

**PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND DEVELOPMENT:  
A STUDY OF THE SASKATCHEWAN APPRENTICESHIP  
AND TRADE CERTIFICATION COMMISSION**

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AND TRADE CERTIFICATION COMMISSION**

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Saskatoon

By

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## ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify factors that deterred employees of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission from accessing the training and development fund for personal and professional development. The researcher used an instrument modeled on Darkenwald and Valentine's (1985) Deterrents to Participation Scale (DPS-G) and incorporated the Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale and Robitschek (1998) Personal Growth Initiative Scale to investigate employee perceptions of deterrents to participation. For purposes of this study, participation was defined as enrolment in a course, workshop, seminar or training program for which the employee had requested prior approval and reimbursement of expenses from their employer.

Principal components analysis identified the combined category and factor, *workplace issues* as having the greatest potential for decreasing deterrents to participation for Commission employees. Results indicated (1) the mean score on the item *personal growth initiative* was significantly lower for respondents with one year of post secondary education than for both respondents with two years and greater than four years of education after high school; (2) the mean score on the item *personal growth initiative* was significantly lower for respondents in the office and clerical occupational category than for all other Commission work groups.

Another significant factor was that thirty-two percent of Commission staffs were eligible to retire within five years. Sixty-six percent of staffs were between the ages of forty-six and sixty. Survey data revealed the mean score on the item *lack of relevance* was significantly lower for respondents with greater than ten years until retirement than for respondents with three to five years until retirement. This result was anticipated, as

Martindale and Drake (1989) clearly indicated that the closer one was to retirement, the less relevant education for career became. Marginally significant difference in the mean score on the item *lack of relevance* between respondents with one to two years until retirement and those with three to five years revealed a contradicting hypothesis. Participation in education, training, and development was less relevant to persons with three to five years until retirement than for those expecting to retire in one to two years. *Personal and family constraints* also influenced employee participation in educational opportunities.

In order for the Commission to become a learning organization as indicated in the *Draft Human Resource and Organizational Learning Strategy, 2003*, innovative strategies are required to include all staffs in training and development. Thus, by identifying a framework of deterrents, the Commission could use this checklist as a tool in future planning and policy development efforts related to staff professional development. Participation by Commission employees in surveys related to this study has increased their awareness of opportunities to participate in personal and professional growth initiatives.

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## Chapter 1

### THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

The Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (the Commission) was an industry led agency with a legislated mandate to govern and manage the apprenticeship system in Saskatchewan. The Commission's mandate (McDougal, 2003) was "to create a relevant, accessible and responsive apprenticeship training and certification system to meet employers' and employees' needs and priorities" (p. 3). It delivered this mandate under the framework of *BILL No. 26 of 1999, The Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Act, 1999, The Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Regulations, 2003, and The Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission Regulations, 2003.*

The Commission's vision (McDougal, 2003) was "a skilled and representative trades workforce, industry trained and certified" (p. 3). A representative workforce referred to the goal of attaining greater participation in the trades by women and equity groups in order that workforce demographics would be truly representative of the demographics of the province of Saskatchewan. Worker training was achieved via the apprenticeship model. Trades certification was granted (The Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission Regulations, 2003) upon completion of the terms of apprenticeship (p. 15) and by attaining a pass mark on a certification examination (p. 20). Interprovincial certification provided for worker mobility and signified eligibility to work in all Canadian jurisdictions.

The Commission's goal (Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission Business Plan, 2002) was to provide quality service in an effective and accountable organization. A significant part of the apprenticeship and trade certification program was the staff who served employers, apprentices and trainers throughout the province, and also at the interprovincial level. In part, the ability to respond to this challenge was dependent upon the effectiveness of Commission employees to meet customer service expectations.

The Commission was confronted with critical human resource challenges. Twenty-eight percent of staff was eligible to retire within three years. Another 34% of staff was new to the Commission. It was estimated (McDougal, 2003) the Commission could experience a 70% renewal of staff within three to five years. To continue to be able to meet customer service expectations would be a challenge for both management and staff.

One strategy for meeting this challenge was a collective commitment by leaders and managers at all levels to move the Commission towards becoming a model learning organization committed to lifelong learning. The challenge to become a learning organization was promoted by the Government of Canada. In *Directions for the Future (2000)* researchers stated that investing in people, in lifelong learning and in career development could play a key role in the ability to attract and retain talent.

#### Purpose of the Study

The Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission recognized that developing a workforce aligned to the strategic direction of the organization was essential for providing quality service. In the 2003 (draft) Human Resource and Organizational Learning Plan, McDougal presented the following information: To assist in

workforce development, the Commission annually allocated one percent of the operating budget, or approximately \$40,000 for staff training and development. Since year 2000, the Commission invested approximately \$5000 per year in staff training and development. Between the years 2000 and 2003, only 3 out of a total of 53 staff members requested financial assistance from the training and development fund.

The purpose of this study was to determine and analyze what prevented Commission employees from accessing the training and development fund. This study examined the deterrents to voluntary participation in education, training, and development opportunities, and sought to determine how the Commission might assist employees to increase participation.

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem was stated in two parts: from the selected literature and the responses of Commission employees, what were the deterrents to employee participation in education, training, and development; and, what can the Commission do to reduce barriers to participation?

#### Research Questions

The researcher used the following questions to guide the study:

1. What were the common themes in the selected literature regarding adult participation in education, training, and development opportunities?
2. What was going on in Commission employees' lives that prevented them from participating in educational opportunities?
3. What were the key variables that affected Commission employee participation rates in adult education?

## Significance of the Study

This study was important for those with a concern for engaging staff in lifelong learning. An understanding of the attractors and deterrents to participation may assist in the development of strategy and policy that help to achieve organizational objectives. From the selected literature and the responses of Commission employees, this study examined which factors increased the participation of employees in education, training, and development opportunities. The results of this study were compared with best practice according to the literature in order to determine policies and strategies that increase participation.

The survey instrument was designed to explicate the deterrence construct from the perspective of employees as defined by their perceived deterrents to participation in education, training, and development. Previous research conducted by Valentine and Darkenwald (1990) proposed a typology of adult learners with respect to deterrents to participation of the general population.

The data from this study contributed measures of academic self-concept, self-esteem, and personal growth initiative and some basic understanding of how organizational culture and other workplace issues influenced participation. The study identified perceptions of participation issues from an interdisciplinary perspective, and drew attention to the complexity, the multidimensional nature, and interrelationship of the reasons for non-participation in learning activities.

## Definition of Terms

In this study the following terms were used:

*Adult Education* referred to the official UNESCO world definition:

the term *adult education* denotes the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level, and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development. (as cited in Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 9)

*Personal Development* was the acquisition of “transferable skills (presentation, negotiation, influencing) which will broaden you in your current role but also assist outside work, and make you more marketable within the organization” (Floodgate & Nixon, 1994, p. 45).

*Training* referred to the “provision of instructions and opportunity for practice to enable individuals to become proficient in some activity” (Rossett, 1996, p. 53).

*Professional Development* focused on increased employee efficiency and effectiveness, but also considered:

not only specific skills related to staff member’s current duties but also include the preparation of staff for future roles within, or even, outside, the system. This understanding of staff development is further broadened by the inclusion of both professional (work-defined) and personal growth as legitimate areas of concern. (Main, 1985, p. 7)

*Career Development* referred to the “lifelong process of managing learning, work and transition in order to move towards personally determined and evolving preferred futures” (Bezanson, 2003, p. 2).

*Participation* in the context of this study meant enrolment in a course, workshop, seminar or training program for which the employee had requested prior approval and reimbursement of expenses from the Commission's training and development fund.

*The Commission* referred to the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission. The Commission was an industry led agency with a legislated mandate to govern and manage the apprenticeship and trade certification system in the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada.

*Lifelong Learning* was defined by the Commission of the European Communities as "all purposeful learning activity undertaken in an ongoing way with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence" (as cited in Bezanson, 2003, p. 1).

*Barrier* "connotes an absolute blockage, a static and insurmountable obstacle that prevents an otherwise willing adult from participating in adult education" (Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990, p. 30).

*Deterrent* "suggests a more dynamic and less conclusive force, one that works largely in combination with other forces, both positive and negative, in affecting the participation decision" (Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990, p. 30).

#### Assumptions

The following assumptions applied to this study:

1. That all Commission employees responding to the survey had the necessary background and/or ability to complete the survey.
2. That the survey questions were sufficiently comprehensive, reliable, and valid to describe the factor structure of deterrents to participation in voluntary adult education programs.



3. That the data collection procedures and researcher did not introduce bias to inquiry such that erroneous results were reported.
4. That the respondents' perceptions of the meaning intended by the research instrument were accurate.
5. That there was a natural tendency for people to learn and that learning would flourish if nourishing, encouraging environments were provided.

#### Delimitations

This study was designed to gather information from one specific population, the employees of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission. The results of the study were, therefore, related only to Commission employees in the Province of Saskatchewan.

The study was designed during 2003 and 2004, and as such, reflected the literature from this period. The survey was administered in July, 2004. The respondent population were Commission employees directly involved in the delivery of services and/or support services to apprentices, industry, and other partners in the Province of Saskatchewan. The researcher invited all 53 Commission personnel to participate in the study and was delimited to personal perceptions of employees and did not consider input from other affiliated parties.

#### Limitations

Only Commission employees participated in this study. Findings should not be generalized beyond this population. The findings were limited to responses describing the reality of employees on the specific day of the inquiry. The composition of the respondent group was quite diverse, with few numbers representing various subpopulations. There was much diversity among employees with respect to education levels, years of service, job

duties, and responsibilities. Analyses stopped at the point of identifying the broad dimensions of deterrence among the population as a whole, thereby masking individual differences.

Further, this study was subject to Rating Errors including over-rater, under-rater, and central tendency errors. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale measured global self-esteem from a sociological perspective and had been criticized for its cultural bias, gender bias, and for masking important differences within the domains of self-concept that contributed to self-esteem (Flynn, 2003). Finally, the concept of Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) and its measure were relatively new; additional research was needed for further validation (Robitschek, 1998). The fact that persons high in PGI capitalized on opportunities for growth at a higher rate than people who were low in PGI, had yet to be demonstrated.

#### Organization of the Thesis

Chapter One provided a brief introduction to the context in which the study was conducted. The purpose and significance of the study was stated. Terms used in the study were defined and assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the study were stated.

Chapter Two reviewed selected literature that discussed philosophies and purposes of adult education. Theories of career, learning, adult learning, and participation were included in the literature review.

Chapter Three introduced and explained research design and methodology. The development of the survey instrument was explained and the data collection procedure outlined. A description of the research population was provided and the process for data analysis outlined.

Chapter Four detailed research findings obtained from the survey data. Demographic data was presented, and the context of findings discussed in detail. Quantitative data was examined and grand means and standard deviations calculated. An ANOVA of categorical factor deterrents and sociodemographic variables was conducted. Where the mean difference was significant at the 0.05 level, Student-Newman-Keuls (S-N-K) and Tukey HSD post-hoc tests were conducted. A summary of findings was presented.

Chapter Five summarized the research, methodology, findings, and conclusions. The interrelationship between categories of potential learners and demographics, self-esteem, and personal growth initiative was explicated. Implications for theory, research, and practice were proposed. Suggestions for improved practice and policy design were also presented.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Adult education, training, and development were presented in the selected literature as normally a voluntary activity. The rationale for this study was to understand the participatory behaviour of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission employees in educational opportunities. It appeared there were factors that limited Commission employee's voluntary participation and it was anticipated that with understanding, their effect on participation could be minimized.

This study began with a review of selected literature to develop an awareness of the current academic understanding of deterrents to participation in education, training, and development. Literature reviewed included philosophies of education, theories of career, learning, adult learning, and theories of participation. Knowledge gleaned from this review was used to propose a conceptual framework from which to view deterrents to participation and provided the foundation for the design of a research instrument.

Philosophical perspectives on adult education matter because one's philosophy of education will affect outcomes. Philosophies, according to Beder (1985), were "beliefs about the way in which adult education should be conducted and the general principles that guide practice" (p. 37). Different beliefs reflected deliberate focus and influenced assumptions that

underlie practice. Beder stated the use of a particular philosophical perspective provided a rationale for educational practice.

### Philosophies of Adult Education

Throughout the ages, adult education had served many functions. Apps (1979) proposed helping people acquire the tools for physical, psychological, and social survival in the context of enhancing the quality of human life. In their review of philosophical literature, Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) proposed the aims of adult education as cultivation of the intellect, societal advancement, personal growth, change in the social order, and organizational effectiveness.

What exactly was meant by the term adult education? For many people, classroom scenes in formal institutional settings come to mind. Wenger (1998) viewed education as a “mutual developmental process between communities and individuals” (p. 263). For Wenger, education was a lifelong process of investment in the future of community. Education was the lived experience of participation in the world. Other theorists posited adult education be divided into formal (educational institution), non-formal (church, television), and informal (every day life experiences) learning activities. In recognition of prior learning assessment and recognition programs, it was proposed that experiential learning could also be considered adult education.

Adult education was also associated philosophically with the concepts of development and growth. Boyd, Apps, and Associates (1980) defined growth as the “progressive movement towards the solution of problems and the development of abilities to encounter future problems with greater competencies” (p. 17). Senge (1990) used the phrase “personal mastery” to connote personal growth and learning and argued:

personal mastery goes beyond competence and skills, though it is grounded in competence and skills. It goes beyond spiritual unfolding or opening, although it requires spiritual growth. It means approaching one's life as a creative work, living life from a creative as opposed to a reactive viewpoint. (p. 141)

So far, the literature had revealed that adult education incorporated elements of personal growth, personal development, spiritual growth, skill development, formal learning, non-formal learning, informal learning, and experiential learning. Lefrancois (1972) stated "learning comprises all changes in behaviour that are due to experience" (p. 8) while Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) asserted that "education surely involves learning, but not all learning involves education" (p. 6). The official UNESCO world definition of adult education stated:

the term *adult education* denotes the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level, and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development. (as cited in Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 9)

The UNESCO definition identified who in society was considered adult, educational goals, content, and objectives of adult education. UNESCO further argued that "adult education should be seen as an integral component of a global scheme for lifelong education and learning" (as cited in Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 10).

### *Cultivation of the Intellect*

From a cultivation of the intellect perspective, adult education was viewed as an extension of the goals of pedagogy; a pursuit of wisdom and the ability to make informed decisions for the good of society. Lawson (1975) rejected social change as a function of adult education and argued education was or should be inherently neutral. Adult education

was viewed by Paterson (1979) as the academic pursuit of knowledge which was “morally, socially, and politically neutral” (p. 356).

The academic pursuit of knowledge in adult education according to Paterson (1979) involved the study of mathematics, the physical sciences, history, the human sciences, languages, the arts, morals, religion, and philosophy. For Paterson, the cognitive value or intrinsic value of the knowledge determined educational value and educational pursuits created a deepened awareness of life and increased one’s intellectual dimensions.

Lawson (1975) argued the cultivation of the intellect perspective excluded learning occupational skills, crafts, and trades from its definition of adult education. In the academic pursuit of knowledge, knowledge of the skills required to perform an occupation constituted adult education, but not the actual development of the skill itself. For example, from Lawson’s perspective education included knowledge of the principles of electricity. However, the result of education from a cultivation of the intellect perspective was someone intellectually capable of explaining charging system theory, but unable to diagnose faults or perform system repairs.

### *Individual Self-Actualization*

The philosophies of humanism and existentialism promoted individual self-actualization as the purpose of adult education. Maslow’s (1970) hierarchy of needs and Rogers’ (1969) theory of actualizing tendency were used as frameworks to guide the practice of adult education. Maslow and Rogers viewed education as the means to nurturing self-actualizing and fully functioning individuals. The self-actualizing of the individual was also supported as the goal of education by Knowles (1984).

Knowles (1984) proposed andragogy as “the art and science of helping adults learn” (p. 52) and as a methodology to assist adults to develop their full potential. McKenzie (1978) believed adult education should “facilitate the development of a proactive, self-directed adult who will be responsible for the evolution of a more enlightened human existence” (as cited in Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 47).

From the individual self-actualizing perspective, the focus of adult education was personal growth and development. Education was viewed as a life long process and placed the individual at the centre of the educational experience. A liberal arts curriculum that contributed to the growth and development of an individual was considered equal in value to that of knowledge gained from personal experience. For example, the self-examination of one’s personal values and attitudes was equated as being of equal educational worth as the study of values and beliefs of past civilizations.

Adult education was presented as the occurrence of learning relevant to the needs of the individual. According to Beder (1989), adult education should assist individuals “in making choices that maximize their human potential. Because learners are responsible for their actions, they should control learning content, process, and evaluation” (p. 47). Paterson (1979) and Lawson (1991) regarded the goals of adult education as self-discovery and self-development and advocated individual choice and voluntarism in adult education.

#### *Personal and Social Improvement*

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) wrote that from a self-actualization perspective of adult education, the more self-actualized adults there were, the better its society should be. However, personal and social development philosophers viewed the goals of personal and



social improvement as the focus of adult education. Personal and social improvement was not considered to simply be a by-product of adult education.

Growth and development was emphasized within the social context of an individual's life. From a personal and social improvement perspective of adult education, it was argued by Hallenbeck (1964) the individual learner and society cannot be separated. Hallenbeck proffered the basic aim of adult education was:

to maintain an adult population up to the standards of competence in the knowledge, wisdom and skill which society requires; to develop in adults an understanding of the serious problems which interrupt the operations and progress of their co-operative society and prepare them to participate in the solution of these problems; and to provide all adults with opportunities for the highest possible development in attitudes, understanding, knowledge, and quality of human existence toward the goal of the greater self-fulfilment and realization of each individual human being. (p. 7)

The goal of social reform and reconstruction in North America dated back to the early twentieth century. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) discussed adult education as a means to resolve social, political, and economic upheavals that resulted from mass immigration and industrialization. Darkenwald and Merriam stated educational programs were developed:

to socialize the new immigrants, ameliorate the social ills brought about by rapid urbanization, train workers and leaders needed for the growing industrial society, and contribute to the development of a democracy without corruption. (p. 51)

A philosophy of personal and social improvement advocated for and promoted the democratic way of life. Adult education was presented as a means of improving an individual's life within society. With an emphasis on individual growth, adult education was directed towards helping "adults to cope with and function in a changing social milieu" (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 52). Education was promoted by Blakely as leading to "a better, more fulfilling personal life, while at the same time making a better citizenry and a

better world” (as cited in Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 53). Knowledge was viewed as inseparable from the ever-changing life experiences of the individual in a societal context.

### *Social Transformation*

In contradistinction to those who emphasized the individual within the social context, social transformationists such as Freire (1970) and Illich (1970) advocated the goal of adult education was to bring about a new social order. The aim of adult education from the social transformation perspective was radical social change. The current educational system was criticised by Illich and Freire as perpetuating the evils of oppressive society, and as stifling individual freedom. Proponents from a cultivation of the intellect perspective (Lawson, 1975; Paterson, 1979) advocated adult education should be morally, socially, and politically neutral. Freire (1970) argued there was no such thing as neutral education in the context of a democratic society; education was not devoid of ideological content, it was inherently value-laden.

From a conflict theory orientation, Courtney (1992) contended that adult education transmitted dominant cultural values and perpetuated a class-based society. Illich (1970) and Freire (1970) argued that the current educational system was inadequate as a tool for social change and must be transformed from that which perpetuated the social order, to that which challenged the social system and thus liberated.

### *Organizational Effectiveness*

The goal of adult education from an organizational effectiveness perspective was summarized by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) as employee education, training, and/or development for the express purpose of enhancing the financial prosperity of the company, or

to improve service to the public. One of the basic tenets of this philosophy was the alignment of employee development with organizational objectives.

To enhance effectiveness in achieving objectives, organizations often borrowed and reformulated methodologies indiscriminately from various disciplines. Perhaps the reason for this eclectic behaviour was the diverse needs and requirements of both the organization and its employees. Hiebert (2001) claimed that because clients were different, “one size fits all doesn’t work. Culture and context result in very different realities” (p. 2). It was perhaps because of these very different realities that Oaks (2001) proposed “efficiency, equity, and sustainability are key policy drivers” (p. 3).

Rossett (1996) stated the concept of organizational development referred to the job of “examining strategy, roles, processes, systems and measurements to ensure that the organization and all of its members achieve their goals” (p. 53). A basic assumption of organizational development according to Strain “is that an organization’s effectiveness can be increased by a process of integrating the goals of the individual working for an organization with the objectives of the organization” (as cited in Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 67).

Hird (2000) contended organizations that got the goals right would develop more effective training programs. Training programs that successfully promoted purposeful company-wide learning would result in the development of a learning organization. Steinburg (1992) advocated lasting organization change could result from practices that helped individuals to “examine the reality of their present circumstances, and what is truly important to them, so they can move toward the latter with courage, conviction, and clarity” (p. 32).

A learning organization according to Kramlinger (1992) was one “whose members continually learn and adapt to changes that enhance the organization’s overall performance” (p. 46). The goal of enhancing organizational effectiveness through organizational change may be realized by promoting individual growth and development:

The obvious but sometimes forgotten fact is that the words organisms (humans) and organizations (all types), derive from the same root. So when we talk about organizational change, we are really talking about individual change. (Juechter as cited in Steinburg, 1992, p. 32)

In summary, adult education has been defined as encompassing all of life experiences including education, learning, training, and development (personal and professional) whether formal or otherwise. Education was viewed as a continuous process of growth and development for the duration of one’s life-span proposed in the context of lifelong learning. From a cultivation of the intellect perspective, adult education was regarded as an extension of the goals of pedagogy; a pursuit of wisdom and the ability to make informed decisions for the good of society. The philosophies of humanism and existentialism promoted individual self-actualization as the purpose of adult education. The individual was visualized at the centre of the educational process, making choices regarding their own personal growth in the context of lifelong learning.

Adult education from a personal and social improvement perspective emphasized growth and development within the social context of an individual’s life and advocated for the democratic way of life. Social transformation theorists promoted the goal of adult education as one of radical social change; from that which oppressed to that which liberated. From an organizational effectiveness perspective, the goals of the organization and the goals of each employee were intertwined, mutually supportive, and considered in the context of lifelong learning and organizational learning.

## Theories of Career

A rapidly changing work world and labour force present challenges that have substantial impact on the personal and/or social lives and career development of workers. Policy makers from an organizational effectiveness philosophy promoted lifelong learning in the context of learning organizations. Career development, from this paradigm was “not about making the right occupational choice” (Jarvis, 2003, p. 4) rather it was about equipping people with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to make choice in career, as well as other aspects of their lives for the duration of one’s life-span.

In this section, theories of career will review Holland’s (1996) person-environment interaction that proposed matching personal traits with workplace characteristics. Super’s (1996) life-span, life-space theory combined aspects of life-stage psychology and social role theory. From a developmental perspective, the interaction of life roles and work roles was explained. In a contextual explanation of career by Young, Valach, and Collin (1996), action theory was used to integrate aspects of change, processes, and human intentionality to explain career goals and behaviour. Holland’s work has had a huge impact on the development of vocational assessment devices used for career counselling.

### *Person-Environment Interaction*

Holland’s (1996) typology of persons and work environments was first presented in 1959. Holland emphasized that people tended to seek intrinsically satisfying work situations and identified six personality types and six model work environments. Holland proposed that people would search for a work environment that would “let them exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on agreeable problems and roles” (p. 39).

Holland's (1996) person-environment theory was largely based on Parson's trait and factor model and was used extensively during times of world and economic crises to "classify people in some meaningful way and place them in jobs where they could perform satisfactorily" (Brown & Brooks, 1996, p. 3). The crises referred to were the first and second World Wars and the Great Depression of the 1930's. Personality traits and interests during that era were matched with job duties and requirements; people were directed towards services and occupations where it was felt they could make the most contribution.

Holland (1996) proposed people searched for vocations or situations that suited their personality and interests, and concluded if they had more information, they would be able to make better choices. Holland extended Parson's work with extensive studies and research and developed assessment instruments for personality, personal interests, work environments, work requirements and occupational descriptions. People would complete diagnostic tests and an interpretation of responses enabled the classification of a person as one of six types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, or conventional. Work environments were classified using a parallel set of constructs. One's personality type as revealed from the diagnostic tests was matched to the work environment in which the individual would function the most effectively and experience the greatest satisfaction.

People and environments were not labelled purely as one of the six types. Holland (1996) proposed that people and work environments were better described as subtypes. Subtypes enabled a more precise description of a person and/or an environment being classified partly this, that, and another thing. For example, a person and/or an environment may be described as a combination primarily of investigative, realistic, and conventional type

qualities and to a lesser degree social and enterprising. In practice, the highest three scores were used in assessment and intervention.

Holland's (1996) person-environment theory provided important contributions for career counselling services. Many career assessment instruments in use today were derived from Holland's concepts, or have aspects of those concepts embedded in them. Holland's work also contributed significantly to the development of occupational descriptive data and materials that were useful in understanding work requirements and work environments.

#### *Life-Span, Life-Space Approach to Careers*

The world of work was identified by Super, Savickas and Super (1996) as only one of many roles that an individual occupied in life. Social role theory and life-stage psychology were brought together to provide context for viewing careers within the total range of roles and activities in which adults participated. Super's life-span, life-space approach to careers communicated a comprehensive picture of individuals with multiple-role careers. Super et al. (1996) discussed how "time dimension adds a developmental perspective that focuses on how people change and make transitions as they prepare for, engage in, and reflect upon their life roles, especially the work role" (p. 126).

The work of Super et al. (1996) from a developmental perspective was linked to chronological age. Theoretically, life developed on a continuum; a series of life stages (growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement). Life stages were correlated with stages of career development. The progression through this series of stages was referred to as a maxi-cycle. Super's theory also accounted for career changes and adjustments and "a small (mini-cycle) takes place during career transitions from one state to the next or each time an individual's career is destabilized" (p. 124).

Super et al. (1996) proposed typical career developmental tasks were reasonably expected to be encountered and would normally occur at a conventional chronological age. As with other stage development theories, Super suggested failure to successfully complete developmental tasks in one stage, “or skipping a stage in the normal cycle can result in difficulties at a later stage” (p. 131). However, adults at various chronological ages are forced to change careers or to explore alternative lifestyles due to socio-economic factors.

In spite of socio-economic factors and/or personal change, career development still interacted with various adult life stages. Merriam (1984) pointed out that the life-span, life-space approach to careers was still relevant and could be used to “understand the sequence of a career initiated at any time in the life span” (p. 30). Merriam suggested that adults at various chronological ages when faced with the same career developmental task would respond differently and thus require different resources and assistance. The explanations for various individual responses to challenges in careers were attributed to biological maturation and the results of previous life and/or work experiences.

Amundson (2003) noted the changing nature of the world of work and advocated for greater self-reliance in career planning and development. Gelatt (1989) pointed to the need for continuous career growth and development to allow for unexpected career changes and opportunities. Gelatt discussed how the changing nature of the labour market and its increasing complexity required a focus on a transferability of skills and attitudes and the desire to approach change with positive uncertainty. While many writers advocated for lifelong learning, Super et al. (1996) cautioned that “role interactions can be conflicting if they make inroads into time and energy needed elsewhere” (p. 129).



Besides the issue of having the time to participate, Super et al. (1996) discussed an individual's self-concept as a barrier to participation in adult education. In 1963, Super et al. defined self-concept as a "picture of the self in some role, situation, or position performing some set of junctions, or in some web of relationships" (p. 140). Congruence between personality traits and characteristics of one's environment had implication for adjustment outcomes. The proposition that self-concept could affect participation in adult education was also discussed by Cookson, 1986; Cross, 1981; and Ormrod, 1999. Poor choice could result in low self-concept vocationally and/or personally. One's subjective conceptualization of self may preclude participation.

### *Contextualism*

Contextualism was proposed as an alternative interpretation of career that was quite different from traditional ways of thinking. The contextualist perspective recognized the wholeness of career, the complexity of career, and the inter-relatedness of career constructs and variables in understanding events and phenomena. Cooper and Fox (as cited in Young, Lalach, & Collin, 1996) drew attention to:

the complexity and multiplicity of possible connections and inter-relationships; the significance of perspective, which influences what will be perceived and how it will be interpreted; and the open-endedness of interpretation as actors in a situation continuously 'weave' new meanings. (p. 479)

Explanations of career from a contextual perspective made it possible to address ontological and epistemological issues. Contextualism integrated action, change, and human intentionality with the wholeness of an event. In developing a contextual perspective of career, acts were seen as purposive in the goal-directed rather than causal sense. Young et al. (1996) proposed that acts were embedded in their context and change played a prominent role in career. Contextualism rejected a theory of truth based on the correspondence between

mental representations and objective reality. Young et al. suggested “in determining truth, the contextualist works from the present event outward, in a transactional process” (p. 480).

To understand career development and counselling from a contextualist viewpoint, Young et al. (1996) stated that one must recognize action as a central construct. Action was considered intentional, goal-directed behaviour. Action was conceptualized by Young et al. (1996) as “cognitively and socially steered and controlled” (p. 483). Bandura, 1986; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; and Wenger, 1998, supported the concept of cognition and social influence on action. Action was described as being “organized as a system that has hierarchical, sequential and parallel dimensions” (Young et al., 1996, p. 483). An action having parallel dimensions explained the coexistence of different actions for different goals.

Young et al. (1996) proposed that action be considered from three perspectives: “manifest behaviour, internal processes, and social meaning” (p. 484), and understood in the context of individual action, joint action, project, and career. It was suggested that an action be organized according to elements, functional steps, and goals. Career could thus be described and interpreted by a process that made sense of action and context.

The exploration of current events and phenomena was a technique to develop a description of career as manifested and used to integrate the individual in a process of career development. Cochran described career counselling as the utilization of a holistic perspective to construct a “coherent and reasonably well-founded whole to serve as a basis for further refinement, extensions, and revisions” (as cited in Young et al., 1996, p. 491).

In summary, Holland’s (1996) person-environment interaction model presented what might be characterized as a somewhat mechanistic approach to career. Based on your symptoms, I prescribe . . . Perhaps an oversimplification, but the literature revealed there

was more to career satisfaction than matching one's personality to a work environment. The compilation of occupational descriptive data and materials developed by Holland to understand work requirements and work environments are however invaluable for increased self-awareness and self-understanding. For those faced with career decisions, increased awareness of personality traits, interests, and personal behaviours can be extremely beneficial.

Super et al. (1996) presented a developmental model of career decision-making that incorporated elements of Holland's (1996) person-environment interaction with life course theory. This paradigm shift from career choice as an event to career choice as a developmental process was significant to explicate progression of career and transition over the entire life cycle. Super's model considered the role of work as one of multiple roles in which there must be congruence and proposed lifelong learning and the role of perceived self concept as critical determinants in career and life satisfaction.

From a contextual view of career, the role of personal perception was of even greater importance than in life-span, life-space theory. Whereas Super et al. (1996) acknowledged the role of perceived self-concept in participation in adult education, contextualists considered the significance of perspective with the wholeness of career and the interrelatedness of all variables. The perceived interpretation of an event resulted in some form of action. Contextualists viewed action as cognitively and socially steered, but, also as purposive and goal oriented. Action was understood in context and from the individual's perspective as they moved towards the goal they had determined, creating and constructing new meaning as they progressed.

## Theories of Learning

In the discussion of theories of adult learning, the writer presented a review of interrelated principles from various perspectives that provided insight into how adults learn “in conjunction with adult social roles and life situations” (Merriam, 1987, p. 189). What was proposed by a discussion of theories of learning was a more traditional review of perspectives that provided insight into how learning experiences may result in changes in behaviour and cognitive functioning.

Four major divisions in learning theory were presented: behaviourism, cognitivism, humanism, and social learning theories. Each orientation presented “very different assumptions about learning and offer helpful insights into adult learning” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 124).

### *Behaviourism*

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) observed that behaviourists attempted to explain learning and motivation “in terms of external environmental contingencies rather than internal causes of action” (p. 101). In many industrial situations, learning (training) was about creating expertise and developing competencies. Mastery of a job proceeded from mastery of simple tasks to mastery of complex tasks and has been termed a hierarchical approach to performance mastery (Zemke, 1999).

“Programmed instruction, a grandparent of e-learning was developed using operant conditioning principles” (Zemke, 2002, p. 88). Competency-based education, self-instructional packages, mastery learning, personalised systems of instruction, and breaking complex tasks into simpler to understand components are examples of the application of behavioural learning theory.

Phillips and Phillips (2002) promoted the enhancement of learning by the development of behavioural objectives. Specifying objectives served to orient the learner to purpose and goals. Objectives aided in the arrangement of instructional strategies, and provided a means for evaluating training outcomes against well-accepted standards. The notion of instructor accountability was implied. Self-evaluation, multi-rater feedback, records check, and performance appraisals are examples of evaluation methods derived from the application of behavioural learning theory.

### *Cognitivism*

Whereas behaviourists equated learning with consequences of behaviour, cognitivists viewed learning as internal cognitive processes. Insight, information processing, memory, and perception were major constructs of cognitivist explanations of learning. Merriam and Caffarella (1991) observed the various approaches to cognitivism were united by a “focus on internal mental processes that are within the learner’s control” (p. 131).

Zemke (2002) in a discussion of Herbert Simon’s contribution to cognitivism noted that because learners have unique cognitive structures, a variety of perspectives in the same lesson should be provided. Ausubel (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991) proffered a theory of subsumption and argued “learning is meaningful only when it can be related to concepts which already exist in a person’s cognitive structure” (p. 130). Ausubel maintained that new knowledge was processed “only to the extent that more inclusive and appropriately relevant concepts are already available in the cognitive structure to serve a subsuming role or to provide definitional anchorage” (p. 130).

Ausubel (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991) proposed the use of advance organizers as a technique for the acquisition and processing of new knowledge. R.M. Smith

(1982) emphasized assisting adults to “learn how to learn” as a technique for the acquisition and processing of new knowledge. R.M. Smith contended that learning how to learn involved “possessing, or acquiring, the knowledge and skill to learn effectively in whatever learning situation one encounters” (p. 19). Learning how to learn suggested that the knowledge and skills to learn effectively could be acquired and then utilized when new, unfamiliar learning situations were encountered.

Contextual views of learning stressed the importance of the immediate environment in learning and behaviour. Constructivists proposed that people organize and try to make sense of information in unique, idiosyncratic ways. Learning was portrayed as constructing knowledge from information. Bruner (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991) advocated for learning through discovery described the essence of learning as “a matter of rearranging or transforming evidence in such a way that one is enabled to go beyond the evidence so reassembled to additional new insights” (p. 130).

Hergenhahn (1988) proposed that insight was achieved by referencing the whole of an experience from the phenomenological or subjective view of the individual. Rather than assessing individual parts or isolated incidents, learning was thought to occur in the total structure of the experience. Gestaltist’s argued that people learn through insight, not trial and error. We either know it or we do not. The idea that when we have learned a solution to a problem, we commonly apply the same solution to another problem was termed transposition (M. Thomas, 2002). Past experience was considered important in explaining present behaviour. Merriam and Caffarella (1991) claimed learning involved reorganizing experiences and thinking about:

all the ingredients necessary to solve a problem and puts them together (cognitively) first one way and then another until the problem is solved. When the solution comes,

it comes suddenly, that is, the organism gains an insight into the solution of a problem. The problem can exist in only two states: (a) unsolved and (b) solved; there is no state of partial solution in between. (p. 129)

Gippen and Peters (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991) proposed “the thinking person interprets sensations and gives meaning to the events that impinge upon his consciousness” (p. 129). Ormrod (1999) developed the phi phenomenon from observations that our perception of an experience was something different from that of the experience itself. From the Gestaltist’s tradition, the laws governing perception (closure, proximity, symmetry, continuity, and praegnantz) are useful for explaining perceptions of the whole (M. Thomas 2002).

### *Humanism*

In contrast to behaviourist and cognitivist learning theories that stressed the potency of external conditions, McCreary (1989) argued that humanism emphasized “the positive drive emanating from within human beings toward self-creation” (p. 76). From a humanistic perspective, an adult was considered an independent, self-directed learner. McCreary argued that the works of Maslow (1970) and Rogers (1969) formed the basic tenets of humanistic learning theory.

The focus of learning was the facilitation of individual growth and development. Darkenwald and Merriam (1992) described the purpose of adult education as one of “helping adults to realize their potential, make good decisions, and, in general, better carry out the duties and responsibilities inherent in the adult role” (p. 77). Merriam and Caffarella (1991) discussed people as “free to act, and behaviour is the consequence of human choice” (p. 132). Coombs (as cited in McCreary, 1989) observed “much of a person’s behaviour results from self-concept” (p. 76).

Personal growth and development was a basic precept of humanistic philosophy and psychology. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) claimed “humanism draws on phenomenology which emphasizes a person’s perceptions that grow out of experience, and existentialism, which stresses individual responsibility for becoming what one wants to become” (p. 78). Darkenwald and Merriam argued that it was the individual learner who was best situated to determine learning needs. The use of learning contracts and personal development plans, by whatever name, reflected humanist traditions.

Cross (1981) observed “there is a natural tendency for people to learn and that learning will flourish if nourishing, encouraging environments are provided” (p. 228). Personal growth (learning) was viewed as motivated by a basic human desire to know and to understand. Sahakian (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991) viewed learning as a form of psychotherapy that “contributes to psychological health” (p. 133).

### *Social Learning*

From a social learning perspective, Lefrancois (1972) described learning as the acquisition of culturally appropriate behaviours. Learning which behaviours were deemed socially acceptable and which were not is perhaps an oversimplification. However, it was the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required in different social situations that was cited to develop able members of society. A basic assumption of social learning theory was people learn by observing other people in social settings.

Lefrancois (1972) proposed explanations of social learning phenomena based on classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and cognitivism. Bandura (1986) described learning from an imitation theory perspective that accounted for both the learner and the



environment and incorporated explanations of social learning phenomena proposed by Lefrancois. Merriam and Caffarella (1991) discussed learning behaviour as:

a function of the interaction of the person with the environment. This is a reciprocal concept in that people influence their environment, which in turn influences the way they behave. (p. 135)

The role of motivation in social learning phenomena was explained by various models such as expectancy-valence, perceived social pressures, monetary incentives, achievement strivings, and efficacy. Rather than a deep theoretical discussion of Bandura and other proponents of social learning theory, the author was primarily concerned with social learning's contribution to adult learning and with identifying deterrents to participation in training and development.

One application of learning in social context was "action learning". The basic concept of action learning was a training program where participants "learn by doing" in a team or work group that consisted of between 6 and 30 employees. Froiland (1994) explained that employees "tackle an actual problem, generate solutions to the problem, develop an action plan and take responsibility for implementing the plan" (p. 27). Somewhat similar to action learning, Ormrod (1999) discussed "authentic activities" as a technique for learning to solve complex, real-world tasks.

Social learning was also evident in role-playing or role enactment training techniques. Persons in complementary roles, and audiences, served to "guide the performer's role enactment through approval, to offer social reinforcement for a role well enacted; and thus to contribute to the maintenance of the role behaviour over time" (McCreary, 1989, p. 77). Socialization through role-playing inculcated culturally acceptable behaviour.

Mentoring relationships can be initiated to provide a forum for learning new behaviours by providing support, challenge and vision. Mentoring programs “are recognized as effective ways to develop a sense of belonging, facilitate intergenerational transfer of knowledge and promote staff retention” (Cuerrier, 2004, p.4). A somewhat similar process was the use of apprenticeship for training and development. Through the socialization process, the apprentice acquired trade language, values, norms and beliefs. The journey person (an expert, highly skilled worker) was viewed as both trainer and mentor (Pentelichuk, 2001).

Other instructional strategies that draw on social learning principles included class discussions, reciprocal teaching, and cooperative learning. The promotion of role models that symbolized desired behaviour or attributes was identified as a very powerful technique for socialization. Hergenhahn (1988) noted that “symbols retained from a modeling experience act as a template with which one’s actions are compared. During this rehearsal process individuals observe their own behaviour and compare it to their cognitive representation of the modeled experience” (p. 327).

In summary, behaviourism, cognitivism, humanism, and social learning theories were based on various assumptions about how people learn. Each of these traditions proposed strategies to enhance learning and were selected for their diversity and the insights they provided into adult learning. Specific job training and skills development appeared most effectively accomplished by various techniques derived from behavioural learning theories. Adherents to this model “arrange the contingencies of reinforcement in the learning environment so that the desired behaviour will occur” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 137).

While behaviourists focused on external behaviour, adherents to cognitivist traditions emphasized internal mental processes from a developmental perspective. The importance of context and the whole of an experience from the phenomenological or subjective view of the individual were recognized. In contrast to behaviourist and cognitivists learning theories, humanism emphasized self-actualizing tendencies. Adult learners were considered self-directed and learning was motivated by a basic human desire to know and to understand. Social learning differed from other learning theories by its focus on the social setting. Learning was proposed to occur from the observation of other people, from interaction with other people, and from the interaction with one's environment.

### Theories of Adult Learning

Merriam (1987) proposed three categories in which various theories of adult learning might be grouped: "(a) those that are based on adult learner characteristics, (b) those that emphasize the adult's life situation, and (c) those that focus upon changes in consciousness" (p. 189). Merriam's framework for categorizing theories of adult learning was used to reveal conditions that promoted adult learning and to identify deterrents to participation in adult education.

#### *Adult Learner Characteristics*

Pedagogy was commonly defined as the art and science of teaching children. Knowles (1984) proposed andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn" (p. 52). The andragogical model was based upon several assumptions, all of which characterize adult learners:

1. Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.
2. As a person matures, one's self-concept moves from dependent to self-directed learner.

3. With maturation, an adult accumulates a variety of experiences that can be a rich resource for learning. One's self-identity is derived from personal experience.
4. Adult readiness to learn is closely associated to life-stage developmental tasks and social role expectations.
5. An adult's orientation to learning is life-centred. Learning is most effective in the context of application to real-life situations.
6. While adults do respond to some external motivators, the most potent motivators are internal pressures. (55-61)

Knowles (1984) drew from these assumptions, numerous implications for planning training and development opportunities. From a developmental perspective, andragogy had significant implications for the design of adult learning opportunities. The interaction between biological and social environmental factors was presented as a necessary consideration in curriculum design. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) advocated "historical factors, social and cultural norms, and individual differences" (p. 89) played an essential role in effective curriculum design. Adult learning was viewed as more than the pursuit of self-fulfilment and andragogy assumed that a high degree of responsibility for learning rested with the learner.

Cross's (1981) Characteristics of Adults as Learners (CAL) consisted of two variables: personal characteristics and situational characteristics. Personal characteristics reflected gradual growth and development from childhood to adulthood. Cross expressed personal variables as "continua along three dimensions: physical, psychological, and sociocultural" (p. 235). Situational characteristics described conditions under which learning took place. Situational characteristics identified those variables unique to individual adult participants such as part-time versus full-time learning, and compulsory versus voluntary participation.

Cross (1981) claimed the assumptions of andragogy could be incorporated into the CAL model of adult learning. The CAL model incorporated completed research on ageing,

stage and phase development, participation, learning projects, and motivation. Self-concept and readiness to learn were considered a function of developmental growth as opposed to maturation from childhood to adulthood.

The CAL model proposed by Cross (1981) suggested educational opportunities should be adaptive and adjustive in response to the physiological processes of aging. Education that was adaptive referred to making necessary adjustments such as accommodation for those with hearing loss or the need for greater illumination in the classroom. Education that was adjustive also accepted and capitalized on adult prior learning and experience.

#### *Adult's Life Situation*

Theories of adult learning from an adult's life situation perspective emanated from the roles and responsibilities that distinguished an adult's life. McClusky (1984) offered the Theory of Margin as an explanation for adult participation in learning opportunities. Theory of margin posited the notion of a discrepancy between power and load. Load was defined as the demands placed on an individual by self or society. Power was defined as available personal resources to cope with one's load.

Adulthood was presented as "a time of growth, change, and integration in which one constantly seeks balance between the amount of energy needed and the amount available" (Merriam, 1987, p. 192). The relationship of load to power was explicated by the concept of margin. Cross (1981) explained margin as "keeping one's capacity to deal with life (power) a little in excess of the problems (load)" (p. 245):

Margin may be increased by reducing Load or increasing Power, or it may be decreased by increasing Load and/or reducing Power. We can control both by modifying either Power or Load. When Load continually matches or exceeds Power and if both are fixed and/or out of control, or irreversible, the situation becomes

highly vulnerable and susceptible to breakdown. If, however, Load and Power can be controlled, and better yet, if a person is able to lay hold of a reserve (Margin) of Power, he is better equipped to meet unforeseen emergencies, is better positioned to take risks, can engage in exploratory, creative activities, is more likely to learn, etc., i.e. do those things that enable him to live above a plateau of mere self subsistence. (McClusky, 1984, p. 159)

The ratio between load and power was viewed as a limiting factor in one's decision to participate in learning opportunities. McClusky (1984) claimed that a surplus of power must be available to take on more challenges and pursue additional activities. The amount of power available would "have a strong bearing on the level and range of his performance" (p. 160). Resistance to learning would be lessened if basic personal commitments (load) could be eased. The development of organizational policy such as paid leave of absence, on-the-job training, and various training fund allowances was presented as a logical extension of thought.

Cross (1981) maintained the greatest application of McClusky's (1984) conceptual framework was with middle aged and older adults. Merriam (1987) suggested "McClusky felt that older persons could enhance their self esteem through learning and education relevant to their life situation" (p. 192). In one's later years of life, McClusky (1984) proposed education for career development could be substituted with education for community service or hobbies. Self-concept, power, load, margin, commitment, time perception, and life transitions are important components of this theory. Stevenson (1980) developed a test instrument to measure margin in life.

Another framework from which to view learning from an adult's life situation perspective was Knox's (1980) Proficiency Theory. Knox claimed that adults would engage in learning activities to cope with life events, or to comply with societal expectations of role proficiency. Knox argued that adult learning was motivated by unsatisfactory performance

in life roles and spoke to a discrepancy between current and desired proficiencies.

Proficiency theory was:

based upon assumptions that adult learning is both developmental and transactional. It is developmental in that learning is integral to the changes adults undergo as they age, changes which are internally and externally precipitated. Learning is also transactional in that (a) learners are motivated to learn through interaction with their social context, and (b) they interact with people and resources within the learning situation. (Cross, 1981, p. 193)

From a proficiency theory perspective, the motivation for adult engagement in learning activities resided in a perceived discrepancy between current and desired levels of proficiency. Central concepts of proficiency theory were “general environment, past and current characteristics, performance, aspiration, self, discrepancies, specific environments, learning activity, and the teacher’s role” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 255).

#### *Changes in Consciousness*

Mezirow (as cited in Merriam, 1987) claimed that learning in adulthood was characterized by changes in perspective or consciousness. The importance of reflective thought and life’s experiences in creating inner meaning and mental constructs was emphasized. A strong cognitive focus characterized transactional encounter and perspective transformation learning.

Mezirow (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991) equated perspective transformation with emancipatory learning. Emancipatory learning was defined as “self-knowledge and insights gained through self-reflection” (p. 259). Perspective transformation was described as:

the emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings. It is the learning process by which adults come to recognize their culturally induced

dependency roles and relationships and the reasons for them and take action to overcome them. (Merriam, 1987, p. 194)

Perspective transformation was proposed as a process precipitated by a disorientating dilemma to which current knowledge, skills, and attitudes were ineffectual. Mezirow (as cited in Merriam, 1987) explained learning in adulthood as a process of transforming existing knowledge into a new perspective. Learning was presented as the critical examination of one's assumptions, values, and beliefs until their very structure was transformed. Perspective transformation resulted in a new agenda for action and "action out of one's new perspective is an integral part of the theory" (p. 194). Mezirow's perspective transformation theory promoted autonomy and a self-directed orientation to learning in adulthood.

A self-directed approach to learning in adulthood was not supported by Brookfield. Brookfield (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991) questioned "whether self-directed learning is in fact a distinct concept" (p. 207). This statement was confusing because Brookfield also argued one of the principles of effective facilitation of learning was self-direction (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 302). Brookfield proposed five other principles of effective facilitation that addressed "participation, mutual respect, collaboration, praxis, and critical reflection" (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991, p. 302).

Brookfield (as cited in Merriam, 1987) characterized adult learning as a transactional encounter. Brookfield claimed the role of the facilitator was "to challenge learners with alternative ways of interpreting their experience and to present to them ideas and behaviours that cause them to examine critically their values, ways of acting, and the assumptions by which they live" (p. 196). While not advocating for social action, praxis (reflection and action) and the notion of change were presented as desired learning outcomes.



Learning outcomes based on changes in consciousness raised ethical and philosophical issues in the literature. In Freire's (1970) theory of conscientization, the end goal of education was liberation or praxis. Praxis was defined as "the action and reflection of men upon their world in order to transform it" (p. 66). Mezirow (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991) defended consciousness raising education with the argument that "social action may develop, and it is desirable and appropriate that it do so. But this is the learner's decision, not the educator's. Educator's do not set out to effect specific political action; this is indoctrination" (p. 261).

In summary, the theories of adult learning reviewed were chosen for their diversity and presented information and arguments considered important in the design and implementation of adult education and training and development policy. Adult learning was portrayed as complex phenomena that had potential to influence every facet of life. Theories of learning based on an adult learner characteristics perspective proposed that adults were primarily internally motivated and learning tended to become more self-directed with age. Best practices included learning opportunities that were adaptive and adjustive to the characteristics of learners. Readiness to learn was presented as closely associated to life-stage developmental tasks and social role expectations.

In contrast to theories based on adult learner characteristics, theories of learning from an adult's life situation perspective proposed that adults were primarily externally motivated. Readiness to learn was presented as closely associated with life-stage development. From a change in consciousness perspective, learning was precipitated by a disorienting dilemma to which current knowledge, skills, and attitudes were ineffectual. A strong cognitive focus characterized transactional encounter and perspective transformation learning.

## Theories of Participation

Theories of participation from the frameworks of economics, social psychology, leisure and recreational studies, time allocation, and adult education were reviewed. While not all theories of participation may be considered pertinent to explanations of participation in adult education, each conceptual framework provided important contributions for developing a comprehensive understanding of adult participatory behaviour. Mezirow's (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991) transformational learning theory can also be included in this framework as a theory of participation from a change orientation perspective.

### *Economics*

The *Cost-Benefit Theory* presented by Dhanidina and Griffith (1975) proposed a rationalistic model of decision making wherein "the decision to obtain more schooling is a deliberate choice that resembles the decision-making of other investors" (p. 218). From a cost-benefit framework, participation in education was more likely when the actual benefits derived from investment outweighed the costs incurred. Training and development was viewed as an investment in human capital to increase value and worth. Decision-making was based on utility maximizing behaviour.

Cohn and Hughes (1994) used an *Internal Rate of Return (IROR)* framework to discuss educational participation decision-making. Whereas the cost-benefit framework looked at actual monetary benefit, IROR posited perceived relative value and worth in decision making. The decision to invest in education to increase salary was contrasted with other options such as tenure in job or seeking alternative employment. Societal variables were noted to have an impact on decision making when an IROR framework was used for participatory decision making.

## *Social-Psychology*

A *Theory of Reasoned Action* was based on the assumption “that human beings are usually quite rational and make systematic use of the information available to them. People consider the implications of their actions before they decide to engage or not engage in a given behaviour” (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, p. 5). A person’s actions were presented as influenced by a personal attitude towards the behaviour and by a perceived social pressure (subjective norm) to conform.

A person’s attitudes were thought to be a function of personal beliefs (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). If one believed that an action was in his or her best interest, and, further believed that significant others also agreed with the decision, then the likelihood of engagement in that behaviour was increased. The decision to participate was viewed as a function of the relative importance of both attitudinal and normative factors. Ajzen and Fishbein proposed the relative weighting (importance assigned by an individual) of both factors would vary from situation to situation and person to person. The theory of reasoned action was limited to explanations of behaviour under volitional control.

The *Theory of Planned Behaviour* proposed by Ajzen and Driver (1992) expanded on Ajzen’s theory of reasoned action with the addition of the concept of “perceived behavioural control”. Ajzen and Driver speculated that “the more favourable the attitude and subjective norm with respect to behaviour, and the greater the perceived behavioural control, the stronger should be an individual’s intention to perform the behaviour” (p. 208). Perceived behavioural control was presented as positively correlated with behavioural achievement.

*Leisure and Recreational Studies*

The *Interdisciplinary, Sequential-Specificity, Time-Allocation, Lifetime Model (ISSTAL)* model presented an interdisciplinary understanding of participation in discretionary time activities. D.H. Smith and Macaulay (1980) proposed ISSTAL for explanations of social participation in leisure and recreational activities. The model focused on social context variables, personality traits, and lifespan differences.

Merriam and Caffarella (1991) quoted Cookston (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1991) who stated that “relative to others within the same cohort, people who exhibit higher levels of participation in adult education in their thirties may be expected to display similarly higher levels in their forties, fifties, and sixties” (p. 240). Cookston adapted the ISSTAL model to study participation in adult education and noted that participation in adult education “tends to fit into broader behavioural patterns of behaviour and will covary with participation in other types of socially valued behaviour” (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 1998, p. 35).

The *General Activity Model* proposed by D.H. Smith and Theberge (1987) expanded the ISSTAL model with their assumption that people adapted to their sociocultural environment. The model was promoted as suitable for studying any kind of discretionary time activity. Research conducted by D.H. Smith and Theberge suggested participation would be higher:

- for individuals who have more dominant, higher or more socially valued positions in various social status and role hierarchies in a given society;
- when there are co-participants;
- when the person is a member of voluntary groups;
- when resource and access opportunities are greater;
- when the person is healthier; and
- when the person has more intellectual capability. (NCES, 1998, p. 34)

The general activity model suggested that variables were causally interconnected and that situational variables had the greatest influence on participation because they exerted influence on one or more intervening variables.

*Leisure Constraint Frameworks* was a theory of participation that focused on the study of factors (constraints) that inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment of an activity. Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991) proposed a hierarchical structure of three major constraints: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. In a study of leisure constraints conducted by Alexandris and Carroll (1997) it was suggested that interpersonal and structural constraints were not related to participation. The difference between participants and non-participants was attributed to intrapersonal constraints.

A study of leisure constraints conducted by Williams and Basford (1992) of the ski industry identified the need for strategies to respond to both a segmented market and latent demand. Williams and Basford recognized that different deterrents existed for participants, former participants, and non-participants. The effective demand of participants was categorized as frequent, moderate, and infrequent. Each group required different marketing strategies to increase the likelihood of participation.

The other major segment of the ski industry was comprised of former participants and non-participants. This group's potential participation was conceptualized as latent demand potential. Williams and Basford (1992) argued the need for different strategies to address the needs of interested former participants and interested non-participants. Targeting each group's specific needs would thus have a greater impact on participation rates.

Conceptualizing employees as former participants in education rather than non-participants

would be a valuable strategy in developing organizational policy and/or action strategies to increase participation in adult education.

### *Time Allocation Theory*

Robinson (1997) proposed a theory of participation based on time allocation. Robinson argued that because the amount of time in each day was finite, educational activities were in direct competition for time with other discretionary participation activities and resources. Time had definite boundaries and increased in value as “spare” time decreased.

Robinson (1997) claimed a personal perception of how much free time one had was subjective and an important determinant of participatory behaviour. In Robinson’s study, people with comparatively higher levels of formal education were more likely to report using free time for educational activities. Personal variables such as age, sex, attitudes, and other personal factors did not predict individual differences in time allocation.

### *Adult Education*

Knox and Videbeck (1963) presented a theory of *Patterned Participation* that was considered “the first major effort to explain the relationship between situational, social, and psychological antecedents of participation in adult education” (Scanlan, 1986, p.3). Efforts focused on explaining the relationship between one’s subjective orientation toward participation and the objective organization of a person’s life space. The resultant interaction between an individual and his/her environment was responsive to changes in life circumstances.

*Force-field Analysis* was an attempt by Miller (1967) to connect personal needs theories of motivation and Lewin’s (1947) force-field theory. Miller viewed educational

activity as the interaction between personal needs and social structures; participation was correlated with one's socioeconomic class and place in the life cycle. Force-field analysis considered changes in life circumstances and changes in technology as motivators for participation in education.

Rubenson's (1997) *Recruitment Paradigm* integrated concepts of expectancy-valence models with cognitive motivational theory. Rubenson proposed that actual experiences, actual environmental structures, and actual individual needs were less important determinants of behaviour than how they were subjectively perceived and interpreted. An individual's participation was contingent upon: active preparedness, perception and interpretation of the environment, and the experience of individual need.

The cognitivist aspect of the recruitment paradigm focused on the perceptual components of an individual's life. Rubenson (1997) considered previous experiences of success (expectancy) and the value one placed on being successful (valence) as contributing factors in determining one's disposition towards participation. It was argued that a person's perceptions were developed by the socialization process and directly effected how one interpreted his/her environment and the importance assigned to current personal needs.

*Chain-of-Response* (COR) proposed by Cross (1981) posited participation as a complex chain of responses that tended to originate within the individual. The concepts of expectancy and valence were incorporated into the COR model. Participatory behaviour was envisioned as a continuum of responses to internal and external factors. Cross argued the interrelated concepts of internal psychological variables, self evaluation and attitudes toward education were influenced by social, environmental, and/or experiential factors. Internal psychological variables interacted with and influenced the expectancy and valence associated

with participation. Life events, life transitions, and developmental tasks of life cycle phases also influenced the expectancy and valence associated with participation.

Cross (1981) claimed “individuals with high self-esteem ‘expect’ to be successful” (p. 126) and, “if adult educators wish to understand why some adults fail to participate in learning opportunities, they need to begin at the beginning of the COR model – with an understanding of attitudes toward self and education” (p. 130).

Scanlan and Darkenwald (1984) credited Johnstone and Rivera (as cited in Scanlan & Darkenwald) with categorizing *situational deterrents* (those influences external to the individual or beyond his or her control) and *dispositional deterrents* (those based on personal attitudes or dispositions toward participation). Cross (1981) proposed a third category that she labelled *institutional deterrents* (those practices and procedures that exclude or discourage adults from participating in organized learning activities).

The *Psychosocial Interaction Model* of participation proposed by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) “emphasizes social-environmental forces, particularly socioeconomic status, not because individual traits or attitudes are unimportant but because less is known about their influence on participation” (p. 142). Darkenwald and Merriam proposed a model of participation with two major divisions: pre-adulthood and adulthood (Figure 1).

Drawing on the field of social science, pre-adulthood experiences were portrayed as strongly influenced by individual intelligence and family socioeconomic status. Both factors were cited to have a huge role in determining preparatory education experiences and socialization in one’s becoming an adult. Socioeconomic status (viewed as the direct result of pre-adulthood experiences) appeared first in the continuum because of its dominating



effect in all aspects of an individual's life. The second component in the continuum, learning press, was directly related to socioeconomic status.

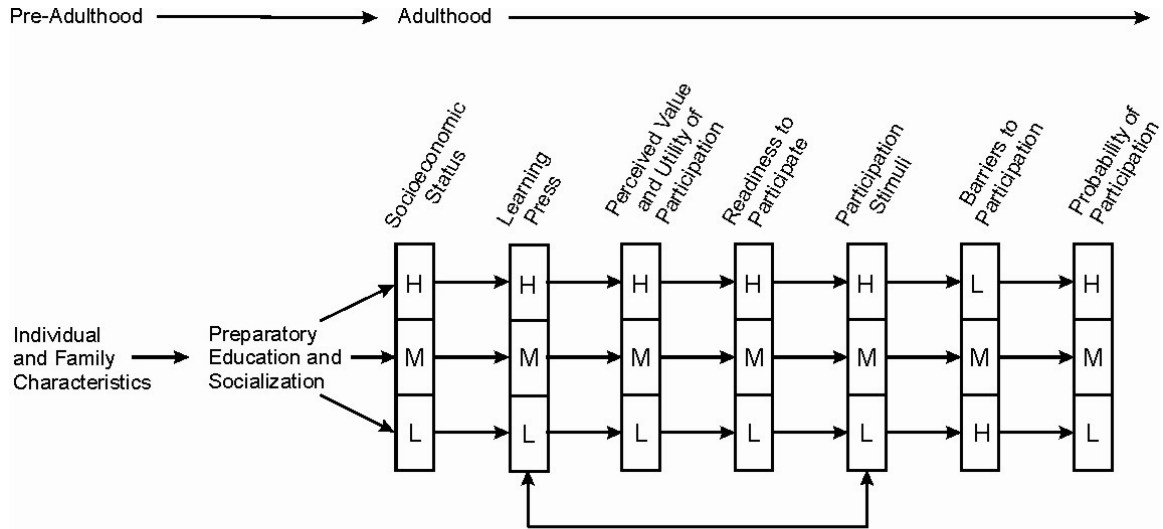


Figure 1. The Psychosocial Interaction Model

SOURCE: Adapted from Darkenwald and Merriam (1982).

Learning press was a concept unique to this model. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982)

discussed learning press as:

the extent to which one's current environment requires or encourages further learning. High learning press is related to high SES (and low to low) in that learning press is determined by general social participation (e.g., participation in civic, cultural, religious, and recreational activities and organizations), occupational complexity (e.g., technical, professional, and managerial employment), and life-style (e.g., personal taste, leisure-time preference). All these components of learning press are heavily influenced by socioeconomic status. (p. 142)

Darkenwald and Merriam claimed that learning press influenced the next two components of the continuum, perceived value of adult education and readiness to participate. In these components was an emphasis on psychological forces affecting participation. The perceived value of education influenced an individual's readiness to participate.

An individual's readiness to participate was followed on the continuum by participation stimuli. Participation stimuli referred to specific events that nudged one to consider further education, and these events were directly connected with learning press. The intensity of events such as a job change, loss of job, the desire for self-improvement, or retirement was regarded as subjective. But, in theory, high socioeconomic status and high learning press were related to high levels of participation stimuli.

Barriers to participation in the Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) model represented the final component on the continuum in an individual's decision to participate in adult education. The situational and dispositional deterrents proposed by Johnstone and Rivera (as cited in Scanlan & Darkenwald, 1984) and Cross (1981) were retained in this model. Cross's proposal of institutional deterrents was subsumed by *psychosocial obstacles*. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) contended that institutional deterrents comprised of two elements: those practices and procedures that excluded or discouraged adults from participating in organized learning activities and the potential learner's negative attitude toward education. Scanlan (1986) argued that "the utility, appropriateness, and pleasurability of engaging in educational activities" (p. 12) was determined in part by socioeconomic status factors.

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) proposed a fourth barrier category labelled *informational barriers*. "Informational barriers constitute a separate category because they do not derive solely or even mainly from institutional deficiencies in promoting educational offerings" (Darkenwald and Scanlan, 1984, p. 156). Scanlan (1986) observed that "the literature has consistently shown a direct relationship between levels of awareness of educational opportunities and the socioeconomic status of the population studied" (p. 12).

In summary, conceptual frameworks from the disciplines of economics, social psychology, leisure and recreational studies, time allocation and adult education all provided valuable insights for developing an understanding of adult participatory behaviour.

Participation was presented as a complex phenomenon because of the uniqueness of each person in terms of individual characteristics and abilities, social roles, and work roles. What could motivate and captivate the interest of one individual may be considered uninspiring by another.

An understanding of the participatory behaviour of adults in education, training, and development opportunities required a holistic perspective of participation. The adult decision to participate voluntarily was presented by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) as a function of both internal and external motivators, influenced by context, and subjectively interpreted from an individual's perspective.

The Psychosocial Interaction Model proposed by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) was used to form the foundation of the conceptual framework to explicate the deterrents construct. Elements and factors of participation gleaned from the review of the selected literature were integrated to construct a survey instrument to assess deterrents to participation for the specific sub-population of Commission employees that participated in this research.

#### Research Supporting Survey Design

The design of the data collection instrument was largely based on the Deterrents to Participation Scale (DPS-G) designed for study of the general adult public by Darkenwald and Valentine (1985). Commission employees are, however, distinct from the general population. For example, the survey population was 100% engaged in full time employment and a training and development fund was available to provide financial assistance for tuition

and books for approved courses. Darkenwald and Valentine recommended adaptation of the DPS-G to accommodate the unique characteristics of distinct sub-populations.

Various perspectives on participation in the literature were chosen for their diversity: philosophy, career, adult learning, participation, and learning. Combined categories and factors were identified that explicated the deterrents to participation in education construct: relevance of course offerings, academic self-concept, cost, time constraints, convenience, interest, personal and family constraints, encouragement, workplace issues, self-esteem, and personal growth initiative (Figure 2). A common theme from the review of the literature was that participatory decisions were attained from the subjective perspective of the individual. At the heart of the participation decision was personal perception. People find ways to do things that are important to them. Personal perception was presented as a function of both internal and external motivators, influenced by context, and interpreted from an individual's perspective. Variables associated with participation decisions in education, training, and

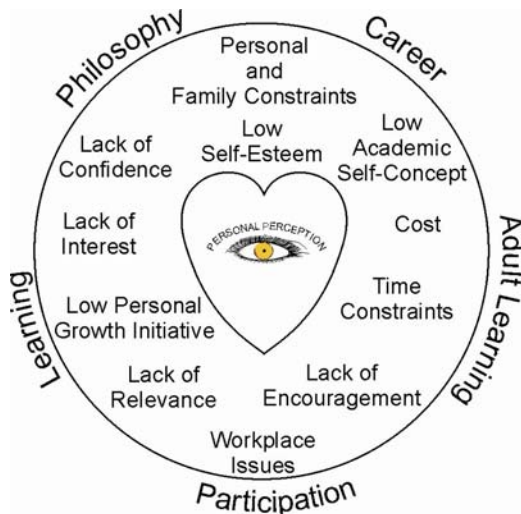


Figure 2. Factors in Participation Decisions

development are summarized in Table 3.1. Each combined category and factor that explicated the deterrents to participation in education construct was explored in further detail.

### *Lack of Interest*

G. Thomas (2002) proposed “meaningful learning is that which creates an understanding and gives meaning” (p. 4). If an adult was not interested in an activity and did not perceive its contribution to the betterment of daily life, they would choose not to participate. Participation was discussed as dependent upon one’s perception of whether or not he/she would be able to make a worthwhile contribution to the activity. Knowles (1980) argued that “if adults’ experience is not being used, or its worth is minimized, it is not just the experience that is being rejected, adults feel rejected as persons” (p. 50).

In a discussion of teacher participation in professional development, Terehoff (2002) stated that “attending to an adult learners’ needs and interests” (p. 69) and the creation of “an environment where teachers have not only physical but also psychological comfort” (p. 71) was essential. Gerber (2000) noted that adult learner’s needs and interests changed in relation to life stage. In discussing participation in adult participation, Gerber suggested that “by the time people reach their early 50s, the grind begins to wear, and they are attracted to other pursuits” (p. 50). Participatory interest diminished in activities that did not contribute to quality of life from the perception of the individual.

### *Personal and Family Constraints*

Life stages and participation in educational activities was discussed in relation to personal and family constraints. Educational participation correlated with personal and family constraints was evaluated and discussed by Henry and Basile (1994) in terms of

Table 3.1

*Variables Associated with Participation in Education, Training, and Development*

---

**Demographic characteristics**

- age
- sex
- race/ethnicity
- place of birth and citizenship
- family characteristics (ages/number of children)
- educational attainment
- English language skills
- employment status
- occupation
- years employed
- union membership
- income
- participation in various benefit programs
- home ownership
- area/location of residence

**Life events and transitions** (recent)

- marriage
- divorce or separation
- widowhood
- childbirth
- children starting school
- children leaving home
- layoff or unemployment
- retirement (approaching retirement)
- life stage and developmental tasks
- career and developmental tasks
- continuum of life (growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance)
- family constraints (child care)
- personal constraints (time, cost, obligations)

**Past participation in adult education**

- formal education
- informal education
- non-traditional education
- experiential education

**Attitudes/opinions towards education**

- personal belief participation will lead to certain outcomes (benefits vs cost)
- past educational experience
- perceived value of courses offered
- academic self concept
- personal perception
- employer support (financial)
- personal commitment to lifelong learning
- armed forces participation

**Other participatory behaviour** (current participation and frequency)

- attending religious services
- service clubs or service organizations
- sports or recreation

**Co-participant influence** (recent)

- close friends
- co-workers
- family members

**Physical and mental health**

- overall health rating (personal constraints)
- changes in health status
- personality factors

**Intention to participate**

- personal interest
- knowledge of available courses
- perceptions of barriers
- perceptions of benefits

**Motivations**

- learning new skills
- meeting new people
- earning more money
- improve self-image or self-esteem
- to secure alternate employment
- academic pursuit of knowledge/wisdom
- discrepancy between current and desired proficiency
- unsatisfactory work performance

**Reference group opinions**

- perceived approval and support (family, co-workers, friends)
- culturally appropriate (social pressure)

**Informational**

- awareness of course offerings
- career planning

**Institutional**

- scheduling
  - prior learning assessment
  - geographic location
  - too much red tape
  - technology enhanced learning
-

relationships between employment status, marital status, age and number of dependent children, and availability of domestic support. Studies by Knox and Videbeck (1963) and Henry and Basile emphasized the influence of life cycle changes on adult participation as significantly correlated with major changes in life.

Knowles (1980) proposed educational participation was motivated by the need to improve one's ability to cope with life's current problems. This proposition was supported by G.F. Thomas (2002) who suggested that participation may occur when "we are confronted with a succession of internal and external changes, which converge and require adaptation" (p. 380).

Statistics Canada (2002) recorded that "increasing levels of education have been associated with greater participation" (p. 5). Reduced personal and family constraints afford the opportunity to access post secondary educational opportunities. Bezanson (2003) suggested that "access to opportunities for learning and work are often available to mainly the more privileged in any society" (p. 3). More privileged was defined in terms of socioeconomic status. The more privileged an individual was, the greater the opportunities for participation.

### *Workplace Issues*

Senge (1990) and Wenger (1998) wrote about developing learning organizations. The influence of the workplace on productivity and employee participation was the subject of much discussion and debate. Senge viewed employee participation in education, training, and development as essential for organizational growth and effectiveness. Wenger examined the workplace as a community of practice and considered learning in social terms.

Kramlinger (1992) discussed a learning organization as “one that coordinates and optimizes opportunities for learning” (p. 46). The Canadian Centre for Management Development (2004) suggested that “learning happens best in an environment of trust, respect, openness and authenticity” (p. 4). Phillips and Phillips (2002) explained that “without management support, participants will rarely implement new skills and knowledge in the workplace” (p. 80) and “without top executive commitment and involvement, training and development will be ineffective” (p. 81). Vicere (1985) suggested that participation in educational activities “must be encouraged and appropriately rewarded” (p. 236).

Gordon (1989) commented that the “need for lifelong training is deeply embedded in the structure of our work” (p. 33). Hequet (1993) identified a “strong correlation between worker-education programs and improved morale” (p. 83). Hequet suggested that a workplace culture that supported continuous learning should equate to a happier, more satisfying and productive workplace. Floodgate and Nixon (1994) advocated for the use of professional development plans “as a means of encouraging and supporting learning activities” (p. 43).

Terehoff (2002) viewed mutual planning as offering the “potential to facilitate developmental growth” (p. 70). Phillips and Phillips (2002) suggested that for employees to grow, they “require feedback on their progress” (p. 82). One-to-one interviews were presented by Bullock and Jamieson (1998) as “the cornerstone of personal development planning” (p. 68). Investing in dialogue and mutual planning to promote the alignment of employee objectives and organizational objectives was acknowledged as an essential element of good organizational practice.



### *Lack of Encouragement*

A workplace culture that supported and encouraged its employees may be equated with a supportive and encouraging home environment. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) concluded, “a person’s attitude toward a behaviour is determined by her beliefs about performing the behaviour. Her subjective norm is also a function of beliefs” (p. 73). Yang, Blunt, and Butler (1994) proposed that “from an understanding of the multiple interactive effects of attitudes, subjective personal norms and subjective social norms...it is possible to predict participatory behaviour” (p. 83).

The contribution of “a home environment that values and supports post-secondary education exposes the child to the consideration of, and the opportunities associated with, an education past high school” (Statistics Canada, 2002, p. 7) was inestimable. Bullock and Harris (1996) discussed the importance of helping people to understand the connection between attaining “future success and current activities and planning” (p. 32). A lack of awareness of opportunities was noted by Henry and Basile (1994) as a major deterrent to participation “along with not valuing educational results” (p. 67).

In an explication of behaviour change and bodybuilding, Phillips and Phillips (2002) related how the occasional visit to the gym had little impact on the body, but “with the proper motivation and support” (p. 79) change would take place. Likewise, a supportive and encouraging environment would exert a positive influence on an individual’s decision to participate in educational opportunities.

### *Lack of Relevance*

The manifest behaviour resulting from a personal lack of interest or a perceived lack of relevance of educational opportunities may be abstinence. Gordon (1989) stated that when

left to themselves, people “usually pick things they like to do and then do them” (p. 30). Steinburg (1992) claimed that “when people are really doing what they want, motivation will be natural” (p. 27). Brookfield (1986) noted that “people will make firm commitments to activities in which they feel they have played a participatory, contributory role” (p. 2).

Bahrami (2002) proposed “learners need to see the relevance of learning to their situation” (p. 79) and that learning “tailored to the individual is perceived to be of benefit” (p. 82). Lack of course relevance was found to “increase with age and decrease with education” (Martindale & Drake, 1989, p. 73). Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) proposed “people consider the implications of their actions before they decide to engage or not engage in a given behaviour” (p. 5). In evaluating the relationship between previous educational experiences and participation, Valentine and Darkenwald (1990) reported the phenomena of “highly educated, middle income, who places considerable value on continued education but finds existing programming irrelevant to his or her needs” (p. 37).

### *Cost*

Consistent with many individual experiences, participation in activities was often times reduced to an issue of affordability. Knox and Videbeck (1963) claimed “an individual’s participatory opportunities are defined by physical resources available” (p. 106). Henry and Basile (1994) recorded “typical adult learners are employed full-time and have a relatively high income” (p. 65).

In their research, Valentine and Darkenwald (1990) reported a cluster of individuals who had the “confidence to participate but cannot afford the direct and indirect costs involved” (p. 37). The costs of participation can be viewed as other than monetary. Personal values and beliefs influence one’s perception of the total cost of an activity and include

considerations such as time away from family or inability to participate in other highly valued activities.

### *Time Constraints*

For many individuals, time constraints may be directly related to personal and family responsibilities and restrictions. Bullock and Harris (1996) recorded that “students need to have access to the appropriate time and resources to enable them to undertake the tasks associated with professional development plans” (p. 33). Sparks and Richardson (1997) promoted one alternative to after hours education and training was a policy whereby “time for professional development activities can be provided by extensive on-the-job opportunities and collaborative work” (p. 6).

Numerous studies point out the “strength of cost and time as the most influential deterrents” (Henry & Basile, 1994, p. 67) to participation in educational opportunities. Knox and Videbeck (1963) proposed that “an individual will not be able to utilize all of his opportunities. It will be necessary for the individual to select” (p. 106) from among viable alternatives and prioritize activities in consideration of time constraints.

### *Lack of Convenience*

The statement that “not all alternatives are equally available to all individuals in the environment” (Knox & Videbeck, 1963, p. 106) may at first lead one to assume the researchers are making reference to socioeconomic status. Although socioeconomic status can be a factor in limiting educational opportunities, availability of transportation, parking, distances to educational facilities, and personal health issues are other examples of convenience issues.

Henry and Basile (1994) noted that lack of convenience “refers to all things about the institution that discourage participation such as class times and locations” (p. 67). Human Resources Development Canada (2003) identified “too much red tape” (p. 6) as another convenience deterrent to participation.

### *Academic Self-Concept*

M. Thomas (2002) claimed that “our perception of an experience is something different from the experience itself” and emphasized the importance of “past experience upon present behaviour” (p. 1). The validity of personal perception was unchallenged. For many adults, perceived negative educational experiences from adolescence are a deterrent to educational opportunities as adults (Merriam, 1984). Low academic grades from adolescence influenced adults’ confidence levels. The research conducted by Human Resources Development Canada (2003) staff recorded that adolescents with low grades were not confident in their learning ability. Martindale and Drake (1989) found that “lack of [academic] confidence was found to increase with age and decrease with education” (p. 73).

Bullock and Harris (1996) identified that “students need confidence in themselves to carry out personal development plans” (p. 33). Ormrod (1999) found that “students who believe they can do a task are more likely to accomplish it successfully” (p. 134) and that people “tend to choose tasks and activities at which they believe they can succeed” (p. 134). Learning was presented as “most effective when it involved the entire person, physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually” (Canadian Centre for Management Development, 2004, p. 4). Because learning usually involved change, Steinburg (1992) recommended encouraging people to “choose change rather than resist it” (p. 27).

## *Self-Esteem*

Academic self-concept was presented as closely associated to self-esteem and self-efficacy. The Chain of Response model presented by Cross (1981) identified self-esteem as a factor influencing participation in educational opportunities. Nooper (1993) discussed the resultant “increase in self-esteem and personal fulfillment that invariably accompany exposure to training and education” (p. 57).

Phillips (1993) stated that “if staff have developed the capacity and confidence to pursue their own learning, then they will” (p. 3). Bullock and Harris (1996) encouraged the use of reassurance and support as especially appropriate for less able students. Encouragement and support may also be appropriate with older employees who are hesitant to engage in formal learning opportunities because of their age (Human Resources Development Canada, 2003). Terehoff (2002) reported that self concept as it relates to learning involved “a sense of personal freedom to learn, choice of learning, and the relevance of experiences during learning” (p. 66).

Bahrami (2002) found that gains in self-confidence and self-awareness could be affected by the development and implementation of personal education plans. The Public Service Commission of Canada (2004) determined that higher self-esteem and increased motivation resulted from participating in educational opportunities. Wexler (2000) found that “people with the capacity for self-efficacy not only manifest emotional self-control, but also use this to accomplish specific pre-set goals” (p. 3) where as “students with low self-efficacy tend to give up more quickly in the face of difficulty” (Ormrod, 1999, p. 134).

### *Personal Growth Initiative*

In agreement with the philosophy of the organizational development movement, the Canadian Centre for Management Development (2004) asserted adults were responsible for their own learning. Terehoff (2002) stated that “when adults discover they are capable of self-direction....a strong desire to continue the learning process” (p. 67). Phillips (1993) defined self-development as “individuals and groups taking the initiative to organize and use the resources necessary to support their professional and personal learning” (p. 3).

Promoting personal growth opportunities was presented by Nooper (1993) as a competitive advantage in today’s economy because “learning leads to adaptability” (p. 56). Steinburg (1992) suggested that organizational growth and success would be realized by the “ability to hold the vision of a holistic system in our heads” (p. 29). The challenge, according to Senge (1990) was to be able to see the underlying structures; to see the whole; and to develop a “framework for seeing interrelationships rather than cause-effect chains” (p. 73). Wenger (1998) wrote that “what we think about learning influences where we recognize learning, as well as what we do when we decide that we must do something about it – as individuals, as communities, and as organizations” (p. 9). Perspectives matter because they shape both what we perceive, and what we do.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine and analyze what prevented Commission employees from accessing the training and development fund. This empirical study used an adapted version of the Deterrents to Participation Scale (DPS-G) developed by Darkenwald and Valentine (1985). Adaptation of the DPS-G was necessary to accommodate unique characteristics of Commission and/or its employees. Careful regard for the literature-based factors and elements described in Chapter Two were observed in the adaptation of the survey instrument.

The review of selected literature identified factors which explicated deterrents to adult participation in learning activities (Appendix E). These key elements were integrated by the researcher into the revised deterrents to participation survey instrument. The participants were asked to respond to items or statements dealing with their perceptions of the relative importance of reasons for deciding not to request financial assistance from the Commission's training and development fund. The survey instrument included measures of self-esteem, personal growth initiative, academic self-concept, and made provision for additional comments to be provided by the respondents.

## Background

As discussed more fully in Chapter One, the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission was established to ensure the apprenticeship system effectively meets industry needs, and to develop a trades workforce that contributes to the economic and social development of Saskatchewan (The Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Act, 1999). Commission employees comprised a rich diversity of professional and trades qualifications, training, personal and work experiences.

According to Scanlan (1986), the adult decision to participate or not to participate “in educational activities represents a complex phenomenon of human behaviour” (p. 3). The Commission, on its journey to become a learning organization was concerned about the current level of employee participation in training and development. Between the years 2000 and 2003, only 3 persons participated in training and development as defined in the context of this study.

## Description of Population

The Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission had in total 53 staff, including management. The subjects participating in the research were all 53 of the Commission employees. The subjects comprised the following work units: management team, apprenticeship consultants, program development officers, training coordinators, office administration staff, and other professional staff such as the aboriginal liaison, human resource consultant, training administrator, and educational consultant.

## Research Instrument

The Employee Participation in Education, Training, and Development survey comprised four sections (Appendix A). In the first section, the questionnaire asked



participants to indicate, on a 5 point Likert scale, the relative importance of factors in their decision not to request financial assistance from the Commission's training and development fund. Thirty survey items were from the Deterrents to Participation Scale (DPS-G) developed by Darkenwald and Valentine (1985). The DPS-G had an observed alpha reliability coefficient of 0.86. Eleven additional items were included to modify the DPS-G to measure deterrents for distinctive sub-populations as recommended by Darkenwald and Valentine.

Developed following an exhaustive search of the literature, the 11 items were proposed for inclusion on merit of their face validity. Content validity for the combined categories and factors was established through a review of the items by professional and academic colleagues. A matrix of the survey questions was included (Appendix E).

The second section of the survey contained the Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale, comprised of a ten item Likert scale with items answered on a five-point scale. Martindale and Drake (1989) indicated results from their study determined that a better understanding of dispositional deterrents to participation was needed. Martindale and Drake proposed self-esteem played an even greater role in deterrents to participation than had yet been revealed.

The inclusion of the Robitschek (1998) Personal Growth Initiative Scale (PGIS) in section three was a response to recommendations for further study in order to more fully explicate the deterrents to participation construct. The PGIS comprised a nine item Likert scale with items answered on a five-point scale.

The fourth section of the survey collected demographic information. Respondents were asked to contribute information such as: job position, tenure in their current position, number of years until retirement, educational experiences, age and gender, and marital status.

This information was entered into the analysis only after sub-groups were identified, thereby maintaining the centrality of deterrents. At the end of the survey, an opportunity was provided for respondents to offer additional comments and suggestions.

A pilot of the survey was not conducted due to the low number of Commission staff. To divide 53 staff into two groups appeared impractical as some cells would have had low numbers, thereby reducing the validity of survey results. No similar comparison group was available with which to conduct a pilot. It is difficult to compare results of this study with similar studies of participation in adult education. Unique to this study were measures of personal growth initiative, self-esteem, and workplace issues. Also, participants in this study were employed full time, and substantial funds were available to reimburse employees for educational costs. Other researchers surveyed the general population of a specific geographic region, or delimited studies to sub-populations such as military personnel or health professionals.

#### Procedures for Data Collection

Commission employees (all 53 staff members) each received a survey package via the inter-office mail system. Each package contained a cover letter with instructions which stated that by completing the survey, respondents were giving their consent. Anonymous survey responses were requested to be returned in the researcher's self-addressed envelope marked Personal and Confidential using the interoffice mail system.

Commission employees were informed of the intent of the study, their role in supplying valued information, and the purposes for which their information would be used (Appendix B). In the cover letter, participants received assurances of anonymity and confidentiality, and were informed of the voluntary nature of the survey. A specific date was

indicated for the return of the survey. The first follow-up letter (Appendix C) was sent to employees five working days after receipt of the survey, thanking them for their contribution to the study and encouraging them to complete and return the survey if this had not been done. A second follow-up letter (Appendix D) was sent five working days later, again thanking employees for their responses and indicating the importance of returning their completed surveys. The follow-up communication was especially important because of the relatively small number of employees employed by the Commission and further complicated by the fact that many employees were preparing for summer vacation. The researcher provided thirty-five days, from the date of distribution, for respondents to return the completed survey. After that time, the data collection phase was concluded.

#### Data Analysis

The numerical data from the survey items was entered into an SPSS, Version 12.0, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences data file using manual data entry. Aggregate means and standard deviation were calculated for each category of factors (Table 4.3). A one-way analyses of variance was then calculated for each category of factors and demographic variables which resulted in a total of 132 calculations. Results were analyzed using  $p < .05$  level of significance. Results were reported only when a further examination of the means was undertaken where significant differences were indicated.

#### Summary

The participants chosen for study were employees of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission. All 53 Commission employees were included in the study. The researcher was interested in understanding the deterrents to participation in education, training and development from the perception of Commission

employees. The researcher administered the deterrents to participation scale Employee Participation in Education, Training, and Development (Appendix A), and analyzed survey responses to determine deterrents to participation for the sub-population of Commission employees.

CHAPTER 4  
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the factors that influenced Commission employees' participation decisions in education, training, and development opportunities. The study was conducted to examine deterrents to voluntary participation and to determine how the Commission might assist employees to reduce deterrents to participation. The survey was developed for this study in relation to the following research questions:

1. What were the common themes in the selected literature regarding adult participation in education, training, and development opportunities?
2. What was going on in Commission employees' lives that prevented them from participating in educational opportunities?
3. What were the key variables that affect Commission employee participation rates in adult education?

Participants were asked to share their perceptions regarding deterrents to participation identified from the selected literature. A survey was sent to all Commission employees (53 employees in total) within the Province of Saskatchewan. The survey sought respondent perceptions in the categories: lack of relevance, academic self-concept, cost, time constraints, lack of convenience, lack of interest, personal and family constraints, lack of encouragement, workplace issues, self-esteem, and personal growth initiative. The survey also provided a

report of demographic information and presented opportunity for individuals to offer additional comments.

The statistical package used for the data analysis was the SPSS program. Aggregate means and standard deviations were calculated for all categories. The data were analyzed by using a one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) to measure the responses within and between demographic information for the categories: lack of relevance, academic self-concept, cost, time constraints, lack of convenience, lack of interest, personal and family constraints, lack of encouragement, workplace issues, self-esteem, and personal growth initiative.

This chapter details the findings and analysis of the survey according to the following sections: demographic data, analysis of the responses within and between demographic information by the combined category and factors, and the emergent themes derived from respondents' additional comments.

### Demographic Data

The Commission was an industry-led agency with a legislated mandate to govern and manage the apprenticeship system in Saskatchewan. Commission employees liaise with apprentices, employers, training providers, and various regulating boards and authorities to manage the apprenticeship training and certification process.

All participants included in the study were employees of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission. The Commission employed 53 staff and all were invited to participate in the survey (Table 4.1). Forty five surveys were returned and only one survey was unusable as the participant did not clearly identify responses to the

questions. The number of surveys analyzed was 44/53 which equates to 83% of Commission employees. Demographic data (Table 4.2) describes the 44 respondents.

Table 4.1

*Summary of Survey Returns*

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Total number of people employed by the Commission	53
Total number of people surveyed	53
Number of surveys returned	45
Number of unusable surveys	1
Number of surveys analyzed	44 (83%)

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Out of respect for the privacy of the respondent population, demographic data were summarized rather than presented in detail. Due to the relatively small numbers of Commission employees, some respondent categories were quite small.

The survey population comprised 18 male and 26 female employees. Forty-eight percent of employees reported they had dependent children. Sixty-six percent of Commission employees were between 46 and 60 years of age and 32% of respondents reported eligibility to retire in 1 to 5 years. Only 4% of the Commission's total workforce was comprised of employees 21 to 30 years. Twenty-one percent of employees indicated employment in their current position for less than 2 years. Work satisfaction for 94% of employees ranged from somewhat satisfied to very satisfied, with the most frequent category (41%) reporting they were satisfied with their work situations. The recorded gross family income for 86% of respondents was greater than forty-four thousand dollars per year. Seventy-eight percent of Commission employees indicated one or more years of post

secondary education. The largest group (21%) reported they had completed more than four full years of education after high school.

Table 4.2

*Demographic Data of Survey Respondents (N=44)*

Survey population	41% Male (N=18) 59% Female (N=26)			
Dependent children	48% of employees have dependent children	25% have children 0 to 12 years	23% have children 13 to 18 years	
Ages of employees	4% are 21 – 30	30% are 31 – 45	66% are 46 – 60	
Years until retirement	32% in 1 – 5 yrs.	18% in 6 – 10 yrs.	48% in > 10 yrs.	=98%
Time in current work assignment	21% < 2 yrs.	55% 2 – 10 yrs.	21% > 10 yrs.	=97%
Work satisfaction	28% very satisfied	41% satisfied	25% somewhat satisfied	=94%
Total family Income	34% \$44 000 to \$60 000	52% > \$60 000		=86%
Years of post-secondary education	20% (est.) 0 yrs. 9% have 3 yrs.	18% have 1 yr. 14% have 4 yrs.	16% have 2 yrs. 21% have >4yrs.	=98%
Occupation	32% managers and professionals	21% office and clerical	39% apprentice support/services	=98%

### Analysis of the Survey

The survey comprised four sections (Appendix A). In the first section, the Employee Participation in Education, Training, and Development questionnaire asked participants to indicate the relative importance of factors in their decision not to request financial assistance



from the Commission's training and development fund. In section two of the survey (Rosenberg self-esteem scale) and section three (Robitschek personal growth initiative scale) participants were asked to respond to statements concerning personal perceptions of general feelings about self and personal growth. Aggregate means and standard deviations for each category were calculated and an analyses of variance (ANOVA) was conducted within and between demographic variables. Where significance of  $p > .05$  was indicated, ANOVA post-hoc tests were conducted. Section four of the survey sought demographic information. At the end of the survey, an opportunity was provided for respondents to offer additional comments and suggestions.

#### Examination of the Aggregate Means and Standard Deviation:

##### Quantitative Data

Participants in the study were informed that their participation in the survey was voluntary (Appendix B), and that they were not required to answer any questions they did not wish to respond to. Aggregate means and standard deviations were recorded (Table 4.3) for each category as identified from the selected literature (Appendix E).

##### *Combined Category and Factors*

The aggregate means for the combined category and factors in Section 1 ranged from 1.56 to 2.30. These mean scores indicated the factors, which were typically described as deterrents to participation for the general population, were of little importance in describing deterrents for the subpopulation of Commission employees. The standard deviation for each category varied among employee views. The highest rated category, workplace issues (M=2.30), was the most important reason why people did not request financial assistance

Table 4.3

*Aggregate Means and Standard Deviation for Combined Categories and Factors*

Combined Categories and Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Section 1</b>			
lack of relevance	41	1.84	.782
academic self concept	43	1.56	.694
cost	43	2.10	.999
time constraints	43	2.03	.812
lack of convenience	42	1.63	.697
lack of interest	44	1.82	.718
personal and family constraints	43	1.85	.810
lack of encouragement	44	1.95	.721
workplace issues	44	2.30	.903
<b>Section 2</b>			
self-esteem	42	2.97	.347
<b>Section 3</b>			
personal growth initiative	43	3.51	.823

from the Commission's training and development fund. The least deterring factor in participation decisions, low academic self-concept (M=1.56), was also the reason about which people were in most agreement.

Henry and Basil (1994) determined that a critical element in the decision to participate in educational opportunities was related to how and where an individual learned about a course. Henry and Basil reported "analysis shows that someone who receives a

brochure at work is more likely to be a course participant than a nonparticipant” (p. 79).

Houle (1980) identified a lack of awareness of educational opportunities as a major deterrent.

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) and Bandura (1986) addressed the importance of social incentives in participatory decisions and Vicere (1985) claimed that participation “must be encouraged and appropriately rewarded” (p. 236).

Commission employees identified the following workplace issues (Table 4.4) as deterrents to participation: failure to receive information about available courses (M=3.07); the organizational structure of the workplace limited opportunity for advancement (M=2.75), a lack of awareness of courses needed for career advancement (M=2.39); the lack of encouragement from boss or co-workers (M=2.39); and a perception that education would not help the employee to advance in their job (M=2.09).

Table 4.4

*Mean and Standard Deviation for Workplace Issues*

Workplace Issue	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Because I didn't receive information about available courses.	44	3.07	1.52
Because the organizational structure of the workplace limits my opportunities for advancement.	44	2.75	1.53
Because I was unaware of the courses I would need to advance my career.	44	2.39	1.42
Because I was not encouraged by my boss or co-workers.	44	2.39	1.45
Because education would not help me to advance in my job.	44	2.09	1.22

Sections 2 and 3 of the survey sought information on self-esteem and personal growth initiative. A comparison of Commission employee self-esteem scores with self-esteem scores of other populations was not performed. It was not possible to say this group has either high self-esteem or low self-esteem. When considered as a group, employees did not appear significantly deterred in their participation due to self-esteem issues. A comparison of Commission employee personal growth initiative (PGI) scores with the PGI scores of other populations was not conducted. It was not possible to categorize Commissions employees as having high PGI or low PGI.

#### Examination of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

##### *Lack of Relevance and Years Until Retirement*

Table 4.5 indicates significant difference ( $p=.018$ ) was determined between the groups categorized according to the *number of years until retirement*, on the item *lack of relevance*.

Table 4.5

##### *Summary of ANOVA for Lack of Relevance and Years Until Retirement (N=40)*

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.711	3	1.904	3.798	.018
Within Groups	18.044	36	.501		

Specifically, the Tukey comparison of means (Table 4.6) showed that the mean for respondents with greater than 10 years until retirement ( $M=1.59$ ) was significantly lower than the mean for respondents with 3 to 5 years until retirement ( $M=2.41$ ).

The observed significance between lack of relevance and years until retirement intuitively made sense. If engagement in adult educational opportunities was for the purpose

of advancement in career, the nearer one was to retirement, the less relevant education would become. Strong relationships between job-related factors and participation in education were reported by Scanlan (1986). Beder (1990) reported low perception of need ie. lack of relevance of education, was positively associated with age and retirement.

Table 4.6

*Summary of ANOVA Post Hoc Test for Lack of Relevance and Years Until Retirement (N=40)*

	(I) Years Until Retirement	(J) Years Until Retirement	Mean	Std. Error	Sig.
Tukey HSD	1-2 yr.	3-5 yr.	2.41	.418	.073
		6-10 yr	2.06	.444	.399
		>10 yr.	1.59	.389	.929
	>10 yr.	1-2 yr.	1.36	.389	.929
		3-5 yr.	2.41	.277	.026
		6-10 yr	2.06	.313	.452

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

In spite of intuition and cited research (Martindale & Drake, 1989), Table 4.6 showed marginally significant difference ( $p=.073$ ) was present between respondents with 1 to 2 years until retirement ( $M=1.36$ ) and respondents with 3 to 5 years until retirement ( $M=2.41$ ). This finding was surprising and indicated a contradiction to the belief that education became less relevant the closer one was to retirement. Education was more relevant to employees with 1 to 2 years until retirement than for employees expecting to work another 3 to 5 years until retirement. This aberration may be explained in part by reviewing the variables which explicate the lack of relevance construct (Appendix E). Persons with 1 to 2 years until retirement probably know their exact retirement date and considered these questions from a

perspective wherein none of the reasons provided were identified as deterrents to participation. They simply were not participating because of their approaching retirement and the survey items were not pertinent to their life circumstances.

*Personal and Family Constraints and Ages of Dependent Children*

Forty persons responded to the inquiry for information about the ages of their dependent children. Nineteen respondents indicated they had no dependent children. Eleven respondents reported having children under 12 years of age, and ten respondents had children 13 to 18 years of age. Nonparticipation in education due to situational difficulties such as issues related to child care were reported by Darkenwald and Valentine (1985).

Table 4.7 indicated significant difference ( $p=.002$ ) was determined between the groups categorized according to *ages of dependent children*, on the item *personal and family constraints*.

Table 4.7

*Summary of ANOVA for Personal and Family Constraints and Ages of Dependent Children (N=40)*

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.555	2	3.777	7.287	.002
Within Groups	19.181	37	.518		

The Tukey comparison of means (Table 4.8) showed that the mean for respondents with children ages 0 to 12 years ( $M=2.56$ ) was significantly higher than the mean for both respondents with children ages 13 to 18 years ( $M=1.54$ ), and respondents with no children ( $M=1.62$ ). These differences indicated that respondents with dependent children under 12

years of age, experienced the most personal and family constraints to participation in educational opportunities compared to the other two groups.

Table 4.8

*Summary of ANOVA Post Hoc Test for Personal and Family Constraints and Ages of Dependent Children (N=40)*

	(I) Age of Dependent Children	(J) Age of Dependent Children	Mean	Std. Error	Sig.
Tukey HSD	0-12 yr.	None	1.62	.273	.004
		0-12 yr.	2.56		
		13-18 yr.	1.54	.315	.007

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

It was interesting to note in Table 4.8 that respondents with dependent children aged 13 to 18 (M=1.54) reported slightly less personal and family constraints to participation than respondents with no children (M=1.62). Intuitively it would seem that those with no children would experience the least constraints of all. Perhaps people with no dependent children are more active in the community or volunteer activities. Other possible explanations include changes in life circumstances or work roles.

In this study, the data sample was relatively small, and in respect for the privacy of individuals, the researcher did not attempt to identify levels of significance between male and female survey responses, gross income, age, or levels of significance due to marital status or age of dependent children. The focus of the survey was to examine deterrents to voluntary participation for the Commission as a group, not deterrents for specific individuals or subgroups within the survey population. It was conceivable these deterrents existed among

the survey population because such findings were reported by Johnstone and Rivera (1965), and Scanlan and Darkenwald (1984).

*Personal Growth Initiative and Years of Post Secondary Education*

The Robitschek (1989) Personal Growth Initiative Scale was included in this study to determine if a relationship between personal growth initiative and participation in education, training, and development existed. Prochaska and DiClemente (as cited in Robitschek, 1999) defined personal growth as “change within a person that is cognitive, behavioural, or affective” (p. 197). Robitschek discussed personal growth initiative as “intentional self-change; that is, the individual actively and intentionally engages in the self-change process in any life domain” (p. 197). Personal growth initiative encompassed the “cognitive components of self-efficacy, including beliefs, attitudes, and values that support personal growth” (p. 184).

Table 4.9 indicated significant difference ( $p=.014$ ) was identified between the groups categorized according to *years of post-secondary education*, on the item *personal growth initiative*.

Table 4.9

*Summary of ANOVA for Personal Growth Initiative and Number of Years of Post Secondary Education (N=33)*

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.084	4	1.771	3.795	.014
Within Groups	13.065	28	.467		

It was suggested that persons who had completed 1 year of education after high school might not be as active, nor intentionally engaged in a process of personal growth as



persons that had completed greater than 4 years or more of education after high school because of prior unpleasant educational experiences. Other possible explanations for the identified differences between groups may be attributed to individual perceptions concerning academic self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy, lack of relevance or questionable worth of educational opportunities.

The Tukey comparison of means (Table 4.10) showed that the mean for respondents with 1 year of education after high school (M=2.83) was significantly lower than the mean for both respondents with 2 years (M=4.03), and respondents with greater than 4 years of education after high school (M=3.94). These differences indicated that persons with one year of post-secondary education may be the least willing to participate in education, training, and development opportunities.

Table 4.10

*Summary of ANOVA Post Hoc Test for Personal Growth Initiative and Number of Years of Post-Secondary Education (N=33)*

	(I) Years of Post Secondary Education	(J) Years of Post Secondary Education	Mean	Std. Error	Sig.
Tukey HSD	1	1	2.83		
		2	4.03	.354	.016
		3	3.78	.418	.189
		4	3.65	.369	.206
		>4	3.94	.342	.023

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

When analyzing data, the researcher discovered a rather obvious oversight in survey design. Respondents were not provided an option to identify 0 years of education after high school. Approximately 20% of the completed surveys did not indicate a response to the

inquiry for number of full years of education after high school. To explore this oversight, the researcher assumed respondents would have indicated zero years of education after high school (had that been an option), and recalculated the statistics. No statistical significance was determined between individuals with zero years of education after high school and any other educational category. For whatever reason these individuals had not yet chosen to participate in adult education, training, and development, or, perhaps they did not wish to participate.

#### *Personal Growth Initiative and Occupation*

Scanlan (1986) recorded that the nature of one's employment was an important determinant of participation in education. As a group, manager/professionals participated in educational opportunities at three times the average for the population as a whole. High occupational status increased participation and was in part attributed to a perceived need to constantly update skills to remain current in one's chosen profession.

Apprentice support/services and persons in the "other" occupational categories each required some form of educational credential such as trade qualification, post-secondary education certificate, or a degree in a specified field of study. Cross (1981) considered the prior effect of participation and attitude on educational participation. Cross suggested that if individuals had participated in adult educational opportunities in the past, it was more likely they would participate in the future. Persons in these three occupational categories have most likely participated in post-secondary educational opportunities and will thus be more likely to participate in the future. Many office/clerical positions at the Commission tended to be entry level type positions or required one year of business college.

Table 4.11 indicates significant difference ( $p=.001$ ) was determined between the groups categorized according to *occupation*, on the item *personal growth initiative*.

Table 4.11

*Summary of ANOVA for Personal Growth Initiative and Occupation (N=42)*

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9.694	3	3.231	6.556	.001
Within Groups	18.729	38	.493		

Commission staff was divided into 4 occupational categories for survey purposes: managers and professionals, office and clerical staff, apprentice support and service providers, and “other” which lumped together the “one of a kind jobs” at the Commission such as educational consultant, Aboriginal consultant, and training fund administrator.

The Tukey comparison of means (Table 4.12) showed that the mean for respondents in the occupational category office/clerical ( $M=2.72$ ) was significantly lower than the means for each occupational category identified: manager/professional ( $M=3.61$ ), apprentice support/services ( $M=3.67$ ), and “other” ( $M=4.59$ ). These differences indicated that office

Table 4.12

*Summary of ANOVA Post Hoc Test for Personal Growth Initiative and Occupation (N=42)*

	(I) Occupation	(J) Occupation	Mean	Std. Error	Sig.
Tukey HSD	Office/Clerical	Office/Clerical	2.72		
		Manager/Professional	3.61	.304	.028
		Apprentice Support/Services	3.67	.289	.012
		Other	4.59	.468	.002

\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

and clerical staff participated in education, training, and development opportunities less than other groups of employees.

#### Additional Comments from the Survey:

##### Qualitative Data

The additional comments section of the survey provided respondents an opportunity to offer personal comments and suggestions. The comments section was included to generate data that would relate to research question number three of this study. The questions sought to determine key variables that influenced employee participation in training and development opportunities. Respondents were asked to identify issues or concerns regarding participation in educational activities not covered in the survey. Secondly, respondents were asked to identify what assistance the Commission could provide that would make it possible for them to increase participation in educational activities. Lastly, respondents were provided opportunity to comment on anything they desired by simply responding to an open ended request for additional comments. Twenty-one (48%) of the 44 surveys contained comments to one or more of the questions. In order to protect the privacy of individuals, participant responses were summarized into emergent themes for each question.

##### *Additional Comments Question 1:*

“Are there issues or concerns regarding participation in educational activities not covered in the survey you would like to comment on?”

There were 6 responses to question one. Responses were categorized according to 2 emergent themes (Table 4.13). Those responding to Question 1 also expressed concern with issues relating to organizational administration.

Table 4.13

*Summary of Emergent Themes for Question 1 (N=6)*

Theme	Responses	Percent
Unaware of educational opportunities	3	50
Lack of encouragement by supervisor	3	50
Total	6	

Fifty percent of respondents indicated they were unaware of educational opportunities that would be of direct benefit to them in their current position. Respondents were also uncertain what personal development was necessary in order to prepare for opportunities for advancement within the organization. Fifty percent of respondents indicated concerns related to a lack of encouragement from their supervisors. Employees indicated they expected their supervisors to conduct performance reviews, provide feedback, and spend time with them discussing opportunities for growth and promotion within the organization. There was strong indication employees felt supervisors ought to be encouraging participation in training and development, and that there should be open access to educational opportunities. Research conducted by Bullock and Jamieson (1998) supported Commission employee criticism with the finding that “the cornerstone of personal development planning was clearly the one-to-one interview” (p. 68). Floodgate and Nixon (1994) promoted the “manager’s role to support and advise” (p. 46) as a critical element in staff development.

*Additional Comments Question 2:*

“What assistance can the Commission provide that would make it possible for you to increase participation in educational activities?”

There were 19 responses to question two. The responses were categorized according to emergent themes (Table 4.14). The theme “a lack of encouragement and support from supervisors” was carried forward from question one. Comments indicated that employees felt management had failed to provide adequate leadership and support for staff training and development. Supervisors were criticized for not encouraging employees to take classes or helping employees to set training and development goals.

Table 4.14

*Summary of Emergent Themes for Question 2 (N=19)*

Theme	Responses	Percent
Thank you to the Commission for past support	2	10
Provide approval of non-job related educational opportunities	2	10
Initiate training opportunities for staff	3	16
Provide encouragement and be more supportive of staff initiative	5	27
Develop a learning culture	7	37
Total	19	

Management was encouraged to provide support for continual learning within the workplace. Twenty-seven percent of respondents suggested supervisors should be more encouraging and supportive of employee initiative. Employees further suggested policy should be developed to clearly indicate the type of training that would be supported by the Commission. Thirty-seven percent of respondent comments were directed toward the need to develop a learning culture in the workplace. Sixteen percent of comments suggested that the employer could provide assistance by initiating training opportunities for employees. Ten percent of respondent comments indicated that their participation in education and training

could be increased by a policy that supported non-work related educational activities.

Ending on a positive note, ten percent of respondent comments expressed appreciation to the Commission for past support and financial assistance in education and training.

*Additional Comments Question 3*

Additional comments.

There were few responses to this opportunity for employees to provide additional comments that pertained to concerns regarding employee participation in education, training, and development not previously identified or discussed. One employee indicated they appreciated the opportunity for input and expressed a desire for improvements in the administration of the Commissions training and development fund.

## CHAPTER 5

### OVERVIEW, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine and analyze what prevented Commission employees from accessing the training and development fund. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each reason in their decision not to request financial assistance from the Commission's training and development fund. The survey instrument included measures of self-esteem, personal growth initiative, and academic self-concept. It was anticipated analysis of survey results would provide a clearer understanding of the complexity of deterrents to participation from the perspective of Commission employees. A complementing goal was to determine what the Commission might do to assist employees to increase participation in training and development.

#### Discussion

Chapter Two provided the reader with a review of various perspectives on participation chosen for their diversity. Philosophies of education, theories of career, learning, theories of adult learning, and theories of participation were searched for constructs that explicated deterrents to participation. Research supporting survey design and deemed essential for understanding the deterrents construct was presented. Participation was identified as complex phenomena because of the uniqueness of each person with regard to individual characteristics and abilities, social and work roles, and aspirations.



Understanding the participatory decision of adults in personal and professional growth opportunities required a holistic perspective that included concepts from divergent fields such as economics, social psychology, leisure and recreation, time allocation, and adult education.

In Chapter 3, careful regard for the literature-based factors and elements were observed in the design of a survey instrument (Appendix A) adapted to accommodate unique characteristics of the Commission and/or its employees. Participants were asked to respond to statements dealing with their perceptions of the relative importance of reasons for deciding not to request financial assistance from the Commission's training and development fund.

Participation, in the context of this study was defined as enrolment in a course, workshop, seminar or training program for which the employee requested prior approval and reimbursement of expenses from the Commission's training and development fund. The adult decision to participate voluntarily in educational opportunities was presented by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) as a function of both internal and external motivators, influenced by context, and subjectively interpreted from the individual's perspective. The methodology used for data analysis involved a calculation of grand means, standard deviation, and variance for each category of factors. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted between each category of factors and demographic variables. The combined categories and factors (Appendix E) which typically described deterrents to participation for the general population produced low mean scores and low standard deviation (Table 4.3). These results indicated that the factors useful for describing deterrents to participation for the general public, were of little importance in identifying deterrents for the subpopulation of Commission employees.

The Commission had a total staff complement of 53. Eighty three percent of employees participated in the survey. The high participation rate in the survey may be explained in part by fact that the researcher sought and obtained support for the study from both management and union representatives. The researcher also employed a rigorous campaign of providing information and reminders to staff. An overview of the survey was presented at a general staff meeting at which both management and union representatives encouraged employees to participate. Covering letters (Appendix B) were sent to all Commission employees to explain the purpose of the survey and to request their participation in the survey. The researcher followed up the survey and cover letter with a reminder (Appendix C) 5 days after distributing the surveys, and a second follow up letter (Appendix D) was sent 5 days later. In each letter employees were asked to complete and return the survey and were thanked for their participation. It was possible to complete the survey in approximately 20 minutes and employees discussed the survey with each other and encouraged one another to participate. Employees appeared interested in the study and wanted to provide input. It is proposed that employees would participate in training and development opportunities if deterrent factors could be reduced.

Results obtained from data analysis were presented in Chapter 4 and will be discussed in this chapter under two separate headings: quantitative data and qualitative data.

#### *Quantitative Data*

A conceptual framework of deterrents to participation from the personal perception of Commission employees was outlined in Figure 3. In the survey, lack of relevance and years until retirement was identified as a significant deterrent to participation (Table 4.6). Fifty percent of Commission staff was nearing retirement (Table 4.2). G. Thomas (2002) noted

that adults choose not to participate in activities that they do not perceive as contributing to the betterment of daily life. Sixty-six percent of Commission staff was in the age category 46 to 60 years of age (Table 4.2). Gerber (2000) suggested that by the time people reached their fifties they are attracted to pursuits other than education. Participation diminished in activities that did not contribute to quality of life from the perception of the individual.



*Figure 3. Deterrents to Participation for Commission Employees*

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From a lifelong learning and organizational development perspective, the goal was to have employees engaged in purposeful learning opportunities. Not just to have employees engage in formal learning such as university and other academic opportunities that would be of benefit only to the employer. McClusky (1984) proposed education for career development could be substituted with education for community services or hobbies. The Government of Saskatchewan's Public Service Commission (1999) policy on tuition and book education allowance program supports McClusky. The policy stipulated that because courses for personal interest or technical skills not related to the employers business were a benefit to the employee, they became a taxable benefit.

In the survey, *personal and family constraints* were identified as a significant deterrent to participation (Table 4.8). Twenty-five percent of employees (Table 4.2) indicated that they had dependent children 0 to 12 years of age. This group of employees reported having the most difficulty participating in educational activities. This finding was consistent with Darkenwald and Valentine (1990) and Henry and Basile (1994). This study did not seek to probe deeper into personal lives, but it would seem reasonable that life's circumstances, time, and family obligations would hamper the efforts of employees with young children to attend post work training and development opportunities.

Alternatives to include this large group of staff in training and development might include flexible hours of work or flexible work arrangements. Approximately one half of Commission employees already had flexible hours of work to accommodate the unique characteristics of job duties. It would not appear unreasonable that concessions to hours of work be granted upon request. Another effective alternative, dependent upon needs and circumstances, could be to host training sessions during work hours.

In the survey, personal growth initiative and number of years of education past high school was identified as a significant deterrent to participation (Table 4.10). Persons with one year of post-secondary education may be the least willing to participate in educational opportunities. Personal growth initiative and occupation was also identified as a significant deterrent to participation (Table 4.12). Survey data revealed that participation in training and development opportunities may be least accessed by office and clerical staff. It was possible that these two seemingly separate groups of employees are one and the same and comprise approximately 21% of the Commission's workforce.

It was conceivable that both groups could benefit from access to career development and career counseling services. Office and clerical positions have a high staff turn over. It was for the office and clerical occupational category there exist the most possibilities for career advancement within the Commission. There are several sequential office and clerical job classifications which did not exist for staffs in other occupational categories. What is unclear from the research was which occupational category had the greater levels of participation in training and development.

Perhaps the most significant determination from this inquiry into personal growth initiative was to acknowledge the uniqueness of both groups of employees, those with one year of education after high school and those in the office and clerical work unit. Consideration must be given to determining and implementing strategies to include both groups, either of which comprise approximately 20% of the workforce, in a program of continuous learning.

The category of factors labeled workplace issues had the highest means (Table 4.3) among the rated combined categories and factors in Section 1 of the survey. However, no statistical significance was identified with any of the demographic variables. An ANOVA of survey data in this survey failed to identify workplace issues as a significant deterrent to participation in the lives of Commission employees. In future surveys of this type, one might consider using factor analysis as an alternative to ANOVA for analyses of survey data. Factor analysis could facilitate a description of typologies of persons and deterrent factors. Deterrent to participation is a multiple factor construct, not a single factor construct.

### *Qualitative Data*

It was from the additional comments section of the survey that the researcher was clearly able to identify workplace issues as a significant factor in participation decisions for Commission employees (Table 4.13 and Table 4.14). Employees appeared to be searching for leadership in staff training and development. Comments indicated a desire for supervisors to conduct performance reviews, provide constructive feedback, and spend time with employees discussing opportunities for growth and promotion.

Some employee comments indicated an unawareness of available educational opportunities and a lack of knowledge concerning required training for career advancement. Henry and Basil (1994) identified a lack of awareness of opportunities as a major deterrent to participation. Approximately one half of the surveys returned contained personal comments, and 37% of those comments spoke directly to issues related to the culture of the workplace. Phillips and Phillips (2002) stated that top executive commitment and involvement is required for training and development to be effective. Nixon (1994) advocated the use of professional development plans, and Terehoff (2002) viewed mutual planning as essential for developmental growth.

### Implications

Based on the results of this study, groups of Commission employees shared commonalities in their experiences, perceptions, and circumstances. Various strategies will be required to reduce the deterrents to participation in education training and development to accommodate both group and individual differences. The Commission identified staff training and development as an important issue with respect to meeting critical human resource challenges and had made a significant financial commitment to employees.

Suggestions on how the Commission might assist employees to increase participation in training and development included the following:

- Establish a career development program for employees, or make access to one available by forming an alliance with another organization. Employees indicated a lack of awareness of required training and development for career advancement (Table 4.4) as a deterrent to participation. It was proposed that a cost effective method of providing employees with needed assistance could be achieved by partnering with another organization to provide career development services to employees.
- Provide training for supervisory staff to acquire skills in providing encouragement, conducting performance reviews and interview processes, providing constructive feedback, developing mentoring skills, and leading by example.
- Designate a portfolio responsible and accountable for staff training and development to co-ordinate and optimize opportunities for learning.
- Utilize staff input to develop a training and development policy. The success or failure of the training and development plan depends on the involvement and inclusion of staff in all stages of the program and will increase their involvement.
- Inservice employees on staff training and development needs and opportunities. Provide support and assistance to establish personal and professional development plans, and demonstrate management support, commitment, and involvement in training and development. Discuss how the organizational structure of the workplace limits opportunities for advancement within the Commission, but not within Government at large.

- Consider flexible work arrangements for staff with dependent children to provide access to educational opportunities.
- Commit to developing an organization that supports lifelong learning and organizational learning. The goals of the individual, organizational objectives and the objectives of the Government of Saskatchewan should be intertwined and mutually supportive. Although individual development is important, this development needs to be part of a larger vision.

This study was guided by 3 research questions. Answers to those questions are summarized as follows:

1. What were the common themes in the selected literature regarding adult participation in education, training, and development?
  - Participation was influenced by the extent to which one's environment required or encouraged further learning.
  - Readiness to participate can be influenced by career development planning.
  - Participation was influenced by the perceived value and utility of education from the subjective perspective of the individual.
2. What was going on in employees' lives that prevented them from participating in educational opportunities?
  - Life events and transitions were identified as deterrent factors.
  - Personal and family constraints were a deterrent to those with young dependent children.



3. What were the key variables that affected Commission employee participation rates in adult education?

- Employees perceived a lack of encouragement and support from their supervisors.
- There was a lack of awareness of training and development opportunities and the requirements for career advancement.

#### Further Research

Deterrents to voluntary participation were examined to consider how the Commission might assist employees to increase participation. It was proposed that a benchmark of current employee participation in education, training, and development was essential. A database could be developed to record current levels of employee participation in formal, informal, and non-traditional opportunities. This database could be updated, and analyzed at intervals to determine if strategies to increase participation did in fact affect employee participation.

The definition of participation used in the context of this study should be broadened to include both professional and personal growth as legitimate areas of concern. Before implementing strategies to increase participation, it would be prudent to know what current levels of participation are. Such a benchmark should consider that 21% of employees (Table 4.2) have been employed in their current position for less than 2 years. Considerable growth and development was perhaps already taking place in their lives. Employee participation in informal and non-traditional learning as well as non-work related opportunities should also be investigated. From a lifelong learning perspective, the goal was

to have employees engaged in purposeful learning activities; not just to have employees engaged in formal learning opportunities.

The possible relationship between personal growth initiative (PGI) and education and PGI and occupation raised issues that ought to be further explored. If such correlations do exist, specific strategies might be developed to assist individuals to overcome deterrents to participation. Further study was necessary to establish whether persons with 1 year of post secondary education did in fact have specific needs that must be addressed.

Various work groups have specific training and development needs. As Follett (2001) contended, workers know best what they need. Ask them! Perhaps a Professional Development Guide (Appendix F) could be employed to provide direction for policy and program development.

#### Conclusion

The Commission had made significant progress in its effort to reduce deterrents to training and development. Financial resources were available to provide reimbursement for course tuition and books, although policy for administration of the training and development fund has yet to be written. Some employees worked unregulated hours and thus had flexibility to access training opportunities at unconventional times. Training and development opportunities had been offered at regularly scheduled staff meetings. However, it is important that training is relevant to the needs of the participants. Needs of individual workers appeared so diverse that delivering a training session relevant for all staff may be extremely difficult.

A collective commitment by leaders and managers at all levels may be necessary to move the Commission towards becoming a model learning organization. Investing in people,

in life long learning, and in career development could play a key role in assisting the Commission to fulfill its mandate. At the very least, as a result of this study, Commission employees now know they have access to a training and development fund should they choose to participate in personal and professional growth opportunities.

The challenge from Senge (1990) was to be able to see the underlying structures; to see the whole; and to develop a “framework for seeing interrelationships rather than cause-effect chains” (p. 73). A caution from Wenger (1998), remember that “what we think about learning influences where we recognize learning, as well as what we do when we decide we must do something about it – as individuals, as communities, and as organizations” (p. 9). Perspectives matter because they shape both what we perceive, and what we do.

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APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: THE SURVEY

## Section One: Employee Participation in Education, Training, and Development

Your responses are strictly confidential

*Directions:* Every year, more and more adults participate in some kind of educational activity. Examples include courses, workshops, seminars, and training programs offered by schools, colleges, and other organizations or community groups. The Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission has a training and development fund to provide employees with financial assistance for approved courses. Please consider the reasons below and decide *how important each one was* in your decision **not** to request financial assistance from the training and development fund. (Please note: in the reasons below, the word “course” refers to any type of educational activity, including courses, workshops, seminars, etc.)

PLEASE CIRCLE ONLY ONE RESPONSE NUMBER WHICH BEST DESCRIBES THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH REASON IN YOUR DECISION **NOT** TO REQUEST FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE COMMISSION’S TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FUND.

IF A REASON IS NOT APPLICABLE FOR YOU, CIRCLE NUMBER ‘1.’

### One of the reasons I did NOT request financial assistance from the Commission’s training and development fund is:

Reasons	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	Strongly Agree
1. because I felt I couldn’t compete academically with younger students.	1	2	3	4	5	
2. because I don’t enjoy studying.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. because I was unaware of the courses I would need to advance my career.	1	2	3	4	5	
4. because I didn’t think I would be able to finish the course.	1	2	3	4	5	
5. because I didn’t have time for the studying required.	1	2	3	4	5	
6. because I wanted to learn something specific and the courses did not address that topic.	1	2	3	4	5	
7. because I felt I wouldn’t be able to meet the requirements of the course.	1	2	3	4	5	
8. because the courses available did not seem interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	
9. because the course was offered at an inconvenient location.	1	2	3	4	5	
10. because I couldn’t afford the registration or course fees for non-approved courses.	1	2	3	4	5	
11. because I felt I was too old to take the course.	1	2	3	4	5	
12. because I didn’t receive information about available courses.	1	2	3	4	5	
13. because of the amount of time required to finish the course.	1	2	3	4	5	
14. because the course was scheduled at an inconvenient time.	1	2	3	4	5	

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
15. because my family did not encourage participation.	1	2	3	4	5
16. because of transportation problems.	1	2	3	4	5
17. because the courses available were of poor quality.	1	2	3	4	5
18. because I was not confident in my learning ability.	1	2	3	4	5
19. because of family problems.	1	2	3	4	5
20. because I'm not interested in taking courses.	1	2	3	4	5
21. because participation would take away time with my family.	1	2	3	4	5
22. because I had trouble arranging for childcare.	1	2	3	4	5
23. because the available courses did not seem useful or practical.	1	2	3	4	5
24. because I wasn't willing to give up my leisure time.	1	2	3	4	5
25. because the course was offered in an unsafe area.	1	2	3	4	5
26. because education would not help me to advance in my job.	1	2	3	4	5
27. because I felt unprepared for the course.	1	2	3	4	5
28. because I couldn't afford miscellaneous expenses like travel, food and accommodation for out of town courses.	1	2	3	4	5
29. because the course was not on the right level for me (too basic or advanced).	1	2	3	4	5
30. because I didn't think I could attend regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
31. because the organizational structure of the workplace limits my opportunities for career advancement.	1	2	3	4	5
32. because I didn't think the course would meet my needs.	1	2	3	4	5
33. because I prefer to learn on my own.	1	2	3	4	5
34. because my friends did not encourage my participation.	1	2	3	4	5
35. because I was too involved in church, community, or volunteer activities.	1	2	3	4	5
36. because I was too involved in physical fitness and/or sports activities.	1	2	3	4	5
37. because I was learning a new job or have new job duties and/or responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
38. because I was experiencing significant changes in life circumstances.	1	2	3	4	5
39. because past educational experiences have been unpleasant/unfavourable.	1	2	3	4	5
40. because I was not confident in my reading, writing, or math abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
41. because I was not encouraged by my boss or co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5

## Section Two: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

*Directions:* The following statements deal with your general feelings about yourself.

PLEASE CIRCLE ONLY ONE RESPONSE WHICH BEST DESCRIBES THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT.

Used by Permission: The Morris Rosenberg Foundation, May 04	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
42. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	1	2	3	4	5	
43. At times I think I am no good at all.	1	2	3	4	5	
44. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	1	2	3	4	5	
45. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	1	2	3	4	5	
46. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	1	2	3	4	5	
47. I certainly feel useless at times.	1	2	3	4	5	
48. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	1	2	3	4	5	
49. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	
50. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	1	2	3	4	5	
51. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	1	2	3	4	5	

## Section Three: Robitschek Personal Growth Initiative Scale

*Directions:* The following statements concern personal growth.

PLEASE CIRCLE ONLY ONE RESPONSE WHICH BEST DESCRIBES THE EXTENT TO WHICH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT.

Used by Permission: Christine Robitschek, Feb 04	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
52. I know how to change specific things that I want to change in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	
53. I have a good sense of where I am headed in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	
54. If I want to change something in my life, I initiate the transition process.	1	2	3	4	5	
55. I can choose the role that I want to have in a group.	1	2	3	4	5	
56. I know what I need to do to get started toward reaching my goals.	1	2	3	4	5	
57. I have a specific action plan to help me reach my goals.	1	2	3	4	5	
58. I take charge of my life.	1	2	3	4	5	
59. I know what my unique contribution to the world might be.	1	2	3	4	5	
60. I have a plan for making my life more balanced.	1	2	3	4	5	

## Section 4: Demographic Information

The demographic information requested is asked because of its direct connection to the adult participation survey. The researcher is **not** at all interested in trying to determine who answered each questionnaire, or how much money you make. What is important, is to be able to associate demographic information with factors in the survey to analyze how the Commission might be able to improve its training and development program to reduce deterrents to participation.

Your responses are strictly confidential

PLEASE CIRCLE THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF

---

64. Gender	1. Female 2. Male
65. Age	1. 21 – 30 2. 31 – 45 3. 46 – 54 4. 55 – 60 5. 61 +
66. How long have you worked in your current position?	1. Less than 2 yr. 2. 2 – 5 yr. 3. 5 – 10 yr. 4. 10 + yr.
67. Location of residence	1. City 2. Rural 3. Small town
68. How may years until you plan to retire?	1. 1 – 2 yr. 2. 3 – 5 yr. 3. 6 – 10 yr. 4. 10 + yr.
69. Marital Status	1. Single 2. Married 3. Other
70. Dependent children	1. Yes 2. No
71. Ages of dependent children	1. None 2. 0 – 12 yr. 3. 13 – 18 yr.
72. Number of full years of education after high school	1. One 2. Two 3. Three 4. Four 5. More than four
73. Total family income	1. 25,000 – 32,000 2. 32,000 – 44,000 3. 44,000 – 60,000 4. 60,000 +
74. Occupation	1. Managerial/Professional 2. Office/Clerical 3. Apprentice support/services 4. Other
75. Work satisfaction	1. Very satisfied 2. Somewhat Satisfied 3. Satisfied 4. Somewhat Unsatisfied 5. Very Unsatisfied

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## **Additional Comments**

Are there issues or concerns regarding participation in educational activities not covered in the survey you would like to comment on?

What assistance can the Commission provide that would make it possible for you to increase participation in educational activities?

Additional comments.

I would like to thank you, once again, for completing this survey. I fully understand the effort and time required and appreciate your participation. Your personal responses will be very valuable in assessing the Commission's training and development program and may be a contributing factor in policy development.

**Please place this survey in the accompanying self-addressed envelope and place it in the mail at your earliest convenience.**

APPENDIX B  
COVER LETTER

25 June 04

Participation in Education, Training, and Development: A Study of the  
Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission

Dear Colleague:

Copies of the attached survey have been sent to all employees of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission. This study will contribute current reflections of participation in training and development. The purpose of the study is to examine the factors that influence Commission employees' decisions regarding voluntary participation in training and development opportunities. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the continuing improvement of Commission policies and practices for staff training and development.

Your voluntary participation is particularly valuable and will contribute significantly to our undertaking of perceptions of deterrents to participation. As a voluntary participant, you are not required to answer any question that you do not wish to respond to. The average time for completion should be approximately 20 minutes. Please complete and return the survey booklet by Friday, 30 July 04. A self-addressed enveloped stamped PERSONAL and CONFIDENTIAL has been included for your convenience. Please place the completed survey in the envelope and return it to Jack Empey by means of the interoffice mail system. The survey is not coded or marked in any way that would identify you as the respondent. Please be assured that your responses will be held in confidence and that each respondent's

anonymity will be safeguarded. Your returned survey will indicate your consent to participate in this study.

Aggregated data collected from this survey will be used for a masters thesis and will be presented for publication in a recognized educational research journal. No individual results will be shown.

Thank you for your cooperation in this project. If you have any questions, you may contact me at 933-5270 or my thesis advisor from the College of Education in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan, Dr. Keith Walker at 966-7623. This research has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board on 24 June 04. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant can be addressed to that Board at (306) 966-2084. Out of town participants may call collect.

Sincerely yours,

Jack Empey

APPENDIX C

FOLLOW-UP LETTER #1

6 July 04

Dear Colleague:

This letter is a follow-up to a survey that was sent on 25 June 04. You were asked questions regarding participation in training and development opportunities. The adult decision to participate or not to participate in educational activities is very complex. Your responses are of great critical value in identifying the challenges and perspectives of Commission policy and program practices.

If you have already returned the survey, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution to this study. If you have been unable to complete this survey, I would encourage you to add your opinions to those of your colleagues. The results of this study, based on the information received from staff, will contribute to the current organizational evolution regarding the refinement of the processes involved in training and development practices and policy.

Sincerely yours,

Jack Empey

**P.S.** If for any reason your first survey has not been received or has been misplaced, please call me (933-5270) and I will immediately supply you with another copy.

APPENDIX D  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER #2

16 July 04

Dear Colleague:

About three weeks ago I wrote to you seeking your assistance in a study being conducted with respect to Commission employee perceptions of participation in training and development opportunities. I wish to stress the importance of your response to the integrity of this study.

The number of staff employed by the Commission is statistically small, therefore, in order for the results of this survey to be truly representative of the population; it is essential that each person receiving the survey return it. I realize that many demands are calling your attention – I hope that you'll consider this area of study worthy of your participation.

If you have just recently completed and mailed the survey, thank you very much for your efforts! If not, I look forward to receiving your completed survey in the next few days.

Sincerely yours,

Jack Empey

**P.S.** If for any reason your first survey has not been received or has been misplaced, please call me (933-5270) and I will immediately supply you with another copy.



APPENDIX E

COMBINED CATEGORIES AND FACTORS:  
EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION,  
TRAINING, AND DEVELOPMENT

COMBINED CATEGORIES AND FACTORS: EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION  
IN EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND DEVELOPMENT

Question

*Lack of Relevance*

- 6 Because I wanted to learn something specific and the courses did not address that topic.
- 8 Because the courses available did not seem interesting.
- 17 Because the courses available were of poor quality.
- 23 Because the available courses did not seem useful or practical.
- 29 Because the course was not on the right level for me (too basic or advanced).
- 32 Because I didn't think the course would meet my needs.
- 33 Because I prefer to learn on my own.

*Academic Self-Concept*

- 1 Because I felt I couldn't compete academically with younger students.
- 7 Because I felt I wouldn't be able to meet the requirements of the course.
- 11 Because I felt I was too old to take the course.
- 18 Because I was not confident in my learning ability.
- 27 Because I felt unprepared for the course.
- 40 Because I was not confident in my reading, writing, or math ability.

*Cost*

- 10 Because I couldn't afford the registration or course fees for non-approved courses.
- 24 Because I wasn't prepared to give up my leisure time.
- 28 Because I couldn't afford the miscellaneous expenses like travel, food, and accommodation for out of town courses.

Question

*Time Constraints*

- 4 Because I didn't think I would be able to finish the course.
- 5 Because I didn't have time for the studying required.
- 13 Because of the amount of time required to finish the course.
- 30 Because I didn't think I could attend regularly.

*Lack of Convenience*

- 9 Because the course was offered at an inconvenient location.
- 14 Because the course was scheduled at an inconvenient time.
- 16 Because of transportation problems.
- 25 Because the course was offered in an unsafe area.

*Lack of Interest*

- 2 Because I don't enjoy studying.
- 20 Because I'm not interested in taking courses.
- 36 Because I was too involved in physical fitness and/or sports activities.
- 39 Because past education experiences have been unpleasant and/or unfavourable.

*Personal and Family Constraints*

- 19 Because of family problems.
- 21 Because participation would take away time with my family.
- 22 Because I had trouble arranging for childcare.
- 35 Because I was too involved in church, community, or volunteer activities.
- 38 Because I was experiencing significant changes in life circumstances.

- Question      *Lack of Encouragement*
- 12      Because I didn't receive information about available courses.
- 15      Because my family did not encourage me.
- 34      Because my friends did not encourage my participation.
- Workplace Issues*
- 3      Because I was unaware of the courses I would need to advance my career.
- 26      Because education would not help me to advance in my job.
- 31      Because the organizational structure of the workplace limits my opportunities for career advancement.
- 37      Because I was learning a new job or have new job duties and responsibilities.
- 41      Because I was not encouraged by my boss or co-workers.
- Self-Esteem*
- 42      On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
- 43      At times I think I am no good at all.
- 44      I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
- 45      I am able to do things as well as most other people.
- 46      I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
- 47      I certainly feel useless at times.
- 48      I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
- 49      I wish I could have more respect for myself.
- 50      All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
- 51      I take a positive attitude toward myself.

Question	<i>Personal Growth Initiative</i>
52	I know how to change specific things that I want to change in my life.
53	I have a good sense of where I am headed in my life.
54	If I want to change something in my life, I initiate the transition process.
55	I can choose the role that I want to have in a group.
56	I know what I need to do to get started toward reaching my goals.
57	I have a specific action plan to help me reach my goals.
58	I take charge of my life.
59	I know what my unique contribution to the world might be.
60	I have a plan for making my life more balanced.

APPENDIX F  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Think about a satisfying personal or professional learning experience that you have had. What do you think made it particularly significant?
2. What has been your personal experience in professional development activities while employed by the Commission?
3. What professional development activities are you currently engaged in?
4. What can the Commission do to support your ongoing learning and professional development?
5. In what ways are you involved in “team” learning? How is the Commission a community of learners?
6. Who should determine the content focus of professional development projects and activities? What activities do you think should be considered as constituting professional development?
7. What professional development activities would be of the most benefit to you? To the Commission?
8. How would you generally describe management support for professional development in the Commission?
9. How should professional development be linked to organizational strategies and objectives?
10. What are the attractors to your participation in professional development? The barriers?

APPENDIX G

SUMMARY OF MAJOR POINTS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW



## SUMMARY OF MAJOR POINTS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

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Low academic self-concept	
Low self-esteem	
Low personal growth initiative	

APPENDIX H

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROTOCOL

*Application for Approval of Research Protocol*

**Submitted to**

*University of Saskatchewan, Behavioural Research Ethics Board*

**1. Name of supervisor** Dr. Keith Walker  
Department of Educational Administration  
College of Education,  
University of Saskatchewan

**Name of student** Jack A. G. Empey, Masters Candidate  
Department of Educational Administration  
College of Education  
University of Saskatchewan

**Anticipated start date:** July 2004

**Anticipated completion date:** December 2004

**2. Title of Study:** Participation in Education, Training, and Development: A Study of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission.

**3. Abstract:** The adult decision to participate or not to participate “in educational activities represents a complex phenomenon of human behaviour” (Scanlan, 1986, p. 3). The Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, on its journey to become a learning organization is concerned about the current level of employee participation in training and development. The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that influence Commission employees’ decisions regarding voluntary participation in training and development opportunities.

A survey of Commission employees will collect data on perceptions of deterrents to participation in training and development. The survey will be based on similar studies conducted in the United States and will provide a baseline for future comparisons. It is anticipated that the results of the study will provide a framework for future research as well as to inform Commission policies and practices for training and development.



**Problem Statement:** The problem is stated in two parts: what are the key variables associated with the participation rates of Commission employees in training and development, and, what policies and strategies reduce deterrents to participation.

**Research Questions:** The researcher will use the following questions to guide the study:

1. What are the common themes in the literature, between and within the various disciplines, regarding specific issues that may deter or increase adult participation in training and development opportunities?
2. What are the suggested qualities of excellent training and development programs and policy?
3. What can the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission do to improve its training and development practices?

4. **Funding:** The researcher will fund the study.


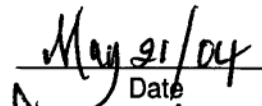
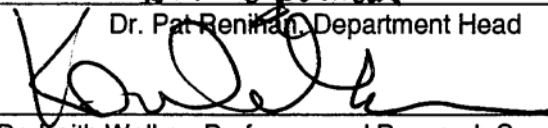

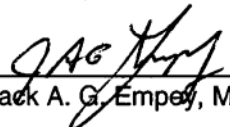

5. **Participants:** The subjects participating in the research are employees of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission. The sample will include the following work units: management team, apprenticeship consultants, program development officers, training coordinators, office administration staff, and other professional staff such as the aboriginal liaison, human resource consultant, training administrator, and educational consultant.

6. **Consent:** Instructions to respondents state that by completing the survey, respondents understand that they are giving their consent. Survey responses are anonymous; no employee will be identified.

7. **Methods/Procedures:** Data will be collected through a survey of Commission employees. A copy of the survey instrument is attached. Participants will receive a survey package containing survey forms, cover letters, and unmarked envelopes for survey returns. All participants will be informed of the intent of the study, their role in supplying valued information, and the purposes for which their information will be used (Appendix B). In this cover letter, participants will receive assurances of anonymity, confidentiality and will be informed of the voluntary nature of the survey. Participants will complete the surveys and return them in an unmarked, sealed envelope. A specific date will be indicated for the return of the survey. There is no employee identification on the survey or the return envelopes.

8. **Storage of Data:** During the study, all data collected will be securely stored in the researcher's home. Dr. Keith Walker, research supervisor, will ensure that data are stored in a secure location for a minimum of five years after the completion of the study.
9. **Dissemination of Results:** Participants will be informed that the data collected and results from this study will be used in my masters thesis, and will be presented for publication in a recognized educational research journal.
10. **Risk or Deception:** There is no known risk or deception in this study.
11. **Confidentiality:** Data will be reported in an aggregated form using descriptive statistics categorized by factor structures of deterrents to participation and typologies of persons. The confidentiality of the respondents is not compromised and no individual employee will be identified.
12. **Data/Transcript Release:** The anonymity of the respondents is not compromised in the study.
13. **Debriefing and Feedback:** A summary report will be sent to all participants in the study.

14. **Required Signatures:**

 <hr/> Dr. Pat Renihan, Department Head	 <hr/> Date
 <hr/> Dr. Keith Walker, Professor and Research Supervisor	 <hr/> Date
 <hr/> Jack A. G. Empey, Masters Candidate	 <hr/> Date

15. **Contact:**  
 Jack A.G. Empey, Masters Candidate  
 Box 81 Hanley SK S0G 2E0  
 Phone: 933-5270 Fax: 933-7663  
 Email: Jack.Empey@sasked.gov.sk.ca

APPENDIX I  
ETHICS APPROVAL FORM



**UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN  
BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD**

<http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics.shtml>

**NAME:** Keith Walker (Jack Empey)  
Educational Administration

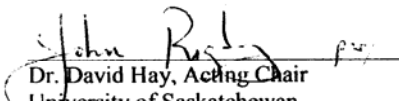
Beh 04-126

**DATE:** June 18, 2004

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the Application for Ethics Approval for your study "Participation in Education, Training, and Development: A Study of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission" (Beh 04-126).

1. Your study has been APPROVED.
2. Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Committee consideration in advance of its implementation.
3. The term of this approval is for 5 years.
4. This approval is valid for one year. A status report form must be submitted annually to the Chair of the Committee in order to extend approval. This certificate will automatically be invalidated if a status report form is not received within one month of the anniversary date. Please refer to the website for further instructions  
<http://www.usask.ca/research/behavrsc.shtml>

I wish you a successful and informative study.

  
Dr. David Hay, Acting Chair  
University of Saskatchewan  
Behavioural Research Ethics Board

DH/ck

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