ANALYSIS OF REENTRY PROGRAMS: AN EXAMINATION OF NATIONAL REENTRY PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN
A TOOLKIT FOR SUCCESS

Donna H. Bonnel
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ANALYSIS OF REENTRY PROGRAMS: AN EXAMINATION OF NATIONAL REENTRY PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN
A TOOLKIT FOR SUCCESS

A Thesis

by

Donna H. Bonnel

Approved by:

____________________________, Committee Chair
Dr. Sherrie Carinci

____________________________, Second Reader
Angela Shaw

____________________________
Date
Student: Donna H. Bonnel

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Dr. Robert Pritchard, Department Chair  Date
Department of Teacher Education
Abstract

of

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Statement of Problem

With middle-aged divorce traumatically forcing women back into the workplace, the need for comprehensive programs to assist these displaced homemakers is critical. Exhaustive research has determined that few reentry programs exist in the United States, and those that do exist are significantly under funded. Without that comprehensive training focused on the development of new skills, these reentry women face the possibility of underemployment due to their lack of the skills necessary to begin a career. This thesis seeks to understand the types of programs and curricula available, the types of training that have been found to be most effective, the types of career counseling necessary, and the success rates of existing programs.

Source of Data

The data analyzed included center director interviews conducted via telephone, as well as curriculum collected from each included center. The interviews and
curriculum rubric was designed to measure the effectiveness of the program curriculum.

Conclusions Reached

Results of this study demonstrated that the curriculum provided by the centers participating in this study incorporates the skills necessary for displaced homemakers to reenter today’s workforce.

______________________________ Committee Chair
Dr. Sherrie Carinci

______________________________ Date
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all middle-aged reentry women, including my mother, who have persevered through some of the most trying times in their lives. Congratulations to all of you! You serve as an example of strength, fortitude and success to all who are fortunate enough to know you. May the new life you achieved provide you with every dream you dared to imagine.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without all of the support of my loving family and friends. I sincerely hope you understand how much your advice, encouragement, and understanding meant to me during this process of pursuing my passion. I am certain I did not thank you nearly enough, so please accept this written recognition as the heartfelt thanks you truly deserve.

Thank you to my classmates and cohort for allowing me the opportunity to share my thoughts and ideas with you, and for unselfishly sharing your own.

Thank you to the center directors who gave so generously of their time and ideas. It is clear how much you enjoy working with this special population of women. Your commitment to help them succeed is clear!

Thank you to Dr. Sherrie Carinci who allowed me the opportunity to explore my passion to help displaced homemakers; her drive to be the best served as my continual inspiration. Thank you also for being my guide on this journey; even when the roadmap wasn’t yours, you allowed the wonderful journey to continue!

To all of you: “When dust settles on my dreams, you wash them clean” (Alger & Venzer, 1991, Track 9). Thank you all for everything!
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dedication</th>
<th>vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter

1. **INTRODUCTION**

   - Statement of the Problem | 2 |
   - Significance of Study | 2 |
   - Methodology | 3 |
   - Limitations of Study | 6 |
   - Theoretical Basis of the Study | 7 |
   - Definition of Terms | 11 |
   - Organization of the Thesis | 14 |
   - Background of the Researcher | 14 |

2. **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

   - Historical Perspective on Divorce | 16 |
   - Updated Divorce Statistics | 23 |
   - Social Support and Divorce | 28 |
   - Self-Esteem and Mid-Life Divorce | 30 |
   - Educational Implications for Displaced Homemakers | 35 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Divorce Data</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Female Divorce Statistics</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Poverty Status of Families, by Type of Family, Presence of Related</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1959 to 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Centers Included in Research</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Reentry Center Funding Data</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Content Analysis – Curriculum</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Content Analysis – Curriculum Continued</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Center Participant Data</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Middle-aged women forced to reenter the workplace after a lengthy absence face some extremely difficult obstacles. Their lack of skills, motivation, and self-esteem coupled with fear of failure, rejection and ageism are ever-present issues for these reentry women (Bennetts, 2007). With long term marriages failing at the highest rate in history (U.S. Census, 2004), more and more middle aged women find themselves faced with this dire situation.

In order to successfully transition into the workplace, these displaced homemakers must gain the employability skills necessary. Simultaneously, they must also examine, analyze and develop the coping skills necessary to succeed in their new life. By participating in comprehensive reentry programs focused solely on their needs, most reentry women are able to gain the skills they need to successfully reenter the workplace.

The purpose of this thesis is to complete a comprehensive study of existing reentry programs throughout the United States. The reentry program curriculum will be reviewed against the researched needs and issues faced by reentry women and will include an examination of existing curricula modules, career counseling models, demographics, and participant success rates, ultimately determining which programs provide the greatest training and success to the participants.
Statement of the Problem

With middle-aged divorce traumatically forcing women back into the workplace, the need for comprehensive programs to assist these displaced homemakers is critical. Exhaustive research has determined that few reentry programs exist in the United States, and those that do exist are significantly under-funded. Despite the fact that California has the second highest divorce rate in the country (U.S. Census, 2004), the State of California has no programs in place to serve the needs of these reentry women. This lack of resources results in large numbers of displaced homemakers in California who require reentry programs. Without that comprehensive training focused on the development of new skills, these reentry women face the possibility of underemployment due to their lack of the skills necessary to begin a career.

This thesis seeks to understand the types of programs and curriculum available, the types of training that have been found to be most effective, the types of career counseling necessary and the success rates of existing programs.

Significance of Study

Current national trends indicate that women between the ages of 40 and 50 will experience divorce at a much higher rate than their younger counterparts. In fact, women in the 40-44 age group experience divorce at a margin of 46% to 49.7% (US Census, 2004). Additionally, women in the over 50 age group experience widowhood at 11.8%, the highest rate of any age group (U.S. Census, 2004). Couple the emotional
loss with the loss of financial support provided by their partner, their transition into (or back into) the workplace is extremely difficult (Bennetts, 2007).

With few reentry resources available to these displaced homemakers, their success rates are low at 74%; chronic underemployment is the most significant issue facing these women (Hewlett & Luce, 2005). When provided with the skills to succeed, data indicates that these women will become self-sufficient, well adjusted, contributing members of the workplace (Bennetts, 2007).

This study drew upon a variety of resources including a review of existing literature, applied content analysis theories, the review of existing curriculum modules, and the application of a rubric on each curriculum. The information and curriculum contained in this national study may be of value to career counseling professionals, depending on their theories and beliefs, support systems and population groups. In addition to helping women who are displaced homemakers to lead a new and more meaningful life, the findings from this study may also be applicable to other centers that focus on participants who lack the self-esteem and skills to reenter the workplace, including the homeless, welfare-to-work, vocational rehabilitation or recidivism programs.

Methodology

This study was conducted using quantitative and qualitative methods of collecting data. The methods used to collect data consisted of a variety of approaches.
including center director interviews, reviewing existing center curricula and gathering various demographic data from the centers.

Internet research yielded a number of centers located throughout the United States. Centers selected for this study were required to meet the following criteria: (a) sole focus of the program on the successful reentry of displaced homemakers, (b) receipt of state funding, (c) longevity of the program, and (d) training methods used. Centers that failed to meet the pre-established criteria were eliminated from the study. Ten centers met the required criteria: three centers in Washington, three centers in Florida, one center in New York, one center in New Jersey, and two centers in Idaho; all agreed to participate in this research.

Through an introductory telephone conversation, each center director was introduced to the research concept and all agreed to participate in a qualitative telephone interview and a quantitative curriculum review process. In preparation for the qualitative portion of the research, a mutually convenient interview date/time was determined. This researcher provided each center director with the qualitative interview questions, covering a variety of topics (see Appendix A), via email prior to the scheduled interview. During the one-hour interviews, the center directors had the opportunity to provide additional information pertinent to this research and to provide detailed information on their center.

In preparation for the quantitative analysis portion of the research, each center director was asked to provide the center’s full program curriculum. This researcher
explained that the quantitative portion would consist of three separate reviews, the first of which was the curriculum evaluation. Information provided to each center director explained that, a five-level Likert scale would be used as a guide to aid in the comparison of existing center curriculum against components determined through research to be of value to displaced homemakers. The quantitative analysis included the following components: challenges faced by displaced homemakers, financial resources, values identification, goal setting, job readiness, time management, communication skills, problem solving, work-life balance, self-esteem development, and social support skills.

Additionally, each center director was advised that two other five-point Likert scales rubrics would be used; one to determine the facilitator’s ability to build upon topics, weaving lessons learned from previous sessions into new sessions, and a second to review the utilization of andragogical concepts. The third and final rubric would be used to determine the effectiveness of the career counseling program at each center. Since the Likert scales were the sole evaluation tool used by this researcher, all three rubrics were provided via email to each center director prior to their release of the center’s curriculum, ensuring that all curricula were reviewed in an identical and objective manner. Nine out of the ten directors indicated that they would provide the curricula.
Limitations of Study

The primary limitation of the study is that there are few centers dedicated solely to the traumatic reentry of women existing in the United States. Although there are a limited number of existing centers throughout the country due to time constraints and research limitations, not all national programs could be studied. Although divorce statistics in California are second highest in the nation (U.S. Census, 2004), no centers exist in California; therefore, the needs of California displaced homemakers could not be examined.

Due to the funding nature of the programs, it was difficult to collect complete details of center budgets and funding, making it difficult to accurately determine the cost per participant. Some centers were reticent to provide data revealing all sources of program funding, therefore, the level, quality and quantity of information collected from each center varied. Some programs receive only state funding, while others apply for and receive federal or private grant funding. For those centers that receive only state funds, the application and tracking of those funds varies and could not be synthesized easily into one method of reporting.

All center directors were interviewed using identical questions; however, the data collected in each interview varied based on the information shared by the director. Interview information may have been biased based on the depth of information shared by the center director. It was clear that some interviewees were reticent to share the full details of the program’s curriculum due to the proprietary
nature of the curriculum and its development. Of the ten centers interviewed, all
provided extensive details of existing curricula; however, only two centers provided
this researcher with more than course outlines and syllabi; three centers failed to
provide any curriculum information and therefore had to be eliminated from the
research. The remaining five centers provided only minimal information, thus limiting
the review aspect of this thesis.

Center director interviews were conducted via telephone, providing this
researcher no opportunity to measure the interviewees’ body language. At times,
conversations were interrupted by pressing issues at the center; in those instances, a
second interview was conducted, but the flow and amount of information sometimes
became stymied.

Only four of the programs included in the study track all data requested, such
as participant demographics and the success rate of the participants. Therefore, it is
difficult to determine the actual success rate of each participant and program.

Theoretical Basis of the Study

The divorce rate among middle-aged women is growing at a higher rate than
any other population (U.S. Census, 2004). At the same time, centers focused on
providing the skills necessary for those women to reenter the workforce are scarce.
The need for these centers is evident. This study attempted to determine best practices,
using the data collected from a variety of sources. The basis of the study is derived
from a comprehensive review of various factors, traits, skills and abilities that are
lacking in many of today’s mid-life divorcees/displaced homemakers. Because published studies lack data summarizing/indicating the success, failure and efficacy of reentry programs, this researcher utilized a variety of theories to evaluate the programs.

Various theories have been developed, focusing on issues commonly experienced by these displaced homemakers. Those theories include: social support theory, self-efficacy/self-esteem and social cognitive theory, education implications including the application of andragogy and connected knowing theories, and effective career counseling methods.

**Social Support Theory**

The application of social support theory in human behavior is critical to all successful relationships. Each individual needs a primary resource for emotional support, and in a marriage/partnership that individual is often the husband/wife/partner. Studies indicate that displaced homemakers may have a more difficult time with the application of the social support theory since often times the confidant was the spouse/partner, prior to the instance of death or divorce.

Marital bereavement marks the end of a close mutual relationship, and the loss of a partner is likely to result in a number of deficits in areas in which the spouse had previously been able to rely on the partner.

(Stroebe, Abakoumkin & Schut, 1996)
Social support theory, primarily, the development of a non-kin network replacing the previous partner/spouse/confidant relationship, is critical to the success of the reentry woman. Without the skills necessary to replace that previous partner/spouse/confidant, the successful transition of these displaced homemakers can be difficult (Pearson, 1986, p. 390).

Self-Efficacy/Self Esteem and Social Cognitive Theory

This researcher emphasized the utilization of the theories associated with Alfred Bandura. Bandura’s (1997) extensive works in the areas of self-efficacy, self-esteem and social cognitive theory provide an excellent basis for personal growth models as well as the curriculum/educational components of these centers. The centerpiece of Bandura’s (1997) theories include the idea that “self-efficacy expectations refer to a person’s beliefs concerning his or her ability to successfully perform a given task or behavior” (Bandura, 1977, p. 192). Without the ability to change their beliefs or successfully perform the new behaviors contained within the reentry curriculum, these displaced homemakers may not succeed in today’s workplace/society.

Educational Implications – Andragogy and Connected Teaching

Combining the adult learning theories of Malcolm Knowles (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998) with the connected teaching theories of Mary Belenky (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberg, & Tarule, 1986). provides an excellent foundation for the education of these adult reentry women. Knowles provides excellent concepts of how the inclusion of personal/life experiences can become an effective learning tool for
adult learners. “The source of highest value in adult education is the learner’s experience. If education is life, then life is also education” (Knowles et al., p. 90). When experiences are incorporated into the learning experiences, skills such as coping, analysis and theory application are provided to the learner.

Belenky’s theory of connected teaching provides that “connected teachers support the evolution of their students’ thinking” (Belenky et al. 1986, p. 219). Belenky’s theories work very well with Knowles’ theories and provide excellent support for the incorporation of the displaced homemaker’s thoughts and experiences into the curriculum and classroom setting.

_Career Counseling_

The career counseling theorists included Donald Super (1980) and John Krumboltz (1996, Krumboltz & Levin, 2004). Their work associated with matching career with interests, values, and goals becomes invaluable to the success of these displaced homemakers. Super and Krumboltz effectively provide strategies and theories into the development of new personal interests, values and the establishment of goals associated with their life/circumstance; or in the case of these displaced homemakers, their new life.

Additionally, the work of John Holland (1992) was incorporated to ensure the utilization of his RIASEC (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional) model. Holland’s model incorporates a self-assessment, identifying which of the six categories the participant identifies most closely with. This
assessment and subsequent identification provide great self-awareness, in this case, displaced homemakers.

Definition of Terms

Andragogy: Premised on at least four crucial assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that are different from the assumptions about child learners on which traditional pedagogy is premised. A fifth was added later.

1. Self-concept: *As a person matures his self concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being*

2. Experience: *As a person matures he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.*

3. Readiness to learn. *As a person matures his readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles.*

4. Orientation to learning. *As a person matures his time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem centredness.*

5. Motivation to learn: *As a person matures the motivation to learn is internal* (Knowles, 1984, p. 12, as cited in Smith, 2002, p. 1)

Career: A chosen pursuit; a profession or occupation. The general course or progression of one's working life or one's professional achievements (Career, n.d.).
**Connected Learning**: A way of learning that is personal and often experience based (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 191).

**Displaced Homemaker**: An individual who: (a) has worked in the home for ten or more years providing unsalaried household services for family members on a full-time basis; (b) is not gainfully employed; (c) needs assistance in securing employment; and (d) has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income, or has been dependent on federal assistance but is no longer eligible for that assistance, or is supported as the parent of minor children by public assistance or spousal support but whose children are within two years of reaching their majority (Washington State Legislature, 2007).

**Likert Scale**: An instrument that asks an individual to respond to a series of statements by indicating whether he/she agrees…with each statement (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006, p. 598).

**Midlife/Middle-Aged**: The time of life between youth and old age: now usually the years from about 40 to about 65 (Webster’s New World College Dictionary).

**Qualitative Research**: The collection, analysis and interpretation of comprehensive narrative and visual data in order to gain insights into the particular phenomenon of interest (Gay et al., 2006, p. 600).

**Quantitative Research**: The collection of numerical data in order to explain, predict and/or control phenomena of interest (Gay et al., 2006, p. 600).
Reentry: A transition process which, for many women, represents a challenge to their sense of identity and to their self-confidence (Killy & Borgen, 2000, p. 121).

Reeentry Woman: Women reentering educational institutions or the labor force after an absence ranging from a few years to as many as 35 years (Padula, 1994, p. 1).

Self-Efficacy: Concerned with judgments of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations (Bandura, 1986, p. 122).

Self-Esteem: A realistic respect for or favorable impression of oneself; self-respect (Dictionary.com).

Subject Matter Expert ("SME"): A person who can perform a job or a selected group of tasks to standards. Her experience and knowledge of the job designates her as a technical expert. She must know what is critical to the performance of the task and what is nice-to-know. She must have recent job experience; otherwise, her knowledge of the task may be outdated by new procedures or equipment (Subject Matter Expert, n.d.).

Transition: Passage from one state, stage, subject, or place to another. A movement, development, or evolution from one form, stage, or style to another (Merriam-Webster.com).

Voice: An instrument or medium of expression. A wish, choice, or opinion openly or formally expressed. The right of expression; influential power (Transition, n.d.).
Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 1 outlines the organization of the thesis. Chapter 2 presents a review of related literature and curricula. Chapter 3 is a qualitative and quantitative analysis of seven reentry programs for women throughout the United States. Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study: interviews conducted with center directors, a review of current curricula available, center demographics and current outcomes using existing curricula. Chapter 5 includes an analysis of data, the common themes identified among the participants and centers, an analysis of which programs meet the needs of the clients, and finally conclusions and recommendations.

Background of the Researcher

A Human Resources professional for more than 20 years, this researcher has a developed a keen understanding of the skills and abilities necessary to succeed in today’s ever-evolving workplace. As a child of a displaced homemaker, this researcher is all too familiar with the struggles faced by these reentry women and their children, and the impacts of a reentry woman who was chronically underemployed, accepted positions to make ends meet, and never regained the career she had established prior to becoming a mother. And, as a friend to multiple displaced homemakers, this researcher has witnessed first hand the struggles, difficulties and ultimate successes of a number of reentry women.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents research regarding the implications of middle-aged women’s divorce, the effects of that process on women during mid-life, and the women’s subsequent attempts to reenter today’s workplace. The literature and data review covered a variety of contemporary topics and provides insight into a number of issues faced by these reentry women.

Middle-aged women forced to reenter the workplace after a lengthy absence face many extremely difficult obstacles. Their lack of current skills, motivation, and self-esteem coupled with significant fear of failure, rejection and ageism are ever-present issues for these reentry women (Bennetts, 2007). The social support of these reentry women has become unbalanced by the loss of their partner/spouse (Barrera, 1986). In order for these women to become successful at supporting themselves and their family, a significant amount of learning must be achieved. By participating in a comprehensive reentry program focused solely on their needs, most reentry women gain these skills.

To understand the transitional needs of mid-life women attempting to reenter the workplace based on a traumatic experience, it is important to explore the factors that influence their success and factors that cause their attempts to fail. While all of the factors cannot be explored in a single project, some of the most important are: (a) the affects of divorce/loss of partner, (b) the national and local demographic effects of
reentry, (c) the education implications of traumatic reentry, and (d) self-esteem, the related fear of failure and identifying what rationale is currently needed to ensure a successful transition into the workplace.

In order to gain a full understanding of the challenges women face while attempting to reconnect to the workforce, a review of relevant literature related to mid-life divorce/loss is essential. This review will include a history of divorce in the United States, including current divorce statistics and the affects of mid-life divorce on the self-esteem of women. In order to fully examine the topic of reentry, other factors will be reviewed, including career counseling requirements, social support theory and the educational implications for displaced homemakers. Reentry programs designed specifically to aid these women in their return to work will be included in this literature review.

This chapter would remain incomplete if research on the “voice” of this special population was not explored. Without a strong advocacy group, these women will remain under-served and will lack the resources necessary for them to successfully reenter the workplace.

Historical Perspective On Divorce

*History of Divorce, Pre-21st Century*

Colonial settlers brought to America a number of strong traditions, many of which were rooted in personal beliefs such as freedom of religion, freedom to own property, and the pursuit of personal happiness. Other traditions, such as divorce, were
not nearly as deep rooted since religious practices in England and its European neighbors forbade divorce in almost all instances (Phillips, 1988). However, America would develop its own way of dealing with marital strife, and over the next 400 years divorce would grow to become an American tradition as deep-rooted as those originally brought by the forefathers.

The first divorce in the new Colonies was in 1639, granted in Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts. Over the next 60 years the Massachusetts Bay Colony would grant 40 more divorces. These early divorces were granted for limited reasons including adultery, fraudulent contract, cruelty and desertion (Holland, 1998). Colonial women may have been awarded property and alimony, but similar to today, problems arose from the collection of those support payments. In these early days of America, women had few opportunities to work outside the home, and without needed support payments many were, forced to remarry to ensure the survival of her children (Phillips, 1988).

*History of Divorce, World War II Era:*

Fast forward more than 250 years to the 1940s and what has been called the divorce epidemic of America. The divorce rate skyrocketed during the 1940s to a high of one in every 28 marriages ending in divorce (Phillips, 1988). The figure becomes even more staggering when examining the total divorce rate for the year 1946 which was an all time high of 4.3% of marriages ending in divorce (Vital Statistics of U.S., 1964). There were a number of trends associated with this staggering rate, including
high rates of divorce in urban settings, high rates of divorce in the West, and high rates of divorce among African American and Latino couples (Riley, 1991).

For the first time in history, women were expected to work outside the home and take on the second shift as a homemaker and mother (Riley, 1991). Since men were abroad fighting the war, women were encouraged to join the workforce to create the weapons, planes and machines required to sustain the war effort. These working women created an intersection of the private and public spheres. When the war ended, and men returned to their former employment, women were once again relegated to the tasks of homemaker and mother. For many of these women, the only way to regain their independence and equality was to become re-employed. In many of these cases, achieving the independence these women have once known meant divorcing their husband and becoming a single person/mother. “After 1945, growing numbers of women employed outside the home sought divorces. In addition, divorce was increasing among families with children” (Riley, p. 160). For the first time in American history, women sought to enter the workforce in large numbers, and in order to compete with men, those women had to become a single parent/head of household.

Divorce had become, for a variety of reasons, an American institution. While research shows that women fair worse in a divorce, it is clear that many Americans women felt that divorce was a viable alternative to remaining a stay-at-home mother or in a marriage that was unsavory.
History of Divorce, 1980s and 1990s

Divorce rates continued to climb steadily throughout the 1980s for the same reasons cited throughout history (Phillips, 1988). While divorces were “easier” to obtain, they were also more readily accepted through the mass enactment of no fault divorce laws across America (Phillips). With the emergence of mass media, a variety of reports, statistics and data on divorce began to emerge, many focusing on the financial impact of divorce and the struggles that divorced women faced. While the reports indicated that there were many reasons for this financial crisis, two issues rose to the top: the lack of child support enforcement and the inability for divorced women to secure employment that supported the new family unit (Riley). Only 30% of women received adequate levels of child support and a full one-quarter of all women expecting to receive court-ordered child support received nothing at all (Phillips).

In 1978, “Diana Pearce, visiting researcher at the University of Wisconsin, published a paper noting that poverty was becoming "feminized" in the United States” (McLanahan & Kelly, 1999, p. 127), thus coining the phrase “The Feminization of Poverty”. This phrase was used to explain the economic ground women were losing against their male counterparts, specifically as it related to the rising divorce rate. “For many the price of that independence has been their pauperization and dependence on welfare” (McLanahan & Kelly, p. 127). Pearce blamed the government for lack of support for these single/divorced women and the lack of programs provided to aid in their transition into the workplace.
During the 1980s, the phrase continued to be used to identify the economic affects of divorce on women and children, which were becoming more and more evident. Insight into this phenomenon of the 1980s is provided by Peterson: “For American women, the correlation between marital status and economic well being had become an increasingly harsh reality. It is argued that, for many women, marital status matters more than labor force status as an indicator of financial well-being” (Peterson, 1987, p. 331).

A number of startling statistics support the contention that women are negatively affected by divorce; or: “a 1981 California study shows that after a divorce, a man’s standard of living shot up by 42%, while a woman’s plunged by 73%” (Holland, 1998, p. 88). Although Holland references a California study, the results of divorce remain the same throughout the United States. Phillips (1988) provides insight into the effects experienced by other women and children: “Throughout the United States and Canada, divorce has produced a new class of poor – divorced women and their dependent children…incomes of men and women after divorce underwent a decline, but the women’s declined much more than men’s” (p. 629).

Even if the statistics provided during the 1980s were moderately overstated, Phillips gives insight into the perceptions of these recently divorced women:

Most wives experience rapid downward social mobility after divorce, while most husbands’ economic status is substantially improved…one study found that 48% of divorced women reported their incomes to be much lower than
that of their friends and associates and only 7% of divorced men did so.

(Phillips, 1988, p. 629)

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the feminization of poverty, affected these divorcing women at a far greater rate than men.

Riley (1991) sums up all issues related to financial devastation related to divorce:

From colonial times to the present, adequate support for divorcing women and their children has remained a puzzling and unresolved issue. Today, preventing divorced women and their children from entering the ranks of the destitute demands developing an equitable method of dividing a couple’s assets, while recognizing the contributions of each partner, even if only one is employed outside the home or one earns less than the other. (p. 187)

The financial impacts of divorce on women are well established and cannot be ignored. Without adequate skill training, reentry women are in jeopardy of continuing the historical trend of the “feminization of poverty” that occurs as a result of divorce.

History of Divorce, the 21st Century

With many couples choosing not to marry, overall marriage numbers are down. Marriages occurring during the 1980s are now faltering at a rate higher than their any other marriage category (U.S. Census, 2004). Most recent census data indicates that a marriage that has lasted more than 15 years has a 50% chance of ending in divorce,
while less than one-third of married couples attain their 25th wedding anniversary (U.S. Census, 2004).

In 2005, nearly 60 million women were single or living without their husbands, compared with 57 million women actually living with a spouse. Such data indicates that for many women the institution of marriage did not hold the promise they might have hoped for. (Bennetts, 2007, p. 71)

Based on this newly emerging data, more and more women, primarily middle-aged women, will be reentering the workforce seeking to support their newly reformed family unit.

Many women who gave up on successful careers to attend to home and family find themselves lacking the skills necessary to successfully reenter the workforce. Unfortunately, only 74% of off-ramped women who want to rejoin the ranks of the employed manage to do so, according to our survey. And among these, only 40% return to full-time, professional jobs. Many (24%) take part-time jobs and some (9%) become self-employed. The implication is clear: off-ramps are around every curve in the road, but once a woman has taken one, on-ramps are few and far between – and extremely costly. (Hewlett & Luce, 2005, p. 46)

Unfortunately, the disproportionate rate of poverty continues into the 21st Century: “The poverty rate among single male heads of household was approximately 17.6%, while the rate for single female heads of household was 36.9% in 2005” (Thibos,
Lavin-Loucks, & Martin, 2007, p. 2). Again, as we saw throughout the final decades of the 20th Century, the trend of women suffering significant economic loss following a divorce continues into the 21st Century. The non-payment of child support also continues. In *The Feminization of Poverty Empowering Women*, Thibos et al. provide little hope for single women attempting to collect court-ordered child support:

The inability of many single mothers to collect their child support payments legally due to them results in another set of underlying factors explaining the disproportionate poverty experiences of women. Although states have enacted policies to assist mothers in collecting support payments from fathers, across the nation over $4.6 billion in defaulted child support payments are owed to these mothers. (p. 3)

While no divorce or reentry experts cited indicate exactly what is the magic potion for assisting these divorced women, their reentry is critical; in today’s economy, it is clear that current, up-to-date workforce-specific skills are necessary. Therefore, it is crucial to identify literature related to skill development, to review the existing curricula, and to develop a curriculum and program that effectively advance opportunities for reentry women.

**Updated Divorce Statistics**

In order to demonstrate the significance of America’s current divorce epidemic, especially for mid-life women, it is important to review current US divorce statistics. While much is written on divorce, and many forms of statistics are available,
the data provided below was selected both for the unbiased nature of the statistical data and the source providing the data:

- There were approximately 2,230,000 marriages in 2005 -- down from 2,279,000 the previous year, despite a total population increase of 2.9 million over the same period. The 2005 marriage rate was 7.5%, down from 7.8% the previous year (Divorce Statistics, 2008).

- *The State of Our Unions 2005*, a report issued by the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University, indicates that only 63% of American children grow up with both biological parents -- the lowest figure in the Western world (Whitehead & Popenoe, 2005, p. 4).

- As of 2003, 43.7% of custodial mothers and 56.2% of custodial fathers were either separated or divorced (Divorce Statistics, 2008).

- In 2002, 7.8 million Americans paid about $40 billion in child and/or spousal support; 84% of the payers were male (Divorce Statistics, 2008).

Continuing to review the US Census (2004) data statistics for our overall population, the following provides additional insight into the statistics provided above:
Table 1

*Divorce Data (U.S. Census, 2004)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of population that is divorced:</th>
<th>10% (up from 8% in 1990, 6% in 1980)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of population that is widowed:</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Percentage of married people who reach their 5th, 10th, and 15th anniversaries: | 5th Anniversary: 82%
10th Anniversary: 65%
15th Anniversary: 52%
| Percentage of married people who reach their 25th, 35th, and 50th anniversaries: | 25th Anniversary: 33%
35th Anniversary: 20%
50th Anniversary: 5%
| Number of single parents: | Males: 2.04 million
Females: 9.68 million |

Although the number of divorces appears to be lower according to census data, the rate for mid-life divorce is steadily increasing with each passing decade. The number of couples reaching milestone anniversaries is staggeringly small (U.S. Census, 2004). While death can account for some of the decreases, when the above-referenced data is coupled with the census data in Table 3 below, it is abundantly clear that mid-life divorce is the leading cause for the declining anniversary milestones and subsequent need to develop programs to assist newly displaced homemakers with reentry to the workplace.
Following is data from the U.S. Census (2004) that shows the divorce rates among females. Highlighted are the divorce statistics for females ages 30-34, 35-39, 40-49 and 50-59.

Table 2

**Female Divorce Statistics - Adapted from U.S. Census Data (2004)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Total 15 years and over</th>
<th>15 to 19 years</th>
<th>20 to 24 years</th>
<th>25 to 29 years</th>
<th>30 to 34 years</th>
<th>35 to 39 years</th>
<th>40 to 49 years</th>
<th>50 to 59 years</th>
<th>60 to 69 years</th>
<th>70 years and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WOMEN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (in thousands)</td>
<td>117,677</td>
<td>10,082</td>
<td>10,027</td>
<td>9,484</td>
<td>10,097</td>
<td>10,319</td>
<td>22,818</td>
<td>18,412</td>
<td>11,852</td>
<td>14,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever married</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>95.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married once</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>77.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still married</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married twice</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still married</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married 3 or more times</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still married</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever divorced</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently divorced</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever widowed</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently widowed</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dash ("-") Represents or rounds to zero.
1 This number, when added to or subtracted from the estimate, represents the 90-percent confidence interval around the estimate.
2 Includes those currently separated.

The percentage of divorced females is greatest between 30 and 59 years of age, at a rate almost double that of their younger counterparts (Table 2). The divorce rate peaks between 50 and 59, but remains high throughout the female population’s 60s. At the same time, the widowed rate increases significantly in the 60s, and more than doubles into the 70s.

Table 3 below provides supporting data regarding the financial implications of divorce.

Table 3.

Poverty Status of Families, by Type of Family, Presence of Related Children, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1959 to 2006
(Numbers in thousands. Families as of March of the following year.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year and Characteristics</th>
<th>Male householder, no wife present</th>
<th>Female householder, no husband present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below poverty level</td>
<td>Below poverty level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL RACES - With and Without Children Under 18 Years</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5,067</td>
<td>671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>5,134</td>
<td>669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4,901</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>4,717</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>4,663</td>
<td>564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>4,440</td>
<td>583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4,277</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Couple the data presented in Tables 1 and 2, with the poverty data in Table 3, and the picture of the financial devastation of divorce becomes clear.
Phillips (1988) asserts that divorce is far harsher on women and children than on the divorcing male partners. It is clear that in the United States the number of middle aged displaced female homemakers is increasing significantly each year and that their financial issues will continue through the 21st century. Without the skills necessary to ensure a successful transition, these women will likely flounder for the remainder of their lives.

Social Support and Divorce

The theory of social support networks began to emerge during the 1970s. To date, no clear definition of the theory has been offered. Pearson (1986) provides insights into a number of other authors’ definitions; she states that “Cobb (1976) identified three components of social support (a) information that one is cared for and loved... (b) information that one is esteemed and valued ... and (c) information that one belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation” (Pearson, p. 391). She provides an alternative definition from Gore (1973) who said that social support networks contain “attributes of socially legitimate roles which provide for the meeting of dependence needs without loss of esteem” (as cited in Pearson, p. 390). Regardless of the definition, it is clear that social support networks provide the caring, belonging and support necessary to succeed in our society today.

Barrera (1986) completed extensive research on more than 25 articles written by various authors, specifically related to the social support theory. Perhaps Barrera’s definition, the simplest among those he researched, provides the key to providing
support for our displaced homemaker population: “the cognitive appraisal of being reliably connected to others” (p. 416). Barrera indicated that the social support theory fits a number of needs, including “cognitive models of stress and coping processes” (p. 417). Bandura’s (1997) research becomes key when applied to the stress and coping skills necessary to successfully reenter today’s workplace.

The Importance of Non-Kin Networks and Social Support

As the displaced homemaker moves through her transition, social support will become vital to her success. There are two definitions that may be applied equally well, or in combination, to the situation of these displaced homemakers. Pearson (1986) states that “social support, defined as the presence of a confidant and friends, was associated with fewer psychiatric symptoms and improved coping skills” (p. 391), and Wan, Jaccard, and Ramey (1996) state that “single mothers will tend to rely on support from other sources because most will not have a stable partner who participates” (p. 504). Both definitions provide valuable insight into the need for a non-kin network to support these displaced homemakers in coping with their ongoing situation.

Lepore, Evans, and Schneider (1991) provide significant insight into social support effects related to coping with traumatic events. In their study of 173 participants who were perceived to have a strong social network, they developed one conclusion that “socially competent individuals might be better able to maintain their social support resources during prolonged stressful situations than less socially
competent individuals” (Lepore et al., p. 906). This conclusion is significant for the displaced homemaker, since their transition into the workplace is often protracted.

Ronna Zavoina (1996) also found that a social support network is essential to a successful transition. She found, however that a social network needs to be clearly defined and not comprised solely of family. Zavoina offers that “dense, kin-filled networks were associated with lower feelings of well-being with women in these networks reporting more conservative attitudes” (p. 30). Zavoina provides additional insight into the value of these non-kin support networks, especially the type established during the divorce phase of the transition:

Thus, one year after their divorces, mothers who were highly involved in their network, both as a provider and a recipient of support, were faring better psychologically than members who were not as integrated. This pattern suggests that a more open network with higher numbers of divorced individuals may be beneficial one year post divorce. (Zavoina, p. 30)

It is clear that a social support network provided by both family and friends, even friendships that are developed as a result of the divorce/loss, aid in the recovery from stressful events

Self-Esteem and Mid-Life Divorce

Research suggests that a divorce or loss of a partner after a lengthy relationship can lead to self-esteem issues. Additionally, the loss of income, friends and assets coupled with the need to return to work could also negatively affect one’s self-esteem
Killy and Borgen (2000) provide insight into the emotional health of reentry women, indicating that “the central characteristics of the reentry woman, whether she is returning to work or to university, is a lack of self-confidence and that regardless of the venue, display low aspirations, assertiveness and autonomy…when the major source of self – whether work, family, community or some combination - is changed or eliminated, a crisis can occur” (pp. 120, 121).

Clearly during this traumatic reentry period, many of the standard sources a person would use to build self-esteem and efficacy have been disrupted and/or lost. In order for these women to become successful, their lives must become stabilized.

Killy and Borgen (2000) referencing Bridges (1980), provide insight into what really must occur for the transition of reentry to become successful: “He describes transition as a process of reconfiguring the self - letting go of the person you used to be and then finding the new person you have to become in the new situation” (p. 121). Bridges explains that these transitions or endings are frightening because our connection with ourselves has been disturbed. However, a variety of literature suggests that there is significant hope that displaced homemakers can successfully reinvent themselves, becoming stronger and more self-confident than ever before (Josselson, 1987; Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989; Super, 1980).

The question then becomes what can be done to assist the displaced homemaker to regain or rebuild her self-esteem. As previously stated in the social support section of this chapter, the common contention is that displaced homemakers
need a social network to regain their self-esteem. In addition to this social network, the displaced homemaker has a significant need to determine their work skills as well as enhance their self-esteem. This contention is supported by a number of research studies, which indicate that work and education are the two most significant factors that influence the self-esteem and well-being of reentry women.

Bisagni and Eckenrode (1993) emphasize both the need for divorcing women to work as well as the need for social interaction as keys to their transitional success. Bisagni and Eckenrode’s report indicates that work can be an undeniably positive “source of social interaction and support” (p. 8). After interviewing 40 women, Bisagni and Eckenrode measured four aspects of the worker’s role: meaningfulness, social interaction/support, productivity, and positive distraction. Work identity as related to self-esteem scored the highest, thus indicating that work can provide a significant relief for displaced homemakers. “Forging an extramarital identity thus is key to adjustment and paid work may serve as a focus” (Bisagni and Eckenrode, p. 2).

Bisagni and Eckenrode’s (1993) survey contains a number of powerful quotes from displaced homemakers, including:

- My job challenges me on how far I can go with my capabilities of thinking, brainstorming and creativity. (p. 8)

- I maintained a high level of performance at work. It was one thing I knew I could do and be good at. If there were problems, I knew I could handle it. (p. 9)
• Work kept me on track, it gave me perspective. Why sit at home and mope when you can be getting good things done? Working lets me look ahead positively. (p. 9)

With this supporting evidence, it is imperative that current curricula be examined to ensure that it contains the tools necessary for the development of not only work skills, but social and network skills as well.

Education on skill building during this transition period may not be solely related to skills necessary to work. In addition to education, there are a number of additional skills that serve a dual purpose: they are necessary to ensure a successful transition while enhancing the reentry woman’s self-esteem. Many reentry women attribute their increase in self-esteem to the development of “parts of their personality that were not well developed in the process of their socialization. This process seems to take place particularly for stereotypically ‘masculine’ traits such as independence, competence and self-responsibility” (Rahav & Baum, 2002, p. 42). As they assume responsibility for the newly created household, many of these reentry women will need to develop skills that may have been traditionally associated with their partner/spouse’s role in the relationship.

Rahav and Baum (2002) analyzed a number of studies conducted throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s and reported that women who traumatically lose a spouse and his financial support “increased their sense of competence, autonomy, and independence” (p. 42), upon finding permanent employment. Their study found that
respondents who were employed throughout the transition not only epitomized the above-referenced quotation, but experienced “higher self-esteem and more control over their life than before the divorce” (p. 42). Rahav and Baum reference Katz (1991) and Dreman, Orr, and Aldor (1994), who found that “occupational progress following divorce contributed to women’s self-confidence and sense of competence” (p. 43). It is therefore clear that when a woman works through the transition, their self-confidence and sense of competence increase.

Expounding on Rahav and Baum’s 2002 study is important for this researcher’s purposes. The six domains researched in their study (Independence, Responsibility, Competence, Self-Esteem, Challenge and Control) were thoroughly explored; their research concluded that “working women reported more positive identity changes than their non-working peers did” and “working women also reported a greater sense of independence and control” (pp. 49, 54).

In their survey entitled Women’s Reflections on Divorce – 10 Years Later, Duffy et al. (2002) found that more than 75% of the women studied had acclimated well after the divorce, attributing their success to regaining their self-confidence and over-all control of their lives:

Women who value the traditional role of a wife/mother but were able to alter their role and their family structure to accommodate their work needs adopted more readily to divorce. They gained a sense of competency as a result of their effectiveness as breadwinner and decision-maker. (Duffy et al., p. 552)
It is clear that if a reentry woman can develop the self-esteem lacking from their traumatic experience, most can become successful in the endeavors they undertake.

Educational Implications for Displaced Homemakers

The educational needs of reentry women are as diverse as their backgrounds, and yet are as common as the situation they share. Educational factors must be considered; such as those researched by Malcolm Knowles (Knowles et al., 1998) which indicate that the highest value of adult education is the participant/learner’s own experience.

In an adult class, the student’s experience counts for as much as the teacher’s knowledge. Both are exchangeable in par. Indeed, in some of the best adult classes, it is sometimes difficult to discover who is learning most, the teacher or the students. (p. 39)

Facilitating curriculum that incorporates the student’s (displaced homemaker’s) experience ensures that their needs are met on a multitude of levels and that they are learning from the experiences of others, not just the curriculum being facilitated.

Knowles et al. (1998) present the reader with six key concepts in the teaching of adults, all of which must be applied when educating displaced homemakers:

1. The Need to Know: Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it;
2. The Learners’ Self Concept: Adjust to have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions. Once they have arrived at that self-concept, they develop a deep psychological need to be seen by others and treated by others as being capable of self-direction;

3. The Role of the Learners’ Experiences: Techniques that tap the experiences of the learner, such as group discussions, simulation exercises, problem solving activities, case methods and laboratory methods, instead of transmittal techniques. Also, greater emphasis is placed on peer-helping activities;

4. Readiness to Learn: Adults become ready to hear those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations;

5. Orientation to Learning: Adults are motivated to learn to the extent that they perceive that the learning will help them to perform tasks or to deal with problems they confront in their situations;

6. Motivation: Adults are responsible to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries), but the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, etc.). (Knowles et al., pp. 64-68)
The incorporation of all of the Knowles, Holton, and Swanson’s techniques into the classroom and the facilitation of the curriculum for these displaced homemakers will become keys to their success.

Additional consideration must be provided to the theories contained within Belenky et al.’s research (1986), which states that these women in general, and as applied to our displaced homemakers are: “overburdened by responsibilities at home…[they have] neither the energy nor the time to map out [their] own [educational] structure” (p. 204). Therefore, the facilitator/educator must be astute enough to gear the classroom model to the needs of this special population.

Another model contained within Belenky et al.’s (1986) research is that of “Connected Teaching”, a concept of teaching consensus building through students’ experiences, diversity of thought, and opinion. In using this model, the teacher is expected to refrain from interjecting his/her opinion. The truth is discerned through the students, seeing themselves in their experiences.

I see myself for the first time through the eyes of others. In the past, whenever I’ve seen myself through the eyes of others it’s been another that I cared a great deal about who had the power to destroy me and usually did. Now I see myself through the eyes of others who matter. (Belenky et al., p. 223)

A concept within the Connected Teaching framework is the theory of a “Teacher as a Midwife” (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 217). Again, the facilitator focuses on the existing knowledge of the participant.
Midwife-teachers help students deliver their own words to the world, and they use their own knowledge to put the students into conversation with other voices – past and present – in the culture. Midwife teachers encourage students to use their knowledge in everyday life. Women spoke often of their need for “practical” information ranging from the most obviously and immediately useful (facts on child rearing, how to dress for a job interview) to seemingly remote matters. (Belenky et al., p. 219)

The educational needs of the displaced homemaker must be met in all aspects of their transition, including how their educational experience unfolds and is provided by the facilitators. Without utilization of the theories mentioned above, the displaced homemaker may under value and under develop the skills and abilities necessary to succeed in today’s workplace.

Counseling Displaced Homemakers

The focus of most counseling for displaced homemakers is professional/personal counseling. A key component in the success of the displaced homemakers is career counseling, including the development/adaptation of the skills necessary to succeed as both an individual and in the workplace. Killy and Borgen (2000) indicate that “reentry women need age-appropriate career counseling (including major selection, job interviewing, technical and resume writing), help with updating their academic skills, assistance in dealing with multiple role stress and other coping skills” (p. 124). Additionally, Lockhart (2003) provides support of these displaced
homemaker programs/centers, indicating that “mini-educational programs should be offered within the community to promote the value of continuing education programs” (Lockhart, p. 170). Both Killy and Borgen as well as Lockhart provide evidence that these displaced homemakers must receive career counseling as a key component to their successful reentry.

In their career counseling textbook, Capuzzi and Stauffer (2006) define career counseling as “an activity that helps individuals achieve greater flexibility, renew their self-definition and life in a transformational relationship, with themselves and the environment” (p. 249), with a primary focus on assisting the client, in this case the displaced homemaker, in the identification of the values and skills that will assist them in their future careers. These value and skill identifications are generally conducted through a series of interventions that may include discussions (individual and group), facilitated learnings and assessments.

Career counselors of displaced homemakers have a unique set of circumstances to address. Wood (1989) provides insight into those challenges:

Because they have been unable to have a significant effect on their fate in the past, some people may fail to recognize or expect that their present and future actions will make a difference in other situations. For example, displaced homemakers may generalize the failure that they experienced from their repeated attempts to rescue a doomed marriage to an expectation that they will be unsuccessful in obtaining a job. (p. 5)
Because of these issues, it is incumbent upon the career counselors to recognize the special needs of the displaced homemaker, ensuring that the counseling provided addresses the present issue of needing to find employment, as well as the underlying issues such as fear of failure and low self-esteem.

As previously explored, one of the most significant issues that must be addressed is self-concept/self-esteem/self-efficacy. Without addressing that fundamental issue, successful counseling may be impossible. “Since most of the divorced clients come into counseling with a negative or devalued self-concept, a greater amount of time should be devoted to the self-awareness stage” (Kitabchi, Murrell, & Crawford, 1979, p. 144). Expanding on self-esteem, Betz and Borgen (2000) provide insight into the consequences of low-self esteem related to career counseling:

In the context of career decision making, approach behavior is especially crucial because it refers to those activities, education majors, and occupations that the individual is willing to try or to pursue – low self-efficacy, leading to avoidance, would thus likely cause the individual to eliminate options in that area. Not only would low self-efficacy and its consequent avoidance lead to the elimination of career options, but it is also postulated to limit initial interest development by avoidance in the kinds of new of experiences and
learning opportunities that could facilitate the development of new interests. (pp. 330-331)

It is clear that once the present issues are identified, the career counselor must then begin to address underlying issues such as self-esteem, allowing the displaced homemaker to identify all options available, not merely the options that feel safe or comfortable.

Research by Super (1980) and the application of his theories assist us in transforming the displaced homemaker’s lack of self-concept/confidence into career opportunities. The “process of career development is essentially that of developing and implementing occupational self-concepts and of translating one’s idea of oneself into occupational terms” (p. 283). Super defines “self concept” as one’s “interplay between personal aptitudes, physical abilities, the opportunities to try on different life roles, and the degree of success or failure achieved in attempting life roles as viewed by one’s peers and one’s superiors” (p. 284). As we see from one of the preeminent leaders in career counseling theory, Super recognized and encouraged career counselors to explore and develop the self-concept and aptitudes of all clients.

The challenge for career counselors is to integrate the development of aptitudes and interests of the participants into tangible items that can be measured. The tried and true approach to overcoming this challenge is the utilization of assessments. “The potential usefulness of theoretical and practical integration of measures of vocational interests and self-efficacy will likely be a major focus of vocational research and
assessment in the next decade” (Betz & Borgen, 2000, p. 334). Career counselors who avail themselves of a variety of assessments that allow the development of traits, aptitudes and interest will ensure the success of their displaced homemaker clients.

The most well known assessments utilized by career counselors include assessments to determine personality type, including the MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator), an assessment tool that aids in the review of an individual’s personality behaviors and qualities. Other assessments aid the counselor in determining the values and goals of individuals and could include: the Work Values Inventory, Values Scale, and Salience Inventory from Super, or the Minnesota Importance Questionnaire.

Still others assist in the development of specific job interests by determining potential jobs that match the individual’s personality type and values; this is accomplished by incorporating personality type and values and goals and the RIASEC model developed by Holland. Holland’s model identifies six personality traits (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional) directly related to career selection. Holland’s work has been incorporated into two assessments, the Self-Direct Search (SDS) and the Strong Interest Inventory (SII) (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2006, p. 118). One additional assessment that may be valuable in working with the displaced homemaker is the Career Beliefs Inventory. Based on Krumboltz’ theory that “the clients and their experiences have shaped their career beliefs and choices” (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2006, p. 127) thus allowing the displaced homemaker to ensure their experiences are utilized throughout the careers they
develop. Suggestions of an additional assessment is presented by Killy and Borgen (2000):

Life, Role Analysis may aid to assess and make sense of multiple roles by looking at the configurations of life roles in the past, present and future. This analysis may be of assistance to the reentry women in making decisions about how she will re-negotiate and reconfigure her various role demands. (p. 127)

Since many of these displaced homemakers will be attempting to balance work and life, it is important they gain the understanding of how they balanced multiple roles in the past and how they can incorporate those skills into their reformed household.

In order to fully support the needs of these displaced homemakers, additional soft-skill building must be identified, and effective techniques must be utilized to aid in their development. Some additional skills needed often include: interpersonal communications, social participation, establishment of new friendships, as well as career models and mentors (Killy & Borgen, 2000).

Interpersonal communication and social participation skill building efforts can be accomplished in a variety of ways, including group counseling. Feedback from group members can be most beneficial in helping the client maximize strengths and minimize deficiencies… the goals of the group should include: making the members stronger, more realistic individuals with the skills necessary to achieve satisfying relationships. (Kitabchi et al., 1979, p. 139)
In order to aid in the development of interpersonal communications, career counselors may also include assessments that assist the participants to identify their “interpersonal communication patterns” (Pearson, 1986, p. 392) and identify the associated strengths and weaknesses.

As mentioned above in the social support theory discussion, many of these displaced homemakers may need to develop additional friendships but lack the basic skills to ensure the successful creation of those friendships (Pearson, 1986, p. 390). Assessments can be used to aid in the successful formation of those much needed relationships. Pearson also states:

Here the focus should be on strategies for building an affective social network through social participation. . . the counselor helps the client identify formal and informal groups that are sources of potential friendships. Through non-threatening involvement and meaningful social participation, the client may soon build a network of supportive relationships. (p. 393)

Assessments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) will aid in the identification of personality traits that can both enhance or impede successful relationships. The displaced homemaker can learn what personality style they identify with and then assess which personality styles will be compatible with their style.

Assessing attitudes, aptitudes, abilities and interests, with resulting insight and self-understanding, is necessary before progress toward realistic planning and
identification of significant life goals can be made (Kitabchi, 1979). Therefore, multiple assessments may be necessary, and no one-size-fits-all assessment may be appropriate. Counselors will need to determine the needs of the individual and move through the counseling and education process systematically.

Career counselors associated with displaced homemaker programs are encouraged by Kitabchi et al. (1979) to incorporate the following goals into all programs:

1. Give support, building trust; share concerns, relieve guilt, learn to work in groups.
2. Learn to communicate, improve interpersonal relationships.
4. Become responsible; learn to make decisions, take risks.
5. Learn about opportunities of outside world: work, education, volunteer employment and creative self-expression. (p. 143)

Outside of skill development, career counselors must also address the special needs of these newly displaced homemakers. Balancing all the tasks associated with both role of mother and employee can be difficult for all involved (Killy and Borgen, 2000).

Reentry Programs

Middle-aged women forced to reenter the workplace after a lengthy absence face many extremely difficult obstacles; a lack of current skills, motivation, and self-
esteem coupled with significant fear of failure, rejection and ageism are ever-present issues for these reentry women (Bennetts, 2007). In order for these women to become successful at supporting themselves and their family, a significant amount of learning must be achieved. By participating in a comprehensive reentry program focused solely on their needs, most reentry women gain these skills.

A variety of women’s reentry programs exist throughout the country, however most are affiliated with post secondary educational institutions and the women’s return to college. Internet searches yielded a variety of literature, sites and information on such college reentry programs; however, similar research yielded very few programs focused solely on the reentry women’s return to the workforce. While only some reentry women may eventually return to college, almost all will reenter the workplace. The educational implications for displaced homemakers vary significantly from other women reentering the post secondary education environment; however the differences between the two populations will not be addressed in this writing.

A number of states offer funding to programs through a variety of sources. This researcher found that at least seven states collect fees to ensure adequate funding for displaced homemaker programs: Washington, Idaho, Wisconsin, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Florida. Unfortunately, for California’s displaced homemakers, no state funding is available; programs that do exist are generally at the local level and are funded by grants or donations. This researcher chose seven state programs throughout the United States, which will be included in the research:
• Life Transition Center: Clark College, Vancouver, WA
• Life Transition Center: Community College of Spokane, Spokane, WA
• Center for New Directions: College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, ID
• Strategies for Success in College, Career and Life – Florida Community College, Jacksonville, FL
• Crossroads Program, Florida Community College, Palm Beach, FL
• Challenge Program, The Women’s Resource Center, Sarasota, FL
• Project Transition, The Displaced Homemaker Program of West Chester and Putnam County, West Chester Community College, State University of New York, Valhalla, NY

All seven programs receive state funding. Two programs appear to be funded from reductions in TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [welfare]) assistance, while many also receive funding through Carl Perkins Federal funds. In the case of the Florida, Washington and New York programs, funding is provided through additional fees associated with marriage licenses.

As previously mentioned, no California programs exist that are dedicated solely to displaced homemakers. However, research on programs for the special population of displaced homemakers within the Sacramento area yielded three programs with a broader participant focus, funded from a variety of sources:

• SETA (Sacramento Employment and Training Agency), whose programs include high school and General Education Development (GED) certificates,
as well as reentry and training programs focused on college entry. Job services are available to all participants; however, according to their website (http://www.seta.net), SETA does not specifically focus on the needs of displaced homemakers. Additional job seeking support is available at the One Stop Career Centers, but again, services are not focused on the needs of displaced homemakers, but rather on all job seekers.

- Women’s Empowerment, is a non-profit organization focused on providing job readiness and empowerment skills for homeless women in the Sacramento community. Boasting a 69% success rate, Women’s Empowerment has just been voted the Sacramento Area’s Non-Profit of the Year. While their focus is not solely on the reentry of displaced homemakers, their program contains many of the key components necessary for such women to succeed. http://www.womens-empowerment.org/assets/content//documents/2008AnnuaReport.pdf

- My Sister’s House, a non-profit shelter for Asian and Pacific Islander women who experience domestic violence, has a Women-to-Work program, although little information was available. It appears that some job readiness and career counseling services are available at either the shelter or through a referral program. (http://www.my-sisters-house.org/Getting_Help.html#PROGRAMS)
Unfortunately for reentry women in the Sacramento area, there are no resources specifically dedicated to their needs. Funding for the Sacramento area programs above appears to come primarily from grants or donations.

Rationale on What is Currently Needed

Research concludes that most women reentering the workplace need significant assistance with their transition. Without a structured framework for this assistance, many of these women are ill-prepared to support their families and to become productive workers.

Displaced homemakers often find themselves in the midst of unwanted change and transition, without any support and needing to become self-sufficient. The purpose of [this program] is to provide training, counseling and services for displaced homemakers so that they may enjoy the independence and economic security vital to a productive life. (Washington State Board of Community & Technical Colleges, 2009, p. vi)

As evidenced by this excerpt, the Washington State programs are clearly focused on the specific needs of this special population of displaced homemakers.

A number of programs in Washington, Idaho, Florida and New York were developed with reentry women in mind. An excerpt from the vocational Education Legislative Report for the Idaho displaced Homemaker Programs provides the purpose of their programs:
In Idaho, adult single parents, displaced homemakers and single pregnant women are served through a network of counseling centers called “Centers for New Directions” . . . They provide a full range of services targeted for single parents and displaced homemakers. . . Specifically, they provide personal, career and educational counseling; assessment and testing; training in life skills; pre-employment and pre-training preparation and supportive services. (Idaho Displaced Homemaker Programs, 1998, p. 2)

As we see from this description, Idaho’s programs focus on a full range of skills necessary for the displaced homemakers to succeed.

Research indicates that all seven programs included in this thesis have been successful in assisting the newly displaced homemaker through their transition. All programs researched contain curricula that are skills-based, timely, and focused on contemporary problems; such curricula provide significant assistance to these reentry women. Many of the available programs researched outline their program as described in the following literature: “Women in transition can confront their fears about change, risk, independent and decision-making in a supportive, nonjudgmental atmosphere” (Willson, 1987, p. 4). Additionally, Life Skills, a program established in Alaska, found that “the main reasons for holding a life skills workshop are to assist women to cope better with their newly independent status, help get them over their fears of looking for a job, and give them a better chance of actually finding and keeping a job…” (Hunt, 1982, p. 1). As evidenced by these references, programs established as early as the
1980s, focused on the specific needs of reentry women and their successful transition into the workplace.

Clearly, the states referenced above accurately projected the mid-life divorce crisis by using growing divorce statistics for justification for their centers. Because of their forward approach to program funding, developing the education necessary to displaced homemakers has been paramount to the success of thousands of these women. Unfortunately, California has not shared the vision of other states and continues to struggle with one of the highest divorce rates in the country. Only three agencies located within the city of Sacramento have been able to provide only limited resources assisting on a few women at a time with their transition.

Federal and State Impact of Voice of Displaced Homemakers

With the exception of the WomenWork! Network, headquartered in Washington, DC, which was established in 1975, this special population has very little opportunity to have their voices heard. The WomenWork! Website provides a detailed analysis of resources available to these women. The site also outlines the legislative struggles faced by displaced homemakers. This clearing house of information provides little hope that state or federal legislation will be addressed to aid in their progress.

While WomenWork! is an excellent national clearing house for information, lobbying efforts are disbursed throughout their local/state affiliates, with no cohesive efforts being provided at either the state or national level. Without a cohesive effort, this special population must rely on the efforts of a few, rather than many, to carry
their message forward. Until the efforts are nationwide, the reentry women’s movement will continue to struggle for funding and much needed recognition.

Established in 1998, the Workforce Investment Act is defined by Working for America in their 2009 fact sheet:

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) provides increased flexibility for state and local officials to establish broad-based labor market systems using federal job training funds for adults, dislocated workers and youth. As such, some displaced homemaker programs have come to depend on this funding. (p. 1)

Since 2008, legislation aimed at updating WIA has currently been stalled in congress for more than 18 months. While many may attribute this stall to the new congress (111th) or the new presidency, these issues cut across all socioeconomic backgrounds and political affiliations and have significant impact on our special population. This much needed legislation aimed at assisting in the higher education of this special population (Higher Education Act passed in 2008) is not expected to have any impact until the fiscal year 2010. In the meantime, this special population is dependent on shrinking state funds as well as limited federal funding.

As evidenced by the research provided, displaced homemakers have a significant number of obstacles to overcome prior to transitioning successfully into the workplace. It is incumbent upon all associated with this special population to provide assistance in every way possible to ensure that displaced homemakers receive all of the education, assistance and funding necessary to ensure their future success.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the methodology used in this study, including the design, participants and analysis used. This study is based on interviews of center directors and established curricula from seven programs in various locations throughout the United States; these programs focus solely on the traumatic reentry of displaced homemakers into the workplace. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies are used in this study; the quantitative methodology included content analysis and examination of the curricula, while the qualitative methodology incorporated the analysis of center director interviews.

Research Questions

Interview Questions for Center Directors

Questions related to the funding sources, success rate, curriculum development and career counseling available to the displaced homemakers were addressed. The questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

Curriculum Questions

Based on research, does the curriculum presented in each of these seven programs address the specific issues facing these transitioning displaced homemakers? If so, is the curriculum presented in a way that will ensure a skill foundation that will
lead to a successful reentry into the workplace? What are the commonalities and differences of services between the centers and the curriculum they facilitate?

Additionally, curriculum was reviewed for specific content, including:

challenges faced by displaced homemakers, financial resources, values identification, goal setting, job readiness, time management, communication skills, problem solving, work-life balance, self-esteem development, and social support skills. The curriculum rubric is attached as Appendix B.

Research Design and Data Collection

*Method of Data Collection - Quantitative*

Content analysis, as described by Babbie (1998), is an unobtrusive method of examining communications where the researcher uses predetermined categories to complete the analysis. According to Babbie, unobtrusive methods have the sole advantage of not affecting the final outcome of the communications being studied, which in this case, was classroom curriculum. Content analysis “permits you to study processes occurring over long periods of time” (p. 318). This concept becomes important to this researcher, since the curricula of these seven programs studied was developed by a number of faculty members over various periods of time.

This study analyzed curricula from seven programs, employing Babbie’s (1998) method ensuring that the content includes the topics necessary to aid in the reentry of the displaced homemaker. Babbie’s work describes the process as “essentially a coding operation” or a conceptual framework based on predetermined
categories (p. 313). The conceptual models, or rubrics, are used to assess the curriculum content for inclusion of pertinent topics to aid in the reentry of the displaced homemaker. The curriculum examples were coded and classified based on topics facilitated, skill development, and utilization of those skills. The center director interviews were coded and classified based on specific population and curriculum information. Content analysis of both data collection pieces allowed for coding to be recoded for consistency and refinement (Babbie, 1998).

All seven centers were required to provide their current curriculum. In each instance, the curriculum was reviewed against the research completed by this researcher. The review was intended to determine if the topics contained within the curricula included those identified in this thesis as being necessary to ensure the successful transition of the displaced homemaker participants.

The content analysis (curriculum review) portion of this study was broken into six steps:

1. reading curriculum as it existed at the time of collection;
2. analyzing the content of the curriculum by using concrete qualitative factors (three individual reviews were completed);
3. reviewing the information gained from the center director interviews;
4. presenting the results of both data collection points in a qualitative format;
5. comparing the results of each center’s curriculum against the other centers’ curricula and research conducted by this researcher; and

6. presenting the conclusions.

Throughout step two, existing center curricula were reviewed based on three separate criteria:

1. researched concepts contained within the curriculum, meaning was the information this researcher found to be necessary to reenter the workplace incorporated into the center’s curriculum;

2. that the existing curriculum was facilitated by a subject matter expert on that topic; an example would be that the financial module within the curriculum was facilitated by a financial subject matter expert; and

3. whether the curriculum concepts were facilitated in a manner that constantly reinforced the previous learnings; when facilitators continually reinforce the previous topics, participants should build the skills necessary to succeed.

To fulfill the quantitative analysis component, each of the three criteria was coded using the five-point Likert scale; one on the scale represented the complete lack of skill building, continuing up to five on the scale, which represented significant skill building. The numerical values of the quantitative assessment were used to make a descriptive or qualitative analysis based on the needs of this population. The rubric used to complete this quantitative analysis is attached as Appendix B.
Center director interviews were conducted using the qualitative method of using comprehensive questions designed to solicit the same information from each interview (Appendix A). Interviews also solicited names of specific curriculum modules, budget/funding sources, demographic information, and available career counseling.

Research Instrument – Data Collection Sheets

Data collection sheets were designed to collect data based on the interviews, curriculum review and associated frameworks. The data collection sheets were coded to ensure the inclusion of all concepts included in this research and based on the referenced analysis (Appendix A and B).

Setting

Seven center directors, managing displaced homemaker programs located in a variety of cities throughout the United States, were participants in this study; in all cases, center directors were eager to assist in this process. Each agreed to participate in a telephone interview and provided candid, insightful, thoughtful responses to the entire series of questions. Each interview was conducted using the same questions, which were provided to the center director in advance. Each interview was recorded, with the participants’ permission, for reference to ensure consistency and researcher objectivity. Subsequent to the interviews, all center directors were expected to provide their curriculum.
Procedures

Each center curriculum was reviewed, and the contents were compared to the previously described rubric. Each curriculum was rated individually, and not compared to the curriculum provided by any other center director. The criteria developed by this researcher was strictly adhered to and applied consistently on an objective basis to each of the seven curricula provided. If a topic identified by this researcher did not appear to be contained within the curriculum, this researcher did not make any assumptions regarding its inclusion.

An integral part of this author’s research was to conduct interviews with existing center directors. Centers were identified based on internet research and availability of curriculum information. Interview questions were developed based research and center directors were contacted directly.

Center director interviews were conducted via telephone at this researcher’s business office. All center directors were provided the questions in advance, as well as information regarding the purpose of the interview and timeframes established by this researcher. Permission to record the interviews was gained through the preliminary information and all center directors understood and acknowledged that the interview was recorded. All interviews were conducted between this researcher and the center director; no other individuals were involved in the process. Each interview was recorded and notes were taken based on the center director responses. Notes were reviewed prior to the conclusion of the interview and were not transcribed by or
shared with any individual, including the center directors. Each interview was scheduled for one hour, with the average interview taking 45 minutes. Each interview was robust with information regarding the history of the program, the demographics of the participants, the curriculum contents, and qualifications of the facilitator. Additionally, each center director provided permission to include in this researcher all the data collected through the interview and curriculum review process, the center funding levels, and their actual names.

Summary

The quantitative and qualitative analysis was conducted using predetermined criteria and questions. Following the data collection, this researcher used a five-point Likert scale as a guide to evaluate each of the seven centers’ curricula while applying the quantitative methods described by Babbie (1998) but to be used for statistical analysis. This researcher’s intent was to determine if the curricula and programs contained the topics identified by the research, if the curriculum met the needs of the displaced homemakers, allowing the displaced homemakers to develop the skills necessary to succeed in today’s workplace.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this thesis is to complete a comprehensive study of existing reentry programs throughout the United States, including a review of their existing curriculum modules, career counseling models, demographics and participant success rates. The reentry program curricula will be reviewed against the researched need issues faced by reentry women.

Center Director Interviews

Summary of Participants

An integral part of the research for this thesis came directly from interviews conducted with the center directors. Seven interviews were conducted with directors from centers across the country, six of which are maintained through the community college system in their states, while one center is maintained through private programs and is funded from a variety of sources. The following is a summary of each of the seven interviews, appearing in chronological order. While all interview questions were identical (see Appendix B), each summary will vary based on the information provided and the research completed both before and after the interview.
Table 4

*Centers Included in Research*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Name and Location</th>
<th>Director Name</th>
<th>Years with Center</th>
<th># of Center Employees</th>
<th># of Career Counselors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Program, Women’s Resource Center, Sarasota, FL</td>
<td>Elaine Taylor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossroads Program, Florida Community College – Palm Beach</td>
<td>Bobbie Marsh</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Transition, The Displaced Homemaker Program of West Chester and Putnam Counties, West Chester Community College, State University of New York, Valhalla</td>
<td>Mia Fienemann</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 recruiter/job developer in office; total of 3 counselors providing training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Transitions Program, Community College of Spokane, WA</td>
<td>Joann Garst</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for New Direction, College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, Idaho</td>
<td>Revis Turner</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 (Mr. Turner acts as counselor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Program, Florida Community College – Jacksonville</td>
<td>Harriet Courtney</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Transitions Program, Clark College, Vancouver, WA</td>
<td>Becky Merritt</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

Centers Included in Research - continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Name and Location</th>
<th># of Hours of Training</th>
<th>Recruitment Methods</th>
<th>Participation Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Program, Women’s Resource Center, Sarasota, FL</td>
<td>27 hours night class, 30 hours day class</td>
<td>Various social service agencies, friend/peer referrals, ads with Salvation Army, hospitals WIC, HHS counselors</td>
<td>Any women, over 18, not in an acute crisis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossroads Program, Florida Community College – Palm Beach, FL</td>
<td>50 hours, days only</td>
<td>Website, college, mediators/attorneys/courts, Workforce Alliance, friend/peer referrals</td>
<td>At least 35 years of age, dependent on income from someone (income no longer available), unemployed/underemployed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Transition, The Displaced Homemaker Program of West Chester and Putnam Counties, West Chester Community College, State University of New York, Valhalla</td>
<td>100 hours, days only</td>
<td>Vast network of local agencies, court system, local family law attorneys, friend/peer referrals. Ads in local Penny Saver.</td>
<td>Divorced, widowed, separated or spouse has become disabled; not prepared for job, but required to go to work to support their family. Type 25 wpm, HS/GED, English as dominant language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Transitions Program, Community College of Spokane, Spokane, WA</td>
<td>96 hours, days only</td>
<td>Local judges/courts/lawyers, social service agencies, ads in college catalog, friend/peer referrals</td>
<td>Individuals who have worked in the home providing unsalaried household services for family members on a full-time basis for 10 years or more. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for New Direction, College of Southern Idaho - Twin Falls, Idaho</td>
<td>24 hours, days only</td>
<td>Social service agencies, friend/peer referrals, college/faculty referrals, financial aid office</td>
<td>Unemployed, divorced or widowed or disabled spouse/partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Program, Florida Community College – Jacksonville, FL</td>
<td>48 hours, days only</td>
<td>Local attorneys, churches, HS counselors, social service agencies, ads in women's digest, ads on college campus</td>
<td>At least 35 years of age, dependent on income from someone (income no longer available), unemployed/underemployed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Transitions Program, Clark College, Vancouver, WA</td>
<td>60 hours, days only</td>
<td>Local judges/courts/lawyers, social service agencies, ads in college catalog, friend/peer referrals</td>
<td>Individuals who have worked in the home providing unsalaried household services for family members on a full-time basis for 10 years or more. *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*From program website.
Table 4

*Centers Included in Research - continued*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Name and Location</th>
<th>Curriculum Focus</th>
<th>Follow-Up</th>
<th>Post Graduation - Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Program, Women’s Resource Center, Sarasota, FL</td>
<td>Personal and professional development of a woman.</td>
<td>Various methods</td>
<td>90-120 day goal assessment phone call; mentoring program available; Alumni networking events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossroads Program, Florida Community College – Palm Beach, FL</td>
<td>Return to work.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Transition, The Displaced Homemaker Program of West Chester and Putnam Counties, West Chester Community College, State University of New York, Valhalla</td>
<td>Go to work or return to work.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Transitions Program, Community College of Spokane, Spokane, WA</td>
<td>Return to work or college.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for New Direction, College of Southern Idaho - Twin Falls, Idaho</td>
<td>Return to college.</td>
<td>Clients who receive intensive services are asked to complete a participant status report each year.</td>
<td>Data collected regarding graduation, job placement, job improvement or continuation to next degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Program, Florida Community College – Jacksonville, FL</td>
<td>Return to work or college.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Transitions Program, Clark College, Vancouver, WA</td>
<td>Return to work or college.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Center Interview #1*

A Non-Profit Center located in Sarasota Florida, The Women’s Resource Center of Sarasota County (WRCSC) was established to assist displaced homemakers with their reentry into the workplace. This center differs from most researched and interviewed, as it is a stand-alone, non-profit center offering a variety of services throughout the Sarasota, Florida community. The Women’s Resource Center was developed, with the assistance of the American Association of University Women, more than 25 years ago by women in the Sarasota community who had experienced
mid-life reentry and wanted to provide resources for others. Funded from a variety of sources including State programs, fundraisers and federal/private grants, the WRCSC is a 501(c) (3) non-profit with a budget in excess of $1,000,000 annually. A visit to their website provides insight into their mission: “Women Empowering Women to Achieve Their Full Emotional and Economic Potential through: Education, Support, Networking and Referrals”. (www.thewomensresourcecenter.org)

The focus of the interview was on WRCSC’s flagship program, the Challenge Program, directed by Elaine Taylor. Ms. Taylor reports that all staff and team members use a “tag line” for the Challenge Program, which is: “personal and professional development for women”. Community outreach is a significant part of the Challenge Program’s strategy and continued success. The center’s annual budget, which provides “1000s of hours of service annually”, is $500,000. While a significant amount of the center’s funding is provided through the State of Florida tax assessment on marriage licenses and divorce filing, Ms. Taylor reports that the center also receives grants from the county and state, private donations and membership dues. The Challenge Program manages their retail shop “Encore,” which also contributes funding to the program.

The Challenge Program is one of only two programs out of the seven programs studied that provide both day and evening classes. The curriculum is comprehensive and includes a number of topics identified by this researcher as necessary for these women to successfully reenter the workplace. Enrollment averages approximately 20
per class, in both day and evening courses. The day program requires 30 hours of training in a two-week period, and the evening program requires a total of 27 hours in a three-week period.

The curriculum is facilitated by one adjunct faculty member, one counselor, and one center director. All three staff members participated in The Challenge Program prior to becoming facilitators and also serve as career coaches, advisors and overall resources for the women who participate in the program.

Ms. Taylor stated that the Challenge Program could be offered at a variety of venues, including the local Habitat for Humanity and an unwed mother’s center. Ms. Taylor’s ambition is to broaden the curriculum to offer a program to middle school girls, ensuring that they learn self-esteem, goal/values creation and budget/finance lessons earlier in life.

Center Interview #2

The Crossroads Program at Palm Beach Community College (PBCC) is one of fifteen programs managed through the Florida Community College system. As with all three of the Florida programs included by this researcher, funding for The Crossroads Program is provided through tax assessments on both marriage licenses and divorce filings assessed to residents of the State of Florida. The PBCC Crossroads Program is funded at $150,000 per year, which is administered to the program in increments associated with various stages of participant success. PBCC Crossroads also receives
in-kind matching funding from the community college, which equates to an additional 25% (or $45,000) of the budget.

The center director, Bobbi Marsh, has been associated with the program since 1987 and has been the center director for eight years. The program’s mission statement is to “provide employment assistance to displaced homemakers until they receive the job skills needed for employment.” The focus of the interview was on the classroom component of the Crossroads Program, however, the computer component of Crossroads is also offered as stand-alone component. Since that is a stand alone program, and all courses offered are incorporated into the Crossroads Program curriculum, the stand-alone program was not discussed as a part of the interview.

Current enrollment of the PBCC Crossroads program is 114 new participants, plus approximately 100 additional participants who carry forward into each fiscal year. The women are required to complete the program within one year or state funding ceases. Ms. Marsh indicates, however, that they continue to offer these displaced homemakers services on as-needed basis, regardless of the funding level. Ms. Marsh classified the students into three categories: (a) true participants, (b) students at the community college, and (c) case management participants who are not ready for either The Crossroads Program or community college.

Recruitment for the program occurs in a variety of ways, including through their website (www.http://www.pbcc.edu/crossroads.xml), mediators, attorneys, workforce alliances, word of mouth, and a number of government and community
agencies. This is the only other program in this research to offer evening classes, with an average of 15 students enrolled in both the day and evening classes. Day students attend for two weeks, for a total of 50 hours; evening students attend for five weeks, for a total of 47 hours.

The curriculum is comprehensive and includes many of the topics researched by this researcher. During the interview, Ms. Marsh indicated that the previous curriculum (eight years ago) contained many of the topics researched; however, the funding requirements changed to one of a focus on job readiness, so some of the soft skills curriculum had to be removed. The curriculum is reviewed annually based on a number of inputs, including surveys from the participants and local businesses that have employed former participants.

The current curriculum was developed by Ms. Marsh and the current career counselor, who facilitate the program with the help of community subject matter experts (SMEs). One difference in the career counseling curriculum of the Crossroads program is that a portion of the module was based on a corporate career counseling model developed by a consultant prior to the current center director’s arrival. The module contains comprehensive information on not only developing a career, but maintaining that career.

Crossroads at PBCC is fortunate to have two professional counselors facilitating all programs. The facilitator for the day Crossroads Program is a Masters, Family Therapy (MFT), certified in a variety of disadvantaged programs, and was
herself a participant of the Crossroads program. The evening program facilitator is a professional career coach and current Chairman of the Board of the center.

Center Interview #3

The Displaced Homemaker Program of West Chester County is managed through the Community College System of New York. This researcher’s initial research yielded information on “Entrepreneur*Wise,” a program designed to provide women with the skills to develop their own small businesses. The current program director, Mia Fienemann, explained that the Entrepreneur*Wise program’s curriculum was replaced several years ago, and that the current displaced homemaker’s curriculum was developed by a professional career coach. Now entitled Project Transition, this program is funded by the State of New York through taxes assessed on both marriage licenses and divorce petitions.

Ms. Fienemann reported that the program has been in existence for 20 years, and she has been center director for eight years. The current counselor, a master certified career counselor, has been associated with the program since inception and created the program’s curriculum for the previous program as well as the current program. Ms. Fienemann understands that the program is fortunate to have such a valuable resource available to the program’s participants.

Like other programs, this program has strict enrollment criteria imposed by the funding source; the displaced homemaker must:
be divorced, widowed or separated, or their spouse has become disabled;

• have no formal education/preparation in becoming the primary breadwinner for the family;

• be ready and available to work;

• type 25 wpm on a computer;

• be a high school Graduate/GED recipient and;

• English must be their dominant language.

The purpose of the program is to train and prepare displaced homemakers for the workforce, while restoring their self-esteem and self-confidence, all in the hope that they can provide for their family.

Funding for the center is $200,000 per year to service as many candidates as possible. Measurements for the center’s success are stringent, including job placement, retention on the job, full-time or part-time employment and promotions on the job.

Recruitment at Project Transition occurs in a number of ways, similar to other centers; however, Ms. Fienemann indicated that one of her most effective recruitment tools is free advertising in the “Penny Saver.” Other sources include a vast network of referral agencies and special efforts made through the court system and divorce attorneys.

Project Transition of WCC is a six-week, day-only program, encompassing 100 hours of training. The average number of participants is 20 per session, and 5 sessions are offered throughout the year. Ms. Fienemann indicated that in the past the
center’s evening courses were attended by participants who were merely looking to enhance their current job skills, not looking for gainful employment. Based on the strict measurements applied by the State of New York, the evening program could not meet the funding requirements, so that portion of the program was discontinued a number of years ago.

The curriculum at Project Transition is extremely comprehensive, incorporating every element this researcher found as effective for a successful transition. Ms. Fienemann continually seeks input from local employers, soliciting them for insight into the effectiveness of the curriculum and the type of training they believe students should receive. This direct employer input led to the modification of the computer training curriculum and the recent addition of Microsoft Outlook (electronic mail and calendaring software) training.

The curriculum is facilitated by a variety of individuals, including the master career counselor and the center director. Additional facilitation resources include local human resources professionals who facilitate the interviewing workshops, and a number of local business persons who facilitate the values, negotiation skills, legal issues and interviewing techniques portions of the curriculum. The curriculum is reviewed periodically which includes input from interns in the career counseling programs at the two local colleges. In addition to their review of the curriculum, those same interns provide career counseling services to the participants.
Unlike any other program, participants at Project Transition receive 1 hour per week of private counseling, including crisis intervention and referrals to outside agencies. Ms. Fienemann believes that this private counseling assists the participants with their “readiness” skills, ultimately leading them to gainful employment.

Center Interview #4

The first of three centers interviewed within the Washington State Community College System, the Change Point program located Spokane Community College is managed by Joann Garst, center director. Like the Florida and New York programs, the Washington State programs are funded through a series of grants received from taxes on marriage licenses.

The program, which has been in existence for a number of years, receives grants totaling $110,000 from the State of Washington, with Spokane Community College providing the required matching funds in the amount of 30%. The matching funds requirement is achieved through in-kind donations of space, computers, administrative services, and facilitators.

Focused solely on assisting the displaced homemaker participants in achieving independence and economic security, the State of Washington has imposed strict measurements associated with the program’s funding, including:

- weekly client course and attendance evaluations;
- specific, posted state dates;
• follow-up surveys and;
• participant achievement check list.

The Change Point Program administers services to more than 200 participants each year through their six-week program, encompassing 56 hours of training (four days per week, five hours per day). Participants may couple that training with an additional eight weeks of “free” counseling for a total at of 96 hours at Change Point. Participants can also attend two refresher courses offered during the summer, free of charge.

Displaced homemakers are sourced through a variety of methods; however the Change Point program finds that their strongest recruitment tool is word-of-mouth referrals from former participants. All other recruiting sources were standard to other programs, although Ms. Garst mentioned that occasionally the program’s adjunct faculty/college professors refer a participant.

The curriculum is comprehensive, and frankly aggressive, for a program of this length. There are eight components to the program, all of which are recommended by the research conducted by this researcher. Ms. Garst indicates that while the timeline may be aggressive, the participants are able to graduate and their success rate speaks for itself.

Change Point incorporates a computer teacher, a career counselor and the center director into their facilitation staff. Additionally, a number of modules are facilitated by local subject matter experts (SMEs), including human resources
professionals and local attorneys. One difference in the curriculum at Spokane’s Change Point program is that it appears to be based on research conducted by the center director rather than being developed by an outside professional. With two core assessment foundations, the MBTI and the Herman Brain Dominance, Ms. Garst believes that the curriculum incorporates an excellent balance of job readiness skills and soft skills to ensure that these women achieve their full potential.

In addition to the standard 96 hours of curriculum, weekly seminars are facilitated by local health care professionals and include: Depression, ADD, Attachment Theory, Locus of Control, Women’s Health Issues and Children’s Health Issues.

Ms. Garst reports that the curriculum is reviewed “constantly” based on any new materials she discovers, input from participants, and needs expressed in their self-evaluations. However, Ms. Garst indicates that any additions to the curriculum would be at the cost of replacing another module, since program hours cannot be extended.

Center Interview #5

Revis Turner is center director for the New Directions program at the College of Southern Idaho; one of several programs located throughout Idaho, this differs slightly from all other programs included in this research by having a sole focus: transitioning the displaced homemakers into (or back into) post secondary education. While their curriculum focuses on many of the topics included in the research, the
expectation is that the Idaho displaced homemakers attending the New Directions center will return to college.

Located at the College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls, this program, like many other researched, receives funding through the State of Idaho’s divorce tax; however, Mr. Turner supplements his center’s funding with a Perkins Equity Grant (for single parents/displaced homemakers) as well as in-kind donations from the community college.

This program’s state funding level is second to the lowest of any of the programs included in this research at $68,000 per year. It provides educational support services to a minimum of 100 displaced homemakers per year. In 2008, the Center for New Directions provided services to 125 persons, with 95 of those receiving multiple services from the center.

The Twin Falls program has been at the college since 1988, and their primary source of referrals is word-of-mouth. The college community also provides referrals, as do many of the local social service agencies.

The curriculum is comprehensive, including a number of the topics researched. However, the program provides a great deal of alternative topics including: family teamwork, holiday time, meals on $1, and “family fun” (cheap and free). The center encourages participants to select the curriculum they believe is necessary to cope with their current situation, which is why “alternative” topics are added to each session.
One interesting aspect of the Center for New Directions at Twin Falls is the fact that a number of assessments are administered to participants as soon as they enter the program; assessments include Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Holland’s Assessment, Skills Inventory and Values Inventory. The rationale to support the use of these assessments is that they allow the participants to begin to determine their own values and to develop goals and career paths immediately in the transition process. Participants are also provided a free subscription to www.myplan.com, where additional assessments may help provide insight into the necessary career and life decisions they face.

Mr. Turner acts as the facilitator and counselor for the entire program. Assistance is provided by three career counselors employed in the College of Southern Idaho’s Career Counseling Center. With the additional assistance of a number of community subject matter experts (SMEs), Mr. Turner is able to complete the curriculum in six weeks (day classes only), with one session per semester.

The State of Idaho has no enrollment requirements; however graduating participants are tracked by the State (not the program) in the following categories:

- entered training, continued training, completed and graduated (college or training);
- entered a job or increased their skills for a promotion (increased pay, benefits or skills).
Center Interview #6

The final of three interviews of center directors in the state of Florida, Harriet Courtney is the director of the program located at the Jacksonville Community College Campus. Ms. Courtney’s program is managed similarly to the program at Palm Beach Community College, receiving funding from the State of Florida from a tax assessed to marriage licenses and divorce filings. As with the other two Florida programs, funding measurement requirements include program enrollment, program completion and job placement. The Jacksonville program receives no additional funding, aside from the required in-kind donations from the community college. The program serves more than 200 clients each year.

The program has been located at the Jacksonville Community College campus for 30 years (since Florida enacted the taxes). Ms. Courtney has been associated with the program for 10 years and has been working at the College’s Women Center for 18 years. Ms. Courtney has, by far, the longest tenure of any center director interviewed and appears to have the most experience dealing specifically with this special population and overall women’s issues.

Ms. Courtney indicated that the mission of the Jacksonville program is to “get them ready for a job search, including personal growth and job search skills.” The curriculum is robust, containing many of the researched topics; however the program is the shortest at three weeks, in a day only setting. The 48 hours of training is daily
from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., the program runs six times per calendar year and averages 15-20 participants per session.

The Jacksonville program incorporates a number of significant assessments including MBTI, True Colors, a participant strength’s assessment, as well as a skills assessment. These four assessments, like many of the other centers, occur at the end of the program during the final module when the participants are preparing for their job search.

All modules are reviewed after each session, incorporating feedback from the participants and any new topics that may become important (on-line application was recently added). The facilitators include college staff, center director as well a counselor from the college’s counseling office. Ms. Courtney indicated that prior to their involvement with the program; the college instructor and the career counselor received a two-day training entitled “Strategies for Success in College and Life.” Ms. Courtney, unlike some of the other center directors, interviewed and selected both members of the program team, indicating that she believed those individuals would be good role models for the participants.

While Ms. Courtney supports adjunct faculty or subject matter experts, given their limited time availability, those opportunities are not often available to the participants. She has, however, had the opportunity to incorporate the “Overcoming Life’s Obstacles” and Debt Management modules, which are facilitated by local community members.
Center Interview #7

Becky Merritt is the center director for the second Washington State program included in this research. The Life Transitions Program has been located at Clark College in Vancouver, Washington for 12 years.

As with all Washington State displaced homemaker programs, funding is provided through statewide tax assessments. This program’s receipt (2007-2009) totaled $104,000, which is the lowest annual funding this researcher found. During the two year period, the program responded to the needs of 200+ women, the lowest per capita cost of any program. Additionally, the Vancouver program receives the highest in-kind donation from the college at $50,000 per year, which includes classroom, computers, administrative services and office supplies.

The program runs daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for four weeks, totaling 60 classroom hours. Unlike any other program, the participants receive six college credits for the successful completion of the program. Another unique feature is that participants who desire additional job readiness preparation may add a fifth week to their program. This fifth week may be added at any time during the college semester, but the program’s core hours remain the same.

The curriculum is similar to all other programs, but does not include any assessments. Ms. Merritt has effectively incorporated three modules: financial management, legal counseling and health education, which are facilitated by community subject matter experts (SMEs). All other modules are facilitated by the
center director, an adjunct college facility member or the career counselor assigned to the Life Transitions Program from the career counseling center. One component of the four-week program is mock interviews, which are conducted by local human resource professionals acting as employers. Feedback is provided directly from the interviewer to the participant; skill enhancement from the feedback is an expectation of the module.

Ms. Merritt reports that the curriculum is reviewed continuously and changes to incorporate feedback from the participants. Ms. Merritt believes that she has a keen understanding that meeting the needs of the participants as well as remaining current with area trends is vitally important to the success of the program and participants.

Unlike any other program, career counseling services are offered solely through the career center at Clark College. The participants are assigned to the same counselor, and all meetings are held in the career center, outside of the Life Transitions area. The counselor assigned to these participants has a Masters Degree in Social Work certification and is familiar with this special population.

Discussion of Budget and Impact on Centers

During each interview, it became clear that the centers operate on extremely tight budgets, with two centers facing closure due to State budget constraints. All of the centers associated with this research are located in states that provide funding through either taxes (marriage license and divorce taxes) or the higher education system. In two centers, both of which are non-profit, donations are also solicited
through a variety of programs. In all but one instance, in-kind donations of office/classroom space, administrative support and products, facilitator time and advertising funding are key to the on-going health of the program.

Many of the programs receive funding in block grants, based on milestones accomplished by the participants. These grants, while available at various stages, become more generous as the participant completes phases of the program. Along with these grants comes the requirement of tracking the continued progress of the participants, which can become difficult after the program concludes. Many of the participants do not find or even search for jobs immediately, and therefore, the programs’ grant funding can suffer because of their participant’s lack of employment success.

Three programs report that information on their participants after the 90-day post graduation date is almost non-existent. In programs where the data is available, it is tracked through the individual state, which researches progress and income associated with the participant’s social security number.

The highest rate of funding was $2,500 per participant at the non-profit center in Sarasota, Florida. The lowest rates of funding were $520 and $550 per participant at the two Washington State Life Transition Programs. It should be noted, however, that the Center for New Direction at the College of Southern Idaho, at an average spend per participant of $680, focuses primarily on women reentering post secondary education with little focus on reentering into the workplace. Of the balance of the
centers (four), the average spending was approximately $1,700 per participant, with an overall average per participant of just over $1,200.

Table 5

*Reentry Center Funding Data*

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<th>Center Name and Location</th>
<th>Director Name</th>
<th>Funding Per Fiscal Year</th>
<th># of Participants in Most Recent Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Average Funding Per Participant</th>
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<td>Mia Fienemann</td>
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<td>Joann Garst</td>
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<td>Revis Turner</td>
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<td>Becky Merritt</td>
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**Average Funding Per Center Participant** $1,221.43
Content Analysis of Center Curriculum

Each center’s curriculum is the key element in determining whether the participants learn the necessary skills to successfully transition back into the workplace; the facilitator also plays a key role in the program’s success. If the curriculum is not relevant to the issues participants currently face and the issues they will continue to face, time spent in the program is wasted.

This researcher has studied the curricula of the seven programs, and for the most part has found that the relevant questions posed throughout this research were addressed by each curriculum, each of which appear to be relevant and address the issues faced by these women.

The qualitative analysis portion of the curriculum review followed the previously stated three step format:

1. researched concepts contained within the curriculum; meaning, was the information this researcher found to be necessary to reentry was incorporated into the center’s curriculum;
2. that the existing curriculum was facilitated by a subject matter expert on that topic; an example would be that financial module within the curriculum was facilitated by a financial subject matter expert; and
3. whether the curriculum concepts were facilitated in a manner that constantly reinforced the previous learnings.
Each of the following summaries will be presented in that format, and in the order of the center director interview summaries above.

*Center #1 Curriculum*

The Women’s Resource Center provided this researcher with a significant amount of their curriculum, handouts and classroom exercises, totaling 80 pages. The materials supplied were the most comprehensive, and provided this researcher with a great deal of insight into the program and the foundation provided to their participants. It is clear that the participants in this program develop an excellent foundation for success.

When rated against the rubric, the curriculum of The Women’s Resource Center rated between a four and five in each category. Of particular note were two theoretical topics that significantly impact the success of the displaced homemaker, both of which were rated a five: Social Support Theory and Self-Esteem. In both instances, the comprehensive content and discussions provided on these theories will provide the participants with the foundation they need to succeed not only in the workplace, but in their personal lives as well.

The Women’s Resource Center is fortunate to have two skilled facilitators who have worked with this specialized population and are extremely familiar with the issues they face. Skilled, knowledgeable facilitators allow for an excellent free-flow of information (andragogy) as well as the recognition that the participants need to move conversations in directions that will assist in their transition. The facilitators clearly
weave previous topics and discussions into subsequent topics, reinforcing previous learnings. When required, The Women’s Resource Center provides subject matter experts (SMEs) to facilitate certain topics such as financial topics, local job market opportunities, and additional items such as holistic medicine, stress relief and wellness.

_Center Two Curriculum_

Requiring only 50 hours (47 for the evening program), The Crossroads Program located at Palm Beach Community College (PBCC), has a comprehensive curriculum that provides the foundation necessary for the participants to succeed. Containing all of the core curriculum modules, as well as all of the theoretical concepts researched, the curriculum is short, but clearly to the point, focused on developing the skills necessary for displaced homemakers to succeed.

All facets of the curriculum were rated a minimum of three on the Likert scale; the values, goal setting and job readiness modules were rated a four, containing more materials than required to begin the foundation development necessary. Additionally, the assessment portion of the curriculum contains two of the most widely used assessments, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Self-Directed Search (SDS), which provide an excellent balance between personality traits and career identification. Both are scored by the participant, so that they are able to develop an understanding of how both assessments relate to their personal and career needs.
The Crossroads Program at PBCC is fortunate to have two skilled facilitators (one day, one evening) who are extremely familiar with the program and its specialized population. The materials are presented using andragogical methods including significant participation and open discussions of the topics. Subject matter experts (SMEs) facilitate sessions on credit counseling and financial topics, incorporating the theories of Knowles et al. (1998) and Belenky et al. (1986).

The curriculum presented to this researcher clearly uses the concept of reinforcing learning. Topics that are woven throughout the 50 hours include: self-esteem, decision making and career development, all of which are core skills/theories that are necessary for reentry success.

Center #3 Curriculum

With 100 hours available to the participants, The Displaced Homemaker’s Program of West Chester and Putnam Counties located at West Chester Community College appears to provide an excellent foundation of job related skills, soft skill building, theories, and career counseling. However, with only the center director interview and several handouts to determine the contents of the curriculum, some speculation must be applied.

The center director interview provided a comprehensive list of the 20+ topics covered by a variety of facilitators. Unlike other centers, this program provides more than 80 hours of computer training, which is clearly necessary to succeed in today’s
work environment. The balance of 20 hours allotted for the soft-skills portion of the curriculum may be a bit hurried given the number of topics covered.

With no actual curriculum to review, this researcher must interpret the handouts provided; this researcher assigns the curriculum a rating of three on the Likert scale: meets the needs of the participants. Without any supporting documents such as a syllabus or course outline, it is impossible to determine the depth and level of the discussions that could flow from the handouts. However, that rating may be too low given the fact that so little information was shared due to the proprietary requirements of the curriculum developer.

The center director shared that the program utilizes a number of subject matter experts (SMEs) to assist the displaced homemakers. Local human resources professionals conduct all of the mock interviews, as well as provide curriculum feedback. Students with a career counseling major at the local four-year college assist in the career counseling/job development portion of the program.

As with Center #2, the Self-Directed Search assessment is utilized to assist these women through their career development phase. This researcher found that again, this assessment was utilized because of the self-scoring and self-determination nature of the results.

It is difficult to determine if learnings are continuously reinforced throughout the 100 hours of training. One portion of the curriculum discussed during the center director interview may provide some insight into this continuous reinforcement: all job
fairs and subsequent applications are completed in a “virtual” manner, utilizing the internet only. Local employers post positions on the program’s website and participants are expected to review the jobs requirements/qualifications and apply online if the minimum qualifications are met.

**Center #4 Curriculum**

The Change Point program located at the Community College of Spokane provides 96 hours of training for their displaced homemaker participants. As with all programs managed by Washington State’s community college system, there are eight core curriculum pieces required: Education Services and Referrals, Job Counseling, Job Readiness, Job Placement, Health, Financial Management, Legal Issues and General Outreach. Additional topics such as communications and self-concept/self-awareness address some of the core components contained within this research.

As with Center #3, limited materials were shared, making it difficult to rate the curriculum against the pre-determined rating scale. Again, with no actual curriculum to review, this researcher must interpret the handouts provided as a three on the Likert scale: meeting the needs of the participants. Without any supporting documents such as a syllabus or course outline, it is impossible to determine the depth and level of the discussions that would flow from the handouts.

The center director interview yielded a list of foundational/skill building topics included in the curriculum: decision making and goals, communications and learning styles. Handouts provided by the center director clearly reinforce the need for clear,
concise communication skills and self-concept. Additionally, the center director interview provided a number of theories that are included in the curriculum: self-esteem, social support and andragogy. Handouts clearly indicate the inclusion of self-esteem and social support as a part of the curriculum.

Faculty from the community college assists the center director in the facilitation of the curriculum. Combining both college faculty and subject matter experts with facilitation from the center director should provide these displaced homemakers with excellent training using the andragogy methods. However, without the supporting curriculum, it is difficult to determine how rich the discussions may become and what skills would be built/reinforced.

The center director interview yielded a number of topics that are facilitated by subject matter experts, including: financial management, mock interviews, legal issues and many of the health issues required by the state. One topic listed during the center director interview, facilitated by an outside SME, relates directly to Attachment Theory (Social Support Theory), as well as Locus of Control. This was the only center interviewed that to addressed the attachment/control issues related to another person; this researcher would have liked more materials, including the curriculum in order to explore the depth of the conversations and training in this module.

The Change Point Program at Spokane Community College provides two assessments to participants: The Herman Brain Dominance (HBD) assessment as well as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Since this researcher is unfamiliar with
the HBD, no comments will be included. As previously stated, the MBTI is a valuable assessment to assist these displaced homemakers in determining their personality traits, which may lead them to make better life and career decisions.

As with Center #3, it is difficult to determine whether or not learnings are reinforced throughout the curriculum. However, the handouts provided clearly weave a pattern of communication and self-concept throughout those modules. Any other comments would be speculation by this researcher and inappropriate without supporting data.

Center #5 Curriculum

Unlike any other center, at the Center for New Directions, located at the College of Southern Idaho in Twin Falls, the focus is solely on the displaced homemaker’s return to college. Based on the center director interview, course outlines and handouts provided, this center is providing the information needed to determine if a return to college will work for individuals who participate in the program.

With no specific curriculum guidelines required by the State of Idaho, the center director has taken a unique approach to the concept of andragogy. The program allows the students to select the curriculum and topics to be included in their training hours, while core topics such as reentering post secondary education, financing your education; career decisions and Idaho Laws for Families are required. A variety of elective topics are included in the various sessions; those topics include: community resources, fair pay, fun/cheap family fun, parenting tips and family teamwork.
Since the modules provided to this specialized population do not specifically align with the research, and with no actual curriculum to review, the Likert scale was not applied to the handouts and interview materials provided. This researcher did not attempt to determine if the curriculum provided met the needs of this program’s participants.

Unlike any other center, the assessments utilized in this program are administered early in the program (within the first two sessions), and are reinforced throughout each session. A comprehensive set of four assessments are used, including the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), and possibly the Holland Assessment (actual name not provided; may be the Self-Directed Search [SDS] or the Strong Interest Inventory [SII]), which utilizes Holland’s RIASEC model and identifies six specific personality traits (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional) directly related to career selection. Two additional assessments, with no names provided relate to the participants skills and values assessment. These assessments would be equally valuable in a life-career model since they determine the skills possessed and the values the participant aligns toward.

A number of college faculty participates in the facilitation of the curriculum regarding college attendance and study skills, and all other topics are facilitated by the center director. Without knowledge of the specific modules, it is difficult to determine if any learnings are woven through the curriculum. A number of subject matter experts (SMEs) are utilized to facilitate modules such as the laws, stress, and community
resources. Since the participants utilize the career counseling services of the college, the college facilitates the career-related topics.

*Center #6 Curriculum*

The Crossroads Program, located at Jacksonville (FL) Community College is the third Florida program included in this research. With only the center director interview and several handouts to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum, some speculation must be applied.

The center director interview provided a comprehensive list of 30+ topics covered by a variety of facilitators. As with the other Florida centers, the program’s focus is on job readiness and ensuring that the participants have the skills necessary to succeed in today’s work environment. With more than one-third of the listed topics focused on job readiness, it would appear that this program meets the needs of the participants. The balance of the topics provided during the interview with the center director focus on soft-skill development, with more than 12 hours focused on assessments, the most of any of the centers included in this research.

With no actual curriculum to review, this researcher must interpret the course outlines/syllabus provided as a three on the Likert scale: meets the needs of the participants. Without any supporting documents, it is impossible to determine the depth and level of the discussions that would flow from handouts. However, based on the information provided by the center director that rating may be too low.
Based solely on the information from center director interview, this researcher has determined that the participants in this program receive a number of the researched topics and theories, including: self-esteem, communications/trust, stress and time management as well as job readiness/career counseling. With no handouts to review, it is difficult to determine if the andragogical theories are applied; however, based on the center director’s longevity with the program (30+ years) as well as the subject matter experts (SMEs) who assist in the facilitation, it is difficult to imagine that the curriculum is not rich with discussion and related learnings.

As mentioned, this program utilizes more assessments than any other, including:

- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
- True Colors, based on the MBTI traits
- Strengths Assessment (assessment name not provided)
- Identifying Skills (assessment name not provided)
- Reinventing Yourself Inventory (assessment name not provided)
- Goals Assessment (assessment name not provided)

The utilization of these six of assessments provides the participants with an excellent foundation of skills possessed, skills needed, personality traits used in their personal and professional life, how to determine what careers they tend to gravitate toward, and how to establish and achieve goals. This researcher failed to ask if the assessments were provided at the beginning or end of the program, however their
inclusion in the overall program was noted by the center director at the end of the curriculum discussion.

The Crossroads Program at Jacksonville Community College provides a significant number of subject matter experts (SMEs) as facilitators of the job readiness/interviewing curriculum, overcoming life’s obstacles, financial management and three of the assessments. The balance of the curriculum is facilitated by either the instructor (college faculty) or the career advisor/counselor.

As with the other centers that did not provide curriculum, it is difficult to determine if the learnings are woven throughout the topics. However, based on the center director interview, the experience of the center director, it is difficult to imagine that follow-up/reiteration does not occur throughout the curriculum and associated modules. It is also difficult for this researcher to imagine that the skills and traits determined using the six assessments are not included in subsequent learnings/modules.

Center #7 Curriculum

The Life Transitions Program located at Clark College in Washington is the second of the Washington State programs included in this research. Similar to the program located at Community College of Spokane, specific educational requirements are placed on this program, including: education services and referrals, job counseling, job readiness, job placement, health, financial management, legal issues and general outreach. Additional topics are addressed, such as self-esteem, values identification,
time management and financial management, which are some of the core components contained within the research

With no actual curriculum to review, this research must interpret the course outlines/syllabus provided as a three on the Likert scale meets the needs of the participants. Without any supporting documents, it is impossible to determine the depth and level of the discussions that would flow from handouts. However, based on the information provided by the center director, that rating may be too low.

The center director identified a number of the researched topics and theories, including: self-esteem, communications/trust, stress and time management, as well as job readiness/career counseling. With no handouts to review, it is difficult to determine if the andragogical theories are applied, however, it would be difficult to imagine that the curriculum wasn’t rich with discussion and related learnings based on the information from the center director’s interview as well as the use of subject matter experts (SMEs) who assist in the facilitation.

As with Center #6, this program utilizes a number of assessments, including:

- Transferable Skills – SKILLS Inventory
- Work Values Inventory (assessment name not provided)
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
- Strong Interest Inventory (SII)
- Learning Styles (assessment name not provided)
- COMPASS Assessment
While this researcher is unfamiliar with the utilization of a number of these assessments, it would appear to provide the participants with an excellent foundation of skills possessed, skills needed, personality traits used in both their personal and professional life, as well as how to determine what careers they tend to gravitate toward. A review of the syllabus indicates that the assessments are included throughout the curriculum, and they are listed in the order in which they are administered by the program. The syllabus indicates that all assessments are concluded by week two of the four-week program. There is no indication whether the learnings from the assessments are included in week three and four’s curriculum; however, week three and four focus primarily on job readiness, and the assessments would provide the participants with an excellent foundation for discussions regarding career development and job readiness.

As with the other centers that did not provide curriculum, it is difficult to determine if the learnings are woven throughout the topics; however, based on the experience of the center director, it is difficult to imagine that reinforcement of learnings does not occur throughout the curriculum and associated modules. It would also be difficult for this researcher to imagine that the skills and traits determined through the six assessments would not be included in subsequent learnings/modules.

The curriculum at the Life Transitions Program includes facilitation by a number of subject matter experts (SMEs), including faculty from Clark College as well as community members. With no handouts to review, it is difficult to determine if
the andragogical theories are applied; however, it would be difficult to imagine, based
on the center director’s interview as well as the use of subject matter experts (SMEs)
who assist in the facilitation of the program that the curriculum wasn’t rich with
discussion and related learnings.

Table 6

Content Analysis – Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Name and Location</th>
<th>Financial Resources</th>
<th>Resources of Materials Used</th>
<th>Discussions of Challenges Faced by Displaced Homemakers</th>
<th>Values Identification</th>
<th>Goal Setting</th>
<th>Job Readiness</th>
<th>Time Management</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Problem Solving</th>
<th>Work-Life Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Program, Women’s Resource Center, Sarasota, FL</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossroads Program, Florida Community College – Palm Beach, FL</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Transition, The Displaced Homemaker Program of West Chester and Putnam Counties, West Chester Community College, State University of New York, Valhalla</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Transitions Program, Clark College, Vancouver, WA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not included</td>
<td>Not included</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for New Direction, College of Southern Idaho - Twin Falls, Idaho</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not included</td>
<td>Not included</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Program, Florida Community College – Jacksonville, FL</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Transitions Program, Community College of Spokane, Spokane, WA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not included</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As indicated in Table 6 above, four of the seven programs (highlighted) meet all of the soft skill development needs identified by this researcher. Additionally, two of the programs (the Life Transitions Programs in Spokane as well as the Center for New Directions) may meet all of the participants’ needs; however, the data needed to make a final determination was not available. The final program, the Life Transitions Program in Vancouver, meets most of the needs, however lacked the three most basic skill needs including communication, problem solving and attaining a work-life balance. All three of those skills were identified by this researcher to be key to the reentry success of these displaced homemakers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Name and Location</th>
<th>Assessments</th>
<th>Career Counseling</th>
<th>Self-Esteem Development</th>
<th>Social Support Skills</th>
<th>Andragogy Utilized</th>
<th>Subject Matter Experts Utilized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Program, Women’s Resource Center, Sarasota, FL</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossroads Program, Florida Community College – Palm Beach, FL</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Transition, The Displaced Homemaker Program of West Chester and Putnam Counties, West Chester Community College, State University of New York, Valhalla</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Transitions Program, Clark College, Vancouver, WA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for New Direction, College of Southern Idaho - Twin Falls, Idaho</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not included</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Program, Florida Community College – Jacksonville, FL</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Transitions Program, Community College of Spokane, Spokane, WA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All seven programs provide an excellent foundation of career counseling and incorporate the theoretical foundations needed for these displaced homemakers. With the exception of one component in the Center for New Directions program, which is focused on the displaced homemaker’s reentry into post secondary education rather than into the workforce, all seven programs incorporated the six key components identified as necessary for the displaced homemaker’s successful transition into the workplace.
Participant Statistics

After completing the above comprehensive review of both the center director interviews and the curricula, this researcher felt that it was important to provide the reader with a snapshot of the participant population. Table 8 outlines the participant statistics collected through the center director interviews. While each center is responsible for a variety of statistics that may not be listed here, the most common data available is included.

Table 8

Center Participant Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center Name and Location</th>
<th>Director Name</th>
<th># of Annual Participants</th>
<th>% of Female Participants</th>
<th>Most Common Socioeconomic Classification</th>
<th>% of Participant Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Program, Women’s Resource Center, Sarasota, FL</td>
<td>Elaine Taylor</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>Varies, although most are middle-class</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossroads Program, Florida Community College – Palm Beach, FL</td>
<td>Bobbie Marsh</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Broad spectrum of participants</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Transition, The Displaced Homemaker Program of West Chester and Putnam Counties, West Chester Community College, State University of New York, Valhalla</td>
<td>Mia Fienemann</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>Middle-class</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Transitions Program, Community College of Spokane, Spokane, WA</td>
<td>Joann Garst</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Broad spectrum of participants</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for New Direction, College of Southern Idaho - Twin Falls, Idaho</td>
<td>Revis Turner</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>Primarily receiving some type of public assistance</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Program, Florida Community College – Jacksonville, FL</td>
<td>Harriet Courtney</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100% (3 men in 10 years)</td>
<td>Broad spectrum of participants</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Transitions Program, Clark College, Vancouver, WA</td>
<td>Becky Merritt</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Broad spectrum of participants</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Chapter

Data collected throughout the interview process was significant and meaningful to this researcher. Each center director provided relevant data throughout the interview questions and follow-up contact; however in most cases, subsequent curriculum information was lacking. The tables presented are based on data collected through the interviews and the curriculum provided by each center; no interpretation of data has been incorporated into the data presented in these tables.
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this thesis is to complete a comprehensive study of existing reentry programs throughout the United States, including a review of their existing curriculum modules, their career counseling models, demographics and participant success rates. The reentry program curricula provided by each of the seven centers have been reviewed against the researched need issues faced by reentry women. The goal of this research and work is to determine if current reentry programs meet the needs of this growing specialized population.

Discussion

There are a variety of discussions that must take place in order to fully examine the research completed. Those discussions will include: themes identified from the research, including six sub categories; which programs best meet the needs of their participants; and what this researcher believes is needed for this specialized population. Also included in this chapter is a detailed analysis of success factors identified.

Without exception, all centers’ sole focus was the reentry (either to the workforce or to a post secondary education environment) of these displaced homemakers. Ms. Marsh, Center Director for the Crossroads Program at Palm Beach Community College believes that “each displaced homemaker should be able to get a job and become economically self-sufficient,” a sentiment that was similarly
expressed by each center director. Some programs have a formal mission statement; others merely profess a strong mission to assist these women. This researcher was encouraged and pleased to hear that many of the concepts researched are currently incorporated into the centers’ entire curriculum.

All programs in this study range from six weeks to nine weeks, and all hold classes full-time during the workday; only two of the centers provide evening classes. All centers focus solely on displaced homemakers, with five administering the program to only those who meet specific admission criteria. All ages, socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnicities are welcome at each center. Each participant is encouraged to begin and end the program, and only rarely will the displaced homemaker be allowed to continue in the program if significant absences occur.

Without question, all center directors indicated that within a few days of the displaced homemaker’s participation in the program, any communication barriers between the participants have vanished. All center directors report that regardless of the socio-economic background, age, ethnicity or situation, these women find that they all have something in common and develop a network that remains strong throughout the program. This phenomenon aligns with various research that indicates the reentry woman’s need for a strong social support, non-kin network to guide them through this difficult, stressful and lengthy process (Bisagni & Eckenrode, 1993).

Some centers have formal measurements of their success, and some centers are required to maintain the measures to ensure continued funding, while others have
developed the measurements at the center level, ensuring their continued success and continuous monitoring.

*Themes Identified from Interviews*

All center directors were eager to participate, however, it became evident to this researcher that all are extremely busy and have few resources to support them. In some instances, calls were interrupted and had to be rescheduled; others had to be scheduled at the beginning or end of the day to accommodate the center director’s overwhelming schedule.

All seven center directors showed an immense amount of pride in their career choice, their center staff and how their efforts are changing the lives of these displaced homemakers. Each had wonderful, anecdotal stories of women who came into the center having lost all hope, and emerged after the program ready to enter the workforce as a new person. In at least three instances, the center directors are former participants of the program; in two instances, the career counselors are former participants of the program. Interesting insight was provided by Ms. Taylor, Center Director for The Women’s Resource Center in Sarasota, Florida; when considering counseling staff members, she stated that “if they indicate the participant needs to be ‘fixed,’ they would not be hired.” Ms. Taylor explained that the client needs to be accepted at their current emotional state and not be viewed as needing to be changed.
Funding

In all seven instances, the center directors found that the most difficult question was related to funding. Whether that is because funding is so limited or because funding sources are, in some cases, proprietary (grants, loans, gifts), none of the center directors were eager to respond to that series of questions. All of the centers receive primary funding from a state revenue source, e.g., through taxes on marriage licenses and divorce petitions. Six of the seven centers are located at a post-secondary education site (community college), which provides significant in-kind donations (up to 40% of the state budget in one instance), and the final center is a stand alone site. Regardless, all responded with sufficient information for this researcher to develop a comparative analysis of per-participant funding ratios (see Table 5).

As with all the centers, funding becomes a focus. Becky Merritt, Center Director for the Life Transitions Program at Vancouver Community College in Washington summed it up best: “the focus of the curriculum must be to meet the grant requirements; the State indicates what has to be included, and we must include each portion of the requirement.”

Curriculum

Discussions centering on the program curriculum flowed easily, with a great deal of pride emanating from each conversation. Whether the program is 20 hours or 70 hours, it was clear that each center director felt their curriculum met the needs of their participants. Every center director reported continuous improvement in the
curriculum, receiving improvement input from a variety of sources, including the participants. Some centers include local businesses in the improvement input process; others include research on the latest theories and curriculum models.

*Career Counseling*

One additional area where each center director felt the program met the needs of the participants was in career counseling. Again, this researcher found that each center director felt that their career counseling staff was a valuable member of the team, solely focused on and dedicated to the placement of these displaced homemakers. Each believes that the career counselor aspect of the program is aligned with the area labor market and local employers, and provides the best employment resources available to these reentering women.

*Director’s Perspectives - Curriculum Themes*

Without the full curriculum from each center, some speculation on the part of this researcher must be incorporated. Without the actual materials, handouts, discussion notes and facilitator’s guides, the richness of the curriculum can only be speculated. In all instances, this researcher will speculate only in areas where such speculation would benefit the participant.

As expected by this researcher, most centers’ curricula contained the themes expected, aligning with the research. Those themes included: challenges faced by displaced homemakers (seven centers), self-esteem modules (six centers), values identification (five centers), financial awareness (seven centers), formal assessments
including MBTI, SDS and skills inventories (seven centers) and job readiness skills including resume writing, cover letters and interviewing techniques (seven centers). Additionally, all seven centers incorporated the theories of social support and andragogy, and all centers utilized subject matter experts. At a number of centers, curriculum contained all anticipated skill development areas and themes, and a great deal more, in some instances, surpassing this researcher’s expectations.

One center director reported that the curriculum had been developed by a professional career counselor and another reported that the curriculum was based on research; regardless of how the curriculum was developed, all the centers were attuned to the needs of this special population. This researcher was, however, surprised to hear that some of the richest curriculum appeared to come solely from trial and error methods used. That may be attributed to center directors who are committed to continuous improvement of the curriculum, and who accept feedback from the participants and others outside the center.

**Time Constraints**

The most common theme regarding curriculum was that each center director felt more classroom time was necessary, but few felt that any additional modules could be added without compromising the current curriculum. Each center director had a list of additional modules that could be added, but none could decide on a module that could be shorted or removed in order to include the new module. Each center director indicated that they continue to review the curriculum and will, remove
modules when they no longer serve the intended purpose, are no longer current with workplace trends, or can be replaced with a video/computer based training module.

Each center incorporates through prior familiarity with the concepts, research or trial and error, the adult learning methods prescribed by Knowles et al. (1998) and Belenky et al. (1986). Each curriculum incorporates the discussions, exercises and practice sessions found throughout the concept of andragogy. It is clear that in each center, participants enjoy modules rich with those foundations, intended to reinforce the learnings and to ensure that the skills are taught and then practiced.

Each center has a facilitator who is clearly comfortable with this specialized population, and who enjoys facilitating these classes. Each center director reports that regardless of whether the facilitator is a center employee, an adjunct faculty from the community college, or a SME from the community, each is committed to the modules taught, the skills and lessons contained within the curriculum, and the part they play in changing the lives of these displaced homemakers. Harriet Courtney, Center Director for the Crossroads Program at Jacksonville Community College in Jackson, Florida indicates that the program’s facilitator “has a passion for these women; she’s an excellent role model for them.”

*Interview and Content Analysis Findings*

Results from both the center director interviews as well as the comprehensive curriculum review resulted in a variety of prominent themes across the seven programs, including:
• Challenges faced by Displaced Homemakers

• Financial Resources

• Value Identification and Subsequent Goal Setting

• Job Readiness

• Assessments

• Career Counseling

• Self-Esteem Building

• Social Support

• Andragogy and Connected Teaching

Each of these themes has been explored in detail, as specifically addressed in the curriculum of each center.

Challenges faced by displaced homemakers. As expected, each participant in the researched centers faces a number of common challenges identified in this researcher’s research, including: loss of support network, fear of failure and significant lack of skills necessary to support their newly formed family unit while entering today’s work environment. Each center is committed to ensuring that the women receive the support they need to succeed, and each center’s curriculum attempts to address the on-going challenges faced by the displaced homemaker. Themes like fear of failure/rejection are addressed thoroughly by each center throughout the curriculum and are intended to enhance self-esteem as well as develop their social skills.
All centers are aware of the need to address this topic and appear to have curriculum incorporating topics focused on the challenges faced by these displaced homemakers. In all seven instances, the curriculum/syllabus provided appears to contain at least minimum effort for these women to identify some of the issues they have in common and is facilitated by the instructor/counselor. At one center, this topic is addressed for multiple days, while at another center this topic is addressed only minimally on the first day and appears to never be addressed again.

**Financial resources.** Each center addresses the subject of finance in a variety of ways, all of which included facilitated courses/exercises by a community subject matter expert. Each of the seven centers identified this as a key need of these women and provided the resources necessary to ensure their future success. Some centers provided additional workshops for budgeting, post-secondary education financing, as well as one center providing information on stocks and investing.

Harriet Courtney, Center Director for the Crossroads Program at Jacksonville Community College in Jackson, Florida indicates that the “hardest part/biggest challenge is finding the participants employment,” and for the Jacksonville program, the largest part of the funding comes from actual employment statistics of the former participants.

**Value identification and subsequent goal setting.** Each center provided a variety of assessments (formal and informal) intended to assist these displaced homemakers in the identification of their key personality traits, their values (home and
career) and the development of related goals. At each center, this topic appears to be a significant concern, and therefore, becomes a significant portion of the curriculum. The incorporation of assessments into each center’s curriculum aligns well with the findings of Betz and Borgen (2000), Super (1980) and Holland (1992). All three researchers advocate for the use of assessments when assisting clients (in this case, displaced homemakers) to determine goals, interest and vocational/career selection.

According to Ms. Taylor at The Women’s Resource Center in Sarasota, Florida, the values exercise incorporated into their curriculum is “a base starting point for women who have never thought about personal values, or self-care, or coping mechanisms, or her self-esteem, or self-worth. The exercise focuses them on self and how she has participated in her life events.”

*Job readiness.* One of the strongest components of each center’s curriculum, the job readiness curriculum is presented in a variety of ways, all of which are effected for the participants. Each center provided, at a minimum, resume writing, job search and job interviewing workshops/techniques. Some of the centers provided additional aids such as mock interviews with local Human Resources Professionals, presentations on success on the job, and information on the local job market and “hot” jobs. At least one center provided computer training focused on on-line job searching.

Each participant developed skills in cover letter writing, aligning jobs with their core values, and how to determine the need for balance in their family life with
the jobs they sought. While many of the centers report that only a few participants leave the program with a job, all report their participants understand how to find a job.

One program, focused primarily on job readiness is the Displaced Homemaker Program of Westchester and Putnam Counties; their goal, according to Center Director Mia Fienemann, is to “take them, train them, prepare them for the workforce…to market themselves, learn workplace behaviors and to take action.” Harriet Courtney, Center Director for the Crossroads Program at Jacksonville Community College in Jackson, Florida indicates that the “hardest part/biggest challenge is finding the participants employment,” and for the Jacksonville program, the largest part of the funding comes from actual employment statistics. Unfortunately, the job availability for the participants in the Life Transition Program in Vancouver, Washington differs from other centers. According to the Center Director, Beck Merritt, “most participants secure minimum wage jobs.” When asked why that is the case, Ms. Merritt indicated that the community college is approximately 5 minutes from the city of Portland, Oregon where the unemployment rate exceeds 12%.

Assessments. Each center has a focus on assessments ranging from formal assessments including MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) and the Self-Director Skills (SDS) Inventories, to values and skills inventories. In some centers, additional formal and informal assessments provide participants with insight into their learning styles. In each center, it appeared to this researcher that the assessments were administered early enough in the curriculum to be included in the job readiness/career
development portion of the program. As stated above, the inclusion of assessments is a critical component to the success of this displaced homemakers; this researcher was encouraged to see that all centers incorporated a variety of assessments.

Career counseling. Each center has a certified career counselor available to the participants, and each participant is encouraged to use this professional resource. In each center, the career counseling resource continues to be available to participants after the program concludes. Ironically, while the centers provide this as a resource, none track the utilization of the career counselor post graduation. It appears to this author, based on center director interviews, that this aspect of the center is one of the most underutilized resources afforded to the participants. Perhaps it is the participant’s lack of understanding of the value of the resource, or their need to move out of the center’s framework and onto the next phase. While the career counseling curriculum was unavailable for most centers, this researcher believes that the centers do align with the needs identified by this researcher, including having an affect on their own fate (Wood, 1989), as well as exercises in overcoming failure, identifying negative self-concept as well as improvement of self-esteem advocated by Kitabchi et al. (1979) and Betz and Borgen (2000).

Self-esteem development. Regardless of whether the curriculum was developed by a professional facilitator or the center director, or whether it was developed 15+ years ago or recently, the development of the participant’s self-esteem was a core component to each program. Woven throughout each center’s curriculum was a series
of modules and lectures created to enhance the self-esteem of these displaced homemakers. Each center addressed this subject head-on and as a core component of the curriculum, was intended to ensure the success of these reentry women.

Ms. Marsh, of the Crossroads Program at Palm Beach Community College indicates that their curriculum is rich with self-esteem building exercises including “a lot of reframing exercises and a lot of self-esteem building exercises.” Ms. Fienemann from the Displaced Homemaker Program in Westchester and Putman counties provided her true sentiments on the topic of self-esteem building for these women: “we restore their self-esteem and self-confidence so they can provide for their families.”

This researcher was encouraged to see all but one center include modules on self-esteem identification and development. Based on center director interviews and curriculum/syllabi provided, the theories of Bandura (1986, 1997), Killy and Borgen (2000) and Duffy et al. (2002) have been incorporated into the modules, ensuring that all the participants identify the skills they possess, the skills they lack, and the ways in which those necessary skills can be developed.

Social support. Each center director reported that addressing the social network aspect of the challenges is an event that occurs with the training, without intervention of the center staff. In each center, within a few days of attending class, these women bonded with each other, developing a new support network. Common bonds also include: children of similar age, similar problems and clear motivation to succeed.
Center directors reported that women who tended to bond with others within the group had a higher attendance rate and subsequent success rate than their counterparts who chose to remain outside the network.

While no center incorporated curriculum specifically addressing the theory of social support, all seven centers address the issue in a variety of ways including discussions, and in three instances, with specific modules/tasks to help the participants identify their kin and non-kin support and the development of social networks. Participants in each center appear to receive enough information to determine their next steps in to developing additional social supports.

Some of the strongest support for the social support theory is found in quotes received directly from the center director interviews, including:

- Ms. Marsh, Crossroads Program at Palm Beach Community College stated that “participants are expected to start and finish together, not alone. Their role is to affirm and to encourage each other through the program.”

- Ms. Fienemann, Center Director for the Displaced Homemaker Program of West Chester and Putnam Counties indicates that “fifty percent of the success of the program is the bond between the women.”

- Ms. Garst, Center Director for the Life Transition Center at Spokane Community College felt “that [the participants] bond and network constantly and have created a weekly networking group; basically, they help each other.”
• Mr. Turner, Center Director for the Center for New Director in Twin Falls, Idaho indicates that participants in his program “find they have a great deal in common, including children, single parenthood, similar struggles, time commitments, balancing family and life.”

• Ms. Merritt, Center Director for the Life Transition Center at Vancouver, Washington indicates that their participants “tend to make friends; many see each other outside of the group.”

Responses provided by center directors indicate that the findings of Pearson (1986), Barrera (1986) and Zavoina (1996) were a large part of the social support recognized and incorporated into the curriculum. Zavoina indicates that the need for dense, non-kin networks is critical to the success of recently divorced females, especially within one year from separation/divorce. The displaced homemakers who participate in these programs clearly provide one another with a network of social support that more than meets Zavoina’s findings.

*Andragogy and connected teaching.* Since curriculum was not provided by five of the seven centers, it’s difficult to determine the extent of the andragogy and connected teaching concepts incorporated into each center’s curriculum. And while the terms andragogy and connected teaching are not well known, it appears that each of the center directors incorporated the foundation from Knowles et al. (1998) well as Belenky et al. (1986) into each of the seven centers’ curricula. Discussions with the center directors related to curriculum facilitation and skills of the facilitators led this
researcher to believe that an effort was made by each facilitator to incorporate participant experiences, consensus building and building, on existing knowledge to aid in the development of skills necessary to succeed in today’s workplace.

_How Are the Centers Doing?_

In all instances, the centers provide, at a minimum, an adequate program for their displaced homemaker client. Each center is committed to this specialized population is and determined to meet their needs, even with budgets that would appear to significantly limit their resources.

Based on center director interviews, it appears that each center believes that they capture a significant number of the location’s (city, county) displaced homemaker population. With one of the strongest referrals being peer to peer referrals, this researcher believes that speaks significantly to the value of the program.

Participants, in each case, are presented with materials that allow them to explore their own career needs and determine the next steps available to them. Each and every participant learns how to complete job applications, create results and cover letters, participate in interviews, and receives significant information on how to conduct their job search.

The centers that provide assessments to their participants provide them with valuable insight into their personality traits, individual values, career values and the creation of personal/professional goals. In all instances, this researcher believes that assessments are invaluable to the future success of these displaced homemakers.
Which Programs Meet the Needs of their Clients?

It was the intention of this researcher to provide an analysis and opinion on which centers performed the best, however, that performance analysis was intended to be based on a comprehensive curriculum review. Without full curriculum from each program, this researcher believes it would be unjust to compare the programs against one another.

Suffice to say that each center director interview yielded information that leads this researcher to believe that each center director feels they meet or exceed the needs of their displaced homemaker population. Based on the interviews and curriculum syllabi/outlines and materials provided, this researcher agrees with the center directors.

Limitations

While all limitations outlined in previous sections of this thesis remain valid and impacted the survey, no limitation was greater or harder to overcome than the lack of curriculum. Without each center participating equally, no true curriculum analysis could be completed. This researcher did not anticipate the lack of participation (five of the seven centers) related to the sharing of curriculum. Since the expectation of curriculum sharing was set up-front (during the interview process), and all centers agreed to provide their curriculum, this researcher did not anticipate the full impact the lack of curriculum would have on this research.
One additional limitation arose after interviews were conducted. Initially, this researcher conducted ten interviews including two additional programs associated with community colleges (Washington and Idaho) and one program that was a stand-alone non-profit (New Jersey). Unfortunately, those programs failed to provide any portion of their curriculum, and therefore had to be excluded from this research.

Recommendations

While each center included in this study appears to meet the needs of their clients, this researcher would suggest that an attempt be made to exceed the needs of the clients. That concept is true in most businesses today and must be instilled, from the beginning, in these reentry women. While all centers had adopted a customer-focused approach, no customer service modules were included in any of the center’s curricula.

This researcher remains unconvinced that each and every center included focuses on continuous improvement of the curriculum. Without a continuous improvement focus, curriculum will remain “flat” and become unappealing to today’s reentry women. Without a continual focus on the needs of the local employers, which must be updated continually, the modules may not provide the learnings needed for these women to succeed. Modules must be updated, graphics must be changed and out-dated colloquiums must be removed; it’s almost 2010, and each curriculum should reflect today’s thinking.
Additionally, this researcher believes that curriculum reviews should be conducted annually, based on a number of factors including the research provided in this thesis. Without the identification and development of curricula that addresses all the issues faced by these displaced homemakers, they may remain unprepared to return to the workforce - the ultimate goal expressed by all center directors. This curriculum review may need to include new modules and the expansion of the training hours provided. This researcher acknowledges that that may be a daunting task; however, it is one that needs to be addressed.

Final Reflections

This chapter would remain incomplete if the “voice” of this special population was not once again explored. Without a strong advocacy group, these women will remain under-served, lacking the resources necessary for them to successfully reenter the workplace. While this researcher found seven programs in five states that provide funding for these programs, a significant number of states, including California, ignore the needs of this ever-increasing population.

Those states must review existing systems imposed by the states included in this study and develop a process that will work for their displaced homemaker populations. Each state included in this study has imposed a tax only on those who choose to marry or divorce, thus eliminating the need for a generalized, state-wide tax. Such taxes only affect the constituents who choose to participate in the marriage/divorce process.
With California’s burgeoning mid-life divorce population, it is incumbent upon those in the legislature to study the needs of this population and impose a tax on both marriage licenses and divorce petitions. Until that tax is imposed and subsequent program development occurs, 50,000 mid-life divorcees in California will struggle to reenter the workplace, most reentering without the skills, knowledge and abilities they need to succeed.
APPENDIX A

Center Director Questionnaire
Appendix A - Center Director Questionnaire

Center:

Associated Curriculum Name:

Date of Interview:

Person Interviewed:

Contact Information:
  Address
  Phone
  Email

Time Interview Began:

Time Interview Concluded:

Thank you for your time today. As I mentioned during our initial telephone conversation, I am a Masters Degree student at California State University – Sacramento developing a Master’s project that involves the review and subsequent development of curriculum is intended to aid in the transition of traumatically displaced homemakers during their return to the workforce.

My research yielded your program and curriculum and I’d like to spend some time determining a number of key aspects of the center, program and curriculum. I have a series of questions to ask, which of course, may lead to additional follow-up questions.

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<td>Describe the object of your center/program.</td>
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<td>What measurements are in place to determine if you’ve met the objective?</td>
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<td>How do you fund the center/project?</td>
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<td>How do you recruit the center/program participants?</td>
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<td>How long do the participants attend the center/program?</td>
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<td>Can they participant as they wish (coming and going) or are they expected to stay for the entire program?</td>
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<td>What led to the curriculum development and the modules that are currently included (research, specific authors, etc.)?</td>
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Have them provide a list of the current modules, length of the module and who facilitates each module:

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<td>Why were those specific modules/topics selected?</td>
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<td>How were the modules/topics developed?</td>
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<td>Looking for the methodology/research used to develop the topic.</td>
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<td>Who developed the modules/topics?</td>
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<td>How often are the modules/topics reviewed for changes?</td>
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<td>How would you complete a review of that type?</td>
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<td>Who facilitates the modules/topics?</td>
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<td>How is the facilitator selected? Is their specific criterion that needs to be met and if so, what is the criterion?</td>
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<td>What training do they receive in order to facilitate to this population?</td>
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<td>Have you ever used adjunct faculty or subject matter experts to deliver the module/topics?</td>
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<td>If so, when?</td>
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<td>Does it still occur?</td>
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<td>If not, why not?</td>
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<td>How was the career counseling staff selected?</td>
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<td>What training does the CC staff receive to assist this population?</td>
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APPENDIX B

Curriculum Rubric
### Appendix B – Curriculum Rubric

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