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School/Family/Work: A Mesosystem Analysis of Factors
Affecting Child Care Teachers' Persistence
in Community College Courses

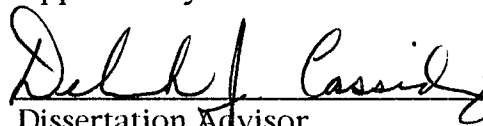
by

Martha Jane Buell

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
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of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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Approved by


Dissertation Advisor

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APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Advisor Dick J. Cassidy
Committee Members Mary G. Morgan
B. Kay Padley
Jonathan T. ...

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BUELL, MARTHA J., Ph.D. School/Family/Work: A Mesosystem Analysis of Factors Affecting Child Care Teachers' Persistence in Community College Courses. (1996)
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This study assessed factors contributing to child care teachers' commitment to earning a degree and re-enrollment behavior through analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were collected by means of a survey completed by 125 child care teachers enrolled in at least one community college class and working 15 or more hours in a child care setting. Two of these participant were selected for interviews in order to explore the research questions qualitatively.

A model was developed depicting the relationship of school integration, family, and work support on role conflict and goal commitment to earning a degree. The model is based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. According to the model role conflict mediates the relationship between the independent variables and commitment to earning a degree.

Path analysis was used to test the model. Role conflict was not predicted by the independent variables, nor did role conflict mediate the relationship between the independent variables and commitment to earning a degree. However, school integration and family support had a direct effect on commitment to earning a degree. For those who reported difficulty in funding education, both integration in college and family support predicted commitment to earning a degree but for those who reproted ease in funding education only school integration predicted commitment to earning a degree.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to test for differences between those teachers who re-enrolled the subsequent quarter

and those teachers who did not. Family support differentiated those who re-enrolled from those who did not. Further, commitment to earning a degree exhibited a trend in differentiating the re-enrollers from those who did not.

Three themes were explored in the interviews. These included supports and barriers to coordinating of the roles worker student and family member, connections between course content and job performance, and issues related to professionalism.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL PAGE.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Purpose.....	2
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	4
Ecological Theory.....	4
Role Theory.....	7
Professional Development for Child Care Teachers.....	11
The Model to be Tested.....	16
Commitment to Earning a Degree.....	18
Role Conflict.....	21
Influences of Context on College Persistence.....	24
Hypotheses.....	32
III. METHOD.....	35
Subjects.....	35
Procedures.....	37
Instrument.....	37
Qualitative Measures.....	42
IV. RESULTS.....	46
Preliminary Analysis.....	46
Path Analysis.....	48
Re-enrollment.....	55
Best Fit Model.....	57
Qualitative Results.....	57
VI. Summary, Discussion, Implications.....	78
Summary and Discussion.....	78
Role Conflict.....	79
Commitment to Earning a Degree.....	80
Effects of Difficulty in Financing Education.....	82
Re-enrollment.....	83
Implications for Future Research.....	84

Implications for Professional Development	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	89
APPENDIX A. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS.....	98
APPENDIX B. QUESTIONNAIRE.....	99
APPENDIX C. QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	110

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Individual, Work and School Variables.....	36
2	Sample Demographics.....	36
3	Correlation Matrix of Independent and Dependent Variables.....	47
4	Direct and Indirect Effects of Independent Variables on Commitment to Earning a Degree.....	50
5	Correlation Matrix of Independent and Dependent Variables for Those Who Expressed Ease and Those who Expressed Difficulty in Funding Education.....	51
6	Direct and Indirect Effects of Independent Variables on Commitment to Earning a degree According to Reported Ease in Funding Education.....	55
7	Comparison of Independent and Dependent Variables by Enrollment Status.....	56
8	Interviewee Scores on Key Variables.....	59

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Model of Commitment to Earning a Degree for Female Child Care Teachers.....	17
2	Results of Model of Commitment to Earning a Degree for Female Child Care Teachers.....	49
3	Model of Commitment to Earning a Degree for Female Child Care Teachers Who Report Ease in Funding Education.....	53
4	Model of Commitment to Earning a Degree for Female Child Care Teachers Who Report Difficulty in Funding Education.....	54

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Currently, over 10 million U.S. children are enrolled in non-parental child care, and approximately 3 million people are employed as child care teachers. These child care teachers are an educationally heterogeneous group, representing a range of educational levels from less than high school graduates to post baccalaureate degrees. Contributing to this heterogeneity is (a) a yearly teacher turnover rate of near 40% and (b) diverse state licensing regulations that require a wide range of pre-service and in-service training for child care teachers. The wide range of training requirements produces a work force with varying educational levels. The heterogeneity in educational levels of child care teachers is troubling because some research shows a connection between teachers' level of education and the quality of care they provide (Cassidy, Buell, Pugh-Hoese & Russell, 1995a; Helburn, 1995; Whitebook, Howes, & Philips, 1989). Because of the connection between training and or education on the quality of care provided, it is important to examine influences on teacher training and education. Currently, child care teachers are motivated, though not strongly, to participate in in-service training and educational programs both by state licensing regulations and by the guidelines for professional development adopted by National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Encouraging employed child care teachers to participate in in-service education, such as college course work, creates a situation where they must function simultaneously in three separate spheres, that of school, family, and

work. Pressures that originate from trying to maintain these three roles concurrently may increase the likelihood that child care teachers forego their pursuit of in-service education. While some research has addressed the factors that influence college persistence in general (Tinto, 1993), the influences of one's work role in conjunction with one's family role has been studied less (Bean & Metzger, 1985) and not as it applies to child care teachers.

Investigating the effects of the family and work contexts, as well as those originating from school, should contribute to understanding college persistence in child care teachers.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to test a conceptual model that explains how the contexts of school, family, and work affect the commitment to earning a degree by female child care teachers, along with examining factors associated with re-enrollment behavior. In order to do this, survey and interview data collected on contextual factors, personal characteristics, and process variables that affect adults' continued participation in college course work were analyzed. This examination of contextual and personal variables builds on past empirical work that found these factors play a role in school persistence by nontraditional college students (Bean & Metzger, 1985; Chartrand, 1992; Tinto, 1993). In addition, the work of scholars who examine the process of integrating various roles is foundational to this study (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992).

This research is further informed by theorists who insist that the examination of personal characteristics in conjunction with contextual factors is essential to understanding development (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). According to Bronfenbrenner (1993) the way different spheres of endeavor

(microsystems) are integrated affect the development of the individual within these microsystems. In this study the linkages between microsystems, which create a mesosystem, are of primary interest. It was hypothesized that if the microsystems of work, school and family are supportive and complimentary, functioning in all three spheres will be enhanced and will facilitate college persistence. Ultimately, this increased education will translate into improved quality in the child care setting. If there is discord between these microsystems, the pursuit of college course work will be impeded. This, in turn, may impede the potential for improved quality in the child care setting.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature contains information related to ecological theory and role theory, the theoretical frameworks utilized in the study. Also included are issues surrounding teacher education and professional development. Finally the review of the literature contains an articulation of the model to be tested.

Theoretical Frameworks

Ecological Theory

Bronfenbrenner (1993) defines his ecological model of development as:

The scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life course, between an active, growing, highly complex bio-psychological organism - characterized by a distinctive complex of evolving interrelated, dynamic capacities for thought, feeling, and action - and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded (p. 7).

Here, Bronfenbrenner (1993; under review) is describing a means of conceptualizing development. According to Bronfenbrenner, development occurs through the process of a person interacting in a context over time (PPCT). From this point of view it is impossible to separate the direction of effects -- personal characteristics and environmental characteristics co-act over time influencing each other and determining development. If one is to understand development, all four of these variables must be considered concurrently. The chief mechanism that drives development is proximal process. A proximal process is "a progressively more complex reciprocal

interaction between an active, evolving bio-psychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate environment”

(Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994, p. 572).

According to this conceptualization of development, the context in which development occurs is critical to an understanding of development. The people and artifacts that surround a developing person affect the proximal processes experienced and thereby affect development. The immediate environment is a microsystem. Microsystems are, in turn, embedded in the macro environment which also has an effect on development.

In his early work, Bronfenbrenner (1979) defined the levels of the environment that differentially influence development. He conceptualized the environment as a system of nested contexts, each more removed from the developing person, but still exerting an effect. These levels are believed to influence the developing person both directly and through interaction with other levels. Following is a brief description of the levels of context of the ecological model.

Microsystem - a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit, engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment.

Mesosystem - comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person. Special attention is focused on the synergistic effects caused by the interaction of developmentally instigative or inhibitory features and process present in each setting.

Exosystem - comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives.

Macrosystem - consists of the overarching pattern of micro-meso-and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other extended social structure, with particular reference to the developmentally instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structure, life course options and patterns of social interaction that are embedded in such overarching systems. (Bronfenbrenner, 1993)

Chronosystem - The chronosystem is the way in which the entire system moves through time. This level of context takes into account period and cohort effects. (Bronfenbrenner, 1989)

The effects of these contextual levels are not unidirectional. They affect each other and are, in turn, affected by the developing person. Though not included in the levels of context, the personal characteristics of the individual must be understood if one is to understand development. This is because individual characteristics shape the environment. Bronfenbrenner (1993) refers to the personal characteristics of the individual as being either developmentally instigative or inhibitory (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). For instance a baby who is considered by most who come in contact with him or her to be lovely will have a different experience from a baby who is considered ugly. In this way the baby him or herself will influence the environment within which he or she will develop.

Whereas primarily used to examine the effect of environmental interaction with individual characteristics on the development of children, the ecological framework also can be used to examine influences on adult development (Cassidy, Vardell, & Buell, 1995). Just as the pretty baby will

shape his or her own environment, so too will the adult's personality shape their environment. For instance, an adult who feels strongly committed to getting a college degree will have a different college experience than one who is ambivalent.

Although all levels of context simultaneously and interdependently influence development, they can be examined separately. The present study explored interactions at the micro- and meso-system levels. Despite limiting inquiry to these two levels, the influences at the other levels are nonetheless present and must be acknowledged if not directly measured. For instance, the value that society places on the worth of the work women do (a macrosystem influence) will affect the respect women receive for working in child care (a microsystem influence). Likewise, the value placed on the work of child care (a macrosystem influence) or the value placed on child care in a family member's workplace (an exosystem influence) will likely affect the support that family members give to child care teachers for obtaining college education to improve qualifications for working in their field. In this way, family support also affects the teachers' success in the college course work (a mesosystem influence).

Role Theory

The roles that people enact (student, wife, worker) are themselves seen as an influence at the microsystem level and, as such, are included in the definition of microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). Because the role one enacts is so influential on his or her development and behavior, role theory provides another way of interpreting the influences that exist in various microsystems. The analytic focus changes, however, from one of development in the ecological model, to one of behavior in role theory.

According to role theory, people's behavior is defined by the social roles they enact (Jackson, 1972; LaRossa & Reitez, 1993; Nye, 1976; Zurcher, 1983). Roles are the system of meaning that allow role occupants and others with whom they interact to anticipate behaviors and to allow expectations for social interaction (LaRossa & Reitez, 1993). There is a normative aspect to roles; what is expected of an individual enacting a given role is standardized within a society.

According to Zurcher (1983) and Nye (1976), there are two theoretical perspectives on role enactment: structuralist and symbolic interaction. The structuralist view emphasizes the influences of power distributions, cultural values and functionality on role enactment. For instance, the role of mother, being imbued by western society with the primary responsibility of caring for the emotional needs of her offspring in order to socialize them, would fit into a structuralist conceptualization of role. The symbolic interaction view assumes that roles emerge from, and are shaped by, interactions in particular social settings. From this perspective, the role of mother will be affected by the expectations, demands, and support of other members of her family and her own expectations and perceptions.

According to Zurcher (1983), these two approaches are compatible, as both perspectives describe influences on role enactment, with the primary difference being analytic focus. According to Nye (1976), structuralists concentrate analysis on formalized roles where the cultural expectation of the role is clear. This aspect of roles is similar to influences at the macrosystem level in ecological theory. Symbolic interactionists assess roles that are informal, where the role is more vaguely defined. This aspect of roles also is akin to macrosystem influences, but is more closely related to microsystem

influences. In the present study one could consider the settings of work and school to have a more structuralist influence and the role of family member a more symbolic interactionist role structure. However, though there are, of course, elements of both structuralist and interactionist in all roles, and such elements should be considered in concert in order to understand the affect of a role on one's behavior (Zurcher, 1983).

Several researchers (Jackson, 1972; LaRossa & Reitez, 1993; Nye, 1976) point out that the term role is used also in the theater and denotes that people are performing, their audience being society. Both role theory and ecological theory take the social influences at both the macro- and micro- levels and the individual negotiation of those influences into account.

Role Conflict. The construct of role strain is based on role theory. Role strain occurs as the demands of multiple roles increase and can take two forms: role conflict and role overload. Marks (1977) hypothesized that the fit of the roles and role demands will be different depending on whether the demands are balanced or unbalanced. Demands are balanced when the affective response to all roles is equal (either all roles are liked and are equally committed to, or all roles are disliked and equally noncommitted to). Role strain is hypothesized to occur if these roles are unbalanced i.e., some roles are liked while others are not. Marks did not suggest that occupying many roles is going to cause stress and strain by default. It is the perception of roles that causes stress and strain.

There are two types of role conflict: interrole conflict and intrarole conflict (Grace, 1972). Interrole conflict is the individual's appraisal of the level of conflict between two or more roles, that the individual simultaneously occupies, such as wife and worker. Intrarole conflict occurs when aspects of

the same role cause conflict, such as the role of wife having both an affective and an instrumental component. In the proposed model the concept of interrole conflict is of primary concern; that is, the emphasis is on conflict stemming from enacting roles in two or more microsystems at the same time.

Role overload occurs as the demands from a single role overwhelm one's ability to enact the role. Although not measured in the current model, role overload also may exert an influence on one's ability to successfully enact multiple roles. For instance, as the requirements for being a successful student increase, as might happen during exam time, role overload in the student role would cause strain on the entire system. For instance, the child care teacher may feel the need to neglect household duties in order to study, or request time off from work to complete a class project.

Although not adopting an explicitly ecological theoretical approach, much of the work on role strain and role conflict is compatible with Bronfenbrenner's (1993) definition of the effect of the mesosystem on development. When one examines the definition of mesosystem, the "linkages between two or more microsystems," it is easy to see how role conflict arising from trying to occupy two or more roles simultaneously, and the strain that can occur from such occupation, could qualify as a synergistic effect in a mesosystem analysis. In their work on role conflict, Frone, Russell and Cooper (1992) examined the directionality of the causes of role conflict. They differentiated the elements of the role conflict as the demands of work intruding in the home, or home intruding into work. This evolution in conceptualization brings the concept of work/family role conflict even closer to the definition of a mesosystem effect.

In general, research on role strain and interrole conflict has examined the conflict stemming from incorporating an another role with the family role, such as the conflict arising from being a family member and an employee (Frone et al., 1992; Goldberger, Greenberger, Hamill, O'Neil, 1992; Greenberger & O'Neil, 1993; Voydanoff, 1988), or being a family member and a student (Dyk, 1987; Chartrand, 1992; Gerson, 1985). Currently there is no research examining the role strain that occurs due to incorporating three different roles, such as worker, mother, and student. However, based both on role theory and ecological theory, attempting to incorporate three roles would likely increase role strain, thereby making functioning in each role more difficult. Due to this increased difficulty, persisting in college course work may be more difficult. However, if the members of each role set are supportive of the individual's functioning in other roles, less conflict will arise and persistence in college course work will be supported.

Professional Development for Child Care Teachers

Following is an explanation of the current state of the professional development models for child care teachers in the U.S., and the implications these models have on the care children receive. Because of the nature of the child care field and the professional development models that have been suggested, most of the teachers who are involved in professional development will be nontraditional students. This assumption is based on the belief that child care teachers, because of time and cost constraints, will not be full-time students at four-year universities. Therefore, understanding the factors that affect continued participation in course work for nontraditional students is relevant to understanding the factors that affect persistence for child care teachers involved in professional development. As will become clear,

uncovering factors that contribute to the continued participation of child care teachers in college course work is vital, if the quality of child care is to increase.

The quality of child care in the United States is variable, and much of the quality is poor (Helburn, 1995; Whitebook et al., 1989). Many researchers have suggested that the teacher is a primary influence on early childhood classroom quality (Berk, 1985; Ruopp, Travers, Glantz, & Coelen, 1979, Whitebook et al., 1989). There is currently a movement to improve the quality of child care by improving the training of child care teachers based on the assumption that increased education will translate into higher quality care. A professional development framework for the early childhood field (Willer & Bredekamp, 1993), of which child care teachers are a part, has been proposed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the professional organization for early childhood educators.

The NAEYC professional development framework (Willer & Bredekamp, 1993) assigns one to a level of professionalism based primarily on level of education. The framework proposes improving professional qualifications for child care teachers by increasing their knowledge of child development and teaching methods through improving the educational background of the early childhood workforce. This educational enhancement may be in the form of pre-service degrees from community or four-year colleges and universities. However, in many cases teachers will acquire course work as a form of in-service education since they are already employed in the early childhood field. The in-service component of the NAEYC's professional development framework makes this approach to professional training distinct compared to other professions. Professional training is usually pre-service.

According to Larson (1977), the essence of creating a profession is the attempt to secure links between education and occupation. In doing this the structural links between knowledge and control of professional practice are formed. Professional knowledge is exclusive. Eligibility to obtain the knowledge is controlled, i.e., only certain means of gaining the knowledge are legitimate. The use of in-service rather than pre-service education weakens the connection between the core body of knowledge and the ability to practice, because people who are not fully trained are allowed to practice. An in-service education model is at some level an admission that training is not necessary. If education were necessary to perform the job, pre-service education would be required.

Further complicating the situation is the nature of in-service training and education. In-service training ranges from college courses taken in pursuit of a degree to attending two-hour workshops. The people who offer these workshops have a wide background and expertise. Additionally, workshops often have no articulation and cover a patch-work of unrelated information. This is in contrast to a coherent course of study as is found in the courses in a college major. The professional development proposed by the NAEYC is based on formal educational level. The requirements for most states' licensing agencies are satisfied by workshop training.

At present there is no research comparing the quality of care given by people who received pre-service training or education with those who received in-service training or education. However, several studies show a direct link between teacher educational level and the quality of child care (Arnett, 1989; Berk, 1985; Cassidy et al., 1995a; Clarke-Stewart & Gruber, 1984; Roupp et al., 1979; Snider & Fu, 1990; Whitebook et al., 1989). The National Day

Care Study (Roupp et al., 1979) examined the impact of aspects of child care that can be regulated, including teacher-child ratios, group size, and teacher qualifications, on the quality of care. The authors reported a relationship between the level of a teacher's general education and classroom behaviors associated with higher quality. However, a much stronger relationship existed between education specific to child development and early childhood education and appropriateness of teachers' classroom behavior. Similarly, Snider and Fu (1990) found that teachers with college degrees in child development/early childhood education gave significantly more developmentally appropriate responses when asked to rate audiotaped vignettes of teacher-child interactions than did teachers with degrees in other fields or with other levels of education.

Counter to these findings, the National Child Care Staffing Study (Whitebook et al., 1989) reported that having a college degree, regardless of the field of study, was the best predictor of appropriate caregiving. However, teachers with at least a bachelor's degree in early childhood/child development provided more appropriate caregiving and were more sensitive and less detached than teachers with vocational training or less. Berk (1985) also found that formal college education, regardless of specialization, was associated with positive teacher behaviors such as encouragement, indirect guidance, and development of children's verbal skills. Clarke-Stewart and Gruber (1984) reported similar findings. Children's social competence was positively related to teachers' overall education with no significant differences assessed for those with education specifically in child development. However, teachers' training in child development was positively related to children's cognitive scores.

Arnett (1989) examined the effects of four different levels of child-related education on teachers' childrearing attitudes and classroom behaviors. The four levels in this study were: no training, two courses of a four-course college training program, completion of a four-course sequence, and completion of a four year degree in child development or a related field. The findings of this study indicate that there is a pattern of more training being related to less authoritarian childrearing attitudes, and higher classroom performance. Further, teachers with a four year degrees demonstrated significantly higher classroom performance than the other three groups.

In the Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study (Helburn, 1995) significant differences were found for teacher educational background and process measures of classroom quality. Teachers with four year degrees taught in classrooms with significantly higher ratings on classroom quality than did teachers with some college. Some college was defined as attending college level courses at either four year or two-year institutions, but not having earned a bachelors degree. Likewise teachers with some college course work taught in classrooms rated significantly higher than did teachers who had graduated from high school.

In one of the few studies to employ a pre- and post- test design as well as to examine the effects of strictly in-service, college-level training, Cassidy, et al. (1995a) found that teachers who attended 12-18 hours of in-service college course work made significant improvements in both scores of classroom quality and developmentally appropriate beliefs about teaching. In a follow-up study, there was a continued trend in teachers' beliefs becoming more developmentally appropriate, although this trend did not reach statistical significance (Cassidy, Buell, Pugh-Hoese & Russell, 1995b).

The findings of these studies do not unequivocally indicate what kind (pre-service, in-service work shops or in-service college courses) and level of education is related to improved classroom quality. However, they demonstrate a strong relationship between level of education and the quality of the care provided by the early childhood teacher. Basing a professional development system largely on in-service training translates into some children receiving care and education from individuals who are unable to provide high quality education and care because they lack education. Therefore, based on the assumption that increased education translates into increased quality, the more rapidly in-service training is acquired, the more rapidly the quality of child care settings will improve. This means that uncovering factors contributing to college persistence is vital.

Taking college level course work while also being a member of the workforce is a challenge faced by many nontraditional students (Sheehan, McMenemy, & McDevitt, 1992). The ability of the child care teachers to successfully adapt to the new college environment in which some of teachers receive their in-service education will be affected by contextual factors, in the school, home and work environments (Bean & Metzger, 1985; Chartrand, 1992).

The Model to be Tested

Following is the presentation of a model examining how the multiple roles of family member, worker, and student interface and influence commitment to earning a degree in child care providers. The model relies on Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1993; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) and role theory (LaRossa & Reitzel, 1993; Nye 1976; Zurcher, 1983).

The model is shown in Figure 1. The figure depicts a relationship between the outcome of commitment to earning a degree and the exogenous

variables in three contexts, as well as individual factors that affect the outcome. Research has shown that these exogenous variables individually have a direct effect on persistence (Bean & Metzger, 1985). Based on role theory, the model suggested that their simultaneous influence on college persistence is mediated by role conflict.

It is important to note that this model was limited to women who are nontraditional students. The specific group of nontraditional students are child care providers engaged in professional development through participation in in-service education (i.e., college course work).

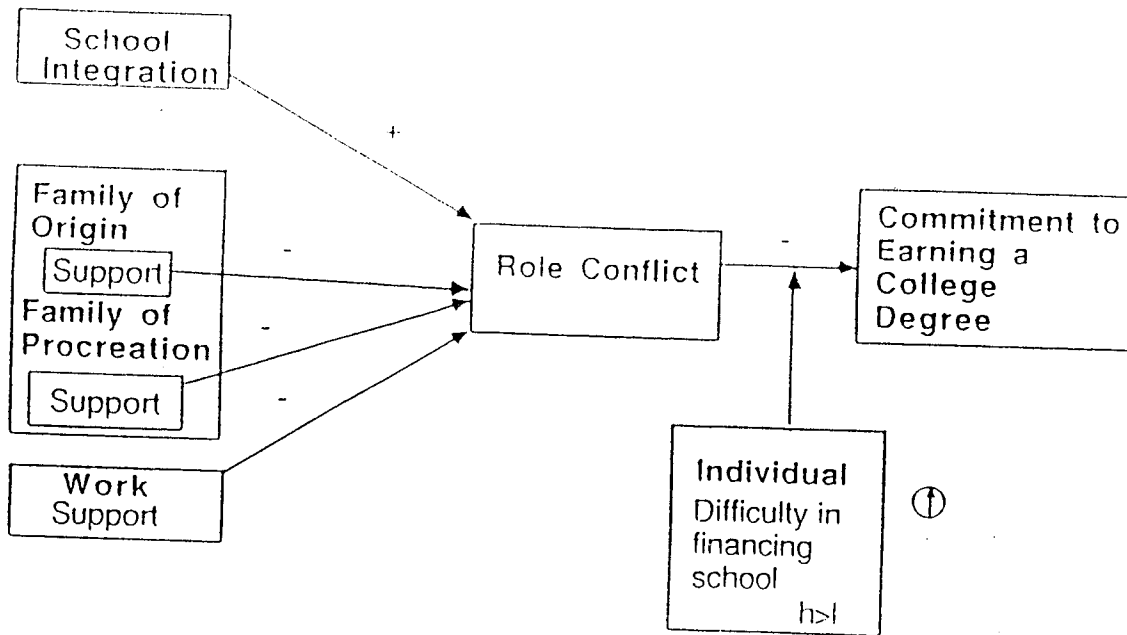


Figure 1. Model of Commitment to Earning a Degree for Female Child Care Teachers

Commitment to Earning a Degree

College persistence has been variously assessed as intent to continue taking courses (Chartrand, 1992), getting a degree (Stoecker, et al., 1988), as the number of quarters/semesters enrolled in courses (Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1987), as length of time enrolled in courses from a base line (House, 1992). College persistence is often coded as a dichotomous variable. Commonly, students are categorized as either persisting or not (Ashar & Skenes, 1992; Bean & Metzger, 1980; Mutter, 1992; Pascarella & Chapman, 1980; Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Pascarella et al., 1983; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Wolfe, 1993).

Using the High School and Beyond Study (HSB), Williamson and Creamer (1988) studied a sample of 3,943 students. Persistence was defined as receiving a degree or certificate over a two year period or remaining in any institution of higher education. To be considered as a nonpersisters the subject had to have withdrawn from higher education for more than 20 consecutive months. This method of measurement takes into account "stop out" behavior. That is, students may temporarily withdraw from college, and then elect to continue after a time. Likewise, in his study of 369 community college students, Voorhees (1987) operationalized persistence as re-enrolling in college. His rationale was that community college students are likely to stop out at various intervals in their academic career.

In research on 766 community college students, Mutter (1992) found goal commitment, measured by how committed to earning a degree the respondent was, also affected persistence. These findings support those of Chartrand,

(1990) who found that commitment to school was positively related to personal distress, and not related to GPA.

Based on a review of existing literature, Bean and Metzger (1985) have constructed a model of nontraditional students' attrition. They describe the decision to drop out as based on five different sets of variables: grade point average, intent to continue, background variables, environmental variables, and psychological outcomes. Psychological adjustment, grade point average and intent to continue are negatively related to attrition. Background variables and environmental variables will either facilitate or inhibit attrition. Using 347 nontraditional students (defined as over the age of 24 and living off campus) Chartrand (1992) tested the Bean and Metzger model (1985) using intent to continue as the dependent measure. She found that intent to continue was related to institutional commitment and an absence of psychological distress.

There are several studies which focus on intent to continue in taking courses as the dependent variable, rather than persistence (Chartrand, 1992; DeFour & Hirsch, 1990; Pascarella et al., 1983; Staats, Partlo, 1990). Using intent to continue rather than persistence is advantageous in that intent can be measured with one-time data collection, where as measuring persistence requires longitudinal data collection. Furthermore, it has been shown that intent to persist is related to actual continuation (Cabrera et al., 1993). In a study of 466 freshman at a 4-year traditional university, Cabrera, et al. (1990) found that intent to persist (measured as how likely the subject was to enroll the next term) explained 48% of the variance in persistence behavior.

In past research, a wide variety of factors have been shown to be associated with college persistence. School factors such as class size (Ashar &

Skenes, 1993), integration (Cabrera, Castañeda, Nora, & Hengstler, 1992; Chartrand, 1992; DeFour & Hirsch, 1990; Lewallen, 1993; Mutter, 1992; Nora, Attinasi, Matonak, 1990; Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Pascarella, Duby, & Iverson, 1983; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Stoeker, Pascarella & Wolfe, 1988), perceived quality of academic life (Staats & Partlo, 1990), and person environment fit (Chartrand, 1990) also have been found to be related to persistence. Background variables including parents' socio-economic status (Cabrera, Stampen, & Hansen, 1990; Chartrand, 1992), and parental encouragement (Stage & Rushin, 1993) are related to persistence. Personal characteristics such as goal commitment (Mutter, 1992; Nora et al., 1990; Williamson & Creamer, 1988), intent to persist (Cabrera, Nora, Castañeda, 1993; Voorhees, 1987), reason for going to college (Voorhees, 1987), college grade point average (GPA) (Cabrera, et al., 1993; Nora et al., 1990; Stoeker et al., 1988), academic adjustment (DeFour & Hirsch, 1990; Malin, Bray, Dougherty, & Skinner, 1980;), satisfaction with ability to pay (Cabrera et al., 1992), institutional commitment (Chartrand, 1992), certainty of major (Chartrand, 1992), academic self concept and expectation to graduate (House, 1992), and academic aptitude (Pascarella et al., 1983; Williamson & Creamer, 1988) have all shown to be related to persistence.

In the current model, persistence is operationalized as commitment to earning a degree. Persistence was operationalized in this way for two reasons. The first reason is the difficulty in operationalizing persistence in community college populations based on enrollment behavior. Preston (1993) points out that for community college students, continuous enrollment is an inaccurate indicator of persistence because continuous enrollment is an unrealistic expectation. This may be particularly true for child care teachers. Time

constraints, as one may encounter from working and going to school, as well as financial constraints, which are likely to plague child care teachers due to their low wages, may inhibit continued enrollment in course work. Though desirable, constant enrollment may be an impossibility. Using commitment to earning a degree will not misidentify as a nonpersister those students who are committed to earning a degree, but were unable to re-enroll in the subsequent quarter, but who may re-enroll in later quarters.

Secondly, because the current study is not long term, a longitudinal measure of enrollment behavior was unattainable. Though re-enrollment information from the subsequent semester was collected, a dichotomous measure of re-enrollment alone is not an ecologically valid measure of persistence for this sample who are likely to exhibit on again off again college enrollment.

The current measure of commitment to earning a degree includes measures of intent to continue in college, commitment to earning a degree, and certainty of major. As was demonstrated, all of these variables have been shown to be related to persistence. However, Pascarella, Smart and Ethington (1986) point out that any one measure of college persistence is unlikely to be completely satisfactory. Because of this commitment to earning a degree was used in the model but a separate analysis is also proposed to assess factors associated with re-enrollment.

Role Conflict

According to Bronfenbrenner's (1993) theory, the way in which two or more microsystems are integrated will affect an individual's functioning in each microsystem. As was stated earlier, one way of measuring the interface of two or more microsystems is through examining role conflict. The role

conflict stemming from the interface of four different contexts will be examined in this study. These contexts are: school, family of origin, family of procreation, and work. The interaction that occurs between microsystems is presumed to have a spill over effect. For instance, if work and family roles create conflict, this conflict will affect both the work role and the family role and will affect work/school interactions as well as family/school interactions. Additionally, it is possible that there is a three way interface between the roles with a school, family, and work interaction and that it is a multiplicative effect.

The demands from school, family and work potentially create conflict that negatively affects persistence. The additional strain on one's time alone, as would be the case through the addition of a new role (i.e., that of student) has been shown to increase stress (Kelly & Voydanoff, 1985).

In research that addressed school, family and work variables on adults' adjustment to college, using 343 adult learners, Malin, et al., (1980) found satisfaction with having enough time for everything was the strongest predictor of GPA. Chartrand (1990) examined both role salience and the incongruence between one's self and one's perception of a 'good-student' in a sample of 169 undergraduates. The researcher found that there was a negative relationship between role incongruence and GPA and a positive relationship between role incongruence and distress. The researcher also found a positive relationship between role commitment and distress. The researcher expressed surprise at role commitment being related to distress but indicates that other roles were not measured and it could be that in the face of several competing roles, a commitment to the role of student will increase distress. In this case commitment could cause role conflict, hence distress. However, there is little

research on the effect of role conflict on academic persistence, even though scholars (Bean & Metzger, 1985) have suggested that such an effect likely exists. Thus, research that further explores the relationships between role conflict and persistence is warranted. Furthermore, theory and research on role conflict suggests that it would negatively affect persistence as depicted in the model.

However, occupying multiple roles is not always stressful, and some research has shown it to be beneficial (Gerson, 1985; Reifman, Biernat & Lang, 1991). In one of the few studies that looked at both the benefits and conflict stemming from the student role, Gerson (1985) found that women returning to school ($n = 128$) reported more resources, self respect, respect of others, and less boredom than did women who only occupied the sole role of house wife ($n = 40$). However, the returning college students also reported experiencing more role strain, feeling that there were incompatible demands arising from the two settings, tenseness, and feelings of uncertainty about their identity.

Assuming the role of college student, particularly when added in a pursuit of increased professionalization may be salutatory. Currently, seeking increased education to enhance one's professional standing is voluntary in the child care field. When people add roles out of choice, as would be the case with professional development, the roles are generally not as stressful (Piechowski, 1992). In addition, occupying multiple roles is associated with positive outcomes when social support is available (Verburgge, 1983). Therefore, it is hypothesized that social support received from members of each role group will ameliorate the conflict experienced in trying to accommodate the various roles.

Influences of Context on College Persistence

The proposed model suggests four contexts interact to affect commitment to earning a degree. These include the school, family of origin, family of procreation, and work. As one would expect, research focusing on how factors found in the context of school affect persistence behavior are the most plentiful. Next are those that address the context of family. Research on the effects of work factors on college persistence is more sparse.

School. The context of school is defined as the classes, faculty and co-students the respondent comes into contact with as a part of taking classes. Many studies of college persistence are based on the work of Tinto (1975, 1993). Tinto's work is based on that of Durkheim (1951) who examined the effects of integration on suicide. According to Tinto (1993), college attrition stems from failure to become integrated in the college setting.

In Tinto's work (1993), the effect of background characteristics, such as socioeconomic status and past school experience on college persistence, are mediated by integration. Tinto identified two types of integration that contribute to college persistence. The first, social integration, is characterized by involvement with peers and informal conversations with faculty. The second type, academic integration, is usually measured by college GPA, the degree to which the student feels that their learning is facilitated by the faculty and staff of the institution, and contact with faculty and staff concerning academic matters (Tinto, 1993; Wolfe, 1993).

Though there are limitations, Tinto's work is important for the proposed study as it provides an empirical foundation for examining the role of school integration in college persistence. His work best explains persistence in

traditional students in four-year residential colleges. Though his predictions hold up for nontraditional college students, they operate somewhat differently. One difference is the effect of integration on persistence (Ashar & Skenes, 1993; Mutter, 1992; Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1983; Tinto, 1993, Voorhees, 1987; Wolfe, 1993). For traditional students integration was positively associated with persistence behavior; however, for nontraditional students the findings were mixed. The other difference was the effect of background variables on persistence (Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Pascarella et al., 1983; Williamson & Creamer, 1988). For traditional student the effect of background characteristics was mediated by integration, as Tinto (1993) suggested would be the case. For nontraditional students background variables have been found to have a direct effect on persistence. The following studies were conducted using samples of nontraditional students. They are presented in order to highlight the ways integration affects persistence for this population.

In a study with 25 classes of adult, nontraditional learners (the number of actual students was not reported), Ashar and Skenes (1993) found that smaller and more socially integrated classes were associated with persistence. A class was deemed more socially integrated as the percentage of mature managers (people over the age of 35 and who supervised 10 or more employees) increased. The researcher did not assess actual student relationships. Contrary to prediction, academic integration, (measured by both the proportion of students who reported the need to satisfy a desire to learn was important in their decision to return to school; and the proportion of students in the class who reported having further academic plans -- intent to continue) was not related to persistence.

In a study of 369 community college students, Voorhees (1987) found that purpose of enrolling in a college course affected students likelihood of continuing in their classes. For the group of students who were enrolled in order to earn an Associate degree ($n = 111$) about 71% persisted. For those enrolled in community college in order to transfer to another two-year college ($n = 15$), 85% persisted. Of those who were planning to transfer to a four-year college ($n = 30$), 65% persisted. This compared to students who were in college for reasons of self improvement ($n = 20$) or maintaining certification ($n = 31$), with 44% persisting. Like the findings of Ashar and Skenes (1993), Voorhees found that academic integration was not a significant factor in predicting persistence. In this study academic integration was measured by informal contacts with faculty, which is a measure of social integration in other studies (see Mutter, 1992). Part-time status did not predict persistence.

Using 2,326 freshmen from a variety of college settings (four residential universities, two liberal arts colleges, three two-year commuter institutions, and two four-year commuter institutions), Pascarella and Chapman (1983) examined the effects both academic and social integration on persistence. With regard to two-year commuter institutions ($n = 422$), student need for affiliation (a measure of social integration) was negatively related to persistence. There was also a negative relationship between informal conversations with peers (a measure of social integration) and persistence, with those who had more informal conversations with peers persisting less. These surprising findings may indicate that those who need to affiliate have a difficult time doing so in a two-year, community college setting. However, given the research design it was impossible to determine whether those who

left were dropping out of higher education completely, stopping out for a period of time, or were transferring to another institution.

DeFour and Hirsch (1990) assessed the effects of social support in 89 Black graduate and professional students on their continued pursuit of advanced degrees. Perceived satisfaction with social support was assessed across three areas: financial, academic and personal. The outcome measure was academic performance, operationalized as both actual grades and perceived performance. The results showed that Black students were less likely to think about dropping out of school if they were more satisfied with the social support they received from the non-Black members of their academic departments.

One variable that may further affect the relationship of both social and academic integration with college persistence is part-time versus full-time status. Most of the above research was conducted on full-time students. Voorhees (1987) did examine the affect of part-time versus full-time status on persistence and found no differences. However, in her study status was measured as a dichotomous variable rather than a continuous variable, and not in conjunction with the other variables in the study such as the relationship of enrollment status and integration. It is possible that different results would have been found if course load was measured differently. It is likely that as course load decreases the effect of both academic and social integration will decrease also.

Overwhelmingly, the existing research literature shows the effects of school related factors on college persistence. In most research on college persistence, social integration has been shown to relate to college persistence. However, role strain theory suggests that multiple roles result in conflict

which, in the present research, is hypothesized to be negatively related to persistence. Because the role of student is optional, to be committed to earning a degree may have some negative consequences. For instance, a teacher may feel guilty that she is spending time on school work rather than with her family. Therefore, in the current model, school integration is positively related to role conflict.

Family. Various family characteristics have been shown to influence college persistence. In a few studies socio-economic status (SES) has been positively related to continued persistence in higher education (Stoeker et al., 1988; Williamson & Creamer, 1988). However, as Cabrera and colleagues (1990) point out, SES does not consistently predict persistence because on many surveys the potential range of SES is truncated. In research using a sample of 1,375 from the National High School and Beyond study, Cabrera, et al. (1990) found that both satisfaction with ability to pay for college and SES were related to college persistence.

Other research shows that social support affects student persistence (Bean & Metzger, 1983; Cabrera et al., 1993; Malin et al., 1980; Tinto, 1987, 1993). Most studies use a measure of support that fails to differentiate between sources of social support, such as differentiating between support from family or friends. The few studies that address family support separately from friends' support found that it had a direct and positive effect on college persistence (Mutter, 1992).

Family support may be more salient than college social group support for nontraditional students. Their life structure may make close ties with other students, a factor that figures prominently in theories of college persistence, less influential. One of the few studies which examined family support on

intent to continue with a sample of nontraditional students found that family support and encouragement has a direct relationship with both psychological adjustment and intent to continue (Chartrand, 1992). This supports findings from an earlier study (Malin et al., 1980) examining the responses of 1,111 students from the High School and Beyond Study. They found that parental encouragement had a direct effect on persistence. In the present model it is proposed that family support will have a mediated effect on persistence through role conflict. This is based on role theory and the proposition that role conflict will mediate the effect of support of commitment to earning a degree. As support from family increases, role conflict will decrease.

This brings up one of the difficulties in this body of literature. Most of the research has been conducted on traditional students. This means that family measures are those of one's family of origin. However, many nontraditional students may live on their own and/or feel independent of their family. The increased independence these students experience may impact the effect of family support on persistence. For some nontraditional students family may mean a partner and children of their own. According to the Child Care Staffing Study (Whitebook et al., 1989), 46.3% of child care teachers were married, and 53.7% were single. Another 41% lived with their children, 22% lived alone without children, and 24% lived with their parents.

The differential effects of family support, whether family of origin or one's family of procreation, have not been explored. Research is clear that not only is the type of support important to outcome, but also the source of support (Hirsch & Rapkin, 1986). Therefore, in the present model, family support has been broken into support from family of procreation and family of origin. The effects from both of these contexts will be tested separately for their effect

on role conflict and on commitment to earning a degree. It is believed that support from both family of origin and family of procreation will have a negative relationship with role conflict.

Work. The context of work is defined as any setting where the respondent is employed for pay. In this study the sphere of work is limited to the child care setting excluding family day care homes or caring for children in the child's own home.

In the few studies examining work as a variable affecting college persistence, hours worked is commonly used as the measure of this context (Bean & Metzger, 1985; Chartrand, 1992; Malin et al., 1980). In Chartrand's (1992) work on nontraditional students, hours worked had an indirect effect, through psychological distress, on intent to persist. In the proposed study, role conflict is one indicator of such psychological distress. Therefore hours worked would be positively associated with role conflict. However, a more salient variable may be the support the child care teacher receives from co-workers and colleagues. Although the ability to get this support may be a function of the amount of time the teacher is at work. This increased support may offset any costs associated with hours worked.

No other studies could be found that examine the effects of support from one's work place on college persistence. However, just as support from family becomes more salient to nontraditional students, so too should the support from co-workers (Bean & Metzger, 1985). Therefore, the effect of support in the work environment on persistence will be mediated by role conflict. Support from work will decrease role conflict and this will have a positive effect on commitment to earning a degree.

Individual characteristics. Individual characteristics have been shown to have a direct effect on college persistence. Persistence in college courses is affected by feelings of efficacy (Chartrand, 1989; Chartrand, Camp & McFadden, 1992; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1986); commitment to graduation and institution (Mutter, 1992); person environment fit (Chartrand, 1990) and academic self concept (Chartrand, 1992).

As was discussed above, the ability to finance education also is related to persistence. Perceived difficulty in financing education has a direct negative effect on persistence (Chartrand, 1992). Based on the figures provided in Helburn (1995) the average child care teacher makes \$15,017 annually (based on a 40-hour work week), and the average assistant teacher makes \$11,856. Because the wages child care teachers receive are relatively low, the ability to finance education may be a key factor in college persistence. In the current model, perceived difficulty in financing education moderates the relationship between role strain and commitment to earning a degree, such that as perceived difficulty in financing education increases, the relationship between role conflict and commitment to earning a degree is strengthened.

Hypotheses

Based on the above review of the theoretical and empirical literature, the following hypotheses were proposed:

1. The relationship between role conflict and commitment to earning a degree will be negative, such that as role conflict increases, commitment to earning a degree will decrease. This hypothesis was tested using path analysis.
2. Social support received from both family of origin and family of procreation will have a negative relationship with role conflict. As social support received from family (as measured by the perceived social support) increases role conflict (as measured by the responsibilities of school, work and home interfering with each other) will decrease. These hypotheses were tested for in the path analysis.
3. Social support from co-workers and supervisors will have a negative relationship with role conflict. As social support from work (as measured by satisfaction with co-workers and supervisor relationships) increases, role conflict (as measured by the responsibilities of school, work, and home interfering with each other) will decrease. This was tested for using path analysis.
4. Integration in college will have a positive relationship with role conflict. As academic integration increases, role conflict, (as measured by the responsibilities of school, work, and home interfering with each other, will increase. This hypothesis was tested using path analysis.

5. The relationship between the four contexts (school, family of origin, family of procreation and work) and commitment to earning a degree will be mediated by role conflict. This hypothesis was tested using path analysis.

6. The relationship between role conflict and commitment to earning a degree will be moderated by financial difficulty, such that when perceptions of such difficulty increases (as measured by perceived difficulty in financing education) the relationship between role conflict and persistence will be stronger. This was tested by separating the groups into those who expressed ease in funding education and those who expressed difficulty in funding education and rerunning the path analyses separately for the two groups.

7. Role conflict will differentiate those who re-enroll in college courses and those who did not. For those who re-enroll in college courses in the subsequent quarter, role conflict will be lower than for those who do not re-enroll for college courses in the subsequent quarter. This hypothesis was tested in a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA).

8. Social support from family of origin and family of procreation will be different for those who re-enroll and those who do not. Social support from the family of origin and family of procreation will be higher for those who re-enroll in college courses in the subsequent quarter than for those who do not re-enroll for college courses in the subsequent quarter. This hypothesis was tested using a MANOVA.

9. Support from work will differentiate those who re-enroll and those who do not. Those who re-enroll in college courses in the subsequent quarter will report higher levels of support from work than those who do not re-enroll in college courses in the subsequent quarter. This hypothesis was tested in the MANOVA.

10. Integration in school will differentiate those who re-enroll and those that do not. Those who re-enroll for courses in the subsequent quarter will report higher levels of school integration than those who do not re-enroll in college courses. This was tested for in the MANOVA.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The following chapter contains a description of the methods used in this study. Included is a description of the subjects and how they were recruited to participate in the study, a description of the instrument used to collect the quantitative data, and a description of the qualitative interview component.

Subjects

One hundred and forty five teachers from seven community colleges located in the Piedmont region of North Carolina agreed to participate in this study. Of the 121 teachers I solicited to participate in this study, 5 teachers declined participation and 15 returned incomplete surveys. An additional 29 questionnaires were returned by community college instructors who chose administer them personally, of these 24 were complete. Because the number of students the instructor approached to fill out the questionnaires is not known the return rate is undefined.

The teachers were all enrolled in at least one early childhood course during the Fall quarter of 1995. To be considered eligible for this study the child care teacher must have reported working at least 15 hours a week in a child care setting. Those teachers who worked in family day care homes, or cared for children in the child's own home, were not included in this study. These teachers were eliminated due to the confounding of work and family, since both roles occur in the same location. Of the 145 women who completed the questionnaire, 124 provided information on all independent and dependent

variables. The information on individual, work and school characteristics is provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Individual, Work and School Variables

Variable	Mean	<u>SD</u>	Range
Age in years	31	10	18 - 54
Hourly wage	6.05	1.45	3.10 - 11.50
Number of years in child care	4.64	4.66	.08 - 21
Number of years at current center	2.50	2.51	.08 - 11.5
Number of skipped quarters	3.08	2.62	1 - 9

Note. 46 respondents reported that they had skipped a quarter or more since beginning to attend classes.

Sample demographics are provided in Table 2.

Table 2
Sample Demographics

Characteristic	<u>n</u>	Percent
Race		
Caucasian	72	59
African American	45	36
Native American	5	4
Hispanic	1	1
Other	1	1
Undefined	1	1
Family Type		
Family of procreation	63	52
Family of origin	29	23
Extended Family	11	9
Roommates	9	7
Single/Alone	8	6
Undefined	5	4

Procedures

I contacted department heads or chairs of early childhood education programs or child development programs at seven community colleges. The purpose of the study was explained to them, and a request was made that I be allowed to approach students in their classes and invite their participation in the study. In most instances the instructors allowed me to attend their classes and have students complete the questionnaire. However, at three colleges, the department chairs preferred to distribute the questionnaires themselves. In these instances, the questionnaires were sent to the department chairs with detailed instruction on who to solicit for participation.

In the subsequent quarter the department chairs and department heads were re-contacted and the enrollment status of the teachers who filled out the questionnaires was checked. The status of 111 of the teachers who filled out the questionnaires in the Fall could be determined. The reduction in sample was due to teachers not including their names on the questionnaire or the instructors not knowing the enrollment status of the student. Of these teachers, 84 had re-enrolled in the next quarter.

Instrument

The quantitative data were collected by a questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix B. The questions ask for a report of feelings of integration and commitment to college course work, perception of support received from family, information about and satisfaction with aspects of the respondents job, demographic information, and the experience of role conflict. A more detailed description is given below.

School Measures

The school variables assessed included an estimate of number of other students in the classes that the respondent attends, the number of courses the respondent had completed and was currently taking, current GPA, anticipated GPA, types of financial aid received, the type of college expenses covered by the financial aid. Subjective difficulty in covering college expenses was assessed with one question asking how difficult it was to pay for college expenses. This item used a 4-point response scale ranging from (1) easy to (4) very difficult.

School integration was measured by four subscales of the Instructional Integration Questionnaire (IIQ; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980). This is a five factor scale that measures peer group interaction, interactions with faculty, perceived faculty concern for students, academic and intellectual development, and institutional and goal commitments. The first four subscales were used to measure academic integration. The reported alphas for the subscales' are .84, .83, .82, and .74 respectively. The questions have a 5-item Likert-type response set that ranges from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The subscales can be analyzed as separate scales, or used together as a composite measure of integration. The wording was changed slightly to make it more applicable to commuter students; for instance the word "university" was replaced with "college" (Fox, 1984). The alpha reliabilities for the for the individual subscales in the present study were calculated to be .68, .88, .88, .86 respectively. The alpha reliability was calculated to be .93 for the entire scale.

Family Measures

Respondents were asked to list the people with whom they live by indicating the relationship they have with these individuals, their ages, and their sex. In addition, respondents were asked about their marital status and, if married or living with a partner, the highest educational level achieved by the partner and his/her occupation. Respondents were also asked to report their household income, the highest grade level of education of their mother and father, their parents' occupations, and marital status. Further, respondents were asked about any stepparents and their occupations.

Social support from the family was assessed using a modified version of the Perceived Social Support from Family Scale (SSF: Procidano & Heller, 1983). This is a 20-item questionnaire that taps the subjective support people feel they receive from and, in some instances, give to their family. This scale has a reported alpha of .90. A sample item reads "Members of my family are good at helping me solve problems." The scale was originally designed with yes/no, don't know responses. In the present study the responses were a 5-point scale, ranging from (1) never to (5) always. This change provided a broader range of response. Six of the items from the original scale were dropped because they asked for a comparison of the amount of social support between oneself and others, and changes one would wish for in one's family. These questions were believed to be irrelevant to the focus of the present study.

The items on the SSF were asked twice. In the first instance the respondents were asked to consider the amount of support they received from members of their family of origin, including parents, step-parents, siblings, etc. The alpha reliability for this scale in the present study was .95. The

second time the respondents were asked to consider their families of procreation in answering these items. The alpha reliability was calculated to be .93 for this scale.

Job Measures

The job measures included number of children in the class in which the respondent worked (group size); length of time employed at current centers, average number of hours worked per week, teacher to child ratio in the respondents' class, and the ages of the children with whom the respondent worked.

The respondents also were asked to answer several items from the Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey (ECJSS: Jorde-Bloom, 1991). The ECJSS is a 24-item survey that assesses satisfaction in the early childhood work place. It includes five subscales designed to measure different facets of job satisfaction: co-worker relations, supervisor relations, the nature of the work itself, pay and opportunities for promotion, and general working conditions. The survey contains 10 questions for each subscale. Responses are in a yes/no format, and respondents are asked to indicate whether he/she agrees with a statement. Items are scored so a low score represents less satisfaction in that job facet. The possible range of scores for each subscale is 0-10. The alphas for this instrument ranged from .63 for the work subscale to .90 for job satisfaction overall. The test-retest reliabilities ranged from .61 for the working conditions subscale to .91 for supervisor relations.

Nineteen of the original 24 items were used in the study. Questions concerning perceived degree of congruence between the existing and the ideal job and decision making power were dropped from the present study because they were judged not to be relevant. The subscales assessing co-

worker relations and supervisor relations were used in the present study to operationalize social support from work. The calculated alphas for both subscales was .79. The alpha for the combined subscales used in this analysis was .85.

Individual Measures

Respondent were asked to provide their race, sex, age, and whether they were mostly an A, B, C, or D student in high school. Satisfaction with ability to pay for college was assessed by asking the respondents to indicate the degree of difficulty they experience in financing their education on a 4-point scale ranging from easy (1) to very difficult (4). Respondents were asked to list any forms of financial aid they received, and the proportion of their educational expenses covered by this aid.

Role Conflict

Role conflict was measured by 10 items. Four of these items are taken directly from questions used by Frone et al. (1992) to measure work/home conflict. These questions were designed to assess the degree and directionality of the conflict between home and work: that is, they asses the degree to which conflict stemming from work interferes with homelife or how homelife interferes with work. The reported alpha for the questions measuring work to family conflict was .76, the alpha for the questions measuring family to work conflict was .56. Based on this concept of directionality, six additional questions were added to measure the conflict stemming from work and home interfering with college, and to assess pressures from college interfering with work and home. These additional questions were modeled after the questions used by Frone and colleagues. A sample item reads, "How often does your job or career interfere with your responsibilities at home, such as yard work,

cooking, cleaning, shopping, paying bills or caring for your own children?" Each item used a 5-point response scale, ranging from (1) never to (5) all the time. The calculated alpha reliability for this scale in the current study is .90.

Goal Commitment

Goal commitment was assessed using the goal and institutional commitment subscale of the IIQ. This subscale contains six questions asking for intent to continue in school, certainty of major and decision to take courses, likelihood of re-enrollment, and the importance of doing well in school. The established alpha for this subscale is .71; the alpha for this scale in the current study is .91. Additionally, there was a question assessing the commitment to getting a degree by asking the respondent to indicate "how committed they are to getting a degree." Responses ranged from I want desperately to get a degree and would go to any length to earn one (1) to I will never be able to get a degree and there is nothing more I can do to earn one (6).

The questionnaire also invites the respondent to participate in an in-depth interview. If the individual was interested in participation they were to indicate their name and phone numbers in the space provided. The respondents were also able to fill out their name and address if they wanted to receive a copy of the results.

Qualitative Measures

Two respondents were selected from those who indicated they would be willing to participate in an in-depth interview. The addition of a qualitative component was designed to add richness and depth to the quantitative information that was gathered. By combining methods, the research is triangulated, allowing for a more complete understanding of the processes

being examined (Lather, 1986). The teachers were interviewed twice. In the first interview the teachers were asked questions concerning three areas: their experience of combining school, home and work; their views on professionalism; and how they make sense out of their college course work and connect what they learn in school to their job performance. These areas are described in greater detail below. The questions used in the interview are contained in Appendix C with lead questions in bold. In the second interview the interpretation of their answers was shared with them to clarify meaning.

There were three areas covered in the interview. The first series of questions asked the respondents to provide more detailed information on their experiences as a child care worker involved in taking classes, and how the interface of job, family and course work affected their continued pursuit of a degree. It was in this in-depth interview that questions about the multiplicative effect of going to school, being a family member, and working were uncovered. In this way a more substantive analysis of the effects of role conflict in the life of child care workers involved in professional development was conducted.

The second part of the interview asked each respondent to describe her feelings concerning professional development. One of the primary failings of the professional development model proposed by the NAEYC is the lack of teachers' voice in its construction (Cassidy et al., 1995c). Currently, the mechanisms by which course work translates into professionalism for child care workers is not clearly understood. Because professionalism is the goal of the increase in course work, this was a much needed line of inquiry.

The third part of the interview was an attempt to understand the teacher's epistemological level, i.e., the way that they learn about the world

and process information. This exploration was based on the work of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986). These researchers propose that there are five distinct epistemology types that characterize the way women learn. They are (1) silent women who have no voice and are not able to construct or take in knowledge; (2) received knowers who are listeners, able to take in information and apply it, but who depend on others to tell them what is right and wrong; (3) subjective women, who's beliefs about the world are contingent on actually experiencing the information being presented; (4) procedural knowers, who are categorized as the voice of reason; and (5) constructed knowers, who integrate aspects of their personal life with information that they learn from other sources. It was believed that epistemological level affects the teacher's beliefs about the benefits of course work and her understanding of professional development, as well as how she deals with the role conflict experienced in her life.

Participants

Two women were selected to be interviewed. Both women worked full time in child care and had families of their own. It was decided a priori that the interviewees would be from different ethnic groups.

Data Collection

The data were collected through a set of interviews in the participants' home. The goal of the interview was to be open-ended, to have a conversation, and to follow the teachers' leads with further questions and probes. The interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed. The transcripts were read and reread for themes emerging from the answers to the questions. Passages that clearly answered questions were highlighted. These answers along with their interpretations were arranged by question. The women were

interviewed a second time to validate and clarify their answers to the interview questions. The second interviews were also tape-recorded and transcribed. These were again read and reread for answers and themes and these were again highlighted. Finally the responses were arranged by question in order to provide information on the experiences of these women in their own voices.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Path analysis was used to test the relationships between the independent variables and role conflict and commitment to earning a degree. Three separate analyses were run, first with all subjects included. Next, two analyses examined those who reported ease in funding college expenses and those reporting difficulty. Subsequently, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to test for differences between those who were enrolled the following quarter and those who were not.

Also included in this chapter is a discussion of the interview results. Themes emerging from the answers the interviews are discussed and interpreted.

Quantitative Analyses

Preliminary Analysis

Initially, Pearson product moment correlations were calculated for all of the variables in the model. Table 3 reports the results. Results indicated that higher levels of school integration was associated with more support from both family of procreation ($r = .42, p = .0001$) and family of origin ($r = .28, p = .01$). More support from one's family of origin was associated with higher levels of support from one's family of procreation ($r = .68; p = .001$). More role conflict was related to less difficulty in funding one's education ($r = -.28; p \leq .01$). Lastly higher commitment to earning a degree, the dependent variable

in the model was associated with higher levels of school integration ($r = .53$, $p = .0001$), and more support from one's family of procreation ($r = .41$; $p = .0001$) and one's family of origin ($r = .28$; $p < .01$).

Table 3
Correlation Matrix of Independent and Dependent Variables

Variable	Range	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. School integration	1-5	3.69	0.666	--						
2. Support from work	0-20	15.66	3.72	.05	--					
3. Family of procreation support	1-5	4.00	0.88	.42***	.15	--				
4. Family of origin support	1-5	3.76	1.03	.28*	.06	.68***	--			
5. Difficulty in funding education	1-4	2.66	.96	-.10	-.09	-.15	-.19	--		
6. Role conflict	1-5	2.62	.75	-.03	-.18	-.10	-.14	-.28*	--	
7. Commitment to earning a degree				.53***	.05	.41***	.28*	-.01	-0.02	--

* $p < .01$ ** $p < .001$ *** $p < .0001$

As a result of these findings hypotheses 1 - 4 were rejected. Hypothesis 1 stated that role conflict would be negatively related to commitment to earning a degree. This hypothesis was not supported .

Hypothesis 2 and 3 proposed that support from family and support from work would be negatively related to role conflict. These hypotheses were not supported. The relationships between family support and role conflict, and work support and role conflict were not significant.

Hypothesis 4 proposed that school integration would be positively related to role conflict. This hypothesis was not supported. The relationship between school integration and role conflict was also nonsignificant.

Because support from family of procreation and support from family of origin were so highly correlated, these variables were collapsed into a single measure of family support for all remaining analyses.

Path Analysis

Path analysis was employed to test the causal model. In analyzing the causal model, the hypothesis 5 was tested. The path model is depicted in Figure 2.

As is evident in Figure 2, school integration, support from work, and social support from family of origin and family of procreation explain almost none of the variance in role conflict ($R^2 = .01$).

Hypothesis 5 proposed that the effects of work, family support and school integration on commitment to earning a degree would be mediated by role conflict. This hypothesis was not supported. Role conflict did not contribute to the predictive power of the causal model. The exogenous variables did, however, directly affect commitment to earning a degree (see Table 4).

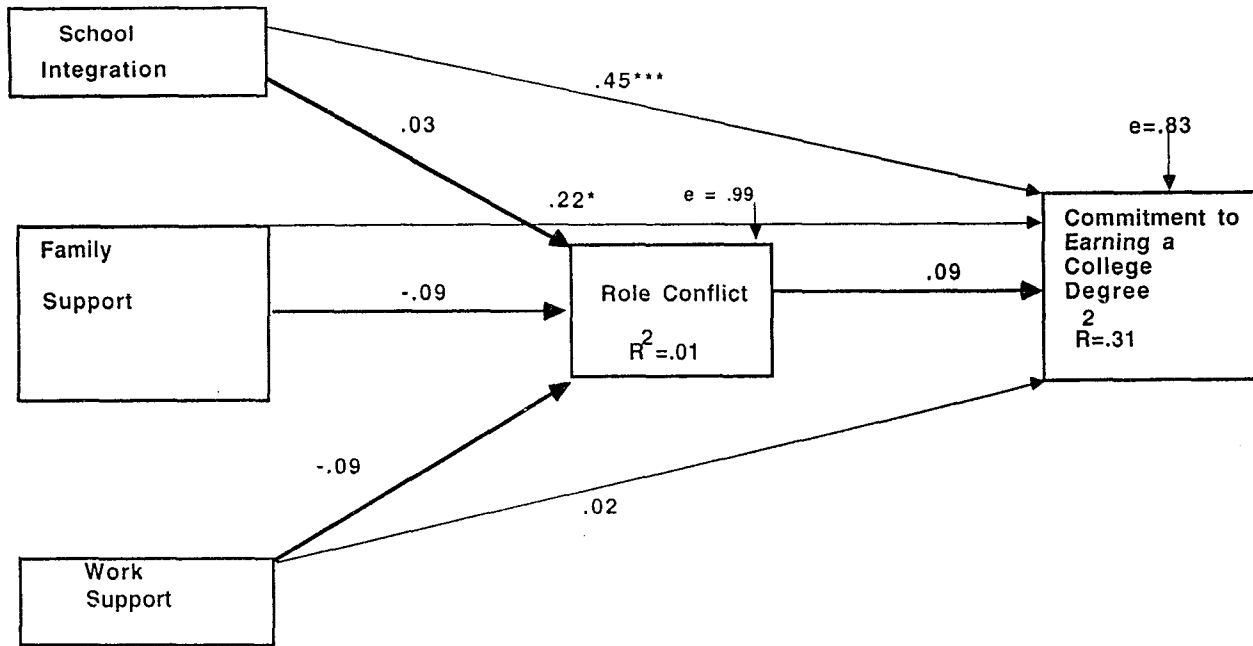


Figure 2. Results of Model of Commitment to Earning a Degree for Female Child Care Teachers

* $p < .01$ *** $p < .0001$

Of the variables in the proposed model, school integration was the strongest predictor of commitment to earning a degree ($\beta = .45$, $p = .0001$). Family support also predicted commitment to earning a degree ($\beta = .22$; $p = .01$). Together these two variables explain 31% of the variance in commitment to earning a degree.

Table 4
Direct and Indirect Effects of Independent Variables on Commitment to Earning a Degree

Variable	Effect		
	Direct	Indirect	Total
School integration	.45	.00	.45
Support from work	.02	.01	.03
Support from family	.22	.01	.23
Role conflict	.09	--	.09

Hypothesis 6 proposed that the relationship between role conflict and commitment to earning a degree would be stronger for those students who experienced difficulty in funding education. To test for a moderating effect of perceived difficulty in funding education on the relationships in the proposed model, the sample was divided into two groups. Those who reported that paying for college expenses was easy or not very difficult were categorized into the ease in funding education group ($n = 45$); those indicating paying for college expenses was somewhat difficult or very difficult were categorized into the difficulty in funding education group ($n = 80$). The intercorrelations of the variables for each subgroup are provided in Table 5.

Table 5.
Correlation Matrix of Independent and Dependent Variables for Those Who Report Ease
and Those Who Report Difficulty in Funding Education

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
Difficulty in Funding ($n = 80$)					
1. School Integration	--				
2. Support From Work	.08	--			
3. Support From Family	.46***	.22	--		
4. Role Conflict	-.01	-.05	-.07	--	
5. Commitment to Earning a Degree	.51***	.03	.48***	.11	--
Ease in Funding ($n = 45$)					
1. School Integration	--				
2. Support From Work	.04	--			
3. Support From Family	.20	-.13	--		
4. Role Conflict	.01	-.18	-.04	--	
5. Commitment to Earning a Degree	.58***	.07	.23	-.04	--

* $p < .01$ ** $p < .001$ *** $p < .0001$

For the students who had difficulty funding their education, higher levels of support from one's family was associated with more school integration ($r = .46$, $p = .0001$). In addition, more commitment to earning a degree was associated with higher levels of school integration ($r = .51$, $p = .0001$) and support from one's family ($r = .48$, $p = .0001$). For those students who had no difficulty funding their education, more commitment to earning a degree was associated with higher levels of school integration ($r = .58$, $p = .0001$).

Path analyses were run for these groups separately. The size of the group classified as ease in funding education was low, so the results must be interpreted cautiously. Figure 3 shows the results for the group that expressed ease in funding education, and Figure 4 shows the results for the group that expressed difficulty in funding education.

As in the full model, role conflict did not significantly explain variance in commitment to earning a degree for either group. Similarly, little role conflict was explained by the independent variables in either difficulty group. For those who expressed ease in funding education, only school integration predicted 29% of the variance in commitment to earning a degree ($\beta = .56$). For those who expressed difficulty in funding education, school integration ($\beta = .37$) and family support ($\beta = .31$) predicted 32% of the variance in commitment to earning a degree. In both models school integration had a direct effect on commitment to earning a degree. Table 6 has the direct and indirect effects of the independent variables on commitment to earning a degree. For the group reporting difficulty funding their education, family support also directly affected commitment to earning a degree. Role conflict did not mediate the relationship between school integration, family support and work support on

commitment to earning a degree for either group. Hypothesis 6 was not supported.

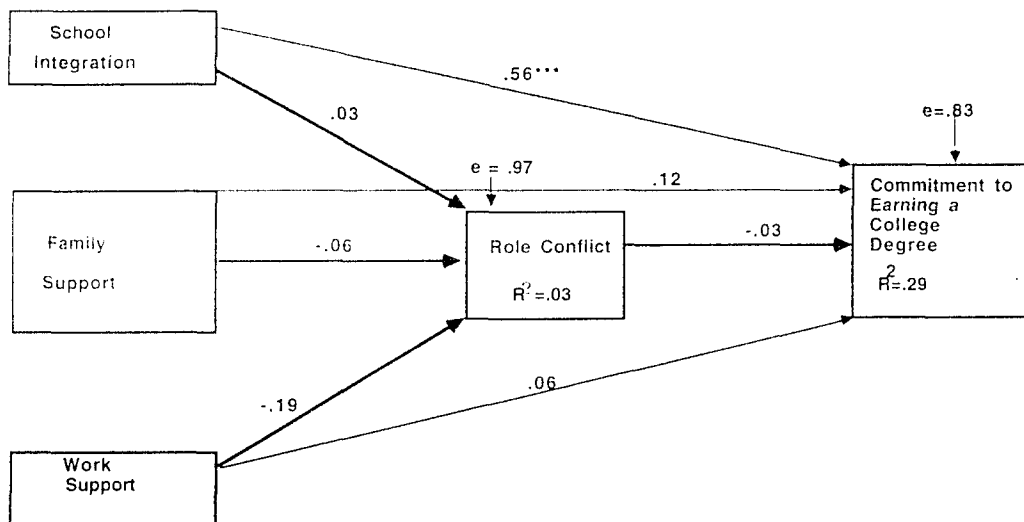


Figure 3. Model of Commitment to Earning a Degree for Female Child Care Teachers Who Report Ease in Funding Their Education

***p < .0001

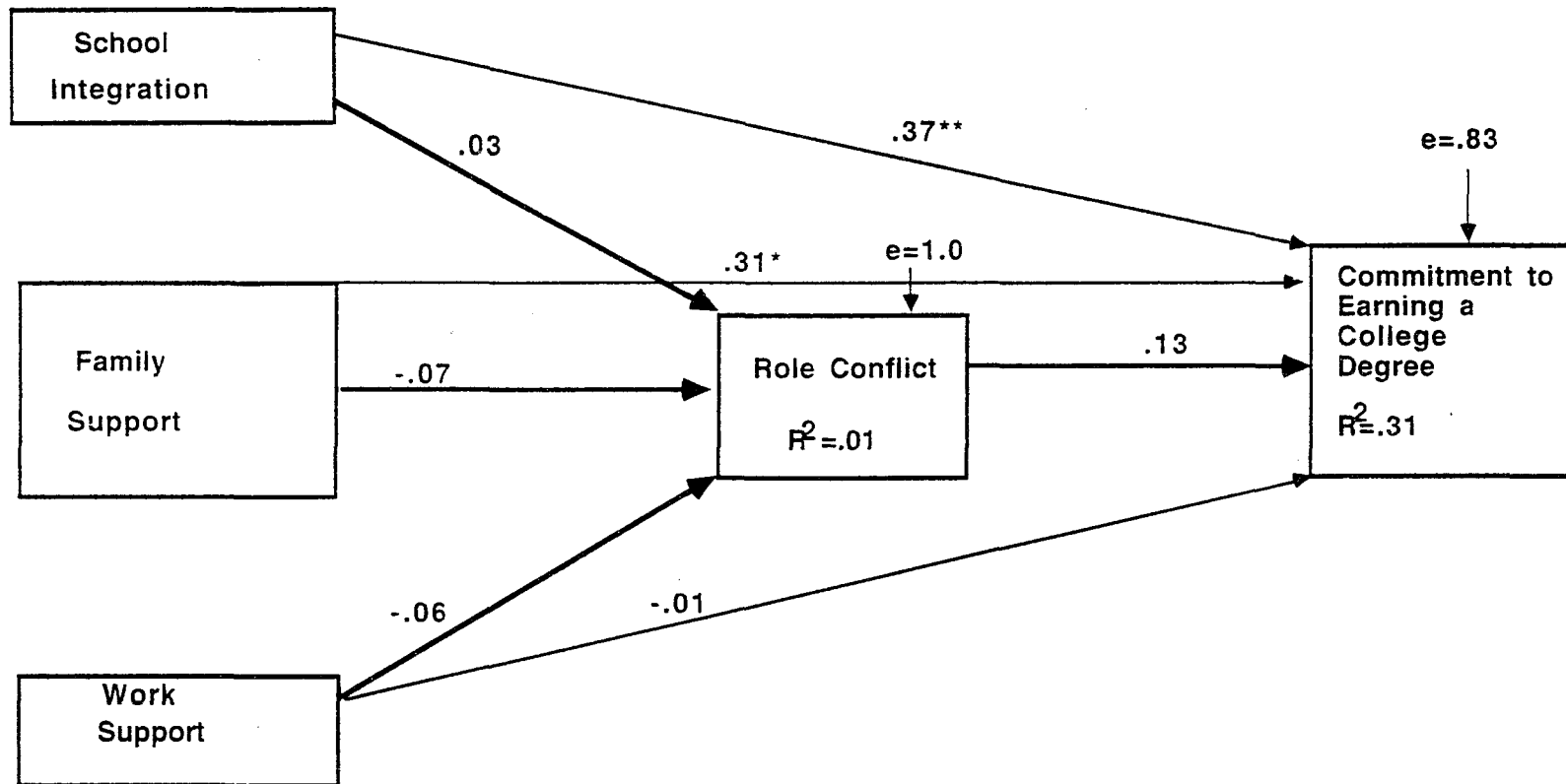


Figure 4. Model of Commitment to Earning a Degree for Female Child Care Teachers Who Report Difficulty in Financing Education

* $p < .01$ ** $p < .001$

Table 6
Direct and Indirect Effects of Independent Variables on Commitment to Earning a Degree According to Reported Ease in Funding Education

Variable	Effect		Total
	Direct	Indirect	
Difficulty in Funding (<u>n</u> = 80)			
School integration	.37	.00	.37
Support from work	.01	.01	.02
Support from family	.31	.01	.32
Role conflict	.13	--	.13
Ease in Funding (<u>n</u> = 45)			
School integration	.56	.00	.56
Support from work	.06	.01	.07
Support from family	.12	.00	.12
Role conflict	.03	--	.03

Re-enrollment

In operationalizing the definition of persistence in the present study, attention must be given to the anticipated result of college course work. It was shown that there is a relationship between teacher educational level and the quality of the child care classroom even after only a few courses. Thus, the sooner the teacher completes course work, the greater the likelihood that the quality in the classroom will improve. Although commitment to earning a degree is important, factors related to re-enrollment also are important. By assessing re-enrollment a more complete measure of persistence is offered than commitment to earning a degree can provide alone.

Hypotheses 7 -10 proposed that there would be differences between the variables for students who re-enrolled in the subsequent quarter ($n = 88$) and those students who did not ($n = 23$). A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to test these hypotheses, using the appropriate sums of squares to account for the uneven cell sizes. Table 7 contains the results of this analysis.

Table 7
Comparison of Independent and Dependent Variables by Enrollment Status

Variable	<u>Enrollment Status</u>				F
	<u>Re-enrolled</u>		<u>Not Enrolled</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	
School integration	3.71	.67	3.68	.58	.03
Work support	15.84	3.56	15.91	2.76	.01
Family Support	3.98	.80	3.34	.97	10.56*
Difficulty in funding education	2.59	.99	2.91	.95	2.00
Role conflict	2.55	.80	2.78	.71	1.54
Commitment to earning a degree	.11	.95	-.33	1.06	3.79+

Note. The variable commitment to earning a degree has been standardized to a mean of zero and a standard deviation of 1.

+ $p = .0542$ * $p < .01$

The results show that school integration, work support, difficulty in funding education, and role conflict did not differ by group in the expected directions. Thus, hypotheses 7, 9, and 10 were not supported.

Those who re-enrolled reported more support from their families ($F = 10.56, p \leq .01$) would re-enroll. Thus hypothesis 8 was supported. In addition, those who did not re-enroll reported lower levels of commitment to earning a degree.

Best Fit Model

Based on these results, another regression was run to identify the best fit model. This analysis included only school integration and family support regressed directly onto commitment to earning a degree. These two variables alone explained approximately 30% of the variance in commitment to earning a degree $F(2, 122) = 27.80, p < .01$. These results indicate that the two variables explained almost as much variance as did the entire model with four variables included. Still much of the variance in commitment to earning a degree (70%) was left unexplained, both by the full model and the reduced model.

Qualitative Results

In order to add depth to this investigation, two of the teachers were interviewed regarding the difficulties and supports they encountered in combining work, family, and school roles, their feelings about professionalism, and how they made meaning from their course work. It was decided a priori that one woman would be African American and the other woman Caucasian, and that they would have children and/or be married. For the purposes of reporting these results, the women, as well as any of the

people they mention, are referred to by pseudonyms. The first interview with each woman occurred in November 1995, and the second interviews occurred in January 1996. All four interviews lasted approximately one hour. The first interviews were transcribed and then examined for themes emerging from their answers. The second interviews assisted in determining if the interpretations of the first interviews were accurate.

The themes that emerged included the importance of instrumental and emotional support, time as a critical factor, work being enhanced by going to school, and the discrepancy between professionalism and earning a degree. The following section includes a demographic description of each woman, plus a description of the themes using the women's own words. Table 8 contains the women's scores on the key variables used in the quantitative analysis.

Table 8

Interviewees Scores on Key Variables

Interviewee	Family support	Work support	School integration	Role conflict	Degree commitment	Funding difficulty
Jill	2.5	19	4.04	4.2	.76	4
Candy	4.11	17	3.17	3.0	-.79	3

Jill

Jill was 33-years-old, Caucasian and divorced. She had one son, an 8-year-old, of whom she had custody, although the child did visit his father on occasional weekends. She and her son lived in a single-family dwelling in rural North Carolina. Recently, her mother had moved in with her. Jill indicated that this was only a temporary arrangement necessitated by her mother's poor health. Presumably, when her health improves, she will move out.

Jill had worked in child care for 11 years and had been working for her present employer for 5 months at the time of the interview. Jill had been working toward her associate's degree for 4 years. In her current position Jill worked 40 hours a week as a lead teacher with 16 5 year olds. There was an assistant teacher in her classroom, making the ratio of teachers to children 1 to 8. Jill was paid \$7.35 an hour and made \$15,000 a year. She received no health, retirement, or vacation benefits. Her child care center helped offset the cost of college courses by paying for registration and books during the fall quarter. However, during the winter quarter it could not afford to help in this way, so Jill decided not to enroll in classes. Jill was not given release time to attend classes in the fall.

Before her present position, Jill worked at a center where she was a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship recipient. I participated in an evaluation of part of the T.E.A.C.H. program and, in that role, had visited Jill's classroom to conduct observations. Jill was selected as an interview participant because she reported a strong commitment to earning an associates degree and because she and I had a past relationship. Indeed, when I began to envision conducting interviews with respondents in this study, it was Jill who I had imagined interviewing. I was impressed with her teaching in contrast to the quality in the rest of her center. I was interested in knowing more about her, and what gave her the strength to attend college courses and excel as an early childhood teacher despite difficult circumstances. I was surprised when I visited a community college classroom and saw Jill. I asked her if she would be willing to participate as an interviewee and was delighted when she agreed. She was selected from among 18 Caucasian women who indicated that they were willing to be interviewed.

I believe that the interview with Jill went well in that I gathered much useful information. However, I was uncomfortable taking her time. As was evident her interviews, not having enough time to do things was Jill's main complaint. Both interviews were conducted on Saturday mornings, while her son was visiting his father. I felt that Jill was comfortable in talking to me, but that the conversations we had made Jill feel bad. Because her situation was so grim, talking about her work/family/school situation seemed to depress her. At the time of the second interview Jill was not enrolled in courses due to lack of funding support. She did not seem so harried or depressed, and although potentially due to other reasons, her improved attitude possibly was due to her having more time to fulfill her other obligations.

Candy

Candy was an African American woman who lived with her husband and three sons in an urban, low-income housing development. At the time of the first interview she and her husband were both 32 years old and their sons were 12, 7 and 2 years old. Her husband had some high school education and was employed as a factory worker. Candy had been employed in child care for six years and was employed at her current center for three years. Candy worked 40 hours per week as a head teacher in a toddler room and with after-schoolers. Candy made \$5.00 an hour, about \$10,000 a year.

Only two of the 55 African American respondents who filled out the questionnaires agreed to be interviewed. Candy was selected because the other teacher indicated that she was not interested in getting a degree.

Both interviews were conducted in Candy's home on week nights. Her youngest child was in the room with us during both of the interviews, and other family members came and went. Because she and I had no prior relationship, I was not as comfortable interviewing Candy as I had been interviewing Jill. I also was worried that Candy might not trust me because I am Caucasian. However, Candy seemed comfortable talking to me and seemed more at ease as the conversation progressed. When I called to arrange the second interview, Candy seemed almost happy to hear from me. After the first interview Candy mentioned that the interview had been all right and was similar to what Jim (her instructor at the community college) had said it would be. I got the impression that my questions had been comfortable for her, and this allowed her to develop a trust in me.

The reaction I had after interviewing Candy was dramatically different from Jill. Despite the fact that Candy and her family seemed to live in much greater poverty, Candy had a more positive attitude. I felt invigorated after talking with Candy, because she believed she was improving her situation and was excited about school.

Family Support

In response to the questions regarding what it was like to coordinate a family, work, and school, both women indicated that it was a difficult task. Both women initially mentioned the support, or lack of it, that they got from their families.

In Jill's case the task of coordinating work, school, and family was overwhelming. Jill said "It's very difficult, very difficult for me, especially when you've got a family or you are a single parent, like me, sometimes it is really hard to do that." Later in the first interview Jill said,

It would make it so much easier for me to have somebody who would be able to keep Luke for me, or be able to take on a little bit of the responsibility of the home. That would make it a whole lot easier for me not to have everything on me. That is probably the worst thing for me is to have everything, every responsibility, on me.

When I asked her to clarify how the lack of a partner affected her ability to coordinate roles, Jill said,

It would still be me making the effort to drive to class, me making myself do the work. I don't care if I had three men here, you still have to do it yourself, and I don't care how much support, you know, how much they do for you, you still have to take yourself up by the nape of the neck and, especially if you worked all day, make yourself go to class, even when you are so tired you are propping your eyelids up.

Jill also indicated that she expected a lot out of herself, attributing it to her personality. In Jill's case, she seemed to want to receive more

instrumental support from others, rather than moral support, which came from self and her belief in God.

Candy's response to the same question revealed that she, too, found it difficult to juggle these three roles. Candy said, "Well, to be honest, it is difficult." However, she focused on the help and support she got rather than the difficulty. She said that her husband helped with the household responsibilities, which gave her a chance to have a break when she came home before she had to work on school assignments. She told me,

But what I like about it is my husband supports me. What I like about his support is that he knows my schedule is so conflicted and so tight that he will have dinner cooked for the kids, so that helps me so when I come home and unload my books and everything, sit down a few minutes, so I can get to my school work and get that out of the way.

Later Candy explained,

It helps, it helps, a lot because if you don't have that (support) it is so hard to do it, it burns you out, and you be like I have to give up on something, and the most likely, if you got work and family and you know you need income, most likely you'll give up your school. You will give up your schooling and you be like, most likely I'll try to go back later because you need the income, so I'm gonna go ahead and just work. If you don't have that it is hard, it is so hard, and I seen a lot of teacher at work, a couple of them have given up on classes already and have dropped out in the T.E.A.C.H. program, they just can't go back right now because the income, they can't do it. With the husbands with different job hours, and don't have no baby-sitter to keep their little ones for them, they have to let something go and, of course, the majority it be your school if you need the extra income to survive, which a lot of them did. I'm kind of glad that my husband helped me which he did. Cause I couldn't made it. I already knew that.

Candy also mentioned the moral support from her mother and that it helped.

Yeah my mom give me support even though she is not here in [Town]...One time I was telling her, "Mom I am so tired and overloaded so badly I feel like I am burning out" ...and she tells me that it is worth it to

take the effort for it. And she tells me it's worth it because she stayed in school, and she tells me it is worth it to go ahead and finish it.

When I asked Jill if there was anything that helped her combine the roles with regard to her family, she indicated that it was difficult to think about anything being easy. Then she went on to explain how a lack of family worked against her.

I don't have any family that live here, cousins and all that, uhm only my mother and one sister. So you know my mother is not a lot of help, she knows how difficult it is for me, how much of a struggle it is. I have to rely on her some for child care, and that makes it difficult for her.

Later Jill said,

Momma has difficulty keeping him (Luke) because she is not well. Her nerves are bad and of course an eight-year-old boy is a live wire here, and she is not able to help Luke with his homework that he has to have done.

Although there were many things that Jill's mother could not do, such as drive a car, in the second interview Jill identified some of the household chores her mother did help with.

Mom helps me some when she can, as she is able. One night a week she might cook or whatever, that is a big help, and she helps with the laundry, and that is a big help. Twice a week Luke gets off the bus here and as mom is able, Luke is a really big handful for Momma, but it makes me feel good, because as least twice a week Luke is able to come home and eat what ever he wants or watch T.V. and not have to go over to somebody else's house, and that makes me feel good, to be able to provide that something for him to provide a normal childhood. If I can't be here Momma is a good substitute for me. That is really nice for me.

It is interesting to note that although Jill's mother lived with her, she did not appear to be a strong source of support, whereas Candy's mother did not live in the same city, she was identified as a source of emotional support. Candy emphasized the importance of family support, "If you don't have somebody to

push you, you feel like you're not really worth it, and you are not really worth it, to take the effort for it."

Support from Work

In response to the supports that make it possible to coordinate work, school, and a family, both women indicated they received a lot of support for going to school from people associated their jobs. In Jill's case, her supervisors expected her to attend. Jill said,

My supervisor does help me out a lot. She is really good about trying to work with you for classes. She wants you to go to school, that's kind of an expectation. She is pretty good about trying to work with you. But you have to understand that there are other people there. There are other people taking classes too, and she also has to work with them. Something that may be good for you may not be worked out in the best interest of the others. So even though she might want to help you more she may not be able to.

Jill also indicated that colleagues at work gave emotional support "because they know how difficult it is." However, Jill's place of employment discontinued its financial support of her schooling, so the support was not continuous.

In Candy's case she felt strongly encouraged by her director, both emotionally and financially. Candy said,

My director at the job is really a help. She's the one that made me go to school. 'Cause I wasn't thinking about school and Marie told me, "You ought to go ahead and go because there is so much new stuff coming out for day care that it would be really great for you, and then you could bring it and share with the others."

In the second interview I asked her to tell me more about the support she got from her job. Candy said,

Yeah Marie is real good, she been pushing. She the one that made me go to school. I was thinking about it, but I was, "Marie, I can't do it. My husband works third shift and I don't have nobody to keep the kids" and

she said, "Candy you can do it. I know you are a strong woman. You can do it. Just take two courses and then from that decision you can decide if you really want to do it."

Both women indicated that they would like to have more flexibility in their schedules, and they would prefer to work less. Candy said she would like to work fewer hours in order to take more classes and finish her program sooner. This was the only thing that she identified that would improve her condition with regard to work and school. Candy said,

I would like to get my hours changed as less time to be going (to work) and then be going (to school) full time. If there was a way I could do that, I would like to do that, and then take more courses. I would like to take two courses instead of one course. That is what I would really like, if I could change, that is about the only thing.

In the second interview she reiterated this feeling.

Yes, if I could change my hours, or I wish we would open up a little bit earlier, or something like that. I would like to change that, so I would be able to take more than I am taking. Because I am only taking one class at a time, and I would like to take two courses at a time, and I wish I would be able to do that. The way my hours are, I would not be able to do that. That is the only thing that I wish I could change, is to take two courses instead of one course. 'Cause taking one course it is a little bit longer to finish it (getting a degree) 'cause you are taking one class at a time.

Jill expressed the desire to quit work entirely in order to finish with school more rapidly. However, Jill stated that this would be impossible due to financial constraints.

Well, I got this big kick back around Christmas, like I was wanting to quit work and go full time to school, so I tried a couple of government numbers, and tried to call the offices to see about scholarships and other government things... And you have to quit work to go full time and how many scholarships would you need in a year?...I would jump at the chance to (to quit school) because I feel like I could do it in three years. To be able to do that would be a dream come true. If there was any way I could do that I would love to. I would jump at the chance just to be able to do that. I don't think it's going to happen.

In the second interview Jill said,

I am sitting here thinking: How am I going to get this degree? How am I going to juggle finances to pay for it? How am I going to juggle the time to have even some semblance of a life and then to try to go to school and get this degree? I want very desperately to get this degree; otherwise, I would not have spent as much time as I have already. It would have been much easier for me to have dropped out already than to keep this struggle up of trying to go to school. I desperately want this degree I would give anything to get it, but I don't know how I am going to, and that gets depressing.

Jill also said,

It is sort of a vicious rat race. Day care centers can not pay you enough money to make ends meet. So you are working at a job that you can't make ends meet, yet you are working at a job where you can't create enough time, or you can't quit your work to go back to school to get trained for a job that would be able to meet your needs.

In general, Jill's interview was rather pessimistic, which she admitted. She could find few sources of support except her faith in God. Jill said, "I am a very religious person...I draw strength from my church."

Regarding what life was like before they took classes, the responses of the two women were different. Jill recalled juggling two roles - family and work - as being easier than her present situation although still difficult.

Well, you know, compared to now it seems like pie work. But, back then, any time you hold down a job and you have children and you have the responsibilities of a home that is tough. The women have it much harder than the men because their (men's) eight hours are over when they come home, and ours are just starting another shift. You put in an eight-hour job, and then you come home and pull another eight hours. But then you have to add your class time, and time for studies, and something has just got to go. You just have to stick with your priorities 'cause you can't do everything.

With the addition of school to the roles of mother and worker, some things in Jill's life had to go. She had to prioritize her needs and curtail some activities, like her social life and keeping up with house cleaning. The fact

that she had little time for a social life exacerbated the problem of finding people to help with instrumental support.

Time

For both women, the overarching concern was time. Jill experienced a lack of time. She did not have time to (a) care for her home in the way she would like, (b) to spend with her child, or (c) to plan for her job. Her main complaint in this respect was not having time to care for her son.

You know, I don't know what I am sacrificing. Sometimes I feel like I am sacrificing my son for other people's children. I'm making him suffer. I think, "Jill, here you are teaching other people's children and letting your own suffer." That is very difficult for a parent.

When I asked her more about this in the second interview, Jill said,

It was hard taking a lot of classes. And knowing a lot about child development is real hard for me as a parent, to see my own child's needs slipping, and me not being able to meet my own child's needs while I am also trying to meet somebody else's child's needs.

Jill also felt like she didn't have time to attend to household errands in an adequate fashion. She said that with her current schedule she needed to take time off from work to attend to errands and that was frowned upon.

I really don't want to work until 4:30 every day because that is really the most stressful...I have to leave here at 7:15 in the morning, so basically businesses are open from nine to five, so any business that you have to attend to, you have to ask off work...Lord it begins to be a nightmare to get your oil changed. To go anywhere to do anything you have to ask off work, and that has been a real stress point. I have to juggle around, like I have to go back into my lawyers office, and I've had to cancel twice because I chicken out asking off work, because I've already asked off a couple of times, and that is not favored at all you know. Child care, boy, you work sick, and I have to work anyway because it is only me.

In the second interview Jill echoed the sentiment of not being able to lose any time at her job because of financial considerations.

You work sick. You can't ask off because I need those forty hours. That is what I am expecting. I have worked all day with a 102 temperature. I hate to do it, to spread germs at the day care, but I need those hours.

For Candy, who expressed more of a sense of support, the focus of time was on organization, ways to "make" more time - time which could be spent on getting school work done and getting time for herself. She stated that the ability to find a little free time everyday made all the difference in her ability to take on her three roles.

If you are a single parent, and you've got overload like you've got children, if you do like I do. I put stuff out ahead of time like what I am going to fix for dinner so that when I get home it don't take that long to fix. I would fix something easy like spaghetti O's, or tuna fish, or hotdogs, something, a little meal that the kids can eat, something quick so you can have your little time so that you can sit down, and relax and get all the exhaustion away from work. And after the kids eat, let them sit down and watch T.V. for a little while. Let them watch their cartoons or put in a tape for a little while so you can sit down and have your little time to yourself, for you to get your school work or your paper work that you need to do from school. Because that little time helps, it may not be a lot of time, but that thirty, forty minutes can help you.

Although these women experienced a lack of time, they liked the additional role of student. If given a choice, they would pick the role of student over that of child care teacher until they finished their degree.

Both women also discussed the ameliorating effects of support on the stress that they experienced in coordinating these three roles. The women talked about different kinds of support that could be labeled under two categories, instrumental and emotional. Instrumental support was help in doing things, such as caring for children. Emotional support was encouragement and moral support, such as people telling them that it is worth it to continue in school. Perhaps because Jill felt an acute lack of instrumental support, she focused on the need for more instrumental support and did not place a premium on the benefits of emotional support. Additionally, Jill may

have felt that she needed to rely on God for support, as she could not count on people. Because Candy received instrumental support from her spouse, she was more focused on the emotional support she received from family and work, which she identified as being a strong motivator to continue in school.

Professionalism

When asked whether they felt like professionals both women quickly and strongly answered "yes." When asked why they felt like professionals, Jill said,

I have been in the field for many years, and I feel like, although I don't have a certified degree, that experience plays a big part in what you do. So I've had that experience, so now when I am in a classes I maybe see the value, and I am taking it much more seriously than a girl who is just coming out of high school. I can see the wisdom in some of the classes, whereas I don't think some of the others do appreciate the classes.

Another example of why she felt like a professional was her ability to help parents.

You can spot problems. You may not be able to diagnose them, but you can spot problems. And you can see children who are going to need help, who need services, and you can be a help when parents come to you with problems, you are going to have a little bit more of a response to offer solutions. And I think that is part of being a professional.

Candy's response focused on the importance and difficulty of the job.

People don't realize that; they think day care is baby-sitting job, and it's not no baby sitting job. We have to really help those children when they come in the morning. We are with those children nine, ten hours cause some parents leave them from seven o'clock, eight o'clock, to six o'clock in the evening, and we are there with them for nine, ten hours of their children's lives. We're almost like those children's parents; that's the way I feel... We have to teach those kids. We have to be there for those kids. We have to help those children with their problems at home. It is not no baby-sitting job. We don't sit there and let them watch T.V. all day and play all day. No, no, no, no, no. We have to work with those children, and it is a professional job. But somehow I don't think society knows it. They really don't know that it is a professional job. I feel like I am a professional, like I am a regular school teacher. I feel that it is a

professional because public school teacher is a professional, so why can't day care workers be a professional. We work with children too. And it really is a professional, but society don't see us that way.

Jill also expressed frustration that the job was not well respected.

Think about it, you wouldn't take your car to a mechanic who had never worked on cars before. Or you certainly would not want to go to a doctor who had never seen patients, to have an operation or something. And children are the most precious thing we have in society. Our most precious commodity, and yet we are handing over their future to people who know nothing about education, or child care, or anything for that matter. It's a joke. I guess the child care profession is looked on like we kind of brought it on our selves because of the kind of people that are allowed to be in the classroom, and that we have allowed to be with our children. Child care people are not looked on as intelligent people who can actually think. Just like a dumb blonde kind of thing. There should be a flat requirement that people have some kind of certification or something. Everybody should have their associate degree at least.

Although Jill thinks that child care teachers should have a degree, she does not see this as connected to professionalism. Neither of the women mentioned professionalism being connected to their education. In the second interview I asked them about that connection. Jill said,

Well, on one hand, I could say that I don't have all of the certification that I need. Of course, that would make me feel a lot better if I did have the certification. To be able to say, see I have this on the wall, I am a professional. But I also know a lot of public school teachers who have a degree, but they are not what I would consider top of the line teachers. That doesn't always make you the best just because you have a lot of training. In order to be a good teacher you have to have a genuine love for children, I think you have to have a caring.

Candy's response was similar.

I think we already professional. I think when you get your certification you just done educated a little bit more, but you are a professional even though you don't have that. Because you are in that field, you might not have that training but you still a teacher. When you have a certificate, it is just a reward that you just learned a little bit more things about it, and you just update about the new stuff that is coming into the centers, and the new things that you learn about children, and new, different things you learn about like different adolescents, different learning disabilities... You say, "I know I studied that in one of those teacher

classes, let me go check in one of my books." And you look it up, and it tells you how to deal with that situation, or how to identify that situation. That is the only thing education does, it helps you identify something about a certain subject, or about a child that you in that field might have. But we are already professional.

It is possible that the women were taking this stance because to do otherwise would be admitting that they were not prepared to do their jobs well; this is an untenable situation. Apparently these women are not thinking of the term professional as I was, that of connecting education with the ability to work. These women believe they are doing a good job and that the work is important. It is these factors that make the work professional work and gives them the status of a profession. However, their feelings of professionalism are challenged by the worth society places on the job they do. Candy pointed out the inadequacy of her pay check.

The only thing that I just don't like about the day care situation is that we don't get acknowledged that we are a professional, and we don't get the pay as a professional.

The frustration Candy felt over not being respected as a professional extended to resenting the way some of the parents of the children treated her. She was distressed by their seeming lack of understanding about their children and their lack of respect for her opinions as a teacher.

You do have stubborn parents, parents that don't see what you see in their child, to try to get them to realize that I'm your child's teacher, and I am with your child nine, ten hours a day like he was my own child, and I know your child just as good as you do. And it is just trying not to offend the parents, to try to talk to them without offending them, or getting them upset, to sit down and get them to believe in what you are saying. 'Cause if you don't get the parent support it makes it hard on your job. It makes it hard on the child; because the fact is, he is not getting any support at home.

Although Jill did see training as part of the way to increase skill and quality in the classroom and as a way to increase respect, neither she nor

Candy mentioned training as supporting their sense of professionalism. Candy felt that she was a professional because the job that she did was important and of value. It is not clear what the source of her perception of herself as being effective in that job was. She expressed frustration that she is not acknowledged for the important responsibility that her job entails. This frustration becomes particularly acute when she discusses the lack of awareness of the magnitude of her job by the parents of the children she cares for and educates.

Making Meaning from College Course-Work

Candy indicated that life was easier before she started to take classes because she had more time to spend with her family. However, she began to take classes because she was "getting burned out, and wanted to try something different." Candy explained,

When I just had to go to work and come home, it was a little bit more time I could spend with my family because I did not have to worry about no studying. So it was a little bit more time cause I didn't have no studying to do. But I was getting burned out, I wanted to try something different. And it was like a difference. You learn something new when you are going to school, so I am so excited now that I am going to school. I get the encouragement because when I go to school I talk to other teachers about stuff. 'Cause I was really getting burned out everyday of working with the same people, cause we just doing the same things everyday.

For Candy taking classes increased her sense of fulfillment at work and enhancing that role. Although coordinating the three roles was difficult for Candy, she seemed to be doing it for more immediate personal satisfaction than did Jill. Perhaps this added to the more optimistic picture Candy presented.

Jill indicated that she liked the applicability of her classes to her work, since she could "see the wisdom of what she learned in class". Jill said,

(I like) the practical, valuable stuff, like being forced to create a resource file, that you wouldn't normally say come in and say, "Hey, today I am going to make a resource file," on your own. It's going to happen because you don't have that much time, but being forced to do research, being forced to learn valuable things. I guess that is the best thing you are learning, things that actually help you in the classroom.

Jill indicated that she liked it when classes focused on relevant information or activities and resented having to do work she termed "busy work".

Because I didn't feel it was applicable to the class, and I ended up feeling like I got the raw end of the deal. Things like that I resent in the classroom. I resent things that are not actually useful to me. Things that seem just busy work. I resent those kinds of things.

Candy indicated that she liked learning all of the new things and then taking it back to use in her classroom. She said,

She (her college instructor) made it so interesting for us. Everyday we was going to school, she had us doing something different all the time. She experimented on us and all, and we did like we was kids. She would get us in a group and we'd do this and that, and it made it interesting and going because she always taught us something different.

She reiterated this theme in the second interview,

Yeah, because if you don't take the courses and you just in it (child care), you burn out. If you don't know nothing new, or you don't get a chance to talk to other teachers from other day cares, it is just like you're going to work. You are in your classroom, you have your lesson plan, and you are doing it, but you are not really into it no more, and you are not comfortable with your kids, and you are complaining this child is not right, or this child is not doing this. And it is best if you take some courses up because you learn different situations; you learn different things that you have never knew. Because there is so much stuff is coming out now, it is changing, and you will be amazed if you sit down and read some you will say, "Gee I didn't even know that." And you take that and you can experiment on that situation with a child, and then see if that really works with that child, and then you learn a little more. Instead of being in a dead-end job you can make your job a little bit more enjoyable if you kind of take some more courses advance yourself. That is what made me. If I did not take no courses I don't know where I would be at. I would probably find me something else. My girlfriend said the same thing; she has been in it twelve years, and she say if she did not go to school she said she would have gave up too if it weren't for the classes she said. And listening to the teachers, and talking to different day care

(teachers), and enjoying herself, and learning more, she said the same thing. It really made her job enjoyable. That is why I say I wish other teachers take at least a couple classes, and meet other teachers from different day cares, it change a lot the way you feel about day care, and about your classes, and age groups, and everything.

Both women presented themselves as having gotten a lot out of their college courses and were changing their teaching in accordance with their new knowledge. Jill said,

I think my college classes have made a big impact on my teaching. They have changed a lot of the ways I handle things now. Especially discipline, that has made a tremendous difference in my classroom as far as that is concerned. And being able to appreciate children. Being able to appreciate their humor, being able to appreciate their outlook on life.

In addition, Jill said that she learned through a variety of teaching styles although her least favorite was straight lecture. She also said she felt that her experience in child care made her more able to see the wisdom of what people were presenting in her classes. She felt that some of the younger women without first-hand experience may not see the wisdom of some of the material.

Candy said that she learned best through experience, either through hands-on activities or from listening to people who had direct experience with the topics they were presenting. She seemed to feel that the information was valid if presented by people who had first-hand experience. When I asked her how she learned best, she said

Hands on experience, or when they bring somebody in who has been through that situation, or they bring a talker in or somebody whose been a teacher from another day care. When they have spokes people that come in that had that experience hands on.

Both women expressed positive feelings about college course work. Both focused on how their college courses affected the work they did, and they felt that this was a positive change. Although Jill was attending school because

she had decided to get a degree, she focused on the pressures of school. She said that she appreciated being forced to make up a resource file, forced to do a research paper, etc. In contrast, Candy expressed invigoration at getting to experiment on children in her classroom. She also indicated that, since her work was paying for her classes and her books, she felt that going to school was valid and worthwhile.

Conclusions

The women in these interviews had a difficult time combining school, family, and work. Given a choice, they would like to have lessened this strain by eliminating one role, namely work. This was not an option for either woman. They had to continue to work to support their families. The obvious choice was to eliminate school. This was what Jill was forced to do the second quarter, for financial reasons rather than time management. Many of Candy's colleagues also had quit school because of money and time constraints.

Both women reported receiving support from their family. For Candy, her husband was a tremendous source of both instrumental and emotional support. For Jill, her mother was a source of some instrumental support, although not as much as she would like. Jill wished for other sources of instrumental support, yet she did not feel that an increase in emotional support would be of much help to her. For Candy, the emotional support she received was critical to her feeling that working towards a degree was worth the effort.

Both of these women felt like professionals. The reasons they gave for feeling like professionals focused on the jobs that they did. Both women drew attention to the status of elementary school teachers as professionals, and the fact that the jobs they performed also were teaching. They both focused on

the importance of what children learned while in their care. Neither of the women connected being a professional with getting a degree. In fact, Candy said that a degree meant "you just know more knew where to find things."

It was frustrating to both women that society did not see child care teachers as professional. Candy was particularly frustrated that the parents didn't see the teachers as professionals. Finally, both teachers complained about low child care wages.

One of the goals of the interviews was not realized. It was hoped that some of the questions would establish the women's epistemology. While there were hints at this, such as Candy's appreciation of instructors who had experience in actually working in child care or early childhood classrooms, it was difficult for me to attempt a designation for Jill. To make determinations about these women's epistemology and its affect on their educational experiences would require more in-depth interviews. However, these women were clearly able to make meaning of what they learned in class. Both women noted the applicability of what they learned, and they truly appreciated the ways in which their coursework enhanced their jobs.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS

The following chapter discusses the results of this research. Directions for future research also are offered. Finally, an attempt is made to connect the findings of this research to the current efforts to professionalize the early childhood workforce.

Summary and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine whether role conflict mediated the relationship between work, home, school, and commitment to earning a community college degree for child care teachers. It was hypothesized that greater support from work, family of origin, family of procreation, and lower school integration would reduce role conflict. Reduced role conflict, in turn, would increase one's commitment to earning a degree. Further, it was proposed that the relationships would differ for those who experienced greater difficulty in funding education. In addition, it was predicted that those who re-enrolled the following quarter would report higher levels of support, and integration, and lower levels of role conflict than those who did not re-enroll.

These hypotheses were based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory that posits that the ability to successfully coordinate pursuits in different microsystems (i.e. school, home and work) will be influenced by the ease or difficulty one experiences integrating those microsystems. Further, the ecological theory proposes that experiences in one microsystem can influence

functioning in another microsystem. The interaction of microsystems comprises the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). It was believed that role conflict would measure the level of difficulty the teachers had in coordinating these three microsystems.

Role Conflict

Contrary to the hypothesis, role conflict was not explained by work support, school integration, or support from one's family. In fact, there was essentially no relationship between these measures in this study. In the past, researchers have found a relationship between work satisfaction and role conflict for child care teachers (Manlove, 1993) and role conflict and job burn-out in elementary and high school teachers (Byrne, 1994). However, in the earlier research the source of role conflict was within-role conflict while the present study examined across-role conflict. This difference in the type of role conflict could explain, in part, the discrepancy between the findings in the present study and the past studies examining role conflict.

In general, the women in this study did not express a great deal of role conflict. The mean score for role conflict was 2.62 ($SD = .75$), on a 5-point scale indicating the three roles interfered with each other only occasionally. This finding was surprising in light of the interviews, where the two women discussed how difficult it was juggling the three roles. It is important to note that both of the women interviewed reported higher levels of role conflict than the sample in general.

There are several possible reasons for the low levels of role conflict expressed by the majority of women in this study. It could be that these women were so accustomed to juggling multiple roles that, although conflict may exist, they have learned to deal with it successfully. Thus, they do not

report experiencing high levels of role conflict. It also is possible that the women were experiencing role conflict but did not report it, as a reflection of cognitive dissonance. That is, since they were combining three roles, reporting that such effort was difficult or that one role interfered with the others was not acceptable. Interference of one role with another could mean they were unsuccessful in their efforts, so they choose to disregard the conflict. It may be that reporting low role conflict is perceived as more socially desirable, and so the women report lower levels of role conflict.

Regardless of the reason, the women in this study did not report high levels of interference of one role on another. Therefore, the model as it was conceptualized was not supported. Role conflict did not mediate the relationship between the measures of support and integration in the three microsystems and commitment to earning a degree, nor did it have a direct effect on commitment to earning a degree. A more plausible explanation of these findings is that commitment to earning a degree increases role conflict rather than role conflict decreasing commitment. Chartrand (1990) found a relationship between commitment to earning a degree and distress in nontraditional college students and posited that commitment to the student role might create distress. In Gerson's (1985) research on women returning to college, she found women who returned to college to take courses reported experiencing more role strain than did those women who were housewives. As demonstrated in Gerson's research, the addition of a new role increased role strain.

Commitment to Earning a Degree

The result of the analysis indicated that among the variables included in the model, integration in college was the best predictor of commitment to

earning a college degree. This outcome supports findings of Bean and Metzger (1989) concerning the importance of being integrated in the college setting on intent to continue. The interviews also highlighted the importance of school integration. Candy, in particular, expressed the benefits of making friends with other students, as well as the instructors. The contribution of these relationships to her enthusiasm about the classes was evident. Jill also talked about the importance of instructors respecting her intelligence, and how this contributed to her positive assessment of the student role.

Family support also was a significant predictor of commitment to earning a degree in the current model. This finding supports that of several researchers (Allen, 1994; Chartrand, 1992; Mutter, 1992) who also found a direct relationship between family support and commitment to earning a degree. This finding is consistent with ecological theory in that support from one microsystem, the family, is instigative in development, or in this case creating the potential for development, in another microsystem, school. It may be that there is a synergistic effect, such that being supported by one's family and feeling integrated in school together contribute to higher commitment to earning a degree.

When considered in light of the interviews, the relationship between support from one's family and commitment to earning a degree is understandable. The women in the interviews discussed, at length, the support (or lack of it) they received from their families. This became a focal point in discussing how they are able to combine the three roles. For example, Candy indicated that she would have been unable to continue in college courses if her husband were not so willing to take on responsibilities in the home, such as preparing meals and taking care of their children. Jill indicated that her

situation would have been made much easier, if she lived closer to family members who could help her in taking care of her son.

It is curious that there was no connection between work support and commitment to earning a degree, although this lack of connection is consistent with other research (Jorde-Bloom, Sheerer, Richard, & Britz, 1991). The implicit assumption is that one is earning a degree to become more proficient in the job. In the present study, the interviewees mentioned the connection between college classes and their job performance. Taking classes enhanced their performance and their sense of satisfaction with their jobs. Based on this, it would seem that there should be a connection between feeling supported at work and being committed to earning a degree. It may be that there was some ambivalence between work and school. Some teachers may feel school improves their job performance to such an extent that they would like to stop working until they finish their degree. If this is the case, feeling supported at work may actually create guilt. One may feel torn between needing to work and the desire to work less in order to earn a degree. On the other hand, being supported at work may engender a sense of complacency. Teachers who felt supported at work may want to maintain the status quo. Earning a degree can, in some way, be perceived as a threat in that the teacher learn new information in college courses that disrupt established work patterns.

Effects of Difficulty in Financing Education

When the effect of financing one's education was examined, for those who had little difficulty the predictor of commitment to earning a degree was college integration. For those who had greater difficulty, both support from

family and school integration predicted the variance in commitment to earning a degree.

These different patterns of relationship according to level of perceived difficulty in funding education are consistent with the ecological theory. As difficulty in funding education increased, the importance of support from family also increased, possibly to compensate for any ambivalent feelings about spending precious resources on a nonessential, such as earning a degree. It may be that when teachers perceive financial difficulty in funding college, they become more dependent on family support to maintain their commitment to the goal of earning a degree. In this way individual characteristics co-act with environmental factors to create different patterns of influence on commitment to earning a degree.

Re-enrollment

Those who re-enrolled expressed higher levels of family support than those who did not. The finding that support from family varied by enrollment status is consistent with findings of other researchers (Allen, 1994; Chartrand, 1992; Malin et al., 1980; Mutter, 1992) who found that parental encouragement and support had a direct and positive effect on re-enrollment.

The differing relationship between family support and commitment to earning a degree by enrollment status lends further support to the argument that influences from one microsystem affects other microsystems in which the individual functions. In this case home affects school. Rather than role conflict acting as the mesosystem influence, it seemed that encouragement and validation from family may be the process influencing college participation.

Furthermore, there was a trend toward commitment to earning a degree differentiating those who re-enroll in college courses from those who do not. This finding is consistent with past research on college persistence that found enrollment behavior to be predicted by commitment to earning a degree (Mutter, 1992; Waggener & Smith, 1993). The connection between commitment to earning a degree and enrollment behavior also supports using these measures together as a means of assessing the persistence construct.

School integration was not different for the re-enroller's status. This could indicate that for the teachers in this study the context of school was not as influential as was the context of home. It may be that school integration predicts commitment teachers feel to earning a degree, but in order to attend college teachers needed the support of others. In this case support from families is necessary to pursue their goal.

Implications for Future research

The results of this study suggest the need to conduct a longitudinal study following child care teachers engaged in college course work over a period of several quarters or years. In this way, other factors associated with re-enrollment and commitment to earning a degree can be identified. The variables in this study accounted for about 30% of the variance in goal commitment. Uncovering other factors that influence commitment to earning a degree would be valuable. The present study suggested that individual differences play a role in determining what factors influence commitment to earning a degree. For example, for people who experienced little difficulty in financing education school integration predicted commitment to earning a degree. For those who experienced difficulty in financing education, family support and school integration predicted commitment. Examining other

individual differences and the manner in which they influence commitment may better reveal the multiple factors that influence college persistence.

Exploring these variables over time also would allow one to see their temporal relationships. It is likely that, over the course of a child care teachers' college career, factors that influence commitment to earning a degree and enrollment patterns will change. Understanding which factors play a larger or smaller role at what point in one's college career, may be useful in designing programs that promote college persistence and consequent degree attainment.

In a critique of barriers and supports to professional development for child care teachers, Cassidy et al. (1994) point out the need for mechanisms that promote teachers feeling comfortable in the college setting. They argue that teachers may be unfamiliar with the culture of higher education, and this may negatively affect their success in college. Strategies to foster teachers' integration in the role of student also may increase their commitment to earning a degree. Creating college classrooms where teachers are able to share and build relationships will be critical to securing their continued enrollment. Determining the salience of the factors that contribute to feelings of school integration would allow colleges to tailor strategies to the particular needs of students and increase students' feelings of integration. In turn, this would increase commitment to earning a degree.

Although role conflict did not predict commitment to earning a degree in this research, it should not be discounted in future research with nontraditional employed students. However, future research may benefit from measuring role conflict differently. In the present study, the questions determining the level of role conflict were unidirectional; all asked for the

amount of interference one role had with another (e.g., "how often does work interfere with school?"). In this way, the measure of role conflict was additive. It may be that the conflict arising from trying to manage three roles is multiplicative rather than additive. An assessment of role conflict that measures the ways the three roles interface with each other simultaneously may prove more useful. Also, future research may want to assess the benefits, as well as costs, of assuming the three roles. It could be that the added self-esteem or increased social network one gains from attending college courses offset some costs associated with assuming this third role (Piechowski, 1992).

Additionally, it is possible that measures of instrumental support may be more predictive of role conflict than were the measures of emotional support used in the present study. According to Jill, it was instrumental support (e.g., help with laundry or cooking) that made a difference in the stress she experienced, and not the emotional support of people telling her she was doing a good job. The questions included in the survey focused on perceived emotional support (i.e., "My family enjoys hearing about what I think,"). Perhaps measuring both instrumental and emotional support would better predict role conflict.

Implication for Professional Development

One must consider the findings of this study in light of the professional development models being proposed for child care teachers. These findings suggest that professional development models must acknowledge the critical role that integration in college plays in teachers' commitment to earning a degree. Professional development models tend to focus on the benefits children derive from the teacher's training. Additional attention should be given to the benefits of such training to the teachers' own development.

Discussions of increased confidence and self-esteem that teachers gain from taking classes and meeting teachers from other settings also should be included in the professional development models.

As a profession there is little that can be done to create family support. However, professional development models must acknowledge that teachers are being asked to take on the responsibility of in-service education in addition to their commitment to other responsibilities. Acknowledging the key role family support plays in the teachers' ability to take classes will give legitimacy to the multiple roles teachers occupy. Community college administrators also could address these needs by creating support services that help teachers combine the roles of student and family member. For instance, class schedules could be adjusted so as to interfere less with family responsibilities, and child care could be provided during evening classes (Cassidy et al., 1995). Although role conflict was not difficult for these teachers, mechanisms that support the teacher in attending to family responsibilities are likely to engender support from other members of that role set. Such additional services may enhance teachers' feelings of support from the institution thereby increasing school integration.

The results of this study indicate the need for a stronger connection between professionalism and earning a degree. The lack of a connection between work and earning a degree or re-enrolling in courses is troubling as it indicates a lack of a connection between earning a degree and working in child care. To address this issue, one area that needs further investigation is the child care teachers' understanding of professionalism. Because ascribing to a professional development model is voluntary, determining why and under what conditions teachers embrace professional development is important. One

means of gaining an understanding of reasons teachers adopt a professional development model is uncovering their understanding of the connection between advanced education and working in child care.

It also is possible that the tension between being a caregiver and being a professional interferes with making the connection between professionalism and earning a degree. As Jill noted, to be a good teacher you need a genuine love for children rather than an advanced degree. This echoes research by Innes and Innes (1979) conducted with family day care providers. The work of caring for and educating children is often affective. Some teachers may feel that earning a degree is counter to the affective nature of the job, such that emotional warmth is diminished by professionalism. It may be that teachers hold negative attitudes about professionalizing the early childhood work force. If this is the case, then efforts are needed to foster respect for the art and the science of teaching.

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Appendix A

Operational Definitions

Commuter institution: Four-year college or university with a student population of 50% or more nonresidential students.

In-service education: Coursework that provides college-level credit taken while one is also a member of the child care labor force.

In-service training: Nonsequential workshops on varied topics not leading to college level credit taken while one is a member of the child care workforce.

Nonresidential student: Student who lives off-campus.

Nontraditional student: A college student who does not qualify for the definition of traditional student.

Traditional student: A full-time, residential, college student at a 4-year institution of higher learning, between the ages of 18-24.

Appendix B
Questionnaire

Thank you very much for agreeing to fill out this questionnaire. It is very important to us that we gather as much information as we can, so please try to answer all of the questions. There are no right or wrong answers in this questionnaire. Many of the questions ask you to indicate whether you agree or disagree with a statement, and different people will have different responses to them.

ABOUT YOUR JOB

The first set of questions asks about your current job. Please read each question carefully and mark your answer.

- Q1 How long have you worked in the field of early childhood?
Total years _____ and months _____
- Q2 How long have you worked for your present employer?
Total years _____ and months _____
- Q3 On the average, how many hours a week do you work at your center?
Number of hours/week _____
- Q4 Which job title most nearly describes your role in your organization. If you have a dual role, what position do you spend more time doing? (Circle the number of your answer.)
- 1 Teacher's aide
 - 2 Assistant teacher
 - 3 Classroom teacher
 - 4 Head teacher
 - 5 Assistant director
 - 6 Director/supervisor
 - 7 Other: _____
- Q5 If you are a teacher, what is the age level of the children you work with? (Circle the number of your answer.)
- 1 Infants (birth to 1 year old)
 - 2 Toddlers (2 year olds)
 - 3 Preschool (3 and 4 year olds)
 - 4 Kindergarten
 - 6 1st, 2nd, 3rd graders
 - 7 Other: _____

- Q6 About how many children are in the room to which you are assigned most of the time?

Total number of children in room _____

- Q7 What is the approximate teacher to child ratio in your classroom?
_____ teacher(s) to _____ children
- Q8 Please tell us how much are you currently paid for your work? (Please fill in the answer that is easiest for you to report.)
- _____ per hour
_____ per week
_____ per month
_____ per year
- Q9 How do you think of your work? (Circle the number of your answer.)
- 1 Just a job
 - 2 As a career
- Q10 Do you expect to be working in the field of early childhood education three years from now?
- 1 YES
 - 2 NO > IF NO, why not? _____

The following questions ask more specifically about your current position.

- Q11 Check all that describe how you feel about your relationship with your co-workers.
- ___ My colleagues care about me.
- ___ I enjoy their company.
- ___ They share personal concerns with me.
- ___ They are not very helpful.
- ___ They are critical of my performance.
- ___ I feel I can't trust them.
- ___ They share ideas and resources.
- ___ They are competitive.
- ___ They encourage and support me.
- ___ My colleagues are hard to get to know.

Q12. Check all that describe how you feel about your relationship with your supervisor(s):

- Respects my work.
- Is too busy to know how I am doing
- Supervises me too closely
- Gives me helpful feedback.
- Asks my opinion.
- Is unpredictable
- Is tactful.
- Encourages me to try new ideas.
- Not very dependable.
- Makes me feel inadequate.

Q13. Check all that describe how you feel about your particular job:

- I have control over most things that directly affect my satisfaction.
- The work I do is stimulating and challenging
- Not enough variety.
- Is respected by the parents of my students.
- Not very creative
- Too much paperwork and record keeping
- Gives a sense of accomplishment
- Too little time to do all there is to do
- Makes an important difference in my students' lives
- Does not match my training and skills

Q14. Check all that describe how you feel about your working conditions:

- My work schedule is flexible
- I feel too cramped.
- The decor is drab.
- The teacher /child ratio is adequate.
- It's too noisy.
- School policies and procedures are clear.
- I can't find a place to carry on a private conversation.
- I need some new equipment and materials to do my job well.
- I always know where to find the things I need.
- It meets my standards of cleanliness.

Q15. Check all that apply to your pay and promotion opportunities:

- My pay is adequate.
- I'm in a dead-end job
- My fringe benefits are inadequate.
- I could be replaced tomorrow
- I have enough time off for holidays and vacations
- I'm being paid less than I deserve
- Opportunities for me to advance are limited.
- I expect to receive a raise during the next year.
- My pay is fair considering my background and skills
- My pay is fair considering what my co-workers make.

Q16 Check all that describe how you feel about your school or child care center

- I intend to work here at least two more years.
- I often think of quitting.
- I'm just putting time in.
- I take pride in my school/center.
- I feel very committed to my school/center.
- I put a lot of extra effort into my work.
- It would be difficult for me to find another job as good as the one I have.
- It's hard to feel committed to my job.
- I sometimes feel trapped in my job.
- I don't really care what happens to this place after I leave.

Q17. What are the two most satisfying things about your present job?

- 1. _____
- _____
- 2. _____
- _____

Q18. What are the two most frustrating things about your present job?

- 1. _____
- _____
- 2. _____
- _____

Q19. If you could do it all over again, would you choose a career in early childhood education?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO > IF NO, why not?

ABOUT YOUR COLLEGE EXPERIENCES

The next series of questions asks about your college experiences. Please read each question carefully and mark your answer.

Q20. In what semester and year did you begin taking courses towards a degree?

Semester _____ Year _____

Q21. Have you taken any time off since you started taking classes?

1 YES > IF YES, how many semesters/quarters have you skipped?

Number of quarters _____

Number of semester _____

2 NO

Q22. Please list the course name and about how many students are in each of your classes right now, not including yourself.

COURSE NAME	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
-------------	--------------------

- #1. _____
- #2. _____
- #3. _____
- #4. _____
- #5. _____
- #6. _____

Q23. About how many college courses have you taken before this present semester/quarter?

Number of courses completed _____

Q24. What is your current GPA?

Overall GPA _____

Q25. What is your expected GPA for this semester?

Expected GPA _____

Q26 From the list below, please check all of the types of aid that you are currently receiving to help you with your tuition and college expenses

- Financial aid
- Scholarship
- Grant
- GI bill
- Other (please describe)

Q27 If you checked any of the types of assistance listed above, about what proportion of your college expenses (books, tuition, fees, etc.) does the financial aid cover?

- 1 Less than 25%
- 2 25-50%
- 3 51-75%
- 4 76-100%

Q28 How difficult is it for you to pay for your college expenses?

- 1 Easy
- 2 Not very difficult
- 3 Somewhat difficult
- 4 Very difficult

Q29 The following series of questions ask about your feelings towards your college experience. Please indicate how well each statement describes you

STRONGLY DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	STRONGLY AGREE
DISAGREE		AGREE

- A Since going to college I have developed close personal relationships with other students 1 2 3 4 5
- B The student relationships I have formed since going to college have been satisfying 1 2 3 4 5
- C My relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my personal growth, attitudes and values 1 2 3 4 5

STRONGLY DISAGREE					STRONGLY AGREE
----------------------	--	--	--	--	-------------------

- D My relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interests 1 2 3 4 5
- E It has been easy for me to make friends with other students 1 2 3 4 5
- F Few other student would be willing to listen to me if I had a personal problem. 1 2 3 4 5
- G Most students at my college have values and attitudes that are different from mine. 1 2 3 4 5
- H My out-of-class contacts with faculty have had a positive influence on my personal growth, values, and attitudes. 1 2 3 4 5
- I My out-of-class contacts with faculty have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas. 1 2 3 4 5
- J My out-of-class contacts with faculty have had a positive influence on my career goals and aspirations. 1 2 3 4 5
- K Since coming to college, I have developed a close personal relationship with at least one faculty member 1 2 3 4 5
- L I am satisfied with the opportunities to meet and talk informally with faculty members. 1 2 3 4 5
- M Most of the faculty I have had contact with are generally interested in students. 1 2 3 4 5
- N Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are generally outstanding teachers. 1 2 3 4 5
- O Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are willing to spend time outside of class to discuss issues of interest with students. 1 2 3 4 5

STRONGLY DISAGREE STRONGLY AGREE

- P Most of the faculty I have had contact with are interested in helping students grow in more than just academic areas. 1 2 3 4 5
- Q Most of the faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely interested in teaching 1 2 3 4 5
- R I am satisfied with my intellectual development since I entered college. 1 2 3 4 5
- S My academic experience has had a positive impact on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas 1 2 3 4 5
- T I am satisfied with my academic experiences at college. 1 2 3 4 5
- U Most of my courses this year have been intellectually stimulating 1 2 3 4 5
- V My interest in ideas and intellectual matters has increased since going to college 1 2 3 4 5
- W I am more likely to attend a cultural event (ie, a concert, lecture or art show) now than I was before going to college 1 2 3 4 5
- X I have performed academically as well as I thought I would 1 2 3 4 5
- Y It is important for me to graduate from college. 1 2 3 4 5
- Z I am confident that I made the right decision in choosing to take courses 1 2 3 4 5
- AA It is likely that I will register at the same college next quarter / semester. 1 2 3 4 5
- BB It is important to me that I graduate from the college I currently attend 1 2 3 4 5
- CC I have a good idea of what I want to major in 1 2 3 4 5
- DD Getting good grades is important to me 1 2 3 4 5

ABOUT YOUR FAMILY

Q30 Please tell us about the people living in your home. List them, their age and sex, beginning with yourself.

WHO? (Husband, roommate, son, stepson, etc.)	AGE (in years)	SEX (M=Male, F=Female)
---	-------------------	---------------------------

Yoursell

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

(If there are more people, please list them on the back)

Q31 We are interested in knowing about the support you receive from your own family (that is spouse, children, etc) Please read each item carefully and circle the number of the answer that best fits with the way you feel

STRONGLY DISAGREE STRONGLY AGREE

- A My family gives me the moral support I need 1 2 3 4 5
- B I get good ideas about how to do things or make things from my family. 1 2 3 4 5
- C My family enjoys hearing about what I think 1 2 3 4 5
- D Members of my family share many of my interests. 1 2 3 4 5
- E Certain members of my family come to me when they have problems or need advice 1 2 3 4 5
- F I rely on my family for emotional support. 1 2 3 4 5

STRONGLY DISAGREE STRONGLY AGREE

- G There is a member of my family I could go to if I were just feeling down, without feeling funny 1 2 3 4 5
- H My family and I are very open about what we think about things 1 2 3 4 5
- I My family is sensitive to my personal needs 1 2 3 4 5
- K I have a deep sharing relationship with a number of members of my family 1 2 3 4 5
- L Members of my family got good ideas about how to do things or make things from me 1 2 3 4 5
- M When I confide in members of my family it makes me uncomfortable. 1 2 3 4 5
- N Members of my family seek me out for companionship..... 1 2 3 4 5
- O I think that my family feels that I am good at helping them solve problems 1 2 3 4 5

Q32 The following questions are about your parents and their backgrounds. Please circle the number that represents the highest level of education that each has achieved

MOTHER FATHER

- Less than high school 1 1
- Some high school 2 2
- High school graduate 3 3
- Some college 4 4
- AA degree / technical school certification 5 5
- BA/BS degree 6 6
- Some graduate study 7 7
- Master's degree 8 8
- Doctoral degree 9 9

Q33 What is (was) your father's occupation?
.....

Q34 What is (was) your mother's occupation?
.....

Q35. Did your parents ever divorce?

- 1 NO
- 2 YES > IF YES, when?

Who did you live with?

- 1 Mother
- 2 Father

Did the parent you live(d)with remarry?

- 1 NO
- 2 YES > IF YES, when?

What was your step-parent's occupation?

What was your step parent's highest level of education?

Q31. We are interested in knowing about the support you receive from the family you grew up in (parents, step-parents, siblings). Please read each item carefully and circle the number of the answer that best fits with the way you feel.

STRONGLY DISAGREE STRONGLY AGREE

- A My family gives me the moral support I need..... 1 2 3 4 5
- B I got good ideas about how to do things or make things from my family..... 1 2 3 4 5
- C My family enjoys hearing about what I think..... 1 2 3 4 5
- D Members of my family share many of my interests..... 1 2 3 4 5
- E Certain members of my family come to me when they have problems or need advice..... 1 2 3 4 5
- F I rely on my family for emotional support..... 1 2 3 4 5
- G There is a member of my family I could go to if I were just feeling down, without feeling funny..... 1 2 3 4 5

STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	2	3	4	5	STRONGLY AGREE
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

- H My family and I are very open about what we think about things. 1 2 3 4 5
- I My family is sensitive to my personal needs. 1 2 3 4 5
- K I have a deep sharing relationship with a number of members of my family. 1 2 3 4 5
- L Members of my family get good ideas about how to do things or make things from me. 1 2 3 4 5
- M When I confide in members of my family it makes me uncomfortable. 1 2 3 4 5
- N Members of my family seek me out for companionship. 1 2 3 4 5
- O I think that my family feels that I am good at helping them solve problems. 1 2 3 4 5

(2.5) The next set of questions asks about feelings you have regarding the ways that work, college work and family life affect each other. Please mark the answer that most closely describes how frequently the statement applies to you.

NEVER	HARDLY	SOME	MOST	ALWAYS
EVER	TIMES	TIMES	TIMES	TIMES

- A How often does your job or career interfere with your responsibilities at home such as yard work, cooking, cleaning, shopping, paying bills or caring for your children? 1 2 3 4 5
- B How often does your job keep you from spending the amount of time you would like to spend with your family? 1 2 3 4 5
- C How often does your home life interfere with your responsibilities at work, such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, or working overtime? 1 2 3 4 5

NEVER	HARDLY	SOME	MOST	ALWAYS
EVER	TIMES	TIMES	TIMES	TIMES

- D How often does your homelife keep you from spending the amount of time you would like to spend on your job or career-related activities? 1 2 3 4 5
- E How often does your college work interfere with your responsibilities at home such as yard work, cooking, cleaning, shopping, paying bills or caring for your children? 1 2 3 4 5
- F How often does your college work keep you from spending the amount of time you would like to spend with your family? 1 2 3 4 5
- G How often does your college work interfere with your responsibilities at work, such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, or working overtime? 1 2 3 4 5
- H How often does your college work keep you from spending the amount of time you would like to spend on your job or career-related activities? 1 2 3 4 5
- I How often does your job keep you from spending the amount of time you would like to spend on your college work? 1 2 3 4 5
- J How often does your homelife keep you from spending the amount of time you would like to spend on your college work or college-related activities? 1 2 3 4 5

ABOUT YOU

Q36 Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic identification? (Please circle only one answer.)

- 1 African American (Black)
- 2 Asian American
- 3 European American (White)
- 4 Hispanic American
- 5 Native American (American Indian)
- 6 Other (specify)

Q37 Which of the following categories best describes your total family income during 1994?

- 1 Less than \$5,000
- 2 \$5,000-\$9,999
- 3 \$10,000-\$14,999
- 4 \$15,000-\$19,999
- 5 \$20,000-\$24,999
- 6 \$25,000-\$29,999
- 7 \$30,000-\$34,999
- 8 \$35,000-\$39,999
- 9 \$40,000-\$44,999
- 10 \$45,000-\$49,999
- 11 \$50,000-\$59,999
- 12 \$60,000 or more

Q38 Thinking back on your high school experience, what kind of student were you? Would you describe your grades as:

- 1 Mostly D's
- 2 Mostly C's
- 3 Mostly B's
- 4 Mostly A's

Q39 If you did not list a partner or spouse, are you? (Please circle one.)

- 1 Single (never-married)
- 2 Separated
- 3 Divorced
- 4 Widowed

Q40 If you have a partner, are you currently married?

- 1 YES > IF YES, how many times have you been married?
- 2 NO

Q41 If you have a partner or spouse, what is the highest grade s/he has achieved in school?

- 1 Less than high school
- 2 Some high school
- 3 High school graduate
- 4 Some college
- 5 AA degree/technical school certification
- 6 BA/BS degree
- 7 Some graduate study
- 8 Master's degree
- 9 Doctoral degree

Q42 What is your partner's / spouse's occupation?

Q43 Which of the following statements best describe how you feel about getting a degree? (Circle the number of your answer.)

- 1 I want desperately to get a degree, and would go to any lengths to earn one.
- 2 I want very much to get a degree, and will do all I can to earn one.
- 3 I want very much to get a degree, and will do what I can to earn one.
- 4 It would be nice to get a degree, but I can't do anymore than I am doing now to earn one.
- 5 It would be nice if I had a degree, but I refuse to do any more than I am already doing to earn one.
- 6 I will never be able to get a degree, and there is no more that I can do to earn one.

Q44 We are interested in knowing about the support you receive from different people for continuing in school. Please read each item carefully and circle the number of the answer that best fits with the way you feel. If an item does not apply to you, please skip it.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A My parent(s) encourages me to continue in my college courses | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B My partner/spouse encourages me to continue in my college courses | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C My child(ren) encourages me to continue in my college courses | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
D My friends at work encourage me to continue in my college courses		1	2	3	4	5	
E My boss encourages me to continue in my college courses		1	2	3	4	5	
F My college instructors encourage me to continue in my college courses		1	2	3	4	5	
G My classmates encourage me to continue in my college courses		1	2	3	4	5	

We would like to hear from more teachers, especially those who may be taking some time off from classes. If you know of any other teachers who work and go to school, but who might be taking time off, or who are taking a different class, please list their names, the city they live in, and if you know it, their phone number.

We would like to get more detailed information about the experiences of going to college while also being a child-care teacher. If you would be willing to participate in an in-depth interview, please fill out your name, phone number and the name of your instructor below.

YOUR ASSISTANCE WITH THIS PROJECT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED. THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

If you would like a copy of the results, please write your name and address below and we will send you a copy when they are available.

Appendix C
Interview Questions for the Qualitative Component

Questions assessing the experience of role strain

What is it like to be taking courses while also juggling a job and family responsibilities?

What kinds of support do you get?

What was it like to be working and keeping up with your family, before you were taking classes?

What are things about your family life that make it hard for you to take college courses?

What are things about your family life that make it easy for you to take college courses?

What are things about your work life that make it hard for you to take college courses

What are things about your work life that make it easy for you to take college courses

What are things about your family life that make it hard for you at work?

What are things about your family life that make it easy for you at work?

What are things about your college courses that make it hard on your family life?

What are things about your college courses that make it easy on your family life?

What are things about you college courses that make it hard for you at work?

What are things about your college courses that make it easy for you at work?

How do you cope with taking college classes and work and family responsibilities?

What could help you manage these three different areas of your life more effectively?

Questions assessing professionalism

Why are you taking college courses?

Do you feel like a professional? Why or why not?

What is a professional?

Is child care a profession? Why or why not?

What does professional development for child care teachers mean to you?

What would make you a better teacher?

How do you feel about the way you do your job?

What would make you feel better about the way you do your job?

What has kept you from doing what you need or wanted to do at your job?

What would help you do your job better?

Questions assessing epistemology

What do you do to make sense of what you learn in school?

What things do you like the best about your college courses?

What things do you like the least about your college courses?

What sorts of teaching techniques does an instructor use that you feel are the most helpful?

How do you learn best?

Are there things in your courses that you don't feel are helpful at all to you?

What are they?

How do you use what you already know to help make sense of the information you learn in class?

How do you relate what you already know with what you learned?

What do you feel influences you the most in how you teach?

Has what you have learned in your courses changed how you act in your own classroom? How or why not?

What sorts of things would you like to be learning in your course work?

What sorts of things did you expect to learn in your courses?

What would you like to be different about your courses?