that you might need to address to complete this program?" and "What do you hope to get out of this program?" and "How has the college encouraged and supported you?" In the second interview, I will ask your experiences while in the program. For example, I will ask you "What were the challenges you encountered while in the program?" and "How have you changed as a result of the program?" Each interview will take about one hour. You do not have to answer every question.

At the first visit, I would also like you to fill out a brief questionnaire. The questionnaire will ask you question about your educational background, marital

status, how many children you have, as well as some questions about your intention to enroll in certain programs at the college. The questionnaire will take about 5 minutes to complete. You do not have to answer every question.

I would like to audiotape your interviews so that I can have an accurate record. My advisor and I will be the people who will listen to the tapes. I will transcribe your interview tape within 4 weeks, assign a study code to the transcript, and destroy the tape. Please indicate below whether you give your permission for the interviews to be audio taped.

#### RISKS, STRESS OR DISCOMFORT

Some people feel that providing information for research is an invasion of privacy. I have addressed concern for your privacy in the section below. Some people feel uncomfortable when an interview is audiotaped.

#### OTHER INFORMATION

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You can stop at any time. Information about you is confidential. I will code the study information. I will keep the link between your name and the code in a separate, secured location until July 2005. Then I will destroy the link. If the results of this study are published or presented, we will not use your name.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Jacob

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### SUBJECT'S STATEMENT

This study as been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, I can ask the researcher identified above. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can call the Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098.

I give the researcher permission to audiotape my interview as described above in the consent form.

I do NOT give the researcher permission to audiotape me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Appendix C: Questionnaire for WorkFirst Students

Please complete questions and return to researcher:

1. Today's date \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are you receiving welfare assistance (TANF)? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
3. Your age \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of children \_\_\_\_\_
5. Ages of children \_\_\_\_\_
6. Marital status \_\_\_\_\_
7. Level of education completed (check all choices below that apply - indicate highest grade level completed when appropriate)
  - a. No previous formal education \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. K-5 grades \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. 6 – 8 grades \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. high school \_\_\_\_\_ (completed \_\_\_\_\_ grades)
  - e. Some college \_\_\_\_\_ (completed \_\_\_\_\_ years) Degree \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Technical or vocational school \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Other \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are you currently enrolled at this college? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
9. If you are enrolled, which program are you entering? \_\_\_\_\_
10. If you are not currently enrolled, do you plan to enroll in this college before the beginning of the quarter? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
11. When do you anticipate completing this program? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D: Database Fields and Associated Interview Questions

### Transcript1 table fields and Interview 1 Questions

<b>Field</b>	<b>Question</b>
Circumstances	Can you tell me a little about yourself and how you entered this college program?
Decision	Why did you decide to come into this program?
Preparation	Describe the experiences you have had at the college up to this point?
Anticipation	What do you hope to get out of this program?
Anticipation	What are your goals for the future related to education and career?
Resources	What resources do you have in your personal life that you will draw on to help you succeed in your goals?
Challenges	What special challenges do you have in your personal life that you might need to address to complete the program?
DesiredColSupport	How has the college and the staff here encouraged and supported you to this point in the program?
PerceivedColSupport	In what ways can the college and the staff support you as you complete the program?
	What do you feel your prospects are in realizing your goals?
SuccessImage & FiveYear	What will success look like to you?

### Transcript2 table fields and Interview 2 Questions

<b>Field</b>	<b>Question</b>
CompletionFeel	How does it feel to be completing this program?
KeyExperience	Describe some of your key experiences while enrolled in this program?
ResultIdent	What have you gotten out of the program?
Goals	What are your goals for the future related to education and career?
PersResources	What resources did you use from your personal life to help you while enrolled in this program?
Challenges	What challenges did you encounter in your personal life during the program?
ColSupport	How did the college and the staff here encourage and support you through the program?
ColSupport	In what ways did the college and staff fail to support you?
Connections	In what ways have you felt connected to the larger campus?
ColResourcesUtil	How have you used college resources (beyond WorkFirst) to help you with your goals?
FurtherEd	Have you considered going on to further your education? Elaborate.
ProgConnections	In thinking about how you've changed during the program, how much has this program caused those changes compared to other things that were happening in your life at this time?

## Appendix E: Research Database Tables and Fields

### Database Tables:

Subjects	Transcript 1
Field Notes	Transcript 2

### Subject Table Fields

Subject ID	Education	Child 3 Age
Name (pseudonym)	Program Duration in Length	Child 4 Age
Age	Child 1 Age	Child 5 Age
Marital Status	Child 2 Age	Child 6 Age

### Field Notes Table Fields

Field Notes ID	Body Language Notes	Impression Keywords
Location	Body Language Keywords	Distraction Notes
Location Notes	Subject	Distraction Keywords
Location Keywords	Impression Notes	

### Transcript 1 Table Fields

Transcripts1ID	AnticipationKeywords	ConfidenceNotes
Subject	ResourcesNotes	ConfidenceSubjectNotes
CircumstancesNotes	ResourcesSubjectNotes	ConfidenceKeywords
CircumstancesSubjectNotes	ResourcesKeywords	PerceivedColSupportNotes
CircumstancesKeywords	ChallengesNotes	PerceivedColSupportSubjectNotes
DecisionNotes	ChallengesSubjectNotes	PerceivedColSupportKeywords
DecisionSubjectNotes	ChallengesKeywords	FiveYearNotes
DecisionKeywords	DesiredColSupportNotes	FiveYearSubjectNotes
PreparationNotes	DesiredColSupportSubjectNotes	FiveYearKeywords
PreparationSubjectNotes	DesiredColSupportKeywords	T1AdditionalQuestions
PreparationKeywords	SuccessImageNotes	T1AdditionalQuestionsNotes
AnticipationNotes	SuccessImageSubjectNotes	T1AdditionalQuestionsSubjectNotes
AnticipationSubjectNotes	SuccessImageKeywords	T1AdditionalQuestionsKeywords

### Transcript 2 Table Fields

Transcripts2ID	GoalsKeywords	ColResourcesUtilNotes
Subject	PersResourceNotes	ColResourcesUtilSubjectNotes
CompletionFeelNotes	PersResourceSubjectNotes	ColResourcesUtilKeywords
CompletionFeelSubjNotes	PersResourceKeywords	FurtherEdNotes
CompletionFeelKeywords	ChallengesNotes	FurtherEdSubjectNotes
KeyExperienceNotes	ChallengesSubjectNotes	FurtherEdKeywords
KeyExperienceSubjNotes	ChallengesKeywords	ProgConnectionsNotes
KeyExperienceKeywords	ColSupportNotes	ProgConnectionsSubjectNotes
ResultIdentNotes	ColSupportSubjectNotes	ProgConnectionsKeywords
ResultIdentSubjectNotes	ColSupportKeywords	T2AdditionalQuestions
ResultIdentKeywords	ConnectionsNotes	T2AdditionalQuestionsNotes
GoalsNotes	ConnectionsSubjectNotes	T2AdditionalQuestionsSubjectNotes
GoalsSubjectNotes	ConnectionsKeywords	T2AdditionalQuestionsKeywords

## Appendix F: Research Database Sample Display

Transcript1 Anticipation	Transcript2 Result
<b>Subject:</b> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Diane</span>	
<b>Keyword1:</b> get started again	<b>Keyword1:</b> feeling psychologically ready to move forward
<b>Keyword2:</b> work in non-profit organizations	<b>Keyword2:</b> feel comfortable with ..knowledge before..step out
<b>Keyword3:</b> hoping I'll be able to communicate	<b>Keyword3:</b> I didn't have the capabilities I have now
<b>Notes:</b> <b>SubjectNotes:</b> I wanted to get my foot back in the door and get started again. I am interested in non-profit organizations and how they work. I [am] hoping to be able to communicate, after I start understanding, after I get myself settled here. Other people [man with street ministries] might have work for me to do, most of it is volunteer and yet, you know, it gets me started.	<b>Notes:</b> <b>SubjectNotes:</b> Feeling psychologically ready to move forward. It's - you have to feel comfortable with your knowledge before you step out into the workforce, and I didn't have that before. I got little bits and pieces of training before, and then I went out for interviews and I felt - I was nervous. I was more scared then because I didn't really - I knew I didn't have the capabilities that I have now.
<b>Subject:</b> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Sammy</span>	
<b>Keyword1:</b> job...give me a lot of self esteem	<b>Keyword1:</b> self esteem
<b>Keyword2:</b> proud to be self sufficient	<b>Keyword2:</b> confidence
<b>Keyword3:</b> daughter to be proud of me	<b>Keyword3:</b> I'm not insignificant
<b>Notes:</b> <b>SubjectNotes:</b> A job (laughter at tone). A, a job, which will give me a lot of uh, self esteem. It will make me proud to be self sufficient. Um, I want my daughter to be proud of me. For being self sufficient and to show her, this, you can go out there and do it, you don't need... someone else or to live through or for someone else. Um, a job and hopefully within 3, 2 to 3 years, my own business of...	<b>Notes:</b> <b>SubjectNotes:</b> Self esteem is the biggest. And the confidence that I'm not insignificant.

### Appendix G: Subject Demographic Tables

#### Education

Type	Subject distribution	Percentage
Some college coursework	5	35.7
Vocational courses	2	14.3
AA	2	14.3
GED	2	14.3
High school diploma	2	14.3
BA	1	7.1

#### Program length

Length in weeks	Subject distribution	Percentage
20	5	35.7
17	4	28.6
15	5	35.7

#### Marital status

Type	Subject distribution	Percentage
Single	7	50.0
Separated/Divorced	4	28.6
Married	3	21.4

#### Percentage of subjects with children

1 Child or more	2 Children or more	3 Children or more	4 Children
100%	71.4%	42.9%	14.3%

#### Average ages

Subject	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
39	11.4	11.5	10	10

## VITA

## JULIE ANNE JACOB

EDUCATION

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Doctorate in Education, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies,  
College of Education

*University of Washington (2005)*

Masters, Policy, Governance and Administration, College of Education

*University of Washington (1988)*

BA, English

*Eastern Washington University (1971)*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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Executive Director, Center for Learning Connections

*Highline Community College (1989-Present)*

Executive Director, The Association of Community and Technical College

Administrators, Executive Office, Center for Learning Connections

*Highline Community College*

Cooperative Education Coordinator

*Highline Community College (1989-1994)*

Director, ASUW Experimental College

*University of Washington (1979-82)*

Secondary composition and literature teacher

*Hadfield High School, Melbourne, Australia (1972-73)*

Presentation and facilitation on leadership, Dean's Retreat

*Seattle Central Community College (2001)*

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Cooperative Education Association

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning

American Society for Training and Development

National Association of Workforce Development Professionals