

PARENT-INVOLVED CAREER EXPLORATION:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF ADOLESCENTS AND PARENTS

by

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The purpose of this study was to explore the experience of students and parents who participated in an innovative, brief technique in career counselling. Eight high school students in grades 10 and 11 who received one session of a Parent Involved Career Exploration (PICE) intervention with a career counsellor were interviewed; six involved parents were interviewed as well. This study utilized a phenomenological approach to investigate students' and parents' experience of the PICE session and their perspectives on its impact on student career development over the ensuing six months. Participants' interpretations were grouped into eight themes: Goals, evaluation of session process and content, impact on career perspective and actions, impact on family dynamics, attributions for change, and direct suggestions for improvement of PICE. Results indicated most participants related their participation in the PICE session to small, but practical, gains in career development; gains were often related to beliefs and perspectives participants felt were more productive. Since this approach appears to merit further attention, implications for practice and further research are discussed.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

#### Context

Young people today face an array of literally thousands of occupations to choose from (Bolles, 1996), many of which they will not have easy access to in terms of exploration. Given this overwhelming number of opportunities, along with the decreasing stability of the work/job world (Bridges, 1994), young people's need for career development assistance has never been greater.

Two decades ago, Prediger, Roth, and Noeth (1974) concluded that students at that time were expressing a significantly greater need for help in career planning than they felt they were receiving. In a further study ten years later, Prediger and Sawyer (1985) argued that, although career assistance had increased, students were still in need of more; over 70% of junior and senior high students surveyed still requested more help than they were receiving. Moving to an older sample, Otto (1984) sampled a group of 30-year olds in the community regarding their biggest problems in transition from high school to adult roles. Two-thirds of the sample reported problems with career choice or career preparation. Most felt unprepared to face the work world, and many traced the lack to a lack of preparation in high school.

The North American educational system prepares students

not for work per se, but for the next level of schooling (Aubrey, 1986). Herr and Cramer (1988) argued that most children in the U.S. are given very little systematic assistance in planning for career development. Worse yet, the increased commitment to a college preparatory model has meant there may be little hope for reform in the near future; "Parents and their children are left to carry the bulk of the load for training and career decision making" (Downing & D'Andrea, 1994, p. 115).

A recent study of over 700 american college students' and their needs revealed nearly 40% of them indicating at least a moderate need for more assistance with career choice (Gallagher, Golin, & Kelleher, 1992; p. 304). Younger adolescents are all the more in need of help as they prepare for post-high school life. Although there are differences in the Canadian context, there are likely some similarities as well.

Due to increasing economic challenges and potentially decreasing resources, the need for more cost-effective career counselling interventions is rising. Though employment concerns are primary, counselling (even career counselling) services are in constant danger of being underfunded (Stone & Archer, 1990). Government-imposed time and funding limitations are fuelling a growing desire to be efficient in a growing trend for new methods of counselling in general (Eckert, 1993) and career assessment in

particular (Amundson, 1995).

Further, there is a heightened need to provide evidence of the effectiveness of career counselling interventions, especially in Canada. A recent review sponsored by the Canadian Labour Force Development Board (Conger, Hiebert, & Hong-Farrell, 1993) found that counsellors were largely not evaluating the effectiveness of their services. Kellett (1994) warned:

In the absence of some definitive information on the contribution that career and employment counselling can make and is making, there is a real danger that counselling ... will be pushed further aside, with even fewer resources given to it" (p. 351).

The warning is well taken, yet challenges in doing such validation research abound as well--challenges due to the same scarce resources, as well as in the political nature of evaluation (Guba & Lincoln, 1993).

Some of the avenues available to counsellors in response to these challenges are political advocacy, increasing needs analysis, outcome research, developing career planning curriculum for use in school classrooms, and experimenting with brief, but potentially powerful interventions. The pattern identification exercise (PIE), used effectively in both individual and group contexts (Amundson & Cochran, 1984; Amundson & Stone, 1992) is an example of a brief technique used outside the school context to facilitate career development. The technique involves facilitating a clients' own analysis of their patterns of

style, preferences, and values using their own experiences as reflective material (See Appendix A for a comprehensive description via Amundson, 1995). Though not limited to a career development context, the technique has been used in this domain with some success.

Brief interventions can be useful not only from a cost-benefit perspective, but also from other points of view as well. If clients most often stay in therapy for only a few sessions (whether planned or unplanned), outcomes may be enhanced if interventions are conceptually planned as brief (Garfield, 1989). One obstacle to brief approaches, however, is the fact that some therapists have displayed resistance to brief models, even in the face of research showing its potential for effectiveness (Steenbarger, 1992).

Another avenue of approach in enhancing the effectiveness of career intervention is to involve parents in ways that heighten their abilities to assist their child's career development. This can be viewed as both a utilization of parental availability, and also potentially remediating or enhancing family skills and dynamics, since the parental role is already influential (Young & Friesen, 1992). However, few programs have been developed involving this untapped resource, and even less that have reported measures of effectiveness.

Recently a brief intervention has been developed which incorporates both parental involvement with adolescents, and

pattern identification in career exploration (Amundson, 1996). It remains to be seen, however, what effects a brief (1 session) career intervention involving adolescents and their parents can have on adolescent career development over the ensuing months. The question is whether the intervention could have a positive, 'catalytic' effect on an adolescent's career planning, promoting greater motivation, exploration, mature choices, and progress toward decisions.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide an initial evaluation of the impact of the Parent Involved Career Exploration (PICE) technique. The literature related to parental influence and involvement in adolescent career development will be surveyed as a backdrop for the present investigation. Hopefully this study will offer a preliminary understanding of the potential benefits, risks, and parameters of the PICE technique. Results of the study will be used to continue development of the intervention, as well as providing a useful resource for designing later evaluation research. The significance of the question is based on the significant need for improved career counselling delivery, both in effectiveness and efficiency. Since the PICE technique is a brief intervention, any potentially catalytic effects on career development will be examined.

### Research Approach

All research can be considered evaluative, and this study is no exception to the rule. Since I hope to offer an investigation of the effectiveness of a career intervention, it is useful to consider the question of who should judge such effectiveness. Guba and Lincoln (1993) have argued that evaluation is inherently a political process; therefore the views and values of as many stakeholders as possible should be considered. A good starting point would be the service recipients. The initial question then becomes what do they feel this intervention has done for them; how successful was it from their perspective.

Accordingly, a qualitative case study approach was utilized, with the primary data source being the students themselves. Since parents also participated in the sessions, and since they have a critical concern for their child's career development, parents were a secondary source of data. No quantitative measures were used in this study. Students and parents were interviewed to draw out their own stories and perspectives on the role of the PICE program in career development/planning over the six months post-involvement. A qualitative approach seemed most suitable for such a preliminary, formative evaluation of this innovation. Future investigation of PICE may well involve a combined qualitative/quantitative approach, and the exploratory data unearthed by this study will provide some



of the basis for such future work. Although I will discuss the implications of participants' views on the PICE impact, it will be left to readers to arrive at their own conclusions as to the success or potential of this technique for counselling practice.

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

#### Adolescent Career Development

Adolescence may be seen as one of the most challenging transitions individuals face over the life span. According to Erikson (1963; 1968), the primary task of adolescence involves the development of ego identity, or identity formation. Healthy resolution results in a clear sense of self, while unsuccessful youth are expected to experience self-doubt and confusion. The transition from school towards work via a career plan is central to such an identity; the worker role itself is integral to such development. Identity formation involves a psychological 'separation' from one's family (especially parents) in order to experience oneself as capable of managing the tasks of life.

Attachment theorists (eg., Bowlby, 1982) have explored this concept of separation as complemented by a secure attachment to parents, rather than replacing it. Attachment refers to a stable, affective bond between parent and child, and the theory proposes that such a bond is necessary to provide security for the child to separate and explore; secure attachment allows for healthy separation and identity formation. Contemporary theorists have proposed that this framework be allowed to organize relational perspectives on career development, rather than competing with them

(Blustein & Prezioso, 1995). What this approach would suggest is that adolescence may be viewed as a movement away from parents within a context of more or less functional/dysfunctional bonding and interactional patterns.

Blos (1979), a psychoanalytic theorist, viewed the stage as a recapitulation of earlier attachment and separation from parents. Family systems theory has also described the time as a key separation phase. For example, in the work of Murray Bowen (1978) the key issue in development is individuation, or emotional 'disentanglement' from one's family. The key is not simple emotional distancing, but autonomous functioning within the context of relationship. What heightens the seriousness of the adolescent stage is that it is a crucial one for both psychological separation and career development tasks.

Kinnier, Brigman, and Noble (1990) tested the relationship between family enmeshment and career indecision with university students. Students in their sample who were more decided regarding careers were indeed more 'individuated' than those less decided, however the measures provided only weak support for the relationship. In fact, individuation (versus enmeshment) only accounted for 3% of the variance, with age, for example accounting for 6%. The authors argue that enmeshment (a growth-inhibitor) does not equal emotional closeness (a growth enhancer). In fact, emotional closeness can promote self-esteem, assertiveness,

and a sense of well-being. In any event, adolescence does contain the bulk of the most observable separating between children and parents; Wechter (1983) advised parents to encourage such autonomy in children's decision-making, including career decisions.

One popular way to conceptualize the career development process is simply the degree to which a person has made requisite decisions in their progression through school towards work. Graef, Wells, Hyland, and Muchinsky (1985) studied several variables associated with such progression in high school students, and found that the best predictors of career decidedness in adolescent females was academic, while for males it was social-interpersonal. Graef et al. suggested the differences related to socialization, with greater and earlier pressure on young men to make career decisions. Whether or not such gender differences are widespread, the general importance of the family in career education is implied.

Interest in family influences on career choice may be traced to the work of Ann Roe (eg., Roe & Seigelman, 1964). While initial investigations involved more concrete variables such as gender and socioeconomic status, the trend has moved towards acknowledgment of interactional variables as well. Owens (1992), for example, looked at multiple predictors of occupational choice in a study involving over 2,000 U.S. high school students. Results suggested the best

predictors were family contingencies, school performance/expectations, family and peer influences.

### **Parental Influence in Adolescent Career Development**

There has been a widely held myth in society that parents do not matter in young people's career planning, and that they are not listened to (Otto, 1989). There is, in fact, a significant amount of literature supporting the contrary, that parents do matter a great deal in informing their children's career decisions. Schulenberg, Vondracek, and Crouter's (1984) comprehensive review suggested two major dimensions of family influence on career development: first, concrete variables such as education, finances, and modeling, and second, family dynamics processes of socialization and relationships. Two decades ago Leifer and Lesser (1976) did a comprehensive review of career literature and concluded that parents were, in fact, the primary determiners of children's career choices, both directly and indirectly. More recently, in the Canadian context, the survey work of Bibby and Posterski (1992) supported a similarly high evaluation of parents' continuing influence in the values, attitudes, and plans of teenage children.

Probing somewhat deeper, Saltiel (1985) coined the terms 'definer influence' and 'model influence' in an investigation of the process of status-attainment. 'Models'

impact primarily on peripheral issues related to behaviour and attitudes, while 'definers' provide the substance for deeper, identity-central beliefs and values. According to Saltiel's findings, for the adolescent, parents were still providing the majority of definer influence, and were the persons most likely to interact with adolescents regarding their own career development. Trice (1991) used a retrospective analysis to examine the relationship between parental occupations and early career aspirations of adolescents. One conclusion Trice drew was that fathers' influence declined with age, due to the fact that adolescents were less likely to aspire to their fathers' occupations than children were. However, it appears this argument rests on a shallow notion of influence. While the child may evince being influenced by strict imitation, an adolescent has perhaps moved past imitation to advice-following (or rejecting).

Wilks (1986), using an Australian sample, concluded that for the majority of adolescents, parental advice was followed for longer-term, difficult decisions, while peer advice was followed for short-term, less important decisions. Brown and Mann (1991) provided another exploration of the relationship between parent and adolescent styles. Expressly stating they were testing Bandura's (1986) modelling theory, these investigators addressed parent/child decision-making competence and

confidence. They concluded that their results partially supported Bandura's theory, though their methodology did not address differences between intact versus blended or split families. Further, there was no control for the quality of relationship within families. This factor would seem an extremely important one for future exploration.

Looking from the parents' vantage point, Young and Friesen (1992) examined parents' intentions associated with critical incidents they had undertaken in fostering the career development of their children. Explanations supported the notion that parents are quite active in attempting to influence their child's career development, defined broadly. Intentions included categories such as skill acquisition, values acquisition, and increased responsibility. Although the authors did not target children's response to parental influence in this study, Young and Friesen suggested that making intentions more explicit would benefit both adolescents and parents.

Recently, it appears that the dynamics of attachment and separation have received much attention relative to career development. For example, Hoffman, Hofacker, and Goldsmith (1992) studied the relationship between adolescents' feelings of closeness to parents with their perceptions of being influenced by parents. Parents were largely seen as the primary influencers of career, and both males and females rated their father as more influential

than their mother. There was a small, but significant, effect noted for closeness to fathers and their influence on adolescents' career decisions. Blustein, Waldbridge, Friedlander, and Palladino (1991) claimed the previous research was unclear on the relationship between emotional independence and career development of adolescents. Their own attempt to add clarity found that, for women, attachment to and conflictual independence (freedom from excessive conflict) from both parents was positively related to progress in career commitment. For men, attitudinal dependence on (having similar beliefs) and conflictual independence from father predicted progress in career commitment. However, support was not found for the expected relationship between psychological separation and career decision making.

The complex relationship of attachment and separation variables may throw light on the difficulty relating career indecision to family problems. For example, the family characterized by overdependence and resistance to adolescent individuality may not necessarily produce undecided or indecisive patterns. Eigen, Hartman, and Hartman's (1987) study of family systems and career decision making failed to find connections involving broad dimensions of family cohesion, but some negative effects were noted related to family systems with strict rules and high attachment. Kinnier, Brigman, and Noble (1990) related greater career



decidedness with higher levels of individuation and less conflictual alliance formation in the family. Penick and Jepsen (1992), who included the most variables in their study, found student perceptions of family functioning were more predictive of career choice behaviour than gender, socioeconomic status, and educational achievement. Although not all research has shown clear relationships between career development measures and family systems variables, the majority of investigations have shown family systems factors such as overinvolvement, enmeshment, intimidation, disengagement and rigidity to have negative effects on career decision making in adolescents (Larson, 1995).

A recent study by Ryan, Solberg, and Brown (1996) investigated parent-child relationships, parental attachment, and career search self-efficacy beliefs. For women, the combination of family dysfunction and level of attachment to mothers accounted for 17% of the variance in career search self-efficacy; for men, attachment to mothers accounted for 9% of similar variance. These results support the complexity of the phenomena, yet do provide some support for the premise that a secure attachment base allows for healthier confidence in one's own abilities and hence career development. Blustein et al. (1991) theorized that the relatively simple variable of career decidedness is not predicted by family inhibition of separation because such stunted relationships may foster indecisiveness in some,

premature decisions in others. Interventions which are capable of ascertaining which tendency is more likely in a given individual are more likely to prove helpful.

Leung, Wright, and Foster (1987) decided to test one aspect of the parental influence issue with an urban and multi-racial sample in a large Canadian city. In their study, adolescents who perceived their parents as more concerned and encouraging regarding school performance were more likely to go on to post-secondary education; no gender effects were found. Although the scope of this research is quite restricted, it does provide limited support for the generalizability of the parental influence research to the Canadian context.

Perspectives of parental influence on adolescents' careers has grown increasingly complex as recognition of a more dynamic process has surfaced. It is this dynamic process between parent and child, as well as changing ideas of what health is, that has helped us to understand why greater career maturity is not simply correlated with greater independence from the family (Thomason and Winer, 1994). Whiston's (1996) exploration of family systems variables, career indecision, and career decision making self-efficacy highlighted the need for further research, since her findings were not consistent with other research showing relationships between family conflict, cohesion, and career variables. There is simply too much ambiguity in the

area of distinguishing healthy/congruent career decision making and premature/dissonant decision making.

Young, Friesen, and Borycki (1994) examined the narratives of 50 young adults, in order to determine the ways they make sense of parents' influence on their careers. One implication of their data was that narratives involving forward career progression did not necessarily include positive evaluations of parental influence. The pattern of narratives did not, however, provide any means by which to predict adolescent career development on the basis of parental influence.

The Young et al. (1994) study also sheds light on the dynamic nature of parent-child interaction, in that the metaphor of 'struggle' with parental wishes was frequently used by their participants. There is, however, very little research on the processes involving influences perceived as negative (Middleton & Loughhead, 1993), and not much more involving the positive influencing of parents in adolescent career. Another perspective related to parent/child interactive influence is that of family role enactment. MacGregor and Cochran (1988) tested the proposition that family figures could be observed when analyzing people's work role contexts. They found support for the notion, but the variability of responses was high. In other words, workers may attempt to resolve family role issues, continue to enact them, or even reject contexts with recognizable and

undesirable roles. These observations do not lend assistance in predicting how specific children will develop, but they do add another dimension to the evidence supporting the deep influence of family on career development as well as ideas for career intervention with a family systems perspective.

While the original research had a more one-sided look to it (ie., in terms of influence and movement), in the past decade there has been a shift to a more dynamic view. Grotevant and Cooper's (1985; 1988) research supports the notion that adolescents must balance individuation and connection to make healthy adjustment. They argue that more attention needs to be paid to the total context and dynamic nature of career development. Blustein et al. (1991) suggest that some degree of attachment may facilitate the sort of risk-taking and exploration that characterizes the developmental tasks of late adolescence. As far as practical application, their words resonate here:

...[a] potentially useful strategy would be to offer psychoeducational programs for adolescents and their parents that would enhance open communication, nurturing, and autonomous relationships. Such preventive interventions may also bolster the natural support systems of many families (p. 48).

Downing and D'Andrea (1994) reported the results of a survey involving American, British, and Swiss parents and their attitudes associated with helping their children in career planning. The work was prompted in part by the Young and Friesen (1992) work exploring parents' intentions for

influencing their children's career decisions. Parents were asked questions related to their aspirations for their children, degree of involvement in career decisions, and feelings associated with their involvement. Results indicated clear differences between the U.S./U.K. and the Swiss parental context. While Swiss parents were more likely to leave career decisions to the child whether the direction was university or working class, the U.S. and U.K. parents were more likely to encourage university-related careers and discourage working class career plans. While Swiss parents saw themselves as primarily encouraging and trusting their children, U.S. and U.K. parents mainly perceived themselves as giving advice or setting expectations. Finally, while the Swiss parents felt confident or involved in the process, the U.S. and U.K. parents felt uninformed and involved; many U.S. parents actually reported primary feelings of helplessness in the process. Within this context the authors questioned whether the outcomes of parental involvement can be very productive without further assistance:

School counselors have focused the bulk of their efforts directly on students. It may well be time for these professional to offer some of their efforts to the parents of the students they counsel. Other career development professionals could serve as valuable teammates to school personnel in providing the assistance needed by parents (p. 125).

Downing and D'Andrea (1994) concluded that Swiss parents don't see themselves as actively involved in their

children's career decision process. However, this is unclear from their reporting; it seems possible that the level of confidence Swiss parents feel may simply cast a 'shadow' over similarly high feelings of being involved. In fact, a greater percentage of Swiss parents (31.8%) rated involvement as their dominant feeling, as compared to the U.S. parents (22.0%). It would be very interesting to replicate this survey with a Canadian sample to compare/contrast national and regional results. In any event, the point is well taken that our educational system is not changing soon; therefore intervention which facilitates both student and parent competency in the career planning process would be most welcome.

#### **Career Intervention Involving Parents**

Given the above evidence for the importance of family on adolescent career development, we might expect a host of programs and research on the same. Certainly, in recent years, family systems applications have grown in the area of career intervention. For example, a number of practitioners have drawn on Bowen's (1978) family theory to design programs taking family dynamics into account (eg., Bratcher, 1982; Castricone, Finan & Gumble, 1982; Zingaro, 1983; Otto & Call, 1985; Lopez and Andrews, 1987; Bradley & Mims, 1992). Most interventions were not intended to involve parents in person, but to help the young person become more aware of their influence and role functioning,

in order to make more active choices. Reports of the effectiveness of such programs, however, has been rare. Though theoretically sound, the systems approach to career intervention may be considered as yet untested (Larson, 1995).

There now seems to be a growing call for more professional attention to programming which may integrate the actions of both adolescents and their parents (Birk & Blimline, 1984; Middleton & Loughhead, 1993). Until quite recently, there has been almost nothing in the literature to support the success of programs helping parents assist their children in career choice (Palmer and Cochran, 1988). These authors argued that exclusion of parents by career programs happens at their peril, due both to parents' strategic influence, and also to their ability to devote intensive time to their child's situation.

This neglect of parental involvement programs is notably an international phenomenon as well. Poole (1983) studied Australian high school students' career development and noted, ironically, a substantial lack of programming involving parents:

This situation exists even though studies assessing the relative influence ... have invariably placed family influences ahead of the formal school structures set up to provide vocational guidance (p. 24).

Poole's own data supported the conclusion that those students who spoke frequently with their parents about career issues had far more definite ideas on both job choice

and education plans, as compared to those whose interactions were more infrequent.

Some have offered services specifically targeting parents, such as career decision making courses and workshops in career development (Osguthorpe, 1976; Greenough, 1976; Daniels, Karmos, & Presley, 1983; Rubinton, 1985;), usually focused on helping parents become aware of the many facets of career decision-making. Reports of such interventions have not provided much in the way of evaluation data, however. Otto and Call (1985), for example, described an eight-hour seminar for parents of teens which targeted career assistance skills, information, awareness excercises, and home activities. Parents were also given a booklet to work through with their child. The authors reported, "...our experience indicates that involving parents works," and that schools implementing such an approach would also benefit from the public relations. These assertions, however, would have been bolstered had they been offered in the context of the provision of evaluative data, whether qualitative or quantitative. One avenue for potential exploration, then, would be a more detailed look at the results of a family involvement approach to career intervention.

Whiston (1989) utilized a family systems approach to suggest career education activities for parents, in order to help them assist their children. The emphasis included both



expectations and behaviours, and goals included the strengthening of interactions within the family. Whiston reported that parents frequently are unfamiliar with career growth stages, and have unrealistic expectations of when choices need to be made. Unfortunately, as usual, no information was provided as to the effectiveness of the interventions.

Interventions may need to aim at helping parents see their vital and influential role, such as through communication of research evidence to parents (Middleton & Loughhead, 1993). These authors present some useful ideas for intervention (eg., providing parents with suggestions for utilizing natural family times to help one child explore aspirations), but again there has been very little documentation of the effects of such attempts.

While parents in general may benefit from increased attention, rural parents in particular likely have significant needs for assistance. Jeffery, Lehr, Hache, and Campbell (1992) reported a developing program aimed at empowering rural parents in a Canadian region to assist their children in career planning. Understandably, rural parents are in a more challenging position regarding career resources than their urban counterparts. In many rural jurisdictions, not only is there a lack of access to career and counselling resources, but economic/job market realities may be more harsh. The development of such programs is a

welcome sight, however, it was premature for the authors to provide evidence of the effectiveness of their interventions at that time. Further efforts to provide career intervention approaches useful in both urban and rural environments are clearly in order, especially in the Canadian context.

Palmer and Cochran (1988) represent an exception to most reports of programs involving parents in that they provided some measured evaluation of success. They provided materials for a self-administered program of career exploration and planning for parents and adolescents to work on together at home. On measures of career development and parent-child bonding, the experimental group improved markedly in contrast with the control group. Interview data revealed participants reported benefits in such aspects as self awareness, power sharing, and decision-making. The results may lead one to question whether effective interventions with parents and adolescents could be designed to utilize a brief session with a counsellor.

Interventions involving adolescents and parents together have been very few. Knecht (1976) reported using a workshop in which career awareness issues were targeted for both parents and students. Castricone, Finan, and Gumble (1982) described a one-day program (Focus on Career Search) for adolescents and parents at a community college . Parents were present for portions of the day; goals included

the encouragement of active family dialogue, and assistance by counsellors to help parents and children raise concerns and listen to each other. Reportedly, participants have been very satisfied with the sessions, although not much was provided in the way of detail on evaluation measures or interview data. A follow-up of unknown duration revealed that "many" cited increased parent-student communication as a primary benefit of their involvement. While the longevity of the change was unclear, the program did appear to be a step in a very positive direction.

The value of counsellors actually spending some time interacting with adolescent and parent together is apparent. Such time would help the counsellor in a number of ways, notably assessing the style of parental involvement and adolescent response, as well as modelling a facilitative interaction with the adolescent. Young, Friesen, and Dillabough (1991) investigated the ways in which parents and their children view parental influence and revealed that such influence will vary in the kinds of intentions, styles, and outcomes. A systemic approach may be useful in responding to the complexity of parent-child interactions, and the counsellor does need to understand the specific context of parental influence in which programs operate. One obvious pitfall which counsellors would do well to ameliorate would be the tendency of some parents to be overly directive in their efforts at assistance.

This brings up again the issue of measuring career development. What needs to be avoided is a simple approach favouring decidedness; a more appropriate goal would be movement toward mature decisions rather than simply decisions in themselves. Kush and Cochran (1993) used an agency framework in looking at the success of a program aimed at helping parents assist their adolescent children (grade 12) with career planning. Those enrolled in the program showed improvement in career certainty, less indecision, more career salience, and a stronger ego identity. The authors argued for programmers to incorporate conditions which may enhance the sense of student agency in the planning process without disrupting the aim of matching person to work. Another way to put this, perhaps, would be to say that counsellors need to be careful to encourage facilitation, rather than direction. This may be accomplished partly by being very patient with students as they attempt to work out their priorities prior to the matching work (Kush & Cochran, 1993):

...the setting of priorities should not be rushed or cheapened to proceed with the matching, but should be done carefully (p. 438).

Of course another very important variable in enhancing such conditions would be in the counsellor's own modelling of facilitation. This approach reflects a more client-centred type of career intervention, encouraging proper self-appraisal before moving into potentially premature decision

making (Miller, 1996).

Parents are a largely untapped resource as far as career interventions go, yet research has consistently shown that parents are the number one influence. Birk and Blimline (1984) advocated for more intervention involving parents and reported work they had done with parents of elementary school children. Some of the exercises had parents exploring the following: what jobs they'd like their children to choose, what they thought their child actually wanted to be, what influences parents saw, and what influence they wished for in their children's career development. Results indicated that parents consistently felt the most significant influencers in the child's decisions should be in order of: parents, child, school, relatives, church, media, and friends. There are several interesting revelations here, not the least of which is the parents' wishing peers would be bottom on the list.

Another interesting result is the placement of parents and the child ahead of school assistance. This may further support the North American difference in terms of the responsibility for career preparation being primarily on the individual rather than the educational system (Downing & D'Andrea, 1994). It is also ironic to discover that fathers generally thought they should be the primary influence; mothers reserved the same place for themselves. The conclusions Birk and Blimline (1984) drew from the more

detailed data led them to highlight the potentially restrictive view of careers parents may foster, frequently reinforcing stereotypical choices. The opposite of this restrictive role has been documented by others such as Auster and Auster (1981), who showed the significant role of family, peers and counsellors in decisions of females who chose nontraditional occupations. Clearly parents have great power, for good and for bad, in their children's attitudes and choices. Therefore, Birk and Blimline (1984) argued, these dangers together with the importance of parents in the process means they should not be ignored in career counselling:

If parents are to facilitate expansive thinking about career options in their children, their own imaginations might need to be stimulated, and their concept of appropriate options broadened (p. 314).

They proposed that the (school) counsellor is in position to be a significant catalyst, initially confronting and broadening the parents' attitudes regarding acceptable alternatives. Interventions should be planned incorporating children and parents, rather than relying on the haphazard [or nonexistent] process of parent-counsellor conferences. Given the amount of research supporting the primary place of parents in their children's career development, Birk and Blimline's (1984) finale does ring true: "Parents are the primary influence on career development" (p. 316); counsellors can and should find ways to join in partnership with them. A retrospective investigation of such positive

cooperation as well as the importance of parents in career development has been reported recently by Keil (1996). He examined the career development of the children of a German family and their perceptions of parental support in the process, highlighting perceived healthy aspects of family system/interaction dynamics and influences on career choice.

One exciting aspect of work with parents and children in career development appears to be the possibility of increased enjoyment of the relationship, even in the context of relatively brief interventions. It would certainly be notable if Castricone et al.'s (1982) support for increased parent/child communication via brief career intervention were to be borne out. As Middleton and Loughheed (1993) remarked, "...the enhancement of parent-adolescent relations could very well be a serendipitous effect of such a cooperative, joint effort" (p. 170). Certainly the involvement of parents in adolescent career development programs deserves much more attention than it has received to date.

#### **Parent Involved Career Exploration (PICE)**

Amundson (1996) reported a new technique in career development which usually involves a one-session interaction between a counsellor and two adolescents, with parents present to observe and offer input when prompted. The approach was developed over several years, and has been reported to be, "well received by both parents and students"

(p. 5).

The intervention is very brief, and it was hoped that a type of catalytic effect might be instigated in terms of the adolescent's career development, complementing rather than replacing more comprehensive career intervention programming. The brief nature of the intervention would make it useful across urban and rural situations, should it prove to have significant promise. This is critical, since it has been strongly argued that virtually all programs carry a sort of "urban assumption" (Jeffery et al., 1992).

Some of the principles guiding the development of PICE were as follows: The importance of parents in career development, the role of the counsellor in finding positive ways parents could be involved, the interest of many parents in learning to help their children with career, a systems perspective on facilitating change, and the practical difficulties associated with scheduling longer programs for family involvement (Amundson, 1996).

If the point of all successful intervention can be boiled down to getting the client to do or to view something differently (O'Hanlon, 1990), then the potential certainly exists for a one-session change catalyst. Eckert's (1993) perspective on brief therapy seems very powerful--the acceleration of change through the specific therapeutic catalysts of planning, collaboration, timing, and empowerment. Career intervention may often lend itself to



such an approach because these factors are more likely to be present or achievable. The PICE approach makes intentional use of the above factors with the goal of facilitating greater student clarity and empowerment in career planning. This approach also reflects Burlingame and Fuhriman's (1987) challenge to conceptually plan brief work, rather than allowing it to simply occur as a result of administrative limits.

Results have not been formally evaluated to date, though informal feedback has been quite positive. Amundson reported comments from a focus group session which centred in three areas: Interpersonal dynamics, session activities, and long-term benefits. He expressed a surprise at what he termed, "...dramatic results which have gone beyond my initial expectations" (p. 12). Though Amundson suggested the approach may only be appropriate where there is a threshold level of parent/child motivation and some quality of relationship, these parameters have not been tested. To a large extent, they are not tested in the scope of this investigation either, though there will be some speculation offered.

The intervention involves regulating input from the parent, while putting the student on "centre stage" to explore potential paths. This dynamic may allow the counsellor to model facilitation, as well as helping the parents to withdraw when appropriate, allowing the

adolescent more room to take on responsibility (Whiston, 1989).

Briefly, the procedure consists of the following phases:

- i) Introduction, including parental observation role;
- ii) Discussion of student career ideas;
- iii) Pattern identification exercise (PIE) leisure activity;  
[For a detailed description see Appendix A]  
Invitation for parental input;
- iv) Pattern identification exercise with school subjects;  
Invitation for parental input;
- v) Discussion regarding labour market and how to plan;  
Invitation for parental input;
- vi) Action planning, next steps;
- vii) Review and encouragement.

For a more detailed description of the steps see Appendix B.

Pattern identification exercises have been utilized as a brief technique for use in career exploration, with some support for its efficacy (Amundson & Cochran, 1984; Amundson & Stone, 1992).

Regarding the use of leisure patterns to inform work choices, Super (1984) and McDaniels (1984) claimed leisure activities can be valuable exploratory experiences for

career development and urged counsellors to investigate this arena of assistance. Hong, Milgram, and Whiston (1993) have noted that leisure activities as a tool in career counselling have been largely ignored. The PIE technique flows from the premise that how a person behaves in each area of their life (eg., leisure activities) reflects patterns in motivation, attitudes and beliefs (Amundson, 1995). Insights into these patterns has direct relevance to career planning.

Given the lack of previous programming involving parents in career development, as well as the lack of evaluation, it seems timely to investigate the effectiveness of the current parent-involved pilot project. As a useful beginning point, this researcher interviewed a sample of the initial student and parent cohort some six months after they received the PICE intervention. How would each of them relate their experience in the PICE session to their career development over the ensuing months? Would they report changes in their beliefs about how to do career planning? Would they report progress toward career decisions? Would they relate any increase in motivation (or self-confidence) or decrease in anxiety associated with career? Would there be any changes in parent-child communication? Would there appear to be any suggestion of gender differences or cultural differences in this experience?

Behind every question of reported changes or

development will lie the question of how the parents and adolescents relate their development to having participated in the PICE session. The answers will obviously not provide data to argue causal links, but they likely would give an initial indication of the promise of the technique for further development and more rigorous investigation in the future. As Young and Valach (1994) argued, evaluation of any intervention needs to centre in the experience of the client. This stream of thought and value has come across in the brief therapy literature as well. The primary decision as to whether therapy has been successful needs to rest with the client (O'Hanlon, 1990).

The present study, then, is a qualitative study providing an initial evaluation of a brief career intervention involving adolescents and their parents. Any demonstrated effectiveness of the PICE intervention may be of considerable potential for the practice of career counselling, whether in schools or in the community.

### **Chapter III**

#### **Methodology**

This chapter will describe the rationale and characteristics of the research method used. Participants (and selection) will be described, as will recruitment and the details of data collection and analysis. Considerations regarding data reporting and the role of the researcher will also be considered.

#### **Method**

"A 'case study' is the analysis of a single case, or of multiple instances of the same process, as it is embodied in the life experiences of a community, a group, or a person" (Denzin, 1994; p. 539). An "evaluative case study" is one which involves evaluation of programs and where often condensed fieldwork replaces the more lengthy ethnographic approach (Stenhouse, 1985). In the present study a qualitative, case study approach was taken in addressing the impact of the PICE pilot project. The central theme of questioning was, "what has it meant to the adolescents and their parents to have taken part in the PICE program." The task of the researcher was to reveal through interviews the structure of participants' interpreted experiences during and in the months after PICE. Rather than attempting to create structure and fit participants' data into it, this method involves allowing the interview data to create the

structure. It is based on a form of "grounded theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1968) in which the researcher attempts to generate hypotheses by induction from data, rather than deducing from assumptions. For example, instead of looking for specific changes in students' career planning in order to support the effectiveness of intervention, this study was interested in how the participants themselves have constructed the meaning of their PICE involvement. It was expected that common patterns and individual differences in perception will appear. These patterns and profiles reveal the impact of the PICE project from participants' own points of view.

The decision to utilize a qualitative methodology rested on my belief that the most important source of information useful in a preliminary evaluation of PICE's impact would be participants' own interpretations. Hence, my intent was to formally record and analyze these interpretations of experience and impact. As Diesing (1972) argued, case study methods do address both particulars and universals, uniqueness and regularities. It is incumbent on the researcher to document carefully the particulars of a case so as to allow comparison to other situations.

It is also my belief that an intervention guided, at least in part, by systems theory (Amundson, 1996) should most appropriately be investigated using a qualitative approach. This fits the distinction made by Salomon (1991)

regarding analytical and systemic approaches to educational research, and the brief therapy models in which client judgments of success are primary (eg., O'Hanlon, 1990). The approach is also supported by a politically-conscious view of evaluation such as that of Guba and Lincoln (1993). What is of primary interest to participants are their own goals and values. A more quantitative approach can miss much of the social and value-oriented character of the process. It was my hope to accurately represent the perspectives of the 'clients' of this intervention, to reveal any insights, and to view in a holistic fashion.

The decision not to include quantitative measures such as career maturity, vocational decidedness, or vocational congruence rested on several factors: 1) the available population of students having received the intervention at the time was small; 2) neither the population receiving PICE nor the sample interviewed were randomly selected, due to access logistics; 3) no pre-intervention measures had been used; and 4) limits on access to the student population negated the possibility of a matched group. Therefore, although the case study method does not dictate a solely qualitative method, such was the approach taken. This research was undertaken with the understanding that some of its potential fruitfulness would be in laying the groundwork for future work using both qualitative and quantitative measures. One avenue for such complementarity will be for

the present approach to produce propositions which may be tested with a larger sample.

Since the qualitative approach is primarily concerned with the immediate experience of individuals (eg., Valle & King, 1978), participants and researchers are engaged in a joint effort, co-researchers after a fashion. The researcher attempts to build rapport and trust with participants in order to facilitate a freer sharing of information on interviewing. Although the interviews in the present study were brief, I attempted to approach participants in a manner which would place them at ease as much as possible, creating a human interaction feeling, rather than a sterile, interrogatory atmosphere.

The usefulness of case study methods depends on its own form of precision. Such "disciplined subjectivity" (Wilson, 1977) requires that evidence be open to scrutiny, and that the research be reported in sufficient detail so as to convey credibility (Glaser & Strauss, 1968). Credibility, or trustworthiness, in this context, may be seen as analogous to the issues of validity and reliability in quantitative approaches (eg., Diesing, 1972). The present study included several strategies for achieving such trustworthiness:

a) Explanation of data collection procedures. Approach letters, interview introductions, and interview guides are appended to complement textual description below.



- b) Data is displayed for potential re-analysis. Transcripts are appended, though researcher questions are abbreviated.
- c) Negative instances are reported.
- d) Biases are acknowledged.
- e) Analysis procedures are documented, via explanation and display of secondary evidence.
- f) Primary evidence is distinguished from secondary, and interpretation.
- g) Quality of data is checked by participant validations, and by triangulation. "Triangulation" (Tawney, 1975) involves using different sources of data, such as both parent and student perceptions of career development impact.

### Participants

Participants were not selected on the basis of demographics, but on the basis of availability. One aspect of the PICE pilot project took place in a large multi-ethnic secondary school in a moderately large Canadian city. Participants for the PICE project were volunteers, with some of the students becoming attracted to the sessions after hearing good reports by their classmates. Some sessions were videotaped with participant consent, and some sessions were observed by counsellors from the high school. At the time of this investigation, approximately twenty students had received the intervention six months previously. Students were contacted for potential involvement, and the

first ten who responded were selected and scheduled for interviews. The school administration had given a time limit on availability of students due to the year-end approaching.

Students were in grades 10 and 11, ranging from 15 to 17 years of age. They all attend the same secondary school, and are of several different ethnic origins, three Chinese, four Caucasian, and one of East Indian descent. All interviewed students' english language skills were quite high, as judged by their ability to freely converse in the interviews. Though more females than males participated, we hoped to have significant participation of both genders in this study. Two students did not show up for their interviews, bringing the total number down to eight. Seven were female, one male. The two students who missed an initial and a rescheduled interview date were both males.

Participants were largely from a school stream called the 'Incentive' program, for students displaying an interest in more interactive modes of learning. While not necessarily the academically elite of the school, these students would likely be placed in the upper percentiles. The particular selection of these students for PICE intervention had been an artifact of the first-come-first-served recruitment which the school facilitated; word of mouth attracted the friends/associates of those first 'clients.' In terms of socioeconomic status, although the

intervention has included students who were considering trades type occupations, the students who participated in this study tended to be considering professional type occupations.

### Recruitment

After receiving approval from the school board and ethical review, students and parents who participated in the PICE project in the fall of 1995 were contacted by letter (see Appendix C) and telephone call to solicit participation in this study. Those parents who agreed to participate (and those students whose parents signed consent forms) were further contacted for scheduling of interviews (see Appendix D and E). Students were called by telephone again the night before their interview as a reminder; even so, some rescheduling was necessary due to forgotten appointments. Two students who missed their first and second appointments were dropped from the study.

### Data Collection

Students were interviewed in a conference room at the school, during a block normally reserved for a Career and Personal Planning (CAPP) course. Interviews were scheduled with two students at a time, with the intention of allowing them to feel more at ease with the interview process and increasing the likelihood of more candid sharing. Although

all interviews were thus scheduled, some went ahead on a one-on-one basis, due to one of the students not showing up for their interview.

Interviews were recorded on audiotape, in order to enhance the reliability of recording and to facilitate a more conversational style of discussion. Since some of the interviews involved pairs, the interview introduction script included an emphasis on individual perspectives, rather than "majority opinions" (see Appendix F). Although taping of interviews may place participants in a position of "holding back" comments, this danger was weighed against potential advantages of such a record. Students and parents were interviewed separately in order to increase the likelihood that candid comments would be more likely. Both students and parents were assured that their comments would be confidential. In order to enhance the likelihood of obtaining realistic views (including negative data), I indicated to participants that I would not be distributing a report which would analyze participants' views case-by-case, rather the analysis would be section-by-section; comments made would be as anonymous as possible within each section. I also assured them they would have a chance to tell me later if there were anything they wished to change, or which they did not want published.

Interviews of parents took place one-on-one in their own homes, during weekday evenings. These interviews were

also audio-recorded. All participants were approached on the basis that the researchers were wanting personal feedback from participants, in order to improve the PICE approach. In this way, what became important was the participants' own experience of the session and its impact, not their analysis of the technique in general. All interviewing took place within a six-week time frame.

### Rationale for Interview Questions

The interviews followed an "interview guide" format (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993), in which topics are outlined in advance with prepared questions, however, further probing questions were expected to arise out of the interaction. Although the structured interview has not been used extensively in career development, it has seen an increasing application in recent years (Savickas & Lent, 1992). Questions ranged from their experience of the PICE session to their beliefs about its impact, to their actions since PICE. Finally I concluded with direct solicitation of suggestions for improving the PICE approach, in addition to any they had already offered. In some instances I probed further for elaboration on answers given, using such questions as, "Can you tell me more about that?" and "What does that mean for you?" Interviews required between one-half hour and one hour.

## Interview Guide

### Experience of the Session

1. Why did you volunteer for the session? What were your initial expectations?
2. Describe your experience of the session.
3. What was it like for you to have your parent present?
4. What was it like to have other people in the room?
5. What was it like to have another student/parent pair there?

### Thoughts on Impact of PICE Session

1. What are your overall impressions of how the session worked for you?
2. What effects (if any) do you think the session may have had on your own career planning?
3. Do you think the session had any impact on your relationship with your parent(s)?

Eg., -Them understanding you better?

-You understanding them better?

-Talking about career issues more often/more  
openly?

-Any changes in how your parent(s) advise you?

### Action Steps

1. What have you been doing in your career exploration and planning since the PICE session?

Eg., -In terms of thinking about career?

-In terms of CAPP participation?

- Talked to anyone in particular occupations?
- Any use of the Career Pathways book? Describe.
- Ideas/plans/actions in work or volunteer experience?

2. Do you relate any development in what you are doing or have done to your participation in the PICE session?

Direct Suggestions

1. Do you have any suggestions for improving the PICE experience or career preparation in general? Please explain.

The interview question guide owed its genesis to two main sources, the existing research literature, and preliminary feedback from PICE participants already obtained. We have seen above that career intervention which involves family members in a joint effort may actually enhance family communication and relationships. Another dimension of career intervention in general is the importance of actions and action planning. Further, a number of students who participated in PICE sessions in the fall of 1995 shared their impressions in a focus group discussion approximately two months later. Their comments at that time helped lead to the present interview guide, as well as the researchers' desire to collect the present data in a more systematic fashion.

### Data Analysis

Audiotapes of interviews were transcribed (see Appendix G). Transcriptions of interviews were read and re-read to become familiar with the overall communication of each participant. Summary notes were constructed from each interview, with examples using participants' own language to illustrate points made.

The researcher then listed the meaning units and categories used by participants in their explanations of experience, and summarized the themes present in each interview. Copies of the interview summary and themes were sent to the participants (see Appendix H), and they were contacted by telephone to discuss any discrepancies, leading to potential revisions. One parent did request a revision in one section, and such revision was made. Another parent had made some potentially sensitive comments about his family situation and he was specifically asked whether the summary was acceptable as presented (which it was). See Appendix I for participant validation comments.

Convergent and divergent data was grouped according to theme, and a summary document of all participants' condensed data by theme was produced. Representative quotes were selected as each transcript was analyzed and included in the summary of thematic data.

Miles and Huberman (1984) have identified common sources of error for qualitative researchers, and I have



attempted to keep in mind and work against each of the following:

- a) The holistic fallacy, in which outlier cases are ignored and interpretations appear all the more patterned.
- b) Elite bias, in which greater credence is given to higher status or more articulate participants.
- c) "Going native," or accepting the opinions of participants without question or researched thought.

Initially a procedure of evidence weighting was considered, involving participant nonverbals and strength-of-presentation, but it was deemed to carry too much potential danger of skewing to be worth the attempt. In presenting data patterns, interpretations, and propositions, my purpose has been to keep in mind that investigation is likely to produce both universals and particulars; reporting of findings herein should reflect both the rich experiences of individuals, and potential patterns of experience within the group. Propositions for further testing the relationship between PICE intervention, parameters, and outcome variables are provided in the discussion.

#### **Researcher Role**

Since my role as researcher has a bearing on this study, I will offer a few comments about my personal and professional background. I am a graduate student in counselling psychology with past experience in the diverse

fields of law, youth work, and employment counselling. My interest in the area of career development developed, in large measure, due to my own personal experience of frustrated career exploration in adolescence. A lack of quality career assistance in my own case, as well as observations of many other young people's need for career assistance led me to focus in this area within counselling psychology. It is my hope and intention to discover and utilize the most productive, holistic, and respectful means of career development assistance with others.

As is common in both university and community research, my role in this study is not as objective as desired. Participants were aware that I was following up on the results of the PICE counselling session and that my research supervisor was the original facilitator. Though I attempted to minimize that connection by specifically mentioning our desire to obtain honest answers (thus the original facilitator was **not** doing the interviewing), the fact remains that participants may yet have had a 'pleasing the investigator' motive operating.

My own expectation biases were partly due to prior knowledge of the PICE facilitator's reports of participant feedback, and partly due to the simple fact that this research comprises material for my master's thesis. Previously referred to as the "file drawer problem," it would be remiss not to mention a specific motivation to find

something meaningful to report, as well as the inability to use the "file drawer" in a case such as this. I have attempted to monitor my own role in the process of data collection and analysis, and to minimize the effects of such biases. Therefore, I attempted to minimize researcher effects by emphasizing my distance from the original facilitator, interviews were taped and transcribed, and impact questions were asked with a tone intended to convey an expectation of possibly little or no impact. This was not difficult, in my view, since I also had expectations and fears that such a brief intervention would indeed produce no results of consequence. As a further check on data analysis, interview summaries were provided to participants for validation or corrections, and student perceptions of impact were compared with parents' data.

Although several means of reducing the biasing impact of this researcher were used, it is recognized that one cannot truly avoid some potentially contaminating effects when participants perceive any connection whatsoever between the intervention provider(s) and the evaluator(s). It is left to the reader to decide whether the chain of reasoning between question formation, data collection, and analyses has communicated a phenomenon with integrity.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

This chapter will describe and summarize participant data. First, the emergent themes will be briefly outlined, followed by thematic presentation of participants' points of view, along with representative quotes. Finally, the experience of PICE participation and reflection will be presented in the form of a summary table.

#### **Emergent Themes**

1. Goals: The goals, hopes, expectations of students, parents' perceptions of their child's goals, and parents' own goals;
2. Evaluation of Process: Comments participants made about the interactional dynamics of the PICE session, including facilitator style, parental involvement, and other families' presence;
3. Evaluation of Content: Comments participants made about the actual activities in the session, such as the pattern-identification exercise using leisure activities;
4. Impact on Career Perspective: Comments participants made about any change (or non-change) in career beliefs or attitudes which they attributed to their PICE involvement;
5. Impact on Career Actions: Comments participants made about any changes (or non-change) in career development activities which they attributed to their PICE involvement;

6. Impact on Family Interaction: Comments participants made about any changes (or non-change) in family interaction or communication which they related to participation in PICE;

7. Attributions for Change: Comments participants made regarding their theories about what in PICE was responsible for any changes; and

8. Suggestions for Improvement: Direct suggestions participants made for improving the PICE approach.

Below is a detailed description of participants' data, presented by theme area, and illustrated with participants' own words.

### Thematic Data

#### 1. GOALS

##### STUDENTS

Many students did not have specific goals or expectations for the PICE session; they were simply looking for general help in career decision making. This was partly due to the fact that they were given only brief information ahead of time. In fact, some students recalled volunteering for the session in quite a spontaneous manner: "They came around to class the same day and I wasn't busy, so I agreed to do it," or "I didn't have a specific goal for the session, but I learned a lot. I didn't totally understand what the session was before I did it."

The factor that seemed to appeal to them most was the

promise of a more personal approach than they had been exposed to thus far at school. The idea of a 'real live' person giving them one-on-one attention and guidance seemed quite attractive, even 'fun'. This personal approach, via the spoken word, was appealing to several students as compared to paper/pen methods:

I thought it would probably be more interesting and more relevant to me than anything else has been, because the program in place now is really generic and time-wasting. So I just rushed down here and signed up...I really wanted to sort of see what else would be relevant to me more than filling out a little form...talking to a person instead of a questionnaire."

One student specifically mentioned that, in her mind, the spoken word was less 'final' than the black and white on paper. This made the session more attractive than the normal career planning activities at school. Another student recalled being a bit disappointed because she had hoped to make it to the point of having a specific occupational choice made. This was not a clearly articulated goal prior to the session, but she became aware of it when she did not make the kind of progress she had been subconsciously hoping for:

I kind of expected it to be a bit more specific, like, 'OK, we'll find a career for you,' or something like that.

Many simply said they were out for whatever progress

**Note:** Quotations from one participant are continued with single spacing; quotes from multiple participants are separated by line space. Quotations have been modified slightly, such as verb tense agreement, to enhance readability.

and ideas they could get. It was seen as a very low-risk venture, something that could help but not hurt. A few mentioned they were looking for either a challenge or a support of goals they already had in place. The idea of having to actually speak of their plans out loud seemed to be a good test of their soundness.

I didn't really go in with any expectations. I guess just to sort of examine my career goals.

It just sounded like something interesting. There wasn't any risk...I just figured I'd try it, see what it was like...so who knows what the session would do.

So I said I might as well take it. If it helps me, it helps me. If it doesn't, I'm not losing anything.

#### PARENTS

Some parents noticed that their son or daughter was quite excited about the chance to participate in PICE. In fact, the son or daughter's eagerness to be involved with their parent present was the big draw for many parents.

She was very excited when she phoned...so she went barrelling down to sign up. I think she is very concerned with what she is going to do, perhaps even unduly so...

The parents had even less information about the session ahead of time than the students did, since the student was their only source. Parents and their sons/daughters did not talk much about the coming session between volunteering and participating. Most were not aware of their son or daughter's goals for the session; some were aware of their son or daughter's career plans, others were not aware of the

specifics.

Generally I know what she wants, but I don't really know in detail what she is going to do.

I knew her general interests, but as far as goals go, no, not really. It was just presented as being an interview regarding careers and career choice.

As far as goals for their son or daughter, many parents related a general desire to support their child in something they wanted to do (students could not participate without a parent present).

I had no idea what this was; I just showed my support to her and went with her.

I just went because she needed me to go.

Several shared their hopes that the session would provide some sort of general help in progressing towards career decisions and plans; for some, any help was seen as better than the status quo.

I'm not sure. I thought she might get some benefit in making career choices.

Well, anything would be a benefit, don't you think?

I just went into it with an open mind. I had no preconceptions because I wasn't given any information about it. So we just went in and hoped our opinions counted....

Obviously, a number of parents were not aware of any specific goals or expectations they had for the session, though discussion of the session's impact brought one or two to light (see below).

One parent related how he thought his daughter didn't



need to be as concerned about her career planning as she was; he hoped it would decrease her worry about career decisions:

I was hoping it would give her a sense of direction, or perhaps even give her a sense of maybe not worrying about it quite as much...I guess I thought that perhaps part of it might give the perspective that if you have your interests and strengths...it will work out....

## 2. EVALUATION OF SESSION PROCESS

All participants (students & parents) expressed a very positive evaluation of the session overall. The facilitator was recalled as being very encouraging, the atmosphere relaxed and interactive.

I thought he did a really good job. He was really encouraging and everything.

...it was a format that worked well, and everybody was dressed casually, which I think really helps. There's nothing that would kill it more than white shirts and ties and stuff like that....I remember the professor at the time just not speaking any of the technojargon, just being very down-to-earth. It was very casual, and everybody was made to feel at ease.

A couple of students mentioned their appreciation for being 'put on the spot', having to give spontaneous descriptions of their interests or goals. One student had come to the conclusion that the session was more useful than written work because the spoken word seemed less of a final thing. Another student valued the sense of attentiveness in the group, as compared to classroom experiences she'd had.

And the fact that it was spoken was also important, because with the CAPP program when you write it down it seems very final, that this is what you want to do.

But because this is just spoken word, it's more of a thinking process.

About half were positive about having their parents in the session, with the rest having mixed feelings. None had only negative feelings about their parent being present. Some students felt more listened to than usual by their parents, while some saw that having them present gave common material to talk about later. Some gained new insight from listening to their parent in the session. One student looked back on the session as a more focused and specific conversation than they would normally have with their parents.

It was good to have my parents around and another student and their parent. Because a lot of times I think that it's only me that's doing all these hard things.

[To have my mom there was]...not a big difference. My mom didn't really say that much either.

I enjoyed it more, because it's the kind of stuff we don't really talk about. We talk like, "Oh yeah, I want to go into human kinetics," but she doesn't say, "Maybe you should do this, or you should do that to get there." And that was what she was maybe trying to say more....

It was neat. Some stuff she said, I never knew she thought that before. I don't know, just something about how you had to be focused on your career, and she's never really talked to me about the options before.

Half of the parents interviewed expressed having gained a greater understanding of their son or daughter as a result of the session. These parents seemed to feel quite positive about such insights.

Yes, I quite enjoyed it. And I know, at least I know what she's thought of something. It's more clear... She said she wants to be a teacher, and she likes reading a lot, and then she expressed herself the kind of feeling she got after reading.

We had talked about it before, but probably not as much in as focused a way. So it very much helped to give that perspective.

It kind of clarified things for me. I was glad to sit in and listen to his opinions and thoughts, because they were kind of new to me. How some of the life experiences he had been through...how that affected him.

Students with mixed feelings had a few different reasons for feeling the way they did. One student, for example, cited her parents' language barrier and her own shyness as factors causing her to be reticent. The parent also echoed the language issue on independent interview.

Student: For me, personally, it was like half and half. I want her there, but I don't want her there...She gave the input, 'cause she knows me better than I know myself kind of thing. But if she wasn't there maybe I can forget about what I say and just say what I want to say. Because I don't want to offend my mom or whatever...So it was good to have her there, but it wasn't excellent to have her there. Next time, I'd probably go without my mom....

Parent: It's good for all the kids if they can express themselves. But...maybe my english is not really good, so I can't really express myself. But I guess for people who really talk this language, and they don't mind speaking out, I think it's a good experience for them.

Some felt the parents did not have much to say in their session, so their presence did not seem necessary. One felt he had already talked about everything with his mother, so it was nothing new; another felt her father went overboard with following up afterward.

It was normal. I mean, everyone talks in front of their mom. But it was kind of the same stuff that we normally talk about.

It wasn't bad [having my father there] except for after he had this obsession, like we should talk about this...every single day...so it was driving me insane. But aside from that, I didn't really notice he was there.

All but one of the students were very positive regarding the other 'family' being in the session, most particularly the other student. The student had a peer to identify with in a room with several adults, as voiced by the student who said, "That's part of what I liked about it, that I had someone else to relate to...instead of a room full of adults". The commonalities between students were also validating, sometimes even surprising. Both similarities and differences were reported as insightful, and the second student provided a contrasting example of the analysis technique in action.

Student: She was in grade 10 also, and in the Incentive program too. So there was a kind of a bond between us...So the problems she has, I have too. It's nice to know I'm not the only one.

I thought it was great. One of the things that really helped me was hearing another student, what they felt, because I think that students right now are quite isolated...The other student in my session was a guy, not in the Incentive program. But actually I found that I had a lot of common ground with him. It was pretty amazing. I wouldn't have expected to find that. It was enlightening.

I was more into the athletic side of things and she was more into the arts side so I had a chance to see it from both perspectives.

Before the session I actually thought that working on my own was better than in a group. But then I found

out, I thought after the session that it's good to communicate with people, and that you can get more ideas.

Parents were almost as grateful for the presence of the other pair, though some valued it more for their son or daughter than for themselves. One parent did express appreciation for the other family's presence for the reason that they would automatically possess more credibility than a student's own parents.

Yes, that was good for them to have a chance to express their feelings. Especially what I remember that the other student was a guy, and he and my daughter could look at the same thing from different points of view, different angles.

...and I thought the idea of kids listening to other kids' values probably would carry much more weight. At this age in particular, parents are totally uncool. No credibility whatsoever. It might also be good hearing other parents. Because ...hearing other parents and their perspectives probably carries a little more credibility.

Having emphasized to both our kids individually the importance of studying and everything else, it was kind of refreshing to hear that we're both on the same track, saying the same things. We're not the only people beating the drum!

One other reason the students may have benefitted from having a counterpart in the same session was raised by a few: This way, even though put on the spot, one student was not the centre of attention the whole time, which might have been more stressful.

It was easier to talk because it wasn't like everything was focused on you...You're not too much on the spot....

A couple of participants were indifferent about having

the other student-parent pair. They could recall nothing added as a result of their presence. The only negative raised about having the other family was language-related; one parent felt her language difficulties would have been less of a problem without others in the room.

I didn't really mind, because I kind of knew her. If it was someone I didn't know at all it would be harder. It was kind of nice because we're really different and it's nice hearing different opinions and views on things.

I kind of knew the other student so it was ok. It didn't really matter; if she hadn't been there it would have been the same.

A final issue of concern for a few participants was the presence of observers, and videotaping of sessions. Though the majority did not feel it affected their session, for some this was a source of minor distraction and increased tension.

There was also a couple of other counsellors observing. It wasn't bad, but it made everything a little more uncomfortable.

When I heard it was going to be videotaped I was kind of scared. It's kind of hard to talk when you have a camera focused on you. I thought maybe if it had been there my answers would have been different [This session was not taped at his mother's request].

### **3. EVALUATION OF SESSION CONTENT**

#### **STUDENTS**

Comments about session content were largely positive. Students valued the way the approach allowed them to start by sharing activities of great interest to them, then used the material as data for analyzing their style and

preferences. Some students referred to this process as much more relevant than school career exercises. One student specifically mentioned gaining insight through the facilitator's use of metaphors from their own experiences to illustrate a point about career planning.

He gave me a chance to express my opinions and feelings...the stuff just came to my head and I had to say it.

The method he used was so unique...it really helped you clarify what you want and how you behave in certain situations. He used sports like a metaphor, 'cause I like sports...so I understood more. I enjoyed that he was dealing with what relates to me, not just a piece of paper....I experienced it, I can relate it to my life; it connects.

I kind of expected it to be a bit more specific,...but it wasn't really. It was like, 'Let's find out who you are first,' which is, I think, more important, but is overlooked a lot.

One student mentioned that she felt the session's technique allowed her more freedom to explore dimensions of herself as well as alternative potential career paths. This was largely a comparison between PICE and other, impersonal, paper/pencil career tools. With the latter, she had felt 'slotted', and forced to make choices prematurely. The PICE experience felt more like the beginning of a process, not the end.

It acted as a beginning point, whereas a lot of programs act as an end. It didn't say, 'What do you want to be?' it just got the ball rolling and started me thinking. I think that was really important.

Some expressed their appreciation for the way the pattern identification process helped organize information

about themselves and careers, as well as teaching them the technique of analysis.

[The facilitator] ...helped me to analyze...my personality, my goals, my weaknesses, my strengths. I think it was a good thing, because sometimes I just couldn't get it untangled in my head....

Though very little attention was given to the Career Pathways booklet, most felt it was useful as a follow-up--not essential, but a good extra. A couple felt this tool required a higher level of experience than they had to date, limiting its usefulness (but enhancing motivation to gain experience!). Though not all students actually went through and used the booklet, those who did had reflected on the relationship between the session and booklet.

The session introduced strategies, and the book kind of was more specific.

I went through it and I did a lot of the activities...and I found it was for people who already had experience...The book kind of made it more clear about what he was talking about experience-wise.

I didn't do every activity, but I looked through it. It seemed even the written stuff in the PICE program seemed more useful than the CAPP stuff, because it's more open. It doesn't focus as much on careers as on what you want.

It wasn't extremely thrilling, but it wasn't dull and boring either. I went through most of it.

#### PARENTS

In general, parents were also positive about the content of the PICE session, though not many comments were made specifically in this area. Some appreciated the broadening approach of both the technique and the facilitator's input, not directing the students, but helping



them think about the impact of their interests and personalities. This progression helped them relate themselves to occupational choices, but did not limit them to standard types of occupations. The emphasis on addressing interests and styles first seemed relevant and also encouraging for their son or daughter.

I thought the session kind of gave enough breadth that it didn't channel us off into the very traditional sorts of limited lists of things you obviously think of....The discussion sort of broadened that up a little bit....Rather than the standard sort of career counselling...[where] you fill in a little sheet of your interests and the computer says you should be a....

He never told them what to do, which is what he can't do....which is what they do now, they give you these stupid tests and tell them that they should be.... And I think the way he did it was really good, if you can get them to think about what it is that they want to do, and make sure that it matches what their personality is, that's really good.

Some of the parents were very emphatic that the technique would not have worked as well if preparation had been expected. Spontaneity was seen as part-and-parcel of the co-analysis, enhancing the candidness of responses. These parents also related their own greater understanding of their children to the unexpected nature of the session's questions.

It was really nice to go in there totally cold and fresh, not anticipating any questions. I think if people can anticipate questions or they anticipate sort of what direction things are going to go...they tailor their answers accordingly.... I know that from my own business....

Because I saw the results of the interview being a structure applied to what I think were just random

thoughts and feelings and interests, and just a general potpourri. What the interview did was it structured a lot of that and I think it's important to go in with no preconceptions on structure. ...so I felt, as did my daughter, 'Gee, some conclusions did evolve out of this that maybe we even knew of, but hadn't faced, or hadn't really thought of.'

#### 4. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE

##### STUDENTS

By far the most-cited impact had to do with modified beliefs and attitudes about career. Nearly all students said their perspective had changed somewhat as a result of PICE involvement. For some, this meant taking a step back to understanding and analyze themselves before looking to choose occupations. One student felt more focused by this emphasis, less overwhelmed, having a place to begin her search. At least half of those interviewed said PICE had broadened their thinking on career options, showing them that similar interests could be expressed in many different ways. This was a change they felt positive about, with more of a sense of freedom, and perhaps less possibility of making 'mistakes'.

I think it helped me, because I began to realize that there were specific goals I would have to set, and there were more broad ways that I could take to a certain path.

I think it basically gave me more options....It just took what I was interested in and he showed me different routes that I could take instead of just one specific thing.

Before I didn't really have somewhere where I could focus, but now I have a little bit of a focus happening

and a direction to go. That focus is to look for something that would really spark my interest....

There's a lot more possibilities. Like it opened it up. Like I just wanted to be a teacher then it sort of opened it up that it could be maybe open a tutoring business or whatever....

Perhaps related to this impact was an increase reported by some, of curiosity about possible paths and about career planning activities in general.

I was interested [in CAPP] before but now I'm more curious, and I want to learn more things about it.

However, not all students shared this opinion of school career planning, before or after PICE involvement:

I thought CAPP was a waste of time before and I still think it's a waste of time, and I'll stand by that opinion.

I hated [CAPP] even more afterward even....They give you all these tests...just to categorize you...and it's not always true for me, sometimes it's totally not true.

Some students looked back on the session as having helped give them a clearer picture of themselves, and an organized way to look at their options. One student related a change in her specific occupational goal based on the PICE session. Through looking at her personality patterns in activities, she saw a better fit than her previous choice, and adjusted her plan accordingly. Another student said she had been encouraged through the session to take aim for a career that would be enjoyable--that this was possible and valid.

Being in emergency is kind of stressful, and maybe

sometimes I'm not up to the stress. And maybe he kind of brought the realization that maybe that career wasn't for me, and helped me realize maybe something else was better. So that's good. And he made me realize that being in sports really is something that I like too, and combining those two together would be a really big thing for me. So that was a really good help.

I didn't realize it was all connected, like sports and career....Yeah, it didn't say, 'Play tennis for a career,' it just said this is your personality in sports and this is also going to be your personality in your career. And that tie I had never made before. Yeah, it gives you a whole new perspective on things.

Some students benefitted in unexpected ways. For example, one student felt encouraged by hearing the other student's struggles, lessening her own sense of isolation. Another gained confidence through speaking in the session in her ability to speak in public, leading her to consider career options previously thought out of reach. She also felt more confident that she could successfully negotiate her career planning tasks. One student had realized the importance of short-term goals in the process of career planning, and felt significantly more motivated to work hard along the way (particularly now in school).

Actually, I'm more willing to work for things, knowing that I'll be able to achieve that goal afterwards...more willing to get to what I wanted.

While some students seemed to take career issues more seriously after PICE involvement, one student reported a more relaxed attitude. While she had been worrying, along with her friends, about making enough progress, after PICE she felt freer to take it more slowly, in a step-by-step

fashion. She learned that the process would likely involve provisional plans along the way that she would change as she progressed. This was such a strong and positive adjustment for her that she was sharing her insights with friends in order to help them as well.

Before I was just kind of thinking..., I've got to get there right now, because grade 12's coming fast and I have to apply or whatever. But he made me realize that when I get to the end of grade 12 I might not want to do what I want to do now, and...I can slow down and think about it and plan it out and take each step at a time instead of rushing into it all at once. It kind of helped me relate to my friends. They're always talking about how we've got to do 'this' now, because I want to be doing 'this' by next year. And I could kind of say, 'You don't have to do that, because you've got a lot of time still...you can take your time at things you want to do.'

#### PARENTAL VALIDATION

Although parents were not specifically asked to comment on the particular issues of impact raised by their children, we may view the parents' volunteered observations as a limited sort of validation data. Since each interview was considered confidential, parents did not have the opportunity to make such directed comments.

All but one parent had some observations to offer in terms of a positive impact on their children. The one parent without observations of impact still felt the experience itself was very valuable for both her daughter and herself. She thought it was a very good opportunity for her daughter to review and clarify her thinking about career plans, as well as gaining something from the interaction

with other students and adults. She wasn't exactly sure how, but felt sure it must have helped her daughter in some way.

Not anything very obvious, but I think it was good to have a chance given to her so that she can speak out and...to review herself...what her goal and career is...and have a chance to share with the opinions of other young people. And at the same time the parents can sit with her and speak openly and frankly; I think this is very good too.

Some parents specifically noted that the impact did not seem large, but that their son or daughter did have a new perspective on career planning. Nearly all of the parents' comments were reflective of comments which had been made by students. A parent who had desired a 'lightening up' for his daughter around the issue of career was not sure she had, in fact, lightened up at all. However, he did report that she seemed more comfortable afterward with the idea of pursuing a career she might enjoy and in spending time in personally valued activities, expecting that there would be a way to utilize them in career pathing.

/ [Did she lighten up?] I don't know. That's a tough call to make. I think she's a little more comfortable with her interests and that...more comfortable doing her performing arts stuff....That's good for her and something is going to work out.

Parallel to one of the students' main themes, some of the parents noted their child's career planning to have broadened out somewhat, even if they were encouraged in a specific direction. This was also seen in a positive light; parents who observed this impact seemed to associate it with

a more balanced and healthy attitude towards career.

It's hard to say, because she already had a fairly good idea of what she wanted to do and it didn't change her idea at all....The process showed that she was probably on the right track. ...I guess she's thinking about other options now too. Like she's sort of broadened her outlook a bit....

A couple of parents also echoed an observation from a minority of the students, that the experience/participation of the session had increased a sense of self-confidence in their child--confidence in their ability to speak in public, and to competently plan for their career. These parents also typically reported feeling more confident themselves regarding their child's abilities. One parent in particular expressed appreciation for the encouragement her son received from the experience of having to express his own thoughts and feelings about his career plans with adults. In her opinion, the ability to communicate and interact with such confidence is crucial to success in the world of work.

I don't see any impact. But since then I know my daughter has her own ideas. It gives me more confidence that I know what she wants....I guess one thing is she can talk to a stranger and then she has more confidence for herself. Because she expressed herself in front of a couple of people....At home she talks too, but it's not like that, and then she really got confidence, and she knows what she's doing, she knows what she wants in the future and she expressed herself.

...just that he's kind of maturing, so he could carry on a conversation, recount his feelings on things, and not be embarrassed or too shy or things like that. The working world is a rough, tough place, and if you can't carry yourself in a conversation or meeting people...sometimes it's really rough on people.

Some parents looked ahead to future decision-making

their children would be faced with and suggested that the PICE session had taught them a method of analysis which would likely prove useful for other decisions along the way. One of these parents felt that, although her daughter was fairly secure in her current plan, she had been looking into other options a bit more and seemed to accept the likelihood of career changes down the road. Having a tool such as the pattern identification technique would be useful not only at this stage of career planning, but in the future as well.

She'll use what he showed her how to do to decide, I think, for sure. It was good, I thought.

Finally, one parent noticed a heightened motivation and discipline in his daughter:

I believe it crystallized one thing for her in her mind. And that is that working today may not have its rewards, say, tomorrow. Passing today's exams isn't going to give you some dramatic result or change in your life tomorrow. But that it is extremely important as a stepping stone to what might happen in your life....

## 5. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS, ACTIONS

### STUDENTS

The most common impact on career actions noted by students involved an increase in research and exploratory actions, such as reading about occupations or interviewing people in potential occupations. In fact, half of the student participants reported this effect. One student, however, was unsure of the relationship was between PICE and these actions in particular. Though it made sense for her



to think the increased exploration had been stimulated by PICE, she also knew this may have been coincidental.

...the session actually stimulated me to...it actually got me more motivated to find out more. Because I talked to different lawyers and asked for advice and what it's like to be a lawyer, and the education required.

I've done quite a bit of research into what it is. On the internet there's quite a bit on human kinetics.

Some students who had not increased their exploratory actions reported noticing their motivation to do career planning activities and to explore occupations had increased after PICE involvement. They did spend more time in planning, and expected also to do more exploration, simply had not done so to date. One of these students felt her motivation had been enhanced dramatically after the session, but the effect faded after a few weeks (though not completely).

Well, at first I was really motivated...like, 'OK I'm going to do something finally!' but it kind of wore off because there really wasn't a chance for a secondary discussion or whatever.

Another common impact noted by students was related to school course selection, which had taken place not long after their participation in PICE. Nearly half noted remembering a clear sense that their approach in course selection had been influenced by the career session. Some got more serious, some were more relaxed about it, and others had taken a more pointedly broad approach to their selection.

It was just before I chose my courses for next year. So then I also chose law 12 for next year. I'm not just looking toward the teaching direction; I'm also looking towards being a lawyer and everything.

...course selection was in February and I based a lot of it on his philosophy of taking your time to get there. And I was kind of working out the steps that I was going to take...

I took it more seriously when I was choosing courses for next year. And I thought about it carefully.

Several students reported a lack of impact on their actions, though they felt they were thinking differently about the process of career planning; they were thinking of new options, using a new way to make their decisions, even though in terms of actions they were going along, "pretty much the same."

Well, I think it's more the thinking process that's changed more than anything I've done.

Several of the students came into the PICE session having fairly well-defined occupational goals in mind, hoping for either a challenge or an encouragement (or help in successfully negotiating the path). As mentioned above, these students were largely encouraged in their direction, even if they also gained a sense of freedom to explore other possibilities. One student did find herself adjusting a specific career plan as a result of the PICE session. While she had been aiming for an occupation involving emergency medicine, the patterns which emerged from her self-analysis encouraged her to re-think the direction. Given her dislike of pressure/stress situations, she started to consider how

she might combine her significant interest in sports with her medical ideas. This was a direct result, so she has reflected, of the counsellor utilizing her leisure interest patterns to help her analyze her own interests, strengths, style and values.

[...and it helped me] realize that it was something that I really, really, really want to do, and I'll do almost anything to try to achieve that. And he made me realize that being in sports really is something that I like too, and combining those two [with interest in medicine] would be a really big thing for me. So that was a really good help. Yes, I have specific ideas on combining my interests, perhaps team doctor or team trainer,....I really like being around organized sports and organized teamwork.

Two students reported a significant heightening of their desire to acquire work experience, whether paid or volunteer. This was apparently a result of both the session process and the workbook questions. Work experience was seen not only as a successful bridge between school and career, but also as necessary to do the work of self and career analysis. Some related feeling that the questions asked showed them that gaining experience would help them understand what they liked/disliked and what their strengths/weaknesses were to a greater degree.

It made me more motivated to get a part-time job. I guess I kind of figured that my athletics were experiences, but only in one area. I thought [after PICE] maybe a part-time job would broaden it. So I started applying in April.

#### PARENTAL VALIDATION

Again, parents were not asked to comment on their son or daughter's specific interview comments, due to the

condition of confidentiality. However, parents' own perceptions of the impact PICE had on their child's actions/plans may serve as an additional source of data, additive and/or comparative.

Parents, in general, noticed less of an impact on career actions of their children. Two-thirds of the parents said they did not observe any concrete changes in their son or daughter's behaviour, though they thought he or she seemed more encouraged, organized, or motivated about career planning. A couple of parents pointed out that at the time of the present interviews final exams were looming, so school had eclipsed career thoughts for a while.

I mean, I can't tell. She thinks about all these things herself, so I don't know. And she always does a really good job of thinking things through herself...

No, I don't think any effect on her. It just helped her review herself, to organize her thoughts, put her head together.... No, she has no time. Because of exams and everything.

Some parents who noticed specific changes in behaviour related to PICE involvement commented on its effects on their child's motivation to get work experience and to do better in school. Others observed their son or daughter exploring a greater variety of occupational options afterward.

She's done some sort of career mentoring...she was very excited about that and it was neat. She certainly had a whole lot of interest in exploring things that were completely 'out there' that I don't think she would have had quite the interest in [before PICE].

School-wise, yeah. It seems that it's more important.

For a while there he was very concerned about getting a job and stuff like that. It was soon after [the session]. I said as long as his marks were up he didn't have to worry about that. [And motivation to get good grades...] Yeah, it did. It turned him around. I think I've even written that down.

Finally, one parent noticed his daughter working appreciably harder at an extracurricular project after her involvement with PICE. He thought it was the first time he had observed her really working hard towards a goal that was meaningful for her. Though he wasn't sure the change stemmed from her experience in PICE, he wondered whether such was the case.

I don't know if this fits into the picture. She's been a very avid swimmer for years and years...and she's going to wrap up her instructor's [qualification] this August. But she's been really gung ho on it, very aggressive. Although she's interested in plants and space and everything, this may be the first manifestation of actually going out, driving home and getting that goal and doing it.

## **6. IMPACT ON FAMILY INTERACTION**

Although not a primary aim of the intervention, a systems orientation requires that family dynamics be considered when addressing any individual member's experience. Since previous research has suggested a positive effect on family communication, we might expect some movement in that direction here. Given the duration of the intervention, it was not expected that family impact would be significant.

The most common impact in this area was noted by

half of the students. These students felt that PICE had helped their parents understand them better, their plans and desires, their values, their commitment, or their weaknesses. There was a definite positive feeling associated with this enhanced understanding. For example, one student felt her mother had become more tolerant of her tendency for giving up on things too easily. This understanding came about as a result of both her own sharing in the session as well as the other student sharing a similar weakness in the same session. Her mother expressed the same observation, that she had become more understanding of her daughter's weakness, and has become more motivated to find ways to encourage her daughter.

Daughter: ...because I am a person who gives up easily, and it's good to see that I'm not the only one. ...I talked to [my mom] a bit before that about me being a person who gives up too easily. And it just happened the student in the session with me gives up easily too! And my mom always thinks that I'm the only one who's doing these stupid things. After the session, well, she found out that it's not only me. So it got better, the attitude.

Mother: I always feel that young people are very aggressive, they have their goals and they work hard for it, but their weakness very often is they don't know how to solve the problems and they give up. This is what I am concerned about for my daughter. But from that interview I heard...I didn't raise up this issue, but the other boy shared this feeling!...then I felt like, this is not a problem with just my daughter; it's very common. We have to learn to encourage them.... I'm still in the learning process.

Right after the session it was really good because you could talk about what you wanted to do in life. But as the days went by you just kind of stopped talking about it....[It is] maybe a little better, because they know what I want.

Three students expressed feeling they had noticed a positive change for a while in their family conversations about career planning, but that it faded after a few weeks or months. Usually the most concrete aspect of the impact related to having more frequent talks about their career planning. Some of the 'fade factor' may well have had to do with the approaching year-end and final exams, but clearly some participants experienced a short-term burst in communication as a result of PICE experience.

At first it did, but I think it's kind of been forgotten. But while it lasted it was pretty good because we sort of came to an understanding, so it was easier to just start talking...

We haven't done a lot of talking at home. Well, right after the session my mom was talking a lot about careers and stuff, but now it's back to normal.

We don't really talk about careers too much now. We talked about it in the spring more.

One of the ways PICE appears to have been able to increase communication about career was simply that it provided an opening for conversations to begin later. A few students and parents noted this dynamic, as well as having a positive shared experience to reflect back on. This latter effect seemed related to both the increased communication and also a simple strengthening of the parent-child relationship.

Student: Actually, personally, I liked having my dad there. It sort of gave us a common ground when we talked about stuff later, like we were on the same wavelength. Because he had to listen to what I had to say and I had to listen to what he had to say. So we just basically came to more of an understanding.

Parent: Again, it raises the issue and gives you a positive experience to reflect back and talk about as a focal point. Something more than the run of the mill standard sort of career counselling you get in high school. So the father-daughter thing, and the peer thing as well.

Another effect of the session noticed by one participant was an enhancement of the communication between parent and child during the session itself. Although a number of students reported feeling more 'listened to' by their parents in the session than normally, one student in particular recalled learning new information from her mother's contributions in the PICE session and afterward. While her mother normally had kept many of her opinions and advice about career planning to herself, the session prompted her to be more forthcoming with these things. Her daughter very much appreciated the input, seemingly from both a career planning and a relationship perspective.

A daughter: It helped me more to hear what she had to say, instead of just on-and-off talking about it.

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A mother: Actually, my daughter and I are very close, and she always exchanges her thoughts with me, but this was the first time we sat together in front of people so that we can talk. This was a very good experience.

Parents, by and large, noticed little change in family dynamics since the PICE session--in fact, less so than the children. However, most parents did perceive some effects, all of which were positive. The few parents who did not notice any impact whatsoever fell into two categories: Those who thought any changes observed were likely a result of



their child's maturation process, and those who felt they already had a very close and communicative relationship. These distinctions were also present in a few students' reflections, that they either saw no effect in their family, or they already had a very open relationship so the session had not necessarily enhanced their communication. However, one of these students did feel more understood by her mother as a result of the session.

No, it didn't make much of a difference. What she said in the session was pretty much the same as what she said to me all the time...afterwards it just stayed about the same.

There's not really any change in how we interact about it.

...I think my mom really knows me inside out, so she knew most everything.

Not much [changed]. But I have a close relationship with my mom. We talked about this before, so it didn't change much between us.

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Parent: I don't think there's any difference in the way we talk about it. Maybe she talks about it a little more because she's getting older.

One father very much valued and enjoyed the experience of PICE for both himself and his daughter, but thought his advising role and their parent/child communication would be much the same as it had been previously. He felt they were likely an unusual family, talking about the issues of the school day and career plans on a frequent or daily basis.

I think we're actually very open in talking about that sort of thing in our family. And we may be really unique that way....so we're very supportive and we do have ongoing dialogue. We review every test together, and we review every day. We make a point of having

supper together, discussing what [she does] in class--not just the subjects [she] learns, but the kids, the teachers, how [she] feels about things.

One of the effects noted by some parents was a validation of the students' perceptions of greater parental understanding. These parents expressed heightened confidence that they understood their son or daughter better, their desires, thoughts, feelings, and planning process. They also felt more confident in their child's competence as a result.

I feel I learned about my daughter more, I know about her some certain things that I didn't know before. And it was quite a good experience too....I guess I know her better, that I know what she wants. Like, I got more confidence and trust in her.

Well, it's interesting to know that he would much rather work with a grouping of people than solitary...

One of the students experienced what she perceived as negative 'fallout' from the session. While most students were interpreting increased family communication about career as something of an improvement, this daughter felt her father became too concerned with following up on the session. Apparently he initiated conversation with her every day afterward, for about a month, until she finally protested. While she did see this as a negative experience, she also felt her father grew to understand her more clearly after the session. This was especially true pertaining to her interests and level of commitment. She felt her father had listened more attentively (particularly in session) than in their usual conversations.

It wasn't bad, except for after [my dad] had this obsession, like we should talk about this, this is such a wonderful thing, let's go through the booklet together, and every single day...so it was driving me insane....It only lasted until I screamed at him to leave it alone....So it kind of went back to normal. I think my dad...I think he learned more about me and what I really am interested in as compared to what I just talk about. Like I can say I'm interested in getting into a career in acting, but I don't think he ever really listens.

Over half of the parents commented on their own role in parenting and communication after the session, though each who did had a unique reflection to offer. One mother felt she understood her daughter's personality better, and was now putting more effort into trying to encourage her rather than push so much. Another parent modified her own career advising somewhat, realizing it would be better to encourage broader exploration rather than influencing her daughter towards having one choice alone.

I guess at this stage it's maybe pretty much the same...Sometimes we talk about it. All I can do is encourage her to do more, or different directions...I was really strict, for one way [one career choice]. But after the session, it broadened my mind too. And then I asked her to look at different directions.

One father expressed disappointment at not having followed up more with his daughter afterward. He would have liked to have had directed conversations with her about her career planning, but felt their family situation during the months post-PICE made that very difficult.

I was hoping that I would be able to follow up with her directly. And we do that in snatches, but I find it's very...you can't sit down for an hour and say, 'Let's work through this.' The environment wasn't there.

This same father related being encouraged in his thinking about trying to have a 'coaching' role as a parent in his daughter's career planning process.

I guess seeing that work in that [session], it reinforces what I think, is that your role as a parent is more of a coach. Like any coach, you help someone with their strengths and cultivating those, and doing some support of the not-as-strong areas, to help them to the goal they want to achieve...

## **7. ATTRIBUTIONS FOR CHANGES**

The issue of attributions for change was not addressed by all participants. A few participants did have ideas about the links between specific aspects of the process of their PICE session and results they observed. While these reflections were sought, they were not probed in depth due to time restrictions. It should be noted as well that these thoughts were offered 'on-the-spot', not as products of a prepared assignment.

One attribution for how students perceived the PICE session achieved what it did for them related to hearing other student's problems and issues. This opportunity seemed to lessen their sense of isolation; perhaps it also changed their definition of individual 'problems' to general 'obstacles' in a normalizing sense.

Mostly what helped was noticing the similarities [between my issues and the other student's]. I didn't realize that other people are having problems with the same things that I was. As an example, being diligent about homework. Being willing to work really hard to reach short-term goals.

Another explanation of a significant mechanism of

impact had to do with gaining insight about career during the session. For some, this came about through pattern identification exercise, especially as it related to their extracurricular activities. For others, a particular contribution from another participant seemed to strike a chord and become an important way to view their career planning. Seeing their own patterns of preference or style in leisure activities analyzed alongside their thoughts about occupations and career planning helped them put things together in a new way--to see themselves in a new way. Some students gained a greater awareness of these dimensions of themselves and were able to then relate them to specific ideas for career paths.

With the other student and his mom putting their input in...some of the stuff like there's more a range of pathways to careers and things...like it never occurred to me to be a lawyer.

Another type of insight gained had to do with broad versus narrow occupational options. Some students saw via the pattern identification exercises (and heard the message reinforced by the facilitator) that a particular pattern of interests, skills, preferences etcetera, could be pursued in many different ways. This seemed to be a freeing inspiration for a few of the students, even if they were still encouraged in the general direction they had had prior to the PICE session.

One student was quite vocal about the intervention being spoken rather than written. In her opinion, having to

think spontaneously and speak of her ideas and goals clarified her thinking more than written work would have done.

One other thing that I liked how it was spoken [versus written] was you had to think things through in your mind before you said them, so it actually clarified yourself just having to explain your career goals to someone else.

This quick thinking forced students to be more candid than they might have been with more time to prepare answers. Students may have also appreciated the spoken nature of the session due to the advantage of feedback. The range of feedback for written work would potentially start at zero (no feedback at all), while spoken interaction would contain at the very least the feedback of nonverbal reactions, likely more (encouragement and/or challenge). In any event, this student felt this format had been instrumental in giving her greater clarity.

Further along similar lines, the session did enhance the confidence level of a couple of students. One in particular related this specifically to being put in the position of having to 'think on her feet' and speak to a group of people. After being successful in the session she felt better about her speaking ability, and also began to feel she could consider new career options involving public speaking. The conducive atmosphere of the session as compared with classroom speechmaking likely has to do with the attentiveness and politeness of the audience (and size

of the group). This explanation for a gain in confidence was echoed by a couple of parents as well (eg., "...because she expressed herself in front of a couple of people...").

Finally, the power of a metaphor used by the facilitator was mentioned by some students as an explanation for their own altered perspective on career paths. For example, one student was struck by a metaphor using a stone thrown into a pond to symbolize the movement through life of a unique individual; different ripples in the water symbolized different possibilities for expressing similar interests, values, etcetera. With another student, the facilitator's use of metaphors from her own previously described leisure activities helped her see herself in a new light with regard to career options.

He told me it was like, in a pond when you drop [a stone], there's different ripples...one ripple could be teaching, and another one could even lead into english or something. Because you have to know some english and stuff to run computers.

#### **8. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

As indicated above, participants were asked directly at the end of the interview for any suggestions they may have had for improving the PICE technique. No preparation was involved, so these comments were, again, very spontaneously offered. Obviously the suggestions were offered as a result of being the most accessible ideas; whether the ideas would also be judged the most critical ones upon further

reflection is open to question. The reader will note below that participants had a range of opinions on the best ways to enhance the effectiveness of the PICE approach.

#### STUDENTS

Nearly two-thirds of the students mentioned some desire for a follow-up session. Some expressed the recollection that they had questions arise in the days or weeks after PICE which perhaps could have been addressed at a follow-up meeting. Others felt they needed a bit more help in terms of putting together an action plan to make use of their insights afterward. Some students thought the follow-up could be an optional extra for those who desired it; others thought it might be good to have the same student pairs meet again with the counsellor. One student specifically suggested that the follow-up be either one-on-one with the counsellor, or with another student as well, but not with parents present. The general consensus seemed to be that parents would not need to be present for a second session.

Next time maybe you should have a follow-up session so you can ask any questions you might have afterwards.

...[for questions] or things you wanted to add about yourself that you didn't think of before....Yeah, just a follow-up would be helpful a couple of days later to let the information percolate. I know I came up with a lot of stuff that just came to mind.

I think another session after the initial one...so you have kind of time to sink in what happened and have ideas about how you want to incorporate your ideas into the step-by-step plan. I think another...half-hour or 45 minute session just to sit down and plan it all out, that would be best.



Related to the above, one student suggested that whether or not there were a follow-up session, perhaps more emphasis could be placed on working out some goals and action plans to walk away with.

I think I would like it more if he would have sat down and started working out goals and some plans with me....I would have appreciated it more if I had a step-by-step plan that I could or could not have followed depending on how I felt after it. I would have liked that.

Two students recalled getting together in a group to talk about what they had gotten out of the PICE session. These students felt it had been a positive, useful experience and suggested future students have that opportunity; this was the case even though exactly what came out of it was not clear in their minds ("I don't remember what we said, but it was a good thing to talk about it").

In terms of some of the logistics, most felt the time frame and context was about right. One student had wished for a shorter time length, while one other student thought her session could have been longer to accomodate further progression. It should be pointed out here that not all students who expressed a desire for extra work in the session said anything about having a longer session; obviously there would be a strong relationship between the adding of session content and the need for further session(s).

The whole session was a bit long...probably about 3/4 of that time would be good.

I kind of felt like it wasn't long enough because I was sort of getting into it and starting to really think and then it's over.

Three students mentioned concerns about the sense of being observed in the session, recommending fewer observers and no videotaping. Most were not bothered by the videotape, but for these few it was a hindrance.

I didn't like so many bystanders personally. I didn't feel like they all had a right to be there. It was quite claustrophobic...

Yeah, I didn't really care. They were all kind of distractions, because there were a lot of people going in and out. I didn't really mind that they were there if they had just stayed and sat quietly and watched. But they were having their discussion in the back quietly but you could still hear them.

Finally, some students suggested provision for further practical help with their exploration. One student recalled wishing she had gained some contacts to follow up specific occupational options. Another student wanted to go further in the session towards specific ideas for occupational options for her, as well as getting information on particular occupations and educational requirements.

Like maybe we could have a contact or two, like a phone number that you could contact and start working your way through...

Maybe a bit more, like, suggestions for particular careers...putting links between everything, like, with an english degree you can do teaching, or journalism...like how do I get there, what kind of courses I have to take.

#### PARENTS

In terms of preparation for the session, a few parents would have liked more advance knowledge, perhaps using the

Career Pathways booklet as a primer. They felt more advance preparation may have helped both them and their son/daughter to get the most out of the session possible. Others, however, expressed an opposite view, that the very 'unpreparedness' of the session was key to having the student give candid responses instead of coming prepared to give the 'standard answers'.

Because it was my first time I didn't really know what it was about,...I guess maybe it would be a good idea if they knew what the questions would be about.

No, I don't think so. With other people, perhaps. But I liked the way it went, because, like I say, I discovered things about my son that I wasn't really cognizant of.

I think it might not be a bad idea to send the kit out beforehand. This saves you doing two sessions. ...So have a little homework for parents and students. Then you come to the session; that becomes sort of a reinforcement exercise.

Half of the parents agreed follow-up of some kind would be an excellent addition. Most felt such a further session would be perhaps more useful with just the students and counsellor meeting. One parent suggested an available but optional follow-up format; another suggested yearly appointments if desired, to help prepare for course selection better. Two parents expressed opinions that a follow-up session would not be useful, one having felt the same information would likely have come up; the other parent thought the students could simply call the facilitator later with questions if they so desired, since he had given out his number.

Why not just have the students themselves, a couple more [sessions], and they can express themselves. And then they learn from others' ideas too. I guess for me, one time for parents is good enough too.

Maybe next year I would like to do that again, but earlier in the year. So possibly [my son] can have a taste of the courses he's taking and how he's progressing...

I think that was enough. ...If a second interview was arranged two weeks later, it would be the same.

No, I didn't have any questions. He said you could call him if you had questions. He wrote out his phone number and everything.

Note that, although participants were told they could call the facilitator afterward if they had further questions, they did not avail themselves of the opportunity despite several students' expressed desire for follow-up. Given the adolescent developmental position, this contrast is likely to be expected.

One parent added an additional rationale for follow-up: If parents and their son/daughter know they will be going to a further session in 'x' weeks, there would be a heightened sense of motivation for them to discuss career planning together and make progress in the interim. At least it would make tangible a time period and those who wanted to continue with the conversations would be further prompted to do so, rather than automatically letting it slide as another important, but not urgent, thing to do in life.

It would probably be good to actually indicate at the session that you would be doing a follow-up visit. Because it also tends to focus you on saying, 'Let's talk about this.' So I think those things would get

more value out of the actual time spent.

One parent suggested probing to further depths with students' feelings about their career issues. In his opinion, this was starting to be a potential towards the end of their session. Of course, a longer session would then be required, which may present logistical challenges. However, contrasting opinions were held by parents, those thinking the session shouldn't go any deeper, others thinking it would have been beneficial to do so.

I thought it was perhaps a little short. It could have gone a bit longer. It struck me that it didn't get a chance to get enough into the meaty issues kind of thing. Because there's a certain amount of ice-breaking involved...

They were starting to express feelings and that. I think it's good for them to feel what they say is valued by their parents [and others]. I think that part is valuable and you do need that additional length.

However, one parent recommended that the PICE sessions be kept to pairs of students rather than individual sessions. As she reflected on the session she thought having two students kept the focus off one person in a way that made it a more positive experience (ie., prevented the content from getting 'too deep' for comfort).

I think if it were too 'one-on-one-ish' it might get a little too deep.

Judging by participants' reflections on their experience of the session, it appears all participants would agree with the words of one parent who exuberantly said, "Keep it informal!" The informality of the session in terms

of atmosphere, language, attire, and attitude seemed well-appreciated by all involved.

Some of the parents (in a similar proportion as students) recommended that sessions not be videotaped in the future. Not only some students, but parents as well, can be adversely affected by such a 'presence'. These parents were not simply halfheartedly 'suggesting' this be the case; one indicated she would not have participated in the original session at all had she not been able to influence that. Incidentally, the original session she was involved in was not videotaped, at her request. Audiotapes were put forward as a potential compromise by one of these parents. If taped records were desired for some reason they could also double as a record for participants of their session. This would allow further reflection by both student and parent later, enhancing the impact of PICE.

It would really, really bother me if they had a camera or video.

...quite honestly, if [my son] had advised me that it was going to be videotaped when [he] originally called, I don't know if I would have participated.

One parent felt confined, and suggested the sessions be held in a larger space, with freedom to move around. This would likely be more of an issue with parents due to the fact that they are listening for most of the session.

The room was very hot. We were sequestered in this little room. I didn't feel like I could get up and walk around, which I tend to do.

Another suggestion related to the dynamics and

procedure of the session was to make it possible for parents and their sons/daughters to have some time together afterward. The parent suggesting this had taken her son out of school for lunch afterward and felt it was a good way to end off--kind of a further way of saying, 'I think you and your plans are important, and I'm wanting to treat you as a young adult' [author's paraphrase].

In terms of the student pairings, a few parents thought diversity in student pairing was important for maximum learning (eg., boy with girl, new immigrant with other). They felt if students were too similar they would not learn nearly as much as seeing things from another's point of view and personality.

...I have an idea that most of the time the girls will chat a lot, right. They are buddies, they talk, exchange ideas, but it's very good for a boy and girl to sit together and exchange ideas. Because maybe they don't have much chance to discuss these kinds of topics officially. ...they would not sit down and put their thoughts together on this topic.

If two new immigrants come together, they have the same feeling. If the young people from different backgrounds, after the discussion they can understand more.

One parent raised an issue which is not specific to PICE, but deserves note nonetheless. In his view, what students really need is more real-life information (and people), not more theory. Granted, PICE utilizes students' real-life experiences to analyze their patterns and personality, but for career guidance in general he felt that the real-person resource was sadly underutilized. There may

or may not be a way to address this in PICE beyond using the real-life experiences, but it is certainly a notable issue for career programming in general.

What I think is really important is [to have parents] come in and talk about their careers. What do they do, what motivates them, why did they choose that career themselves, and then it's real, it's tangible.... That's my strongest recommendation on career planning: Less theory and get a real, live person in there.

Finally, one mother of two very different children raised the issue of how PICE would work with different populations. She wondered how it could work if students were not very verbal, or were very shy, for example. This pilot project utilized participants who were, for the most part, motivated, verbal, and social. Her suggestion was to try PICE with a diverse group of students to determine who it might be most appropriate (and inappropriate) for--an excellent suggestion indeed.

It would depend on the kid though. These kids in Incentive are different than other kids. ...they're quite willing to try new things...and they're quite outgoing, a lot of them. I think it's important to try with kids who don't volunteer...A lot of kids sort of drift around and don't really have any idea what they want to do, and don't really think about it. A lot of people don't want to talk about things as much either...but it would still be better than what they're getting now.

Results indicated some general patterns and differences in experience and impact of the PICE intervention. The results are summarized below in Table 1.



Table 1

Summary of PICE Experience

CATEGORY	RESPONSE TYPE	REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS
Goals	Examine goals	...just to sort of examine my career goals
	Come to a career decision	I kind of expected it to be a bit more specific, like, let's find a career...
	Make any progress	...if it helps me, it helps me; if it doesn't, I'm not losing anything.
Evaluation of Process	Positive--general	I thought he did a really good job. He was really encouraging and everything.
	Positive--parents	I enjoyed it more, because it's the kind of stuff we don't really talk about.
	Neutral--parents	It was like half and half. I want her there, but I don't want her there.
	Positive--other student	...I found that I had a lot of common ground with him. It was pretty amazing...enlightening.
Evaluation of Content	Positive--analysis method	I didn't realize it was all connected, like sports and career...Yeah, it didn't say, "Play tennis for a career," it just said, "This is your personality in sports and ... also ...in your career.
		It acted as a beginning point, whereas a lot of programs act as an end. It didn't say, "What do you want to be?" It just got the ball rolling and started me thinking.
		Parent: ...I saw the results of the interview being a structure applied to what I think were just random thoughts and feelings...
Impact on Career Perspective	Broadened options	...it just took what I was interested in and showed me different routes that I could take instead of just one specific thing.
	Increased motivation for school & experience	1. I took it more seriously when I was choosing courses for next year. 2. It made me more motivated to get a part-time job... 'experiences'. 3. Parent: It turned him around. I think I've even written that down.
	Decreased worry	Before I was just kind of thinking...I've got to get there right now, ...But...I can slow down and think about it...
	Provided a focus	...now I have a little bit of a focus happening and a direction to go---...to look for something that would really spark my interest.
	Positive--school career planning	I was interested [in career planning] before, but now I'm more curious...
	Negative--school career planning	I hated [my career planning class] even more afterward even....They give you all these tests...just to categorize you...

Impact on Career Actions	Increased exploration activity	...it actually got me more motivated to find out more. Because I talked to different lawyers and asked for advice...
	Modified occupational goal	...he kind of brought the realization that maybe that career wasn't for me, and helped me realize maybe something else was better...
	No change	I think it's more the thinking process that's changed more than anything I've done.
Impact on Family Interaction	Increased communication	Right after the session it was really good because you could talk about what you wanted to do in life. But as the days went by you just kind of stopped talking about it...
	Greater understanding	I liked having my dad there. It sort of gave us a common ground when we talked about stuff later, like we were on the same wavelength. Because he had to listen to what I had to say and I had to listen...
	Change in parent's role	I was really strict...but after the session it broadened my mind too. And then I asked her to look at different directions.
	No change	No, it didn't make much of a difference. What she said in the session was pretty much the same...
	Negative fallout	It wasn't bad, except for after [my dad] had this obsession, like we should talk about this...every single day...
Attribution for Changes	Insights about connections between career and hobbies	** See Content comments above **
	Insights from other student	I didn't realize that other people were having problems with the same things that I was.
	Clarification via thinking on-the-spot	...you had to think things through in your mind before you said them, so it actually clarified yourself just having to explain your career goals to someone else.
Suggestions for Improvement	Follow-up for action-planning	I think another session...so you have kind of time to sink in what happened... I would have appreciated it more if I had a step-by-step plan...
	More privacy	I didn't like so many bystanders personally. I didn't feel like they all had a right to be there.
	Advance preparation	I think it might not be a bad idea to send the kit out beforehand. This saves you doing two sessions.
	Pair diverse students	...very good for a boy and girl to...exchange ideas. Because maybe they don't have much chance to discuss these kinds of topics...

## Chapter V

### Discussion

The results of this investigation suggest a potentially catalytic effect of the PICE innovation. Although the reported impact was modest, the gains seem surprising given the duration of the intervention as well as the small group approach. In this final chapter some of the main convergent and divergent experiences are discussed, along with speculation as to potential reasons for divergence. Implications for further development of PICE will be discussed, as well as implications for research, theory, and practice. Finally, limitations of the investigation are noted and followed by concluding remarks.

#### Convergence and Divergence in PICE experience

With the present participants, goals and expectations for the PICE session were initially unclear, made more conscious through reflections and evaluations of impact. There was a general desire for progress toward specific occupational choice, often as quickly as possible. One gets the impression that some level of unexpressed expectation existed that one session would produce an occupational choice/direction. Certainly participants were looking for encouragement, inspiration and progress toward occupational planning choices.

Students and parents shared a positive experience of

the PICE session, relating this evaluation to both interpersonal dynamics and the content of the session. The facilitator's approachable and relaxed style, the session's informality, and the interaction with the other family were nearly universally appreciated.

Participants also expressed a high value on the personal contact approach of the PICE technique, focussing on the student's uniqueness, as compared with previous career planning experiences. These observations, along with the emotional nature of the comments support Miller's (1996) argument for a less decision-focused career intervention strategy:

Frequently, traditional, standardized instruments inadvertently hurry clients through the career counseling process by offering them, too early, a host of specific occupational titles as scores for the client to consider" (p. 44).

There was also a high valuation of other family's presence in the session, particularly the student pairing. This may be seen as reflecting the interpersonal needs of adolescents in adult company, as well as combining some of the benefits of group process with individual counselling. A number of participants reported gaining specific insights due to the joint participation of the other student, a pattern which was somewhat supported by interpretations of change process attributions.

Another common experience reported was the gaining of career and personal insight through the pattern

identification exercise and, in particular, the focus on leisure activities. Again, this insight process was also reflected in suggestions related to attributions for change. As discussed above, the benefits of anchoring patterns of self-analysis in actual client experience has much merit.

In addition to the benefits of using clients' experiences for analysis, there is the further possibility of drawing on their experiences to create meaningful and insight-generating metaphors. For example, the student who was very active in sports gained new insights about her career planning at least in part due to the use of sports metaphor in the career realm. The use of metaphor in counselling does have application in a wide variety of ways (Cirillo & Crider, 1995).

The most common impact participants reported was having a broader perspective on career choice options. This was seen as a positive step, a motivation-enhancing change which allowed more freedom to explore and act. Parallelling this impact was the relatively common experience of a heightened desire for career exploration. Granted, some students who claimed heightened motivation admitted they had not actually done what they expected to do as yet, but they did see the change as an increment in the right direction.

Some increase in family communication regarding career was also a common experience, though this effect did not carry on past a matter of weeks or months. Both students

and parents reflected back on the session as having been a positive experience to reflect back on or a common reference point to initiate conversation later.

Students shared substantial agreement in a desire for further follow-up and/or practical assistance, whether in a longer session, or a further meeting, without needing the parents' attendance. These reflections suggest not only the unfulfilled nature of student service needs, but also the potential they observed in the PICE intervention-- "just a little bit more to get me over the next hump".

Finally, the interpretations of impact offered by students were somewhat supported by parents' observations. Though parental observations were less marked than students' reports, it may be expected that the observing distance accounts for such discrepancies. Note again that parents were not given their child's interview comments and asked to validate them; both sets of reflections were on a recall basis. Further, no concretely discrepant observations of impact were voiced by student/parent pairs.

Since students are at somewhat differing career developmental stages, it would be likely unrealistic to expect similar progress with students who already have specific occupational ideas or goals, as opposed to students who have not progressed to that point as yet. Thus, some students who came to the PICE session with concrete career plans to consider left with similarly concrete encouragement

or modification. Others who came with no clear direction, left feeling they had a focal point to use in exploration (eg., being more observant towards what she really enjoys doing). Career interventions do need to address each client where they are and assist them to progress from that point; an occupational choice is not likely appropriate for a number of adolescents, given their need for further experience and reflection.

Participants differed in their preferences for multiple student/family presence, relating largely to language barrier issues. Similarly, although nearly all students were positive about their own parent's presence, some were more neutral due to drawbacks of language, inhibition, or lack of input. Some participants did not seem to learn anything new about their patterns, or their son/daughter's patterns. Possible reasons for this lack of new information may include the PICE session being too brief and/or dilluted in analysis, or a family interactional dynamic involving unreflective distancing.

Divergent experiences were reported in the area of career choice focus as well as concern. Some students increased in seriousness of career attitudes, others decreased in concern level. Most broadened their career prospects, though a few felt they should become narrower. While these contrasts may appear ubiquitous at first, it should be a characteristic of useful interventions that they

address individuals' unique needs, rather than applying a 'procrustean bed' framework. For example, we may argue that those students who had been overly concerned needed to "lighten up", while those who had been lax in career planning activities needed to "get serious." Similarly, students who are planning exclusively for one narrow occupation need to know that plans may regularly need revision, while students who have no focus at all need encouragement to have provisional plans in order to facilitate action. The main facet here is that each student reporting such a shift did report it in a manner that reflected their own positive evaluation of the change.

Though most students reported a noticeable impact on their thoughts and attitudes about career, some did observe increases in their career activity or specific career choices. It is likely that those students who were at a further stage of developmental "readiness" were the students who exhibited these behaviours.

Impact on family interaction dynamics was not uniform, though there was a uniformly positive evaluation of having participated together in the experience. With such a brief intervention, it is likely unrealistic to expect measurable effects on family interaction, though the limited increases reported in family career communication did parallel the earlier reports of Whiston (1989) and Castricone et al (1982). Students were more likely than parents to report an



increase in family communication about their career planning. This discrepancy may call into question the students' observations, however it may also stem from a greater investment on the part of parents to project a positive family image to the interviewer. While adolescents are in the process of separating (and potentially devaluing), they also do not have the same association between family reputation and the image of parental success.

Finally, while most families reported neutral or positive impacts, one student related a somewhat negative experience of the parent becoming "obsessive" about follow-up after PICE. Such a situation may provide data to address potential parameters for the optimal utility of the PICE approach. However, the example may also simply highlight a need for further direction to parents regarding facilitative follow-up (and potential dangers).

In terms of the effectiveness of the intervention, it appears from participant reports that the PICE project was judged a successful pilot for their own career development purposes, though there were concrete suggestions for improvement. As discussed earlier, evaluation properly centres in the experience of the clients; at this stage, the brief PICE technique seems judged a "success" worthy of further refinement and testing.

### Implications for Further Development of PICE

The experience of participants provides support for career intervention which, although brief, moves at a slower pace, particularly in the exploratory stages. The approach resonates with Miller's (1996) recent comments about appropriate career counselling:

Thus, a refocus on the client-centred aspect of career counseling deliberately slows down the process by stimulating clients to look inward to describe themselves before proceeding with decision-making behaviors" (p. 44).

Modifications strongly indicated include adding either a planned follow-up component, or lengthening the session to allow for progression into action planning. Follow-up would not require the participation of parents, though it is unclear whether students would benefit from the same student-dyad context. Some students appear to have benefitted from a later group feedback session, which may be built into the approach with the appropriate resources. The original facilitator may not necessarily need to lead such a group discussion, leaving room for either peer leadership or other para-professionals. Facilitators may need to give more direction to parents and students regarding the dynamics and potential patterns in follow-up together afterward. This may significantly decrease the likelihood of negative fallout. Although some requests for preparatory material were made, the arguments for a "clean slate" approach to the session are compelling.

As far as limitations and parameters for the PICE approach, it seems reasonably obvious that a certain level of language proficiency is required for useful participation (both speaking and listening). The level of necessary verbal ability on the part of students is unknown; although the approach has been utilized with a range of students, volunteers for this study were largely from the academically oriented population.

Due to the reported appreciation of student pairing dynamics, it would be wise to retain such a feature. However, some neutral attitudes or hesitation regarding parental involvement suggest that there may be family patterns which would delimit the benefit of parental involvement. It would be useful to explore these parameters with varying family and parenting styles, although the possibility does also exist that the PICE approach could be modified to suit particular family styles.

#### Implications for Future Research

The present study supports the value of further pursuing and exploring the potential of the PICE approach and its variations. Future evaluation would do well to utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods of assessment. Longitudinal research, combining self-report measures and observational data would be beneficial in promoting further refinement of effective and catalytic

intervention. The results also support exploration of the PICE technique with different personal and family interactional styles, in order to delimit its most useful parameters.

### Theoretical Implications

The present study lends support for the efficacy of brief interventions, particularly in the career counselling field. The increase in student's career exploration motivation and behaviour supports the efficacy of the intervention, as well as an attachment theory and systems approach. This result is reflective of Blustein's (1989) work relating career decision making self-efficacy to positive exploratory behaviour. Additionally, results support the notion that parents may be seen as providing much more than simply instrumental assistance in career planning (Blustein, Prezioso, & Schultheiss, 1995):

...an active approach on the part of one's parents may provide more than instrumental assistance with career development tasks. From an attachment perspective, it is conceivable that involved parents, by being available and responsive in the negotiation of impending career and educational transitions, enhance the adolescent's experience of felt security" (p. 421).

The PICE technique is an example of an approach which facilitates and empowers students to understand themselves better, and fosters greater freedom to explore, plan and act. The positive experience of participants illustrates the usefulness of approaches which have the aim of fostering

agency in clients, rathering than guiding them in specific directions (eg., Kush & Cochran, 1993).

### Implications for Career Intervention

The PICE approach also illustrates the possibility of brief, but powerful career intervention for adolescents which may involve parents in a structured format, facilitating movement to the next step of career development. The approach seems to appropriately resist pushing clients to decision making before they are ready (Miller, 1996). It also provides a means of giving clients experientially a lesson in viewing career development not as a single decision task, but as a continual process of adapting to a life of work.

Career counsellors may take note at the reported benefits of student pairings, as well as the parental involvement. There may indeed be other intervention arenas where such structuring may prove useful. Finally, the PICE technique and others like it may prove a potential catalyst for useful family process communication, along with career development facilitation.

### Limitations

First, the sample used was not randomly selected, and not all who initially agreed to participate were interviewed. Selection bias is always a factor when self-

selection methods are used, aggravated by participant drop-out rates. Although this study may suffer criticism on the basis of being another small, nonrandom sample of self-selected, homogeneous participants (Larson, 1995), its purpose has been to provide qualitative data on the impact of an innovative intervention. Future investigation would do well to broaden the sampling methods used here.

Another potential limitation is the non-anonymous self-report method for impact assessment. There may indeed be personality influences, let alone cultural biases not to say anything negative about a supposed service the participants received. The fact that one-half of the participants were of Asian decent also argues for caution in interpreting the lack of significant negative data, as does the adolescent-adult status differential in the interview. Although attempts were made to establish rapport and give direct permission to report negative results, this issue remains a potential contaminant with face-to-face interviews.

Maturation effects are always a potentially competing explanation for career development over time. We may expect students to get more serious about career, more wise in their planning and perspective. All follow-up and longitudinal research involves such difficulties with potential maturation or history explanations. Although caution must be urged, it is noted that participants' own reflections of the impact of PICE on their career

development have tacitly taken into account their observations of peers who did not participate in the project.

Though it is not often addressed as a limitation, the use of one facilitator with the PICE intervention argues for caution in interpreting the impact. Since research on counselling effectiveness has often pointed to the importance of the person of the counsellor, the impact of the PICE technique may vary significantly with each facilitator using the approach. The present facilitator was a career counsellor with many years of experience in research, teaching, training, and in counselling intervention. Similarly, the effectiveness of particular techniques is partly dependent on the uniqueness brought by the client(s), as supported by the process and outcome study of Kirschner, Hoffman, and Hill (1994).

With this design we are not in a position to argue for causation of variables, such as PICE leading to specific gains in self-awareness or agency. Obviously there are a myriad of events and other processes going on in families and schools over the course of a school year. What I hoped to do was to probe, in depth, the meanings which various participants have made of their PICE experience in light of the ensuing school year. At this exploratory stage I am most interested in what impact students and their parents believe their involvement in PICE had on their career

development. It will be left for future study to examine other tests of any claims, no doubt expanding on the present design by adding multi-method assessment of variables, both pre- and post-test.

Another issue relates to the long time delay between the initial PICE sessions until interviews in which participants were asked about their experience of the sessions. However, this time delay may also be seen as a positive factor in the sense that any immediate "halo effects" would be minimized. Further, what was of most interest was not an accurate recollection of sessions, but students' (and parents') ensuing beliefs and interpretations about how the sessions affected and fit into the flow of their lives around issues of career development. Future evaluations may wish to involve participants in journal-keeping as part of process investigation.

The previous group feedback session may be expected to have had some effect on the career planning thoughts of students who participated in earlier sessions. One might view such an event as a potential contamination of data relating simple involvement in PICE to career development. Another way to deal with this situation, however, is to consider the focus group as a part of this particular PICE intervention. Interview questioning of students should take this into account and probe for the place of the focus group discussion in their development process as well. Thus for



this specific group, what has happened over the past six months is not simply that students received a career session; they also continued to be stimulated by others receiving the sessions (and talking about it), and they participated in a group discussion about it. We may expect the process to have augmented their efforts at reflection on PICE impact. Further research should attempt to control and monitor the effects of such focus group discussion in an intentional manner.

A final limitation relates to the researcher's own role in this type of evaluation. As discussed under methodology above, qualitative data collection methods nearly always involve a potentially skewing effect of the data collector being associated with a particular agenda. Although efforts were made to limit the participants' perceptions that the researcher was looking for only positive data, future research should include an investigation at more 'arm's length' through anonymous surveys, for example.

### Conclusion

This study investigated the perceptions of process and impact which a particular career intervention (PICE) had upon the career development of adolescents. The one-session intervention involved pairs of students and parents. The major component of the intervention was the utilization of a pattern-identification technique for self analysis, then

applying the analysis to further thinking about the world of work. Eight students and six parents were interviewed regarding their perceptions of their experience in PICE and the impact it had on their career planning and family interaction. Results indicated participants felt students had made small, but meaningful gains in their career planning process as a result of PICE participation. Gains usually related to productive changes in perspective or attitude towards career planning, less frequently to observed career actions. These results were discussed in terms of support for the promise of the PICE approach and others which may incorporate both students and their parents in career intervention programming.

Clearly, the family of origin is crucial to career development. The PICE approach has shown considerable promise in addressing adolescent career development with a brief systems-oriented approach. Although PICE has not been proposed as a replacement for more comprehensive career development programming, it brings to mind the importance of empowering clients to take charge of their own change, as well as the fact that clients have, under certain conditions, been measurably more satisfied with brief intervention than therapists are (Steenbarger, 1992). Such brief approaches do merit further attention, evaluation and investigation.

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## Appendix A



CLEARINGHOUSE ON  
Counseling  
And  
Student  
Services

# ERIC DIGEST

1995

EDO-CG-95-69

## Pattern Identification Exercise

Norm Amundson

### Overview

Career exploration typically involves the investigation of personal factors: interests, aptitudes, values, and personal style (Amundson, 1989). This investigation along with labor-market considerations, can require considerable time, particularly if counselors use qualitative or standardized measures to investigate each factor. Given the time limitations of most counseling situations, and the desire to be efficient and comprehensive, there is a growing need for new methods of career assessment (Amundson, in press; Eckert, 1993). One such approach—the pattern identification exercise (PIE)—has been used effectively in both individual and group career counseling (Amundson & Cochran, 1984; Amundson & Stone, 1992). PIE starts with past experiences and, through an in-depth questioning process, seeks to identify personal patterns which are of relevance in establishing career pathways.

### Discussion

The guided inquiry procedure, developed in the field of rhetoric by Young, Becker, and Pike (1970), served as a starting point to develop the PIE method. These authors used a wide range of perspectives and questions to explore and understand new languages and situations. This was the stimulus for a structured questioning method (PIE) which could be utilized in career exploration.

A premise underlying PIE is that the experiences which form the basis for career exploration can come from *any* aspect of life. The experiences of each person are unique and a detailed and careful examination of these experiences will reveal some common life patterns. To illustrate, a leisure activity, such as playing tennis, can be appreciated for its social elements, the physical activity, the opportunity for competition, or some other reason. The way in which a person plays (during good times and during challenges) may reflect patterns about motivation, planning, attitude, and self-concept. Uncovering these patterns can reveal important personal insights which have direct relevance to career choice, job search, and job satisfaction.

This process of exploring experiences is as important as the questions which are used to stimulate discussion. The client is actively involved in the generation of information, the interpretation of meaning, and the application of new insights. A collaborative working relationship between counselor and client must be maintained

throughout (Gelso & Carter, 1985). The client is respected as the final authority in the identification of patterns. The counselor has an opportunity to provide input, but this is always done in a tentative manner, after the client has had a full opportunity to identify patterns.

The number of experiences to be analyzed varies, depending on motivation level and the amount of time available. Typically, the analysis would not extend beyond two or three experiences. Each analysis has the potential to add new patterns, but there also will be considerable overlap. The counselor plays an important role in introducing the exercise, but the expectation is that the client will be able to work independently or with other people in a group to conduct further analyses. The client is learning a method of inquiry in addition to learning how to identify particular patterns.

### Steps In Conducting PIE

PIE involves client and counselor in a defined exploration sequence. A considerable amount of information is generated prior to identifying patterns. It is often helpful for the counselor to take notes. If note-taking is used, it should be discussed with the client who should have full access to the information.

The steps of inquiry which characterize PIE are as follows:

1. Ask the client to think about some activity from leisure, education, or work which is particularly enjoyable. Ask the client to think about a time when this activity was very enjoyable and a time when the activity was less enjoyable.
2. Have the client sequentially describe in detail the positive and negative experiences. Some open-ended questions can be asked at this point to facilitate a full description. Some of the issues to explore include the people involved, feelings, thoughts, challenges, successes, and motivations. Also, what are the dynamics that differentiate the positive and negative dynamics? Depending on the situation, it may be helpful to question some of the contextual issues. Questions in this regard focus on how the client's interest developed over time and what the client projects for the future.
3. After a full discussion, have the client consider what types of patterns are suggested by the information. Give the client every opportunity to make connections and pro-

vide him or her ongoing support and encouragement. Ask how each specific piece of information reflects something about the client (i.e., goals, values, aptitudes, personal style, interests).

4. At this point, the counselor can provide some input. Counselor statements should be tentative and linked positively with client comments. While this can be an opportunity for reframing, it is important not to lose sight of the client's contribution.

5. Connecting the above information and analysis to specific career themes can now be addressed. As above, the client speaks first, followed by the counselor. The question here is how personal information relates to career choice and action planning.

The above sequence of inquiry can be repeated for several activities. The counselor serves as a guide for the analysis, but at some point clients should be encouraged to conduct their own independent inquiry (perhaps as a homework assignment).

In group counseling, the counselor starts by demonstrating the inquiry process with a member of the group. Participants are then paired off and instructed to follow the steps of analysis with one another. The counselor serves as a consultant while the members discuss and analyze their experiences. After a designated period of time, the group comes together for debriefing.

Positive reports have been obtained from a wide range of clients. Comments often refer to the surprisingly potent nature of the activity, particularly when focusing on leisure activities which initially seemed of little consequence. When teaching the PIE method to counselors, it has been important to illustrate the activity through experiential exercises. As with clients, the counselors have been impressed with the quality and quantity of information that can be generated through the intensive examination of relatively innocuous experiences.

#### Conclusion

PIE represents a comprehensive method for exploring career themes in that it uses experiences as the raw material

for analysis. Exploration is client-centered, with the counselor assuming a facilitative rather than an "expert" stance. Through this mode of inquiry the client identifies patterns of action which relate to goals, values, interests, aptitudes, and personal style.

There are several advantages to using the PIE approach. The most obvious advantage is that PIE offers one procedure to evaluate the client's interests and values. The inquiry has credibility since it is based on life experiences, which are interpreted and validated by the client. Through this approach, clients engage in an activity which not only provides insights, but also teaches a procedure for ongoing self-analysis.

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## **Appendix B**

### **Parent Involved Career Exploration:**

#### **Steps in the Counselling Process (Amundson, 1996; pp. 6-9)**

1. **Introduction.** The first step in the counselling process involves an invitation to students and parents to participate in an innovative career exploration activity. In offering this invitation it is important to indicate that this is only a starting point for career exploration. There is the assumption that some follow-up activities will be undertaken depending on the situation. An explanation needs also to be provided to students and parents with regards to their respective roles in the counselling session i.e. this is the students' career counselling session, parents are invited as observers. When the students and parents come together (two students and their respective parents) there is a need for introductions and to review the goals for the session.
2. **Pattern Identification Exercise.** The next step in the counselling process is designed to imbed career exploration within the "lived experience" of the students. A Pattern Identification Exercise (PIE) helps students to identify personal patterns of action (strengths as well as weaknesses) which have relevance to career development (Amundson, 1995). As a rationale for this activity, the analogy between psychological patterns and physical patterns

(DNA) may be put forward. The following procedure is followed for the PIE exercise:

a. The student thinks about a leisure activity and gives a detailed description of a specific time when it went very well and a time when it was less positive. The contrast here allows students to see patterns of weakness as well as strength. Depending on the fullness of the description, the counsellor may need to ask some supplementary questions. Some of the elements to be elaborated include the people involved, feelings, thoughts, challenges, successes, and motivation.

b. After a full description is outlined the student is encouraged to consider what types of patterns are suggested by the information that has been provided. How does the information reflect various goals, values, aptitudes, personality traits, and interests? It is important in making these connections that the student be provided with support and encouragement to make the connections by him/herself. Tentative questions can be used by the counsellor as long as they are linked positively with the students' observations.

c. The final step in this process focuses on how the patterns that have been identified relate to the career choices that the student is facing. Again, the student takes the lead in making these connections and the counsellor offers support, encouragement and some tentative

ideas.

Upon concluding this exploration process the counsellor turns to the parent(s) and asks for any additional comments. This provides a good opportunity for the parent(s) to confirm what has been discussed thus far and to add any other perspectives. Each student completes the PIE activity prior to moving ahead to the next step.

3. School Preferences and Performance. At this point the discussion turns to what the students like about the courses they are taking and how they are performing in the courses. Some of these preferences may relate to the patterns that have been identified earlier. In providing this information the students are encouraged to illustrate their points with concrete illustrations. As before, at the conclusion of the discussion with each student there is time for parental feedback.

4. Perspectives on Educational and Labour market Opportunities. As students consider their options with respect to further education or the labour market they need an opportunity to discuss the current situation. Some of the issues for discussion include: labour market trends; the need for flexibility; bridging activities i.e. work experience, information interviewing; anxiety about the future; admissions procedures and standards, and so on. Parents are asked to contribute to this discussion and to specifically provide their perspectives about changes in the

labour market and any coping strategies that they would recommend.

5. Setting the Next Step (Action Planning). Prior to concluding the session, students and parents are given information about some of the resources in the school and community (people and materials) and are provided with the Career Pathways exploration workbook (Amundson & Poehnell, 1995) that they may want to complete later. After a short discussion of the available resources, students are asked to specify what they need to do next in order to act upon some of the ideas that came up in the career counselling session. Some of these plans may involve parents working along side them as partners, where this is the case there may be a need to clarify roles and responsibilities.



## Appendix F

### Interview Introduction Script

Thank you for agreeing to meet today. I just want to give you a chance before we begin to read and sign this consent form if you are in agreement. I want to highlight that your participation in this study is voluntary, and there are no consequences whatsoever should you decide you want to withdraw at any time.

I'd like to remind you that the information you provide today will be treated as confidential, and no individuals will be identified in the reporting of results. You also have the option during the interview of choosing not to answer any specific questions you may feel uncomfortable with.

For students, written parental consent and verbal consent from the student is required. Any student whose parent has not provided consent simply will not be interviewed.

Please take time to read the information and consent now. If you still would like to proceed, you may sign one copy and keep the other for your records.

Let me just highlight that what we are interested in is not a majority opinion, but each individual's perspective on how their involvement in this program has affected them. We expect there will be some similarities and some differences in people's stories. Please feel free to speak candidly from your own point of view.

## Appendix G

### Interview Transcripts

#### PARENT-INVOLVED CAREER EXPLORATION: THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS

##### INTERVIEW SUMMARY

101 2 STUDENTS, AT SCHOOL

Why volunteer?

1 I didn't know about the session. The counsellor came and she asked if I was interested in doing this as an experience. I thought, well, it would be fun to try out, 'cause some of the counsellors that I've had before weren't as good, not as responsive to my opinions and stuff, so I thought maybe a one-on-one thing would be better than having you just go and ask for help, cause they have so many students going to them, so I thought it would be fun and worthwhile.

Some of the previous counsellors were at school, some outside of school. Some of them were not too good.

2 I heard about it on the P.A., and I thought it would probably be more interesting and more relevant to me than anything else has been, because the program in place now (CAPP) is really generic and time-wasting. So I just rushed down here and signed up.

Goals?

2 Not really, I really wanted to sort of see what else would be relevant to me than filling out a little form -- Oh, well these are your interests -- I wanted to find out more. [A more flexible approach] eh, talking to a person rather than a questionnaire.

1 Eh, I was thinking of being an emergency room doctor when I went into the session. And through what he talked about and how he ??????????????

it turned out that maybe I'll be better off with specializing in sports instead, because I love sports, I like doing them and I enjoy being around people who like sports. And being in emergency kind of is, like, stressful, and maybe sometimes I'm not up to the stress. And maybe he kind of brought the realization that maybe that career wasn't for me, and helped me realize maybe something else

was better. So that's good.

[Did think you might get that challenged?] Eh, that's what I wanted.

What was the session like?

1 I thought it went really well, because the method he used was so unique, like I'd never seen that happen before, and it really helped you clarify what you want and how you behave in certain situations, and he used sports like a metaphor kind of thing. Cause I like sports and he understands that, and he used that and so I understand more, better. So that's good.

Except my parents don't really understand what was going on because they don't understand english that well. So that's kind of confusing for them, but it was very good for me.

Yeah, I enjoyed that he was dealing with what relates to me, not just a piece of paper saying, "What do you like? This is what you like" and stuff. So I like basketball, and he used, like, "What do you feel when you're sticking your shot, what do you feel when you are dribbling down the court?" And I experienced it, I can relate it to my life, it connects.

2 I thought it was great. One of the things that really helped me was hearing another student, what they felt, because I think that students right now are quite isolated. They're not talking to each other. Yeah, just sort of hearing from somebody else, not just my goals and stuff, but their goals, and how they feel...[it address that feeling of isolation, feeling less alone].

[Mostly what helped was noticing the similarities.] Some of the challenges were the same. I didn't realize that other people are having problems with the same things that I was.

As an example, being diligent about homework. Being willing to work really hard to reach short-term goals.

What was it like to have your parents there?

1 She didn't quite understand. For me, personally, it was like half and half. I want her there, but I don't want her there. I don't know what meaning it was for her, because she doesn't understand what was going on. ... So she gives the input, cause she knows me better than I know myself kind of thing. But if she wasn't there maybe I can

forget about what I say and just say what I want to say. Because I don't want to offend my mom or whatever. It's just a feeling that, "Don't say something wrong, or else I might get into trouble later on."

So it was good to have her there, but it wasn't excellent to have her there. [If I were to go again] I'd probably go without my mom, because she even told me that she didn't understand the session that well. And she said that if she had to again, she won't go. So maybe it's better if I were to go myself.

2 Actually, personally, I liked having my dad there. It sort of gave us a common ground when we talked about stuff later, like we were on the same wavelength. Because he had to listen to what I had to say and I had to listen to what he had to say. So we just basically came to more of an understanding.

[So I enjoyed the controlled communication.]

Other people observing in the room?

1 I don't think it mattered too much. They're counsellors, so they're qualified to be there. So it wasn't a big factor.

2 I didn't like so many bystanders personally. I felt really like there was a lot of people watching. I didn't feel like they all had a right to be there. Because there wasn't just the one counsellor, there was a whole bunch of other people standing there watching. There was a couple other counsellors, plus the vice principal or something. It was quite claustrophobic, quite small.

1 With me there was only one counsellor watching, so I guess that was different.

What was it like to have another student there?

1 She was in grade 10 also, and in incentive program too. So kind of a bond between us. So I knew her personally beforehand, so ...maybe because she's a female too, and I guess females bond better than males. And so the things she talks about I can relate to my life, and stuff that I talk about she can relate to her life, so it's like an interconnection going on. So the problems she has, I have too. It's nice to know I'm not the only one.

2 The other student in my session was a guy, not in incentive program. But actually I found that I had a lot of common ground with him. It was pretty amazing. I wouldn't have expected to find that. It was enlightening.

Impressions of what the session did for you?

2 It was really good. It started me thinking a bit more. I kind of expected it to be a bit more specific, like, "OK, we'll find a career for you," or something like that. But it wasn't really. It was like, "let's find out who you are first," which is, I think, more important, but is overlooked a lot.

So it sort of handed it over for me to decide what I wanted still.

[It did help me put together a bit of who I am and what I might like to do.] It's sort of like I had a point to start on. Before I didn't really have somewhere where I could focus, but now I have a little bit of a focus happening and a direction to go.

That focus is just to look for something that would really spark my interest, because if I'm not interested then I don't really care at all, and I won't do it.

1 What she said is really relevant to me too. But I also found that the counsellor kind of helped me narrow my career choices down to just one and make me realize that it was something that I really, really, really want to do, and I'll do almost anything to try to achieve that. And so since that session I've been getting information about financial aid, about getting into university, seminars about how to get into university. It was kind of like a roller coaster, kind of, and that was the starting point and just on my way to my ending point, just a career. So that really helped me realize that if I wanted to do something I had to focus on one thing and just go for it, not have five different things and try to find out all about those. Too much time and not worth your while.

2 I kind of felt like it wasn't quite long enough because I was sort of getting into it and starting to really think and then it's over.

1 Questions you think of afterward and you want to ask...

2 Yeah, or things you wanted to add about yourself that you didn't really think of before but would be really relevant.

The time was about 70 minutes.

### Effect on career planning?

1 Well, it was really really good for me, cause before I was thinking emergency room doctor, and that was where I was planning on going to, but now that I think about it after the session we kind of thought that, "emergency room = stress" and I don't handle stress too well at times, so maybe that wasn't such a good occupation for me. So I'm thinking...cause I really want to be a doctor, cause I really like helping people and being around people. And he made me realize that being in sports really is something that I like too, and combining those two together would be a really big thing for me. So that was a really good help.

And also I thought that next time maybe you should have a follow-up session so you can ask any questions you might have afterwards. And maybe not have so many people in the room, maybe just the counsellor and another student. Because with the student there you don't feel as self-conscious of your answers as you would one-on-one. So that would be good.

Yes I have specific ideas on combining my interests, perhaps team doctor or team trainer, cause I love watching sports and I felt that if I could help athletes to perform better then it would be better sports to watch. I really like being around organized sports and organized teamwork.

2 Well, at first I was really motivated and I was like, "OK, I'm going to do something finally," but it kind of wore off because there really wasn't a chance for a secondary discussion or whatever. I'm sort of thinking, I'm looking at my interests and what I like doing, and I'm kind of leaning towards a teaching career because I like to be able to be creative and express myself in a lot of different ways. And also I like ... when you're around younger children when you're trying to teach them something you sort of get a sense of fulfillment or whatever, and you realize that you've sort of enriched their lives in some sort of way.

1 I guess I kind of followed up on myself because I'm in the career prep program here in school and one of the requirements is to have 100 hours of volunteer work in your chosen kind of occupation thing. And so I've been trying to contact Dr. Ross Davidson for the Canucks and trying to get a position helping him. I wrote two letters, made two phone calls, I'm still waiting for answers back. So that's kind of like a big follow-up for me. And I know he's also

working at UBC, and I'm trying to get an address there...

Any impact of relationship with parents in terms of talking about career?

2 At first it did, but I think it's kind of been forgotten. But while it lasted it was pretty good because we sort of came to an understanding so it was easier to just start talking instead of ... trying to understand, we could keep going, we could just go straight to what we wanted to talk about. So things got a little bit more civil on everything.

[Sort of like the stuff we talked about in the session provided a background for continuing to talk], but we haven't been talking about that lately, it's been "let's just finish grade 11 first" type thing.

This effect lasted about 2-3 months, I'd say.

1 Right after the session it was really good because you could talk about what you wanted to do in life. But as the days went by you just kind of stopped talking about it and then... we don't talk about it any more. Now it's basically the same as it was before.

I think it's kind of the same, maybe a little bit better, because they know what I want. But basically the same as before.

Any changes in experience of CAPP program?

1 Before the session I thought the CAPP was kind of helpful, because the teacher I had was really into it and he really tried to make us aware that this was important to our life. He gave us things that were really relevant to us. But there was too much paperwork, not enough interaction with people. That was kind of not too good. Afterward I think it was about the same, because he gave us work as a result. We talked about resume writing and cover letter, which was kind of irrelevant because we already knew that from last year. Now we're not doing anything, just reading, kind of tailed off at the end of the year.

So I thought it was helpful before. After the session I kind of looked at it and thought it was kind of helpful but not relevant to me; it was relevant to the general public.

2 I thought CAPP was a waste of time before and I still think it's a waste of time and I'll stand by that opinion.

Anything else you've done?

2 I was in a mentorship program. Everyone came back knowing more and I came back knowing I really really don't want to be an architect. That was last year, though.

So the place I'm at is trying to figure out what would really interest me.

[My focus right now is trying to finish school and get my grades up.]

Any other suggestions?

1 I was hoping that in the session if I figured out which career I wanted I was hoping that he would give us some contact to start making progress into the career. Like maybe he would have a contact or two, like a phone number that you could contact and start working your way through, that would be really good.

2 Yeah, just a follow-up would be helpful a couple of days later to let the information percolate. I know I came up with a lot of stuff that just came to mind type thing.



**PARENT-INVOLVED CAREER EXPLORATION:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

102 1 Student, at school

Why volunteer?

I didn't really volunteer. They came around to class the same day and I wasn't busy, so I agreed to do it. I called my mother and father and they were just going to leave so I just caught them.

Goals?

I only had about an hour to decide, so I didn't have much time to think about it.

What was it like?

It was interesting. There was another student there, a guy. It was interesting to see what kind of things he was interested in compared to me and stuff like that.

What was it like to have a parent there?

Not a big difference. My mom didn't really say that much either.

Other people in the room?

The counsellor, another student & parent, and a school counsellor. Also another interviewer.

Did it do anything for you?

There's a lot more possibilities. Like it opened it up. Like I just wanted to be a teacher then it sort of opened it up that it could be maybe open like a tutoring business or whatever. Like it sort of opened it. And there was another career choice like a lawyer or something.

Any effect on career planning?

I guess you could say that I'm doing more ... like I used to be really nervous when I'm speaking in front of a whole group. But then because I want to become a teacher or possibly a lawyer, I don't know, it's a lot easier for me now. So I don't stutter, or shake, or anything like that. It comes a bit naturally.

It might be related to being in the session, because I didn't know anybody there except my mom. It sort of, like, helped me overcome that fear.

How did the session help that?

Well, I guess because it was also because it was a small group, not a huge group and it was like they were actually sitting there listening, instead of like a class presentation where some people always talk, right. I don't know... it was more comfortable.

Did it help you to see yourself doing that more in the future?

Actually, yeah, it did. He gave me a chance to express my opinions and feelings and stuff without having to, like, I don't know. The stuff just sort of came to my head and I had to say it. I didn't know what kind of questions he was going to ask in the first place.

[kind of on the spot], you got to think fast.

I wasn't really nervous, because I didn't know what to expect. Like if I know what was coming, I'd be sort of nervous and I'd get a bit scared.

Any influence on relating with parents?

No, didn't make much of a difference. What she said in the session was pretty much the same as what she said to me all the time.

[I didn't really learn from her input in the session.]

Afterwards, it just stayed about the same.

With the other student and his mom putting their input in, I was like, some of the stuff we already knew, but then some of the stuff like, there's more a range of pathways to careers and things. It's more wide. Like, it never occurred to me to be a lawyer. It never occurred to me like that.

How did that come out?

I don't know. I'm more of a humanities person than a science person. So then with being a lawyer then I can actually fit it in with having an english degree plus a law degree. It was just before I chose my courses for next year. So then I also chose law 12 for next year.

Career pathways booklet?

I sort of browsed it. I haven't really sat down and used it because I've been really busy.

Any change in how your parents advise?

Not really, cause my mom usually leaves all the stuff like homework to me. It's only when when my marks drop that she actually pushes me.

Parents' occupations?

My dad's a draughtsman, and my mom's...I don't know what she is. She just hides around the house sometimes and goes shopping. Sometimes she'll do occasional work because she used to own a business, a grocery store.

Anything you've done about your career since the session?

Actually I've been doing my work experience. I was at an elementary school last Friday, spent the day there getting the feel for teaching. I really like it, I really like kids a lot.

This is also for my Career Prep requirements, and that was my first day.

Any difference in CAPP experience?

I was interested in it before but now I'm more curious, and like I want to learn more things about it. I'm not just looking toward the teaching direction, I'm also looking towards being a lawyer and everything. It's an interest, right, but I'm not necessarily going to go through that path.

I went into the session without a clue of what to expect, but it sort of opened my mind a bit more.

Suggestions for improving it?

Maybe a bit more, like, suggestions for particular careers. We talked about my hobby -- reading -- and he sort of directed it towards reading, but it didn't exactly connect it to any of the careers. So, ...I don't know how to say it, but...more information on the career.

Putting links between everything, like, with an english degree you can do teaching, or journalism, or working for a magazine, ...linking it together somehow.

[Information on occupations related to your interests.]  
[And even more specific.] Like what kind of journalist, and how do I get there. What kind of courses I have to take.

[Hope to get just a bit further towards knowing how to check it out, yeah.]

What led to you deciding to volunteer with the community centre this summer?

I took a leadership training course and we needed a certain number of hours. I liked it and so I signed up again for the summer.

Anything else you'd relate to having been in the session?

Not really. That's a lot of time ago.

Anything of short-term effect?

Actually, I'm more willing to work for things, knowing that I'll be able to achieve that goal afterwards. It's sort of up and down, up and down. I sort of learned some things, and some things I already knew. I wanted to learn more things, and do more things. More willing to get to what I wanted.

Any example?

The fact that I like reading, and if I like reading I can always read up on things. If I like reading I like learning ... they go together.

**PARENT-INVOLVED CAREER EXPLORATION:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

103            1 Student, at school

**Expectations?**

We heard that this professor from UBC that was coming would talk about jobs and what we want to do in the future, and apparently he was going to give us strategies or ideas about how to go about achieving goals to get that job. That sounded good to me.

Afterwards...he gave us that workbook [Career Pathways], that we could work through, and kind of set objectives. I think it helped me, because I began to realize that there were specific goals I would have to set, and there were more broad ways that I could take to a certain path. Yeah. It opened my eyes to stuff that I would have to do to get there.

The session introduced strategies, and the book kind of was more specific. I think that was the way it was.

**What was your experience of the session?**

I guess it was interesting, because I got to hear what the other student had to say. I enjoyed it, because I learned stuff about myself, I learned what my mom had to say about me that we normally don't really bring up. Yeah. I liked it.

**Other people in the room?**

The two school counsellors. I'm fine talking in front of people, so it didn't really bother me.

**Your mother being there?**

[It was neat to hear some things she had to say] -- Basically sums it up, but I enjoyed it more, because it's the kind of stuff we don't really talk about. We talk like, "Oh yeah, I want to go into human kinetics," but she doesn't say, "Maybe you should do this, or maybe you should do that to get there." And that was what she was maybe trying to say more... that maybe you should think about doing this

before you do that and stuff. So, yeah. It helped me more to hear what she had to say, instead of just on-and -off talk about it.

Her listening to you?

I don't know, I guess from her perspective it was probably pretty good because like I said before, we don't really talk about it, so she was probably pretty interested in what I had to say too, I would assume. She's my mom.

Appreciated hearing another student?

Yeah. Because it turned out that I was more into the athletic side of things and she was more into the arts side so I had a chance to see it from both perspectives. And if I was the only one there I would have only been able to look at it from my eyes, but she gave me the chance to see how it might be for another route too.

Overall effect on career planning?

I don't know. Before I was just kind of thinking, "I'd better start doing this now," and "I've got to get there right now," because grade 12's coming fast and I have to apply or whatever. But he made me realize that when I get to the end of grade 12 I might not want to do what I want to do now, and he made me see that I can slow down and think about it and plan it out and take each step at a time instead of rushing into it all at once.

You kind of thought you had to get to a decision sooner.  
Yeah.

Impact on how you talk with your parents about career?

Not really. I don't know. I guess, that night we talked about it. We said, yeah he's right, I can slow down and think about it; I don't have to rush into it, and we didn't really talk about steps to be taken. I mean, I thought about it myself, but not a lot.

[So there was kind of a difference in how you interacted with your mother during the session and immediately afterwards, but after that] , yeah, it went back.

They don't really care what I go into as long as I'm

happy with it, and I guess they think that everything is up to me. They do care that you've got to get moving in this subject and get your mark up so that it will be ok to get you in. And maybe you should focus on this course more now, but it's nothing really direct with what I want to get into after high school, it's more what I'm dealing with now to get me there. We don't really talk about careers too much now. We talked about it in the spring more. I guess in April we were talking about what if your marks aren't good enough for this, what are you going to do if you can't get in here, as an alternative. I didn't really have any answers, I had never really thought about it. So it got me thinking along those lines.

But now the focus is pretty much on school and finals.

Anything you've been doing that you relate to the session?

Yeah, actually course selection was in February and I based a lot of it on his philosophy of taking your time to get there. And I was kind of working out the steps that I was going to take because I had to figure out the courses that I could use to get into human kinetics, and if not, courses that I could also use to get into something else. And his time frame that he kind of explained in terms of this step and then this step, and this step...made me think that I can do these courses now and then when I get through them I can see what marks I get and then I can go into this or this, maybe instead of just this.

Talked to anybody about the field?

Not really. I've done quite a bit of research into what it is. On the internet there's quite a bit on human kinetics. I read a lot about it, about what it is, and what you can do, and careers that branch off a degree in human kinetics. But I don't know. I'd probably only be looking for a bachelors in human kinetics there and then go into physiotherapy after that. Yeah, I'm looking into it.

Anything else you relate to that session?

It made me more motivated to get a part-time job. He kind of talked about experience, and if experiences are going to help you later on, and if you get experience at a younger age you can carry it with you and just add on. And, I guess I kind of figured that my athletics were experiences, but only in one area. I thought maybe a part-time job would broaden it. So I started applying in April

and stuff.

Career Pathways helpful, used?

I went through it and I did a lot of the activities that were in there and I found it was for people who already had experience. And that's how I came to understand more of what he was talking about after going through there. Because he was talking about what have you done, and what would you like to do, and how are these things going to go together to get you what you want and stuff. The book kind of made it more clear about what he was talking about experience-wise.

[I went through that on my own, not with my mom.]

Parents' occupations?

Dad is a professor of food science, mom a food technician in food science.

Anything else you relate to the session or January?

Yeah. It kind of helped me relate to my friends. They're always talking about how we've got to do this now, because I want to be doing this by this time next year. And I could kind of say after that, "you don't have to do that," because you've got a lot of time still. And I don't know, it kind of helped me to tell them that just wait here, you don't have to keep going just all the time. You can stop and take your time at things you want to do. And it gave me a better understanding of how to tell them that and everything, because that's what he was talking about.

[So kind of a slowing down aspect in terms of decision making, or the specific decision, but a thinking farther ahead in terms of getting experience...putting those two together.] Yeah.

Any suggestions?

I think I would like it more if he would have sat down and started working out goals and some plans with me. He kind of told me how I can go about doing it and stuff. But I think I would have gotten a lot more out of it if I had some material to come out with. I mean, I had the book and stuff, but, I would have appreciated it more if I had a step-by-step plan that I could or could not follow depending on how I felt after it. I would have liked that.



Length was fine. It gave me plenty of time to discuss how I felt and what I thought, and I liked that because I didn't have any time constraints on what I could say and stuff, so that was good.

Keep the other student in there?

Yeah. Oh yeah. That's part of what I liked about it, that I had someone else to relate to that was there, instead of a room full of adults.

Would you keep the parents in?

Yeah. Because you could kind of talk about stuff that normally doesn't come up anyways. And you got to hear what your parents thought. And they were talking to other adults so they could relate to other adults. It was kind of like you were in on a conversation that you wouldn't normally hear anyways. Yeah, I liked that.

Counsellors in the back?

Yeah. It didn't really bother me that they were there.

More sessions?

Yeah. I think an extra session after the initial one, but in a close amount of time after it, like a week. So you have kind of time to sink in what happened and have ideas about how you want to incorporate your ideas into the step-by-step plan. I think, another, I don't know, about a half hour or 45 minute session just to sit down and plan it all out, that would be best.

How long after?

A few days would be ok, anything past seven days is kind of too long past the interview and discussion. You start to forget.

**PARENT-INVOLVED CAREER EXPLORATION:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

104            1 Student, at school

Remember why you volunteered?

Not exactly, it just sounded like a unique opportunity. Nothing like that has ever come to our school before.

Mr. Boisvert told me about it. He came to our Incentives class and announced it. He said the first person to get there will get to. He took a list of all the other people who wanted to and we got a chance to do it like that.

Expectations?

I didn't really go in with any expectations. I guess to sort of examine my career goals and ...yeah.

What was it like?

It was kind of interesting, because it was very interactive, it wasn't like...well, in the fact that he let everybody speak and we sat in sort of a group, so it wasn't as if he was, like drilling us.

[It was me, and another student and their parent, and a school counsellor watching some of the time.]

What was it like to have your mother there?

It was neat. Some stuff she said, I never knew she thought that before.

Like what?

I don't know, just something about how you had to be focused on your career, and she's never really talked to me about the options before.

So you enjoyed having her there, and it felt useful?

Oh, yeah.

Did you think she had a chance to hear new things from you?

Yeah. Probably.

What about having another student there?

It was interesting, because then you'd hear their comments and it would, like, spark ideas in yourself. It was easier to talk because it wasn't like everything was focused on you. There was, like, two people talking.

How the session worked for you?

It acted as a beginning point, whereas a lot of programs act as an end. It didn't say, "What do you want to be?" It just got the ball rolling and started me thinking. I think that was really important.

I didn't realize it was all connected, like, sports and career. I like tennis.

[So it brought together the things I like to do with things I could do as occupations.]

Yeah. It didn't say, "Play tennis for a career." It just said this is your personality in sports and this is also going to be your personality in your career. And that tie I had never made before, that connection. So it was interesting.

Anything you've been doing in career planning since then?

We did this thing called Choices on the computer, but it isn't very useful. This PICE, it started me thinking, whereas the stuff we do at this school, it's really, it's not useful. It's like, "Are you cheerful? You are going to be a flight attendant."

[It slots you into a box, tells you what to do.]

The PICE stuff was actually relevant.

And the fact that it was spoken was also important, because with the CAPP program when you write it down it seems very final, that this is what you want to do. But because this is just spoken word, it's more of a thinking process.

Anything you've done since regarding career that you relate to PICE?

Well, through Incentive we do this mentoring program. And the mentor I worked with was the career I want, or I think I'd like to do at this point. That was a psychiatrist.

(The Incentive program is a class which is taught differently. The same group of students gets math, science, english, socials together. It's different than our regular classes, it's more interactive. I think the material is a

bit more advanced, but we don't take notes much. We learn more by doing.

Any impact on how you talk with your parents about career?

Probably not. We haven't done a lot of talking at home.

Well, right after the session my mom was talking a lot about careers and stuff, but now it's back to normal.

[That lasted probably about a week.]

Overall...

[Rather than getting sent off to do this and that, the session gave me a different perspective on life and careers.]

Yeah, it gives you a whole new perspective on things.

Suggestions for improving it?

No, I think it was good the way it was. Having two students there and their parents.

We had a follow-up session afterwards, and I think that was really useful. We got to hear everyone's opinion.

There were eight or ten people in that group.

Any difference in how you approach CAPP now?

Well, my teacher dropped it, and we just read books now.

I don't think the teachers take CAPP very seriously. Some choose not to, some choose to give everybody A's.

Career Pathways useful?

I didn't do every activity, but I looked through it. Yeah. [I did that within the week after the session, not with my parents.]

It seemed, even the written stuff in the PICE program seemed more useul than the CAPP stuff, because it's more open. It doesn't focus as much on careers as on what you want.

We didn't do very much CAPP, but it was like, "What are your three goals in life, what are your skills, what are your personality types?" There was no thinking involved, just filling in forms.

[It's hard to look at a piece of paper and choose those things.]

Anything you've been doing since November that you relate to PICE?

Well, I think it's more the thinking process that's changed, more than anything I've done.

It opens you up to new perspectives. I didn't look it that way.

Parent's occupations?

Mom's a pharmacist, and dad's a mechanical engineer.

Compared to others' suggestions...

I felt it was pretty good. But one other thing that I liked how it was spoken, was you had to think things through in your mind before you said them, so it actually clarified yourself just having to explain your career goals to someone else.

You're not too much on the spot because the other student was there. So it's not like the spotlight was on you. And the parents talk too.

[I think the timing was about right, in terms of proportion between students and parents.]

**PARENT-INVOLVED CAREER EXPLORATION:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

105            2 Students, at school.

Why volunteer?

1        It just sounded like something interesting. There wasn't any risk, there was nothing I could lose by doing it. I figured I'd just try it, see what it was like.

         Mr Boisvert told me about it, our Incentive 10 class. The first person with parental consent could do it.

What were your career ideas like at that point?

1        Acting and teaching.

         Still not pretty sure, but that's the general field.

         So who knows what the session would do. I also wanted to see different paths I could take.

2        I did it because it was for career, and right now people all need their careers and stuff. So I said I might as well take it. If it helps me, it helps me. If it doesn't, I'm not losing anything.

Other expectations?

2        When I found out it was going to be videotaped I was kind of scared. It's kind of hard to talk when you have a camera focused on you. I thought maybe if it was there my answers would have been different.

1        I wasn't really expecting anything. I didn't know what to expect.

What was it like to be in the session?

1        It was a good formation. They did the inner circle/outer circle thing. It was a good formation, but the camera was very nerve-wracking.

1        There was also a couple of other counsellors observing. It wasn't bad, but it made everything a little more uncomfortable.

The other student?

1 I didn't really mind, because I kind of know her. If it was someone I didn't know at all it would be harder. I don't really know her very well, but I know her to say hi to and stuff. It was kind of nice because we're really different and it's nice hearing different opinions and views on things.

2 One other counsellor was there, as well as the school counsellor. It didn't bother me.

2 I kind of knew the other student so it was ok. It didn't really matter; if she hadn't been there it would have been the same.

What about your parent being there?

2 It was normal. I mean, everyone talks in front of their mom. But it was kind of the same stuff that we normally talk about.

1 It wasn't bad, except for after he has this obsession, like we should talk about this, this is such wonderful thing, let's go through the booklet together, and every single day he'd ... oh, it went on and on, so it was driving me insane. But aside from that, I didn't really notice he was there. They didn't really say much, the parents.

Career Pathways...

1 Only lasted until I screamed at him to leave it alone. I went through the book on my own. I didn't particularly feel that he needed to ... that I needed his help to go through it.

1 It was ok. It wasn't extremely thrilling, but it wasn't dull and boring either. I went through most of it. I went through it whenever I had the time, over a couple of weeks.

Overall what the session did for you?

2 It showed me what other careers I could take, instead of taking the one I want, which was computers. He said that I could probably even get into a career in teaching, or even some other stuff.

[It didn't take away the idea of computers], just broadened it out a bit.

It showed me that you could do a whole bunch of

different stuff instead of just concentrating on the one thing.

How did that come about?

2 He told me that it was like, in a pond when you drop water, there's different ripples. So each ripple is something different. So he said one ripple could be teaching, and another one could even lead into english or something. Because you have to know some english and stuff to run computers.

What the session did for you?

1 I think it basically gave me more options, similar to what he said. It just took what I was interested in and he showed me different routes that I could take instead of just one specific thing.

Acting, teaching and psychology are the things I've been thinking of.

Anything else you've done differently since then?

1 Not really.

[My perspective is a bit broader], but I've been going along pretty much the same, normal life.

2 Pretty much the same.

So for you, with your dad, there was a bit of a negative impact...

1 Yeah. It lasted for about a month. We never really talked about it since then. But it's not like we usually do talk about that, though. So it lasted for about a month, and we haven't really talked about it since. So it kind of went back to normal.

2 We still sometimes talk about it but it's not like she's telling me I have to get a career, but I know I do.

Not really any change in how we interact about it.

[Nothing really came up in the session that we hadn't talked about already.]

I think my mom really knows me inside out, so she knew most everything.

1 I think my dad... I think he learned more about me and what I really am interested in as compared to what I just



talk about. Like I can say I'm interested in getting into a career in acting, but I don't think he ever really listens.

Any change in how you feel about CAPP or your approach?

2 Well, I still think it's a load; it's useless.

1 Yeah. I still haven't changed. CAPP hasn't changed. I think it's boring and it's a waste of time.

Use of Career Pathways book?

2 Now and then I'd pick it up and read bits and parts of it. Probably over a month or so.  
I think they should leave it in.

1 I don't really think it's essential, but I think it's there. It's a good extra to have. But I don't think it's a definitely important thing.

Parents' occupations?

1 Dad's a computer systems manager, mom's a dental receptionist.

2 Mom works for Ikea and dad's a bus driver.

Suggestions for improving the approach.

1,2 [Scrap the videotaping.]

Time length?

1 The length was fine.

2 It didn't drag on or anything. It was fine.

One-shot deal...more sessions?

2 I think that if a person wants to do it more, they can, but if they can, they don't have to.  
[For myself, I didn't feel I needed more.]

Bystanders?

1     Yeah, I didn't really care. They were all kind of distracting, because there were a lot of people going in and out. I didn't really mind that they were there if they had just stayed and sat quietly and watched. But they were having their discussion in the back quietly but you could still hear them.

**PARENT-INVOLVED CAREER EXPLORATION:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

106            1 Student, at school

How did you find out about the session?

School counsellor came to english class, then the other counsellor came to me personally and asked. I'm not sure why me, specifically.

Any goals or expectations?

Not really. I didn't have a specific goal for the session, but I learned a lot.

I didn't totally understand what the session was before I did it.

Career plans before that?

Well, I planned to go to university and get my Bachelor of Arts. Then I want to go to law school.

What was it like in the session?

It was good to have my parents around and another student and their parent. Because a lot of times I think that it's only me that's doing all these hard things. But it's good to have another student to express themselves.

It's good to have a reflection, to think, to see that ... I don't know...

[Part of it is relating to what the other student says,] and and because I am a person who gives up easily, and it's good to see that I'm not the only one.

Before the session I actually thought that working on my own was better than in a group. But then I found out, I thought after the session that it's good to communicate with people, and that you can get more ideas.

Enjoyed having the other student there?

Yeah. And the parents. [That was good.]

The whole session was a bit long, but other than that it was good.

Other people watching?

Counsellors, in and out. I didn't mind. I knew them, the school counsellors.

Length?

I thought it was a bit long. I can't remember exactly how long it was, but probably 3/4 of that time would be good.

Overall impressions?

Mr. Amundson helped me to analyze very detailed. He analyzed my personality, my goals, my weaknesses, my strengths. I think it's a good thing, because sometimes I just couldn't get it untangled in my head, and it's good to have someone tell me.

[Things got a little more clear for me.]

What things did you talk about in the session that you like to do?

I like to sing, I like to write, I like to draw.

Effects of the session on career planning?

Not a great ... because it didn't change much. Mr. Amundson just cleared something for me. He talked about universities...

He presented me with more facts so I am more informed.

...just about going to universities...I can't remember specifically... the session turned into a group discussion for a bit.

Broader career plans?

Yeah, he said that. My goals,... I didn't have much information about other things. So he helped a lot in that.

Anything you've done differently since then that you relate to the session?

I took it more seriously when I was choosing courses for next year. And I thought about it carefully. Because he stressed that we have to have a broader preparation. So I took that advice and it helped me.

Yeah, actually the session actually stimulated me to ... it actually got me more motivated to find out more. Because I talked to different lawyers and asked for advice and what it's like to be a lawyer, and the education required. So it got me stimulated to motivate myself to find out more.

[The lawyers were people my family knew.]

Any changes in family talk about career?

Not much. But I have a close relationship with my mom. We talked about this before, so it didn't change much between us, no.

Temporarily?

Not really. But one thing with my mom, is I talked to her a bit before that about me being a person who gives up easily. And it just happened the student in the session with me gives up easily too! And my mom always thinks that I'm the only one who's doing these stupid things. After the session, well, she found out that it's not only me. So, it got better, the attitude.

[She seems more understanding, more tolerant of it.]

Differences in how she advises you?

I remember she said something about my career, and she referred to what Mr. Amundson said, but I can't remember what it was.

Any changes in your experience of CAPP?

Oh, I hate it. I hated it more afterward even. I think the CAPP program is useless. They give you all these tests, personality and stuff. Just tests to categorize you into... And it's always not true for me, sometimes it's totally not true.

I think that students, not every student, but all

students that want help with career planning should have a chance to do this, the session ... would be a perfect idea.

It's more personal, and with professionals. With you and Mr. Amundson. We would have more faith.

Any use of Carer Pathways?

I looked through it a bit. Not all of it, but some. Probably over about a month. I did it by myself.

Parents' occupations?

Father is in Hong Kong, an entrepreneur, a businessman. And my mom is a realtor.

Suggestions?

I liked everything. Maybe shortened a bit.

Career Pathways was good too. The activities were more realistic.

Follow up?

It would be nice too. We did have a session with all the students. I don't remember what we said, but it was a good thing to talk about it.

It's reassuring to know that everyone hates CAPP.

**PARENT-INVOLVED CAREER EXPLORATION:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

107           1 Parent, at her home.

Circumstances of participation?

My daughter asked me about it, asked me if she could go to the interview, and asked if I would come too.

Any hopes, goals, expectations at the time?

I'm not sure. I thought she might get some benefit in making career choices.

Your daughter's career plans at that point?

I guess she knows what she wants in the future, and she plans it out like she wants. I think it's quite ok so far. She doesn't know really if it's right or not, so I guess it's ok.

Generally I know what she wants, but I don't really know in detail what she is going to do.

[Before the session I didn't know specifically what she was thinking.]

Did you hear anything from your daughter that was new?

Yeah. She said she wants to be a teacher, and she likes reading a lot, and then she expressed herself the kind of feeling she got after reading. Some of them I can't really remember, but I got the feeling of it.

What was it like for you to be there? Enjoyable, or...

Yes, I quite enjoyed it. And I know, at least I know what she's thought of something. It's more clear, just telling me directly.

I feel I learned about my daughter more, I know about her some certain things that I didn't know before. And it was quite a good experience too.

Another student and parent there too?

I think it's good, like, a group of people, a discussion. It's good for all the kids if they can express themselves. But too me, my personality is like, well, maybe my english is not really good, so I can't really express myself. But I guess for people who really talk this language, and they don't mind speaking out, I think it's a good experience for them too.

[For me, it probably would have been better with just the counsellor, my daughter and me.]

Other observers there?

Another teacher, and another counsellor with Dr. Amundson. She was from Calgary or something like that. [It didn't matter that they were there.]

It was quite a good experience for me. I had never been in this situation before.

Anything said by other parent or student significant?

Not really. But the other kid expressed what he wanted and I thought it was quite interesting.

Overall impressions of impact for your daughter?

I don't see any impact. But since then I know my daughter has her own idea. It gives me more confidence that I know what she wants, what her goal is.

Did she gain anything from it?

I guess so. Yeah, because she didn't really talk very much to me. But I guess she knows.

I guess, for example, the idea was to be a doctor, I mean, to be a teacher. And then other people talked about like, you've got a bigger field; you can go in different directions. And I know she got the idea that, oh, maybe I will go that direction, or the other direction too.

[So she was very specific, and she broadened out.]

Any effects on how you talk about career planning with her?

I guess at this stage it's maybe pretty much the same. She's only in grade 11 now.

Sometimes we talk about it. All I can do is encourage her to do more, or different direction. To me, I don't



think I can do anything right now, because she has to graduate first. She has to do well in school first.  
[That's the number one priority now.]

Does she understand you a bit better?

I don't know. The only thing I can do is encourage her. Look more in the future to what she really wants to do. We didn't really talk much about it.

Any change in how you think about helping her?

To me, I was really strict, for one way. But after the session, it broadened my mind too. And then I asked her to look different directions. But I don't really mention that often. You know young kids, they don't want you to nag them.

They don't like it when you talk too much, push them too much.

I guess I know her better, that I know what she wants. Like, I get more confidence, and trust her.

Any observations of things she's been doing because of the session?

I guess more of a framework. I guess one thing is she can talk to a stranger and then she has more confidence for herself.

You feel like she gained some of that through the session?

Yes.

Because she expressed herself in front of a couple of people who she knows.

I don't know. I felt it at that time too. I thought, "Gee, in front of a stranger," and then she really, really can talk, you know. At home she talks too, but it's not like that, and then she really got confidence, and she knows what she's doing, she knows what she wants in the future and she expressed herself. And I guess she gained confidence too, when she knew she talked.

Any observations of how your daughter is approaching CAPP class?

No, it seems the same.

Any use of the Career Pathways booklet?

No. Maybe she has it, but I don't remember seeing it.

Any suggestions?

[Seemed about right, for length, with other student/parent there.]

I guess it's up to, like, time constraints. If you want an hour, then two students, but if you wanted more students, then more time.

[The few observers didn't bother me.]

But it would really, really, really bother me if they had a camera or video.

Desire for follow-up?

Because it was my first time I didn't really know what it was about, and that I guess maybe it would be a good idea if they knew what the questions would be about.

[Or maybe meet once if there were questions after.]

Anything else?

Why not just have the students themselves, a couple more, and they can express themselves. And then they learn from others' ideas too.

The main thing is for the students to know more about this stuff. The parents ... I guess for me, I got more understanding of what she thought. But for the kids' benefit maybe more people, and they can express themselves, and then what they think...

So maybe one week with parents, and after that just students?

Yeah, um humm. I guess for me, one time for parents is good enough too. And after that for the students, if they talk about it they can know more about other students, what they think.

**PARENT-INVOLVED CAREER EXPLORATION:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

108            1 Parent, at his home.

**Circumstances of volunteering?**

She volunteered...I'm not sure. She was very excited when she phoned. She needed a parent to go and it was a quick rush to sign up. So she went barreling down to sign up. I think she is very concerned with what she's going to do, perhaps even unduly so. And so it seemed quite an important focus for her to sort of figure out what she wants to do. She's in the Incentive program. She's doing well, but not...works hard in math and sciences as well, but is very much into the english literature. She likes her theatre and drama so. I think she just wanted to get a sense of how that would pull together for her possible career.

It was during the day, so it was kind of awkward for parents to get there, ...[but I wanted to support her.] We had about a week's notice before the session.

**Your goals?**

I was hoping it would give her a sense of direction, or perhaps even give her a sense of maybe not worrying about it quite as much. In a sense I feel with kids these days, because of tough economic times, kids are concerned with what they are going to do when they're in grade 10. And frankly, when I was in grade 10, like, it never occurred to me to even worry or care. I was busy having fun...It was really only the end of grade 12 that I kind of put any thought to it and I had some vague idea that I wanted to be in sciences somewhere, and that was about it. But kids now, it seems like they have to know what they're going to do. I guess I thought that perhaps part of it might give the perspective that if you have your interests and strengths and that, it will work out, but you don't have to get yourself iron-clad or lose a lot of sleep over it at this point.

**What was it like being in the session?**

I found it very educational. I was impressed with the kids that were in there. They actually, a number of them

had very, very specific goals, and they were pursuing extracurricular things to help them get their goals. They talked about their interests and I was impressed with just how sharp they were. Mind you, a number of these kids were from the Incentive program, so you probably had a select group there.

And I thought the idea of kids listening to other kids' values probably would carry much more weight. At this age in particular, parents are totally uncool. No credibility whatsoever. I don't know whether it's for everyone, but certainly... my son perhaps wasn't as much so, but my daughter is definitely...she wants to make her own mind up.

But if she sees it in her own peer group, or hears an affirmation of her own thoughts from a peer, then ...

What about having the parents there?

It might also be good hearing other parents. Because the other part is, of course, the biological parent has low credibility, and yet hearing other parents and their perspectives probably carries a little more credibility.

Anything you appreciated/not for yourself?

It was fine.

Would you do it again?

Sure. Absolutely.

How about the time length?

I thought it was perhaps a little short. It could have gone a bit longer.

It struck me that it didn't get a chance to get enough into the meaty issues kind of thing. Because there's a certain amount of ice-breaking involved, and getting a role...

How do you feel the session worked for her?

That's hard to say, because we talked about it afterwards, and, she's going through a personally difficult time because she's sort of got two houses and I don't think she's really happy in either one, so she sort of has this, ... here it's sort of a blended family situation and there's some problems there and yet back at home, her mom is a little more, sort of, authoritarian/rules-based and her

older brother is, frankly, a jerk. It's not just the brother-sister stuff; he's really insensitive, and Laura is quite sensitive, so she's really lost right now. She's actually coming over for the summer and we'll see how it goes. But coming over, perhaps, reluctantly, if not...this is the lesser of two evils. So I'm hoping we'll have time over the summer to give her a comfort level in some form. So in that sense, I don't think the follow-up is what I wanted it to be.

Career stuff overshadowed?

Well, I think she's got enough on her plate. We've talked about it, she's really thrilled, she's taking her english lits and writing next year. It's all focused towards some kind of career that will have something to do with drama or performing arts. Perhaps teaching or something and doing that.

So in that sense, it is working. She is feeling a little more comfortable, but... The process...in the fall she wasn't really able to focus on it very well.

You were hoping to follow-up with her?

I was hoping that I would be able to follow up with her directly. And we do that in snatches, but I find it's very...you can't sit down for an hour and say, "Let's work through this." That environment wasn't there.

What about your hope that she would lighten up a bit?

I don't know. That's a tough call to make. I think she's a little more comfortable with her interests and that. In her mother's house she has much more focus on getting a job and earning money sort of thing. She dwells on that quite a bit. Like, she's looking for a summer job kind of thing. And I guess that colours her to some extent. My own values are more...I think a small part-time job is ok, but your first job is being a student, and doing a good job at that. You know, working a night a week at McDonalds or something, that's ok, but that's all it should be. Enough to have some pocket money, and not sort of beginning to saving now for university sort of thing, or putting that sort of pressure on.

...I know I put myself through university totally...but nowadays, especially for a girl, I don't think there's that many jobs that are plentiful, unless you get a union job or industrial. So I think there's that aspect as well as like, if I have a career I want, will I ever have a job in it? I personally have all kinds of people ask me about their kids,

well should they go into computers? My stock answer is they should go into what they want to do. You know they hear there's good money in computers and that, but...give me a break, that's just not how you do it.

You want to go to work and have fun. If you really enjoy what you're doing, your enthusiasm will find you something. You won't actually be working; you'll be having fun and they'll be paying you for it.

Any differences in how you talk about career with your daughter?

Well the existence of the session itself, of course, was a very good spot to sort of open things up, in discussion.

Did you hear anything new from your daughter?

I thought the session kind of gave enough breadth that it didn't channel us off into the very traditional sorts of limited lists of things you obviously think of. There are other ways of getting there. The discussion sort of broadened that up a little bit. I thought that was useful. Rather than the standard sort of career counselling see a counsellor, and you fill in a little sheet of your interests and the computer says you should be a ...

So giving them the idea that it isn't a standard formula; there are a number of ways they can turn. Because I don't think you can give anyone the answer. And it's not something you have to get overly concerned about.

Did you have a chance to express yourself?

Yeah. There were a couple of rounds where they had some comments from parents. And I did make a comment the effect that I think that because of the economy, kids get really overly focused on it, and they don't have the time to enjoy being a student without carrying the weight of responsibility of a job, as well as, in that grade area they're going through ... all kinds of things are happening for them.

We had talked about it before, but probably not as much in as focused a way. So it very much helped to give that perspective. I think that left her feeling a lot more comfortable doing her performing arts stuff which she does extracurricularly. That's good for her and something is going to work out.

Any changes in how you think about your part in her planning?

It's hard, I guess it depends... change from what? I guess seeing that work in that [session], it reinforces what I think, is that your role as a parent is more of a coach. Like any coach, you help someone with their strengths and cultivating those, and doing some support of the not-as-strong areas, to help them to the goal they want to achieve, as opposed to being more directed, which perhaps might be the way someone might look at it more. So I found that coaching approach works a whole lot better. Sort of a low-key role and it's a dialogue, and the way it [the session] was carried out reinforced that.

I tend to be that way anyway.

...

Yeah. You sort of have to step in...the only place where I try to sort of be a little more structured is where there are choices that would greatly limit a future direction that she might make. Then you try to be there and say you want to cover off your math or whatever kind of thing. Just because it may lead to a closed door. Because some things, obscurely enough, require it. It may only be grade 10 level, it's not a big deal. Certain things you do cut choices off. Other than that, that's the only place I think that you want to be there. Kids will not think long-term enough, or they'll be very sure at the moment. And they'll change their minds 10 times between now and grade 12, or maybe re-focused.

Anything you've observed her doing that you relate to the session?

I can't think of anything. Now she's been at her mom's pretty much that whole time. I do see her occasionally, ...but I more conversational times.

She's done some sort of career mentoring...she was very excited about that and it was neat. She certainly had a whole lot of interest in exploring things that were completely out there, that I don't think she would have had quite the interest in.

So you feel there was some relationship to her exploring a wider variety of things...

Yeah. She was really quite keen. She's still searching for kind of whatever it is that will give her some comfort, the holy grail or whatever. I don't think there is one, or it clicks some time later, for some people not for well after they've graduated, they realize they're in the

wrong field.

Do you know anything of the Career Pathways booklet?

Yeah, I have it. I photocopied it for her, and kept a clean copy, cause it's actually useful for other purposes.

She didn't want to do that right now, so I left it with her, but I don't think I'll follow up on it.

I, think the way it is structured, it does walk you through a lot of the stuff about where you're at, your values, and it takes you... I thought the values part is useful, because a lot of professions align themselves with certain values. Certain professions that might deal with biology, forestry, ... certain values go with that. If they're very much in harmony with your own, that's a very positive thing. On the other hand, you may have the same sort of skill set, say in promotional sales, if that isn't you, you're not going to be very happy. I thought that was an interesting twist, because I haven't seen that show up before.

Anything else you can think of in terms of impact?

Again, it raises the issue, and gives you a positive experience to reflect back and talk about as a focal point. Something more than the run of the mill standard sort of career counselling you get in high school.

So the father daughter experience, and also the peer thing as well. It just is a very different way of approaching. I appreciate it probably is very labour intensive.

Any suggestions for improving it?

The booklet was kind of an add-on at the end. I think it might not be a bad idea to send the kit out beforehand. This saves you doing two sessions. Now the booklet isn't student-specific; you may want to tailor it so it isn't overwhelming or whatever. So have a little homework for parents and students. Then you come to the session; that becomes sort of a reinforcement exercise. And I would do the follow-up sooner than you're doing it now. Probably not more than a couple of months from the actual time.

I think you'd get better feedback, more accurate feedback.

It would probably be good to actually indicate at the session that you would be doing a follow-up visit. Because it also tends to focus you on saying, "Let's talk about



this."

So I think those things would get more value out of the actual time spent.

You'd keep the parents in there?

Yeah, I would. The kids there seemed very much ok with that.

Bystanders?

Yeah, there was quite a collection back there. There may have been as many as six back there, but they were far enough back that it wasn't a problem.

Video?

I don't think it matters.

Now that you've got the video, what good is it? (Aside from research) I don't see the help of it.

Was there anything you wished had been in the session?

I guess the length. There were so many areas to touch on. They were starting to express feelings and that. I think it's good for them to feel what they say is valued by their parents and the people. I think that part is valuable and you do need to have the additional length.

And I guess I would always want to emphasize there's no magic bullet. It's a process of exploring and there isn't a right and there doesn't have to be an answer. It just has to give you a sense of how you might orient your own compass. You don't have to go away thinking if I still feel unsure then maybe I won't do anything. Some people know right from grade 8 or something, but some people are interested in a lot of things, but nothing sort of has a magical click to it. And that's ok.

**PARENT-INVOLVED CAREER EXPLORATION:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

109            1 Parent, at her home.

**Circumstances of volunteering?**

They apparently asked some kids, only in the Incentive class I think, which I think was a mistake, just for volunteers. My daughter phoned me at work and wanted to do it and she needed me to go too, and I said fine.

She said they needed somebody right then, at least for permission. It was a while before we actually did it.

**Daughter's goals?**

She just thought it would be fun to do. I don't think she planned to get anything out of it. Because she already had a fairly good idea of what she wanted to do. That's all.

**Did you have any goals?**

No. I just went because she needed me to go.

**What was it like to be in it?**

It was fine. I think he did a really good job.

**What was it like to have that other parent and student there?**

It was ok. I mean, it's no big secret, the things you're talking about. It would depend on the kid, though. These kids in Incentive are different than other kids.

It's not so much an accelerated program, but they're quite willing to try new things, and they're not any smarter than other kids, but they're willing to try new things, and they're quite outgoing, a lot of them. They're just willing to put more effort into things, that's all.

My son, he's a lot more shy, he doesn't have much to say about anything, let alone what he wants to do, to somebody else. I could see some of the questions, like, what was some good experience in your life, I'm sure he wouldn't like to answer questions like that. So I'm sure it depends on the kid.

What about the people watching?

I think there were three people there. It wasn't a big deal.

What did the session do for your daughter?

It's hard to say, because she already had a fairly good idea of what she wanted to do and it didn't change her idea at all. She wanted to go into human kinetics and that's still what she wants.

He was really encouraging and everything. It was good, he told them just to go for it...

The other girl didn't have such a clear idea and he sort of helped her think about what it was. It was good.

What was it that was encouraging for her?

[Both the process of talking about her interests and things he said were encouraging.] The process showed that she was probably on the right track.

She's just kind of a performer; she just likes to do these things. I don't know that she had any purpose in mind. She just thought it would be fun to do it.

Any impact on how she's planning?

Maybe. I don't know. She's still thinking about other things, and I guess she's thinking about other options now too. Like, she's sort of broadened her outlook a bit, like she doesn't have to get into this, she's thinking of other things.

She'll use what he showed her how to do to decide, I think, for sure. It was good, I thought. I'm not sure that it would work with all kids, but it might.

I'd like to see it done with a different kind of kid. Like I don't know why they said that...at that school I don't think they should have said that they had to be Incentive kids. Like, they just went into an Incentive class and ...I don't think that's a very representative sampling of kids, because those kids have gone through interviews and all, that's why they're in there.

How did you talk about her career planning before/after?

We don't talk about it a lot. I mean, she's the one who's going to decide that, not me. Unless she was thinking of something that I thought she was totally unsuited for, I would not say anything. So, it isn't up to me to decide what she's going to do, so...

I don't think there's any difference in the way we talk about it. Maybe she talks about it a little more because she's getting older.

Anything she's been doing differently since then?

I don't think so.

[Just feeling more encouraged, and possibly considering more broadly.]

Any use of Career Pathways?

I looked at it some, but she took it and she read it. It's in her room and ... it will never come out, probably!

Anything else?

I mean, I can't tell. She thinks about all these things herself, so I don't know. And she always does a really good job of thinking things through herself and, I mean, she's careful enough about thinking about things, so whether she's changed the way she looks at things, I don't know. I let her do that.

Any suggestions for improving the approach?

I don't know. I thought it was really good. He never told them what to do, which is what he can't do. He can't do that, and I thought that was good. Which is what they do now, they give you these stupid tests, and tell them that they should be...they told her she should be a forestry worker or something, and that's totally not suitable for her. And so I think that's all a waste of time. And I think the way he did it was really good, if you can get them to think about what it is that they want to do, and make sure that it matches what their personality is, that's really good. I mean, I thought it was really good.

I'm not sure that the counsellors in school would do that, though. I don't know.

If they'd do that instead of the CAPPs program, it would be much better. I don't think they're getting anything out of the CAPP program. It's just a waste of

time. The teachers don't like it either, because they don't know what they're supposed to be doing. If they could do that instead of the CAPP program, they would have the same man-hours there, I'm sure they'd have enough time to do that. They should be able to get through all the students with those hours.

Did the videotape bother you?

No, and I'm sure it didn't bother her either.

Follow up?

No, I didn't have any questions. He said you could call him if you had questions. He wrote out his phone number and everything. I think you could have called him if you had any questions.

Anything else?

I think it's important to try it with kids who don't volunteer, like kids that really need... My daughter is a really clear thinker and she'd already thought out all this stuff herself. A lot of kids sort of drift around and don't really have any idea what they want to do, and don't really think about it.

A lot of people don't want to talk about things as much either. If you asked them questions about themselves, they wouldn't be able to answer it as clearly as some kids. I think it would be interesting. You know, my son will go to school and come home and nothing happened at all! And he has...it's a lot harder to get things out of him; I don't know how it would work with kids like that. It would be interesting to see. But it would still be better than what they're getting now.

**PARENT-INVOLVED CAREER EXPLORATION:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

110           1 Parent, at her home.

How much notice did you have?

Not even three days, since I had to change my schedule.

Any sense of your son's hopes or goals for the session?

I think he would do something like that. He's interested in a field that, frankly, I don't know a lot about -- computer. I think... but he's multi-talented. He's discovering it now.

Was he hoping for something in particular?

He didn't talk about it.

Did you have any hopes?

Well, anything would be a benefit, don't you think?

It kind of clarified things for me. I was glad to sit in and listen to his opinions and thoughts, because they were kind of new to me. Although some of the life experiences he had been through, say, being on a team, and having some of his friends go to another minor hockey association, how that affected him -- that was very interesting. I didn't really see that in him at the time I guess. I didn't realize it had upset him.

Yeah, it was very good, informative.

How about the other parent and student being there?

She was very proud of her daughter, and when you read a parent's pride in a child, it's very recognizable.

And you related to that because you feel proud of your son?

Of course. Of course. Always have, always will.

Any observers there? How was that?

One of the school counsellors.  
That wasn't a problem for me.

Did the videotape bother you?

Yeah, it did. My son kind of sprung it on me at the last minute, and quite honestly, if he'd advised me that it was going to be videotaped when he originally called, I don't know if I would have participated, because I'm that type, just like I say. I don't like having my picture taken.

Overall impressions of the usefulness of the session?

It's always good to hear adults speak. You kind of hope they're telling the truth.

Did you think it was of some benefit for him?

I think so. I really do.

Just that he's kind of maturing, so he could carry on a conversation, recount his feelings on things, and not be embarrassed or too shy or things like that. The working world is a rough, tough place, and if you can't carry yourself in a conversation or meeting people or social things like that, sometimes it's really rough on people. Especially if they're incredibly shy. I don't think my kids are shy.

Has his plan for career changed at all?

We haven't spoken about it.

Well it's interesting to know that in the previous interview that he would much rather work with a grouping of people than solitary, on his own. Like a lot of times you have to have that comraderie between people to make it work. Like I've had my share of cooperative learning...

Any sort of impact on how you might talk with him about career plans?

I mean, he could do a complete turnaround and be into something else. Although he doesn't have a language, and he'll graduate without 12 math. But then that's cool. So it takes him a year longer. Big deal. As far as the language is concerned, if he chooses something that requires it, I'm sure the desire will be there to learn it and master it, rather than being prodded into doing it. He's that type of kid.

Anything he's been doing that you relate to the session?

School-wise, yeah. It seems that it's more important. For a while there he was very concerned about getting a job and stuff like that. It was soon after that. I said as long as his marks were up he didn't have to worry about that.

So he seemed to be a little more serious about getting good grades...

Yeah, it did. It turned him around. I think I've even written that down.

Any use of Career Pathways?

He took it. I'm not sure what's in it.

Anything he's been doing about career?

I know he wants to make a lot of money.

So I guess that's what he's shooting for, but I still think he's kind of young, ... he hasn't really had that taste of having the summer job and the cash. And once that comes, it's "who wants to go to school, who wants to do this, I just want to make money, have a car and drive."

But he's kind of had a taste of that through his cousin, who went to BCIT, did very well, now he's a moving man.

Any suggestions for improving the approach?

Keep it informal.

[It was nice to have the other student and parent in there.] It was kind of nice to hear someone else's ... just to let you know... I think if it were too one-on-one-ish it might get a little too deep.

Do you think homework beforehand would have helped?

No I don't think so. With other people, perhaps. But I liked the way it went because, like I say, I discovered things about my son that I wasn't really cognizant of.

Time for students versus parents?

I think it was fine. It's easy for someone to hog the conversation, so I'd like to hear the kids talk.



Length?

The room was very hot. We were sequestered in this little room. I didn't feel like I could get up and walk around, which I tend to do.

Follow up?

Well, follow-up would require more thought. Maybe next year I would like to do that again, but earlier in the year. So possibly he can have a taste of the courses he's taking and how he's progressing with that, because that drafting thing was a waste of time. Usually if he likes what he's doing, he excels.

Anything else?

Location, probably good for kids to be at school, but you're still in that school environment, and when this thing is over, you're going back to school. That's why, it was very close to lunch, and I took my son out to lunch and we carried on our conversation. It was like a little window opening. It kind of made him feel a little more grown up. That was neat.

Now I kind of regret it not being audioed. Because I would like to listen to it again. But like I say, I did write it down in a letter, like my impressions and things. So I could refer to it if I wanted to. But it's like, his life.

**PARENT-INVOLVED CAREER-EXPLORATION:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

111           1 Parent, at her home.

Circumstances of volunteering?

When I was together with my daughter, she told me that I was being invited to an interview with her. I had no idea what it was, I just showed my support to her and went with her.

I just knew one day ahead.

I didn't know what was going on.

[I didn't know what to expect there, or have any specific goals for it.]

Do you remember what your daughter's goals were?

She didn't discuss it.

What was it like?

She seemed to enjoy it very much. Me too.

Another student and parent? What was that like?

Yes. Two young people can share their opinions as well as from the parent. It is a good idea to exchange...

[I don't remember any other observers.]

Yes, that was good [for the others to be there.]

And the other parent?

Yes, that was good for them to have a chance to express their feelings. Especially what I remember that the other student was a boy, and he and my daughter could look at the same thing from different points of view, different angles.

[Some things they saw differently, some the same.]

Yes, exactly.

Did the session do anything for your daughter?

Not anything very obvious, but I think it was good to have a chance given to her so that she can speak out and

then before she is to be interviewed she has to take some time to review herself, and think over again, what her goal and career is... and have a chance to share with the opinions with other young people. And at the same time the parents can sit with her and speak openly and frankly; I think this is very good too.

A chance to be put on the spot, to speak out loud her plans?

Exactly. Actually, my daughter and I are very close, and she always exchange her thoughts with me, but this was the first time we sat together in front of people so that we can talk. This was a very good experience.

Did the other parent say anything good for your daughter to hear?

Yes, that's good. Sometimes she always gets the opinions from her parents, but she maybe gets used to it. To have a chance to listen to other parents or kids, that's good.

Anything you enjoyed hearing?

Because I always feel that young people are very aggressive, they have their goals and they work hard for it, but their weakness very often is they very often don't know how to solve the problems and they give up. This is what I am concerned about for my daughter. But from that interview I heard...I didn't raise up this issue, but the other boy shared this feeling! Yes, he told us that, the worst of all is if you try hard to do something, for a long period of time, and you can't handle it to the point you like, then I give up; I cannot control.

Then I felt, like, this is not the problem with just my daughter; it's very common. We have to learn to encourage them, how to solve their problems.

Any effect on how your daughter thinks about career planning?

No, I don't think any effect on her. It just helped her review herself, to organize her thoughts, put her head together before she talked, or before she was interviewed.

Probably no change in how you talk about her career with her?

The same. We talk once in a while, because we are very

close. She will share with me what her goal, her thinking or her feeling is.

Any new ideas after that about how to encourage her?

Yeah. I think that I have to do something, but still I don't know how to encourage the young people. I'm still in the learning process.

Even ourselves, not only young people.

Anything she's been doing with career planning afterwards?

No. She has no time. Because of exams, and everything.

[She thinks about it, but that's about it.]

Any use of Career Pathways?

I'm not sure.

Any other thoughts about impact with your daughter?

Not really.

Any direct suggestions for improving this method?

Because career counselling is very new to me, it's difficult for me to give any very good suggestions.

Length?

It wasn't too long. Because the people involved were willing to share their opinion, I think it was good.

Having the other student/parent there?

Yeah, I think so.

You see, I have an idea that most of the time the girls will chat a lot, right. They are buddies, they talk, exchange ideas, but...it's very good for a boy and girl to sit together and exchange ideas. Because maybe they don't have much chance to discuss these kinds of topics officially.

Even when they are at school, maybe they play, they have a good time, but they would not sit down and put their thoughts together on this topic. Yeah. Especially, last time the arrangement was good. We are new immigrants, we've been in Vancouver for just six years, and the other boy has

been here for long, and then the two young people can share their point of view from different angles. If two new immigrants come together, they have the same feeling. If the young people are from different backgrounds, after the discussion they can understand more.

Did you wish for a further session?

I think that was enough. An hour's interview is good enough.

At least, the time is enough for four of us to voice our opinion. If a second interview was arranged two weeks later, it would be the same. It's on the same topic.

Did the videotaping matter?

Not to me, no.

**PARENT-INVOLVED CAREER EXPLORATION:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS**

**INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

112            1 Parent, at his home.

Remember the circumstances about getting into the session?

Yeah. My daughter asked me if I wanted to participate in it. Someone had asked for participants in some classroom setting. Beyond that I don't know who asked...

It was, like, days before going there.

Any sense of what her goals were?

I know her general interests, but as far as goals go, no, not really.

It was just presented as being an interview regarding careers and career choice.

And your own sense of goals?

Yeah. I just went into it with an open mind. I had no preconceptions because I wasn't given any information about it.

So we just went in and hoped that our opinions counted towards organizing something...

What was it like to be in the session?

I thought it was fine. Cordial, relaxed, informal.

There was another student and parent there. I'm sure just one other one. It was very busy in the background, people coming and going, fairly busy, a changeover time. That wasn't a disturbance or anything.

What was it like to have that other student/parent there?

I didn't feel any ambivalence, I didn't feel restrictive, or that I was worried about what I was saying or anything. In fact, I believe we had quite a good dialogue between us. Both the students talking to each other, and myself and the other father. We both talked between us and so did the kids, so I ... if anything, it drew out more discussion.

Overall sense of what it may have done for your daughter?

I believe it crystallized one thing for her in her mind. And that is that working today may not have its rewards, say, tomorrow. Passing today's exams isn't going to give you some dramatic result or change in your life tomorrow. But that it is extremely important as a stepping stone to what might happen in your life in 2 years or 5 years or 10 years down the line. I don't know if it's part of our instant gratification society, but I believe it's really, really hard for these kids to see that. In retrospect as a parent, it's crystal clear to me, because I know where I should have done better, and where I did well, how it paid off. I really empathize with kids in especially grades 11 and 12, I really do.

Any sense of more specifics on how that's affecting her career planning?

Again, it's very hard, because it's so long ago. I remember especially in the case of the other child and the other parent that was there, the child liked electronics. And while the child may not have pursued electronics if that was something he was interested in, or my daughter in space, ... that if it's something you like, pursue it. You're usually successful at something you enjoy. Maybe that was brought to a head, too. It was a secondary point.

If you like it, how does that apply to the real world out there, to getting a job, to choosing a career. If you really like plants, maybe it doesn't make a lot of sense to be an accountant. If you like numbers and crunching numbers, then maybe it does make sense. In the one person's case, he liked electronics. That may mean working in an electronics store, it may mean being an electronics engineer, but that there would be some application of his interests.

Any change in how you and your daughter relate afterwards?

I think we're actually very open in talking about that sort of thing in our family. And we may be really unique that way. For example, she is interested in space, so we sent her to a space training camp, a NASA training camp in Alabama so she could experience it first-hand. So we're very supportive of that and we do have ongoing dialogue. We review every test together, and we review every day. We make a point of having supper together, discussing what you do in class. Not just the subjects you learn, but the kids, the teachers, how you feel about things. So we may be a bit

unique in that manner.

I just personally believe, my wife and I, that it's really important to maintain the dialogue. Because then you can know what is going on. You can support where support is needed, advise when it's needed, and just plain shut up when that's needed.

If you don't talk about it you're going to miss all the cues. I think things can block the wheels pretty fast this time of life.

So pretty much the same as before.

I believe as the year has progressed out here and things have become more difficult and there's become more pressures on her, generally...exams and testing and careers and things like that...that I think, I know she feels under pressure. Every one of her friends feels under pressure. And I think far more than they need to. I think when I read the paper sometimes and I look at job prospects and things like that, maybe it's justified. It's hard to say. But I talk to all her friends, and it's really tough on these guys.

Any things she's been doing in career planning you relate to the session?

It's hard to say. She also enjoys swimming. I don't know this fits into the picture. She's been a very avid swimmer for years and years. She actually qualified to get her lifesaving certificate. She was 14 or 15, and you have to be 16 to get it. So she was kind of marking time on that and she's just gone right back into swimming, and she's going to wrap up her instructor's this August. But she's been really gung ho on it, very aggressive. Although she's interested in plants and space and everything, this may be the first manifestation of actually going out, driving home and getting that goal and doing it. That too has taken a lot of work...long, long days...but she's been very diligent about it, worked very hard, kept her nose to the grindstone.

Yeah. It will be really interesting to see how this all manifests itself. And we're just encouraging her that if, you know, if that's what you want to do right now, then go for it. You're going with our blessing. You enjoy it, you're interested in it. It's not something that's whimsical. She's not at all a whimsical person; she finds what she likes and sticks with it.

Any use of Career Pathways together?

I remember thumbing through the book. I didn't read



it. To be honest, I can't even remember whether we took it home or not. I don't know. I honestly don't know...

Any suggestions for improving the approach?

Length?

I think it was fine. It was very... it was a format that worked well, and everybody was dressed casually, which I think really helps. There's nothing that would kill it more than white shirts and ties and stuff like that.

I remember the professor at the time just not speaking any of the technojargon, just being very down-to-earth. It was very casual, and everybody was made to feel at ease. There was no pressure, there was just ... I'm looking for your opinion and that kind of thing.

I think the length was fine. Seemed appropriate. If it had to err a little bit, I think maybe it was a tiny bit on the short side. I think it may just have had to do with the cycle of the classes, but it was fine.

Other student and parent in?

Yeah, that was great, because I believe it opened up some dialogue that was useful to both parents and both students. And I think there was a realization...part of the conversation was a lot different than just being a third party to it and recording it. I felt there was a lot of commonality between the students, who really barely knew each other but for the first time could talk about careers and things. And the same thing with myself talking to the other parent. Having emphasized to both our kids individually the importance of studying and everything else, it was kind of refreshing to hear that we're both on the same track, saying the same things. We're not only people beating the drum!

What about follow-up?

I think if there's going to be some follow-up, it should be done quicker. It should have been done in about 30 days. Now that may be too quick for yourselves to assimilate all the information and try to make sense of what's been said. But ideally, from our point of view, the interviewee, I think if it was done in about 30 days that would have really helped. I feel I've forgotten a lot of things that were brought up that were quite relevant.

Maybe 30-45 days, we'd remember more of the highlights and more of things that were important that came up.

I think we're fairly unique, compared with most parents. We really do have a lot of dialogue. Since that interview, and talking about the importance of studying ... the only thing... I think it's pretty important actually... In talking to her recently, she was one of 12 students in the entire school that's been on the honour roll every term of every year since grade eight. So she's pretty good. But one of her complaints when she brought home her report card...she is just bored... If she's challenged she does really well...

So that's the only fly in the ointment right now.

They did something else right, and that was they positioned the camera a long way away from the people, so it was not obtrusive. The microphone was up close but it didn't intrude into their space...

Do you think it would have been better with preparation homework?

I think the answer to that, it really, emphatically, in my opinion, is NO. It was really nice to go in there totally cold and fresh, not anticipating any questions. I think if people can anticipate questions or they anticipate sort of what direction things are going to go, and they tailor their answers accordingly. Subconsciously, it's subliminally done. I know that from my own business, if you say, "This is the agenda", and you fax them the agenda, boy, they've come up with the answers they don't even believe in, but they know that's the one you want to hear. And I think to hit it cold like this....that's all that needs to be said. I think the fewer ways you prejudice, possibly prejudice the conversation, the better off you are. I think you'll get more candid answers. More spontaneity.

What about 'readiness' of the student?

I see the cold session as better. Because I saw the results of the interview being a structure applied to what I think were just a random thoughts and feelings and interests, and just a general potpourri. What the interview did was it structured a lot of that and I think it's important to go in with no preconceptions on structure. To go in and ask yourself those hard, cold questions and then put it together. So I felt, as did my daughter, Gee, some conclusions did evolve out of this that maybe we even knew of, but hadn't faced, or hadn't really thought of. I like the cold approach. It's one I use in marketing and sales too. You ask questions, you don't tell them anything, you just keep asking questions and the person will eventually

come to their own conclusions.

Which is the only advice they'll take anyway...

Exactly! If you give them too much information up front to be primed on, I don't think you're going to end up with truly unbiased, candid, spontaneous answers.

Anything else you wished I'd asked?

I think it would be interesting to see what happens with these guys say, a year, two years, three years from now...

I think there should also be...I think it's really, really important when you talk about this at a high school, all of this is just theory, really. And what I think is really important, is parents are a huge resource pool... to come in and talk about their careers. What do they do, what motivates them, why did they choose that career themselves, and then it's real, it's tangible, something you can touch and feel...

Words on paper don't have half the impact as actually feeling, telling, touching, seeing how it all works out...

That's my strongest recommendation on career planning...Less theory, and get a real, live person there.

**Appendix H****Interview Data Summaries****STUDENT # 1****INTERVIEW SUMMARY****PRE-SESSION****1. EXPECTATIONS**

She had been planning on being an emergency room doctor up to this point. She was recruited shortly before the day, and didn't really know what to expect. She thought it would be fun to try, and seemed to be attracted particularly by the personal approach she anticipated. Her experience with counselling in the past had left her with the impression that some counsellors either weren't open to her own ideas, or simply had too many students to deal with to give much attention.

**IN-SESSION****2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS**

She felt quite positive about the interaction overall. Her mother didn't really understand some of what was going on, due to her level of english comprehension. She had mixed feelings about her mother being there, and said she would probably go alone another time. Partly she appreciated the chance to have the input, but also felt shy to say what she really thought.

She liked the other student being a part of the session, and remembered things they had in common helped her feel more comfortable.

**3. EVALUATION OF CONTENT/ACTIVITIES**

She appreciated the facilitator letting her talk about things she really liked, then using metaphors from her own experience (sports). She thought the exercises helped clarify her own patterns of preference and behavior. The activities seemed more personally relevant than the career planning in school (CAPP).

**POST-SESSION****4. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES**

Felt encouraged to really try for a career she may like.

Realized more clearly that she wanted to combine her love of sports (especially team sports) and her interest in medicine. Also came to a realization that the stress of the emergency room may not be the best fit with her personality.

Felt encouraged that she was not the only one with problems, due to the input of the other student.

**5. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS & ACTIONS**

She was thinking about emergency room medicine, and

emerged thinking that a medical career associated with sports would be more appropriate. In fact, in reflecting on the experience, she felt it helped her see how much she really wanted to go in that direction, in a very focussed manner.

Felt more motivated afterwards, went about getting information about university and financial aid, trying to contact the Canucks' team doctor for possible volunteer work.

6. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP,

Right afterward it was good because she found it easy to talk about her career ideas, but after a while it went back to the usual, where they don't talk about it much anymore. It might be a bit better, since they know what she wants now.

7. ATTRIBUTIONS FOR CHANGES & INSIGHTS

Hearing the other student share problems helped her feel more comfortable with her own.

She relates most of the impact to the exercise of observing her own patterns in her enjoyed activities -- making her more aware of her strengths, weaknesses, preferences, and relating that to career.

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Would have liked a follow-up session, perhaps either one-on-one, or with only the facilitator and other student, for questions which came up subsequently.

She would also have liked some sort of contact(s) to follow up on in exploring career interests.

## STUDENT # 2

## INTERVIEW SUMMARY

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1. EXPECTATIONS

She heard about it on the school p.a., and thought it would perhaps be more relevant than her school career planning. She especially remembers wanting to talk to a person rather than do the paper-and-pencil thing, and was quite interested in taking part. She did expect that the session would bring her further in terms of having a specific career path.

## IN-SESSION

## 2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS

She very much appreciated the interaction, and the style, as well as the makeup of the group. The most memorable thing for her was having another student in the session. Even though she may have thought they wouldn't have much in common, she was surprised at how similar their thinking and situations were. This was so strong a memory that her words included, 'amazing' and 'enlightening'. She feels that generally students are not really talking to one another much (thus isolated) and thought the PICE session eased her sense of isolation a bit. She really enjoyed having her father there, since she felt more 'listened to' in the regulated format. The session also provided material for them to refer to in later conversations.

## POST-SESSION

## 3. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES

While she had expected more specific direction in terms of occupational choice, she found a new perspective: Backing up and taking a good look at who she is and what she really enjoys as her starting point. She felt somewhat overwhelmed by the size of the task before, but found that the PICE session helped give her a focus (looking for what would really be interesting for her). At the time of follow-up, focus had shifted to finishing the school year, getting good grades. She felt that her school career planning activities were irrelevant before and after her involvement in the PICE session.

## 4. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS &amp; ACTIONS

After the PICE session, she felt more motivated to work on career exploration and planning, but this faded after a few weeks. She thinks that a follow-up session may have helped keep up the motivation and give additional guidance in terms of steps she could take. She is now occasionally examining her interests, and has been thinking of some career related to teaching.

## 5. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP,

She felt very good about having participated in the

session with her father. She felt more understood by him afterward, and also appreciated that the experience gave material and an easier introduction to carry on career conversations later at home. It was like being 'on the same wavelength'.

Though her focus has shifted to finishing the school year and they're not talking much about career these days, they did talk with greater understanding and frequency for about 2-3 months after the session.

#### 6. ATTRIBUTIONS FOR CHANGES & INSIGHTS

She had some observations regarding what helped her in the session, most notably learning the other student struggled with similar issues, such as the difficulty in working hard to reach her goals. Presumably this lessening of her isolation freed her a little bit more to keep working on that struggle.

#### 7. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

She would have liked less observation of the session, more of a sense of privacy. She didn't feel the observers "had a right to be there", and this made her a bit self-conscious about what she was saying.

She would also have liked the session to be a bit longer, since she felt she was, "getting into it and starting to really think," and then it was over.

A follow-up session would have been good in her opinion, since she had questions afterward and other things she thought of adding to the discussion and analysis. Perhaps a couple of days later to give the information a chance to 'percolate'.

## STUDENT # 3

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

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## 1. EXPECTATIONS

She didn't feel she really had any goals for the session, since it was such a last-minute and casual decision for her. She also felt that if she had known more of what to expect, she likely would have been more nervous about it.

## IN-SESSION

## 2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS

She enjoyed the small group setting, and the attentiveness when she was speaking (compared to her classes!) and described the atmosphere as 'more comfortable'. She found the other student's input interesting, both the similarities and the differences between them and their interests.

She also valued the opportunity and challenge to be put 'on the spot' in answering questions off the top of her head, and felt it was quite a confidence boost for her to be able to do that.

Her mother didn't say much in the group, and it didn't seem critical that she be in the session, as far as this student was concerned.

## 3. EVALUATION OF CONTENT/ACTIVITIES

She appreciated the type of exercises in the session, and felt that she had a good opportunity to explain her own thoughts before the exercise moved onward. Not knowing what questions would be asked may have helped her answer more realistically, spontaneously and see what pattern would come out of it.

The Career Pathways booklet wasn't really a major part of the session for her, and she just browsed through it a bit later.

## POST-SESSION

## 4. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES

She felt the session opened up her thinking in terms of career options. While previously she had been thinking of teaching, she saw that teaching could be done in a number of different ways and settings. The session also increased her self-confidence for speaking in public, encouraging her to consider career options like teacher and lawyer which require public speaking.

She was interested in her school career planning activities, but feels that the PICE session increased her sense of curiosity about careers and planning.

She also credits the session with increasing her willingness to work hard to reach her career goals.

## 5. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS &amp; ACTIONS

She remembers that she chose her courses shortly after



her involvement in the PICE session, and that her selections were definitely influenced by it (Eg., choosing Law 12).

Also, she feels her options broadened out, from simply teaching to a wider field, including law, and she has felt positive about that change.

6. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP,

She didn't think the session was different in terms of how she and her mother interact regarding career planning, and has not noticed any differences afterwards either.

7. ATTRIBUTIONS FOR CHANGES & INSIGHTS

She attributes her own expansion of options to discovering in the session that there are many different career paths, rather than the set standard ones. Part of this came from the style of pattern identification using her interests, but a big part of it also came from hearing the input of the other student and parent.

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

She would have liked to go further with specific ideas for occupations relating to different educational paths, such as an english degree. She also would look for more information on specific occupations and steps towards them in terms of coursework, for example.

## STUDENT # 4

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

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## 1. EXPECTATIONS

She heard that a professor was going to be interviewing students and giving them help in making plans to achieve their career goals. Having a keen interest in a specific and challenging career (in human kinetics), she was very interested in anything that would help her get there.

## 2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS

She enjoyed the session, and appreciated the presence of both the other student and her own mother. She found that the differences between herself and the other student added an extra dimension to her learning. With her interest in athletics and the other student's interest in the arts, she had the chance to listen to the same career exploration technique with a different slant. She also appreciated having another fellow student present, so she didn't feel like she was alone in a room full of adults. There is something comforting about having that other student there, since you can relate to them in ways you cannot relate to the adults.

She also appreciated her own mother being there, because the dynamics and content of the session forced a more specific conversation about her career plans--more room for detail on her part, more room for her mother to give suggestions that she might not normally give. At other times in the session, she appreciated being able to 'listen in on' conversation between the adults.

## 3. EVALUATION OF CONTENT/ACTIVITIES

She felt the session served as a kind of introduction to strategies for identifying her interests and preferences, and that the Career Pathways could serve as a follow-up with more specific application. However, she felt that the exercises in the booklet seem to require a higher level of experience than she has at present. She emphasized again that she enjoyed hearing what the other student had to say as a part of the session.

## 4. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES

She feels the session helped her broaden her perspective, to see that there would be many ways in which she could find an enjoyable career. It also showed her the importance of short-term steps along the way.

She had been quite rushed about the process before the PICE session, worrying about making quick decisions and plans; afterward she felt she could afford to relax a bit in her mind and take things a bit more slowly. She felt that the session not only helped her see her own career planning in a more 'step-by-step' way, but also to be able to share this confidently with her friends.

#### 5. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS & ACTIONS

Participation in the session definitely affected her course selection. She remembers applying the philosophy she gained from PICE and taking a more relaxed approach, giving herself time to try things and work out her action steps. She felt more free to have a provisional plan, then expect to adjust along the way (Eg., after seeing how the courses go). She has also done quite a bit of research into human kinetics on the internet, though she may well have done that in the absence of PICE involvement.

She does credit the PICE session with increasing her motivation to gain work experience. Both the session content and the workbook showed her how important work experience would be in the career planning process.

#### 6. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP,

She talked about her career planning further with her mother the night after the session, and the conversation reinforced what came out of the session (ie., slowing down and taking things a step at a time). The focused conversations seemed to bring more out of her mother, as compared with the normal 'on-and-off' talking about it they would usually do. She felt it helped her to hear what her mother did have to say.

Her parents seem to be most concerned that she would choose a career that she would be happy with, and they did talk more about career plans in the months that followed the session. However, as the year end drew closer, the focus had to be on school, in order to finish well.

#### 7. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

She would have liked to actually work together to put down some goals and plans, something concrete to walk away with. Not necessarily that she would be tied to the plan, but that it would be something to work from and adjust.

She suggested an extra session not too long afterward in order to work on such a concrete action plan would be a good idea. That way a person would have time to let things sink in and generate some ideas for steps to take.

## STUDENT # 5

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

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## 1. EXPECTATIONS

She thought it sounded like a unique opportunity, to meet with a real live person who could help her examine her career goals. Since she didn't know exactly what would happen in the session, she feels she didn't have much in the way of expectations.

## 2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS

She enjoyed having her mother there, and felt that her presence had been very worthwhile. Some of what she heard from her mother in the session was new, for example, her belief that one needed to be focused in a career direction. This student appreciated having the chance to hear her mother talk about her beliefs and different career options.

She enjoyed the interactive nature of the session, the chance to be listened to as well as hear others' points of view. She found the other student's ideas stimulated her own thought process, and also felt that the other student's presence took some pressure off her in the conversation.

In reflecting back on the session, she thinks it also helped that it was oral, rather than a written analysis. Not only did the spoken nature make it more spontaneous, but it also decreased the sense that career planning was a 'final' decision process (as compared with CAPP exercises).

## 3. EVALUATION OF CONTENT/ACTIVITIES

She has felt as though previous career activities have tended to prematurely slot her into occupations based on a few characteristics, while PICE acted in a more freeing manner. While her experience of other programs was that they were 'end' oriented, she felt that PICE was more of a proper beginning for her career planning process. The look at her enjoyed activities (to observe patterns) seemed more relevant to her, and started her thinking more.

She looked through the Career Pathways booklet later, and also felt it to be more relevant and useful to her than what she'd experienced previously. The exercises seemed to allow her more freedom to explore her own interests, preferences and values, rather than focusing prematurely on occupational choice.

## 4. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES

She looks back on the PICE session as having given her a 'whole new perspective on things.' The process they went through in conversation helped her to see the connection between her interest and style in sports and her personality applied to occupations. She had not made that connection before PICE, and seemed enthusiastic about its usefulness.

5. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS & ACTIONS

She couldn't identify anything that she has been doing differently since PICE, but credits the session with changing her thinking process somewhat. She feels she has opened up to more options and a new way of decision-making, due to the analysis of her style in sports participation.

6. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP,

She doesn't talk much with her parents about career plans, and that has remained true after PICE participation. The session did provide a push (mostly at her mother's initiation) to talk about career planning for a brief period immediately afterward, but that faded back to normal within a matter of days or weeks.

7. ATTRIBUTIONS FOR CHANGES & INSIGHTS

She made the observation that the spoken nature of the session's work seemed to help her clarify her own thinking more than a written format. She thought this related to being forced to quickly think things through and present them to another person. (Perhaps this also relates to the lack of feedback in most written career exploration exercises.)

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

She did not have any suggestions for changing the session content or format, and felt it was 'really useful' the way it was set up. This included having the other student and their parent in the session as well.

She did meet with a group of students afterward for a follow-up discussion, and thought it was very useful to hear what other students got out of the session, so perhaps that could be a part of everyone's experience.

## STUDENT # 6

## INTERVIEW SUMMARY

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PRE-SESSION

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## 1. EXPECTATIONS

She was intrigued by the opportunity to participate and, although she didn't really know what to expect, felt there wasn't any risk involved. She had been interested in acting and teaching, and thought she might get some new ideas for career paths she could take.

## IN-SESSION

## 2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS

She enjoyed the interaction and thought the 'inner circle' with students and counsellor was positive, with the parents on the 'outer circle.' However, she found the presence of other counsellors and the video camera to be somewhat distracting and discomfoting ("a little more uncomfortable").

She felt that if she hadn't known the other student at all she would have been more uncomfortable, but since she 'kind of knew' the other student, she didn't mind her presence. In fact, this student did express appreciation at hearing the other's point of view on various things, since they did have some interesting differences.

She didn't recall that the parents in her session had much to say, and it didn't seem to really be critical that her father be there. She did feel that he had a chance to listen and understand more of what she is interested in, but thought he went a bit overboard in trying to pursue more career planning together afterward.

## 3. EVALUATION OF CONTENT/ACTIVITIES

No specific comments about the actual exploration process of the session. She did go through the Career Pathways booklet on her own later, and felt it was a good supplement to the session (though not essential).

## POST-SESSION

## 4. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES

She feels the session expanded her career options, that it showed her there would be many different routes to careers involving her interests, those of acting, teaching, and psychology. She seemed to appreciate the perspective that her career choices do not have to send her along one limiting pathway.

## 5. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS &amp; ACTIONS

Other than the broader perspective, she didn't feel that she has been doing anything differently as a result of the PICE session.

## 6. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP,

This student did experience some negative fallout as a result of participation in PICE. Afterward, her father seemed to become 'obsessed' with doing career planning exercises with her every day, while she felt pushed into it. This lasted about a month, until she had had enough, and she 'screamed at him to leave it alone.' After that they didn't talk about her career planning much anymore, which was more or less, 'back to normal.'

She did seem to feel that her father had gained more of an understanding of her real interests and how serious she is, since he had listened to her more fully in the session than in their normal interactions.

#### 7. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

She would not recommend videotaping sessions, since she felt self-conscious and inhibited by the presence of the camera. She also would recommend minimizing any observation of the sessions, since she found the background people distracting.

## STUDENT # 7

## INTERVIEW SUMMARY

## PRE-SESSION

## 1. EXPECTATIONS

He felt at the time that whatever he could do to help himself in terms of career planning would be the smart thing to do. He didn't have any sense that there would be a risk involved, so he took a, "If it helps me, it helps me" approach--nothing to lose.

## IN-SESSION

## 2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS

He was nervous by the idea of a camera, and was glad his session didn't get videotaped. In retrospect he feels his responses may well have been coloured by the self-consciousness he would have with a camera recording.

He didn't feel strongly about either his mother being there or the other student. Since he 'kind of knew' the other student, it was an ok thing, but thinks he likely would have been more self-conscious with someone he didn't know at all. He didn't think the presence of the other student really added anything to his own experience or learning in the session. With respect to his mother, he thought the information was nothing they hadn't already talked about, so it seemed very normal for her to be in on the conversation. Nothing new seemed to have surfaced as a result of them being there together, from his perspective.

## 3. EVALUATION OF CONTENT/ACTIVITIES

No specific comments regarding the exercises in the session.

He did go through most of the Career Pathways booklet later over a few weeks' time, and found it neither "extremely thrilling", nor "dull and boring". He did find it useful in promoting further thinking, and would recommend leaving it in the program.

## POST-SESSION

## 4. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES

He has been interested in computer-related careers, and feels that the PICE session broadened out his perspective of career choice. Instead of just looking at directly computer occupations, he saw then that there were many ways to use his computer interests in a career path. For example, he could get into teaching, which he hadn't really been considering previously.

## 5. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS &amp; ACTIONS

Other than having a broader perspective on career options, he doesn't feel he has done anything differently as a result of the PICE session. He has been going along, "pretty much the same."



6. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP,

He doesn't think there really has been a change in how they interact about his career planning. Since he is quite close with his mom, he felt she knew "most everything" beforehand, and they do talk occasionally about the subject. They do sometimes still refer back to the session, but his mom is quite careful not to tell him what to do.

7. ATTRIBUTIONS FOR CHANGES & INSIGHTS

He related well to a metaphor used by the counsellor, that of different ripples in a pond being compared to different career paths from the same source. For example, he 'saw' in that graphic way that his computer interests could lead to something so unexpected as teaching or english, since there would be a connection after all.

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

He would definitely recommend videotaping only if all participants were ok with it.

He didn't feel he needed further sessions at the time, but thought it might be good to have it available for those who wanted it.

## STUDENT # 8

## INTERVIEW SUMMARY

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PRE-SESSION

## 1. EXPECTATIONS

She didn't really have a clear idea of what the program would involve, so she didn't have a specific goal for the session. She was interested in whatever help she could get for her career planning, but had no expectations other than that general one.

## IN-SESSION

## 2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS

She enjoyed having her parents there, as well as the other student and parent. She appreciated the chance to hear the struggles of the other student, to see that she wasn't the only one with problems. In her session she got to hear the other student talk about how they had a hard time persevering when problems developed; since that was a big problem for her as well, she felt better about herself after that.

Before the PICE session, she believed that working out her problems and planning on her own was preferable, but through the interaction and insights of the session, she came to believe that working at problem-solving in a group format was also helpful, perhaps providing more useful ideas.

## 3. EVALUATION OF CONTENT/ACTIVITIES

She appreciated that the way the counsellor looked at her activity styles and preferences, he was able to help her organize information about her personality, goals, and strengths in a useful way. She felt it had been more confusing before, and that the exercise helped her see herself in a way that made sense.

She enjoyed the Career Pathways booklet as well, describing the activities as "more realistic" than what she'd done before at school.

## POST-SESSION

## 4. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES

Though not a huge change, she feels that she emerged with a somewhat clearer picture of herself and how to look at career options in a more organized way. She also felt she gained some useful information about the process of university admission and planning.

She felt even worse about her school career planning (CAPP) activities afterward, feeling more sensitive to the potential of the tests to funnel her into some direction which may not truly fit.

## 5. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS &amp; ACTIONS

She did remember taking her course choice more

seriously after taking part in PICE. She remembered the idea of a broad preparation and thought about her choices very carefully, feeling that it helped her selections.

She also felt more motivated after PICE to do research on something she is interested in. She ended up contacting some lawyers and talking to them about what the profession is like, and what education was required.

6. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP,

She didn't think that the session had much impact on their interaction about her career plans. She feels she has a close relationship with her mother, and that they have always talked about this type of thing.

However, her mother did seem more understanding afterwards, more tolerant of her weakness in giving up too easily, due to the presence of the other student (with the same problem) in the session. She thinks both of them felt better about it, seeing that she wasn't the only one struggling there.

7. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

She felt the session went a bit longer than it needed to, perhaps it could have been 3/4 of what it was.

A follow up probably would be good for everyone. She did get together with a group to talk about the experience, and felt good about having that opportunity.

## PRE-SESSION

## 1. EXPECTATIONS

Before the session she didn't really know exactly what her daughter was thinking in terms of career plans. She felt she knew her daughter's general ideas, but thought perhaps she would gain some help in making her career choices.

## IN-SESSION

## 2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS

Though she rated the experience as enjoyable and useful one, she thought the session probably would have been better with just the facilitator, herself and her daughter, due to language challenges. She did feel that she learned some new things by hearing what her daughter had to say in the session. For example, she learned more about her daughter's interest in being a teacher, as well as her depth of enjoyment in reading.

What the other student shared seemed interesting, though nothing said by the other family seemed particularly significant for her own situation. She did feel that it was good for the students to share the experience together.

## POST-SESSION

## 3. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES

She didn't feel that the impact was great, but did notice that her daughter had a new perspective on her career planning than before the session. While her daughter was thinking of teaching prior to the session, she gained a broader perspective on career options that would fit with some type of teaching.

She was also impressed with her daughter's ability to express herself in the session, and saw her daughter's confidence grow as a result. She feels her daughter felt more confident about her ability to plan her career and to communicate as well.

## 4. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP,

Again, the impact didn't seem great; they do talk about her daughter's career plans sometimes, and she encourages her daughter to try things and consider different directions, but she tries not to 'nag' about it.

However, there were some positive changes in her own perspective that she noticed after the session. She felt more confident that she knew her daughter better--what she wanted, and that her daughter knew what she was doing in her exploring and planning.

She saw herself as strictly encouraging her daughter to pursue one thing before the session, but afterwards she was

able to also have a broader perspective in what she encourages her daughter to check out.

5.    ATTRIBUTIONS FOR CHANGES & INSIGHTS

She attributed her daughter's gains in confidence to the fact that she was put in a position where she had to think and express herself in front of a small group, and she did well. She was then more able to see herself as a good communicator and to consider careers requiring that.

6.    SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Keep the session without video camera--too much nervousness would result.

She thought she may have preferred knowing more ahead of time, such as the types of questions that would be asked.

In terms of follow-up, she suggests that having just the students meet together later would probably meet their needs; parents wouldn't need to be there again. This would allow the students the chance to learn from what other students thought as well as from their own session.

## PARENT # 2

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

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## 1. EXPECTATIONS

He recalls that his daughter was quite excited about the opportunity, and he has felt that she has been very concerned about her career decisions, perhaps too much so. He thought she was wondering how this might help, what type of occupations her interests might lead her towards.

His own hope was that the session would help give her a sense of career direction, but that it would also encourage her that she didn't need to worry about it so much.

## IN-SESSION

## 2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS

He enjoyed the session and found it a learning experience as well. He was impressed with the ideas, actions and goals of both students. He felt the parents had adequate opportunity to express themselves, and appreciated that both the other parent and student can have greater credibility in the eyes of one's own child (particularly at this age).

He also found the interaction to provide more of an intense focus on career exploration and planning than their normal modes of conversation. That seemed helpful in gaining a greater understanding of her thinking and interests.

## 3. EVALUATION OF CONTENT/ACTIVITIES

He was pleased in general with the content of the session, and was quite emphatic that he would "absolutely" do it again. He also appreciated the 'broadening' effect of the approach; the identification of patterns in leisure and subject interests did not "...channel us off into the very limited sort of traditional..." occupations. The exercises rather seemed to allow for multiple pathways which she could explore without being slotted into what she 'should' be.

His daughter didn't seem interested in going through the Career Pathways booklet right away, so he left it with her to pursue on her own. He did look through it and appreciated the format, which includes consideration of a person's values. This was something he thought was missing in career exploration materials he had seen before.

## POST-SESSION

## 4. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES

He found it difficult to follow up with her, or to judge any sort of impact, since he hasn't had constant contact with his daughter. He feels the year has been a tough one for his daughter primarily concerning family issues, so career planning hasn't been a very present concern or topic of conversation. His daughter was going to

be living with him (and new family) for the summer; he hoped things would settle down and they could have some good talks then.

He did think she left the session feeling more comfortable with spending time on performing arts which she enjoys, perhaps because the session really encouraged following one's interests. Aside from becoming more comfortable with her interests, he wasn't sure if she had lightened up at all on the issue of career. He seemed hopeful that the greater comfort would be a step in that direction.

#### 5. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS & ACTIONS

He couldn't think of specific actions relating to the session, but thought perhaps her growing interest in english courses was encouraged there.

She has done some career mentoring that she was excited about and did appear to be interested in exploring a wider range of options than before. He did relate this expanded interest to having participated in the session, at least as a conjecture. She seemed "really quite keen," still searching for something that will really interest her.

#### 6. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP,

Although he had been hoping to follow up with his daughter afterward that didn't materialize, due to her concerns with other issues as well as less-than-ideal contact. When they would have time together, it was difficult to bring up the subject with what time they had. It did provide a positive experience together to reflect back on, and he valued the session itself for the shared, focused experience.

The dynamics of the session also reinforced his own belief regarding the parental role as 'coach' figures--supporting strengths, helping with weak areas, assisting them in reaching their own goals.

#### 7. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

He thought the session could have probed to a further depth, however given the need for ice-breaking at the start, the session would have to be lengthened. It seemed that the students were starting to express deeper issues involving their feelings, but the session ended shortly afterward.

The Career Pathways booklet might be useful as a primer before the session, for both students and parents to work through. That might also eliminate the need for a second session. The booklet might also be re-worked to be specific to the student population, since it was more general.

Finally, he suggested that participants be expecting a follow-up session after a certain period. That would add a bit more incentive for the student (and parent) to talk and work through further exploration and planning--knowing the

follow-up meeting was coming.



## PRE-SESSION

## 1. EXPECTATIONS

She did not recall any specific goals or hopes for the session, neither her own nor her daughter. She felt her daughter likely volunteered more for the fun of the experience, rather than for any specific assistance with her career planning.

## IN-SESSION

## 2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS

Overall, she thought the facilitator did a "really good job" and she seemed to appreciate that his manner was very encouraging for the students.

## 3. EVALUATION OF CONTENT/ACTIVITIES

The way her interests were talked about, as well as the facilitator's attitude and comments, were very encouraging for her daughter. She appreciated that the facilitator was not overly directive, as may be the case with tests that seem to tell people what they should be. Instead, the technique focused more on helping them think about what they liked doing, and their personality in those activities.

## POST-SESSION

## 4. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES

Her daughter already had a fairly good idea of a career path, and she seemed to be more encouraged in her direction, however, she also seemed to start considering other options as well. She seems more comfortable that if her original plan doesn't work out that there are other choices she can make. Her daughter also learned the general technique of the session and will use it in making her career decisions.

Apparently the other student in the session didn't have a very clear idea of what she wanted and the exercise seemed to help her make some progress in that direction.

## 5. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS &amp; ACTIONS

Her daughter has not seemed to be doing anything differently as a result of the session, just perhaps feeling more encouraged and considering broader career options.

## 6. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP

There doesn't appear to have been any change in how they interact around career planning. They do not talk about the subject much, and she feels her daughter needs space to make her own decisions. Only if her daughter needed some drastic feedback about a "totally" unsuitable career would she consider speaking to her about it. Her daughter has seemed to gradually talk about career plans more, but

this mother relates that more to maturation.

7. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

She suggested trying the approach with a more diverse group of kids. Most of the kids who participated in this program were in the Incentive program, so they are more outgoing and willing to take risks. She'd like to see how it would work with some students who don't volunteer for things, have a harder time communicating, or who don't really have any idea what they want to do.

She did not feel a formal follow-up session was necessary, since the facilitator had given out his number for anyone who wanted to ask further questions.

## PRE-SESSION

## 1. EXPECTATIONS

She did not have much prior knowledge of the program, so there was not much in the way of expectations. She felt that any assistance in the subject would be useful. Her son had not really talked about any goals or expectations he may have had.

## IN-SESSION

## 2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS

The session seemed to be a positive experience for her. She was obviously very proud of her own son, and related strongly to the other parent's pride in her daughter. She feels she gained a greater understanding of her son because of the opportunity to listen to him speaking in a focused conversation about his own thoughts and opinions, and his feelings about significant events in the past.

She added her own conclusion to the experience of the session by taking her son out to lunch afterward away from the school. She thought he had appreciated the time and felt treated more like an adult in the process.

## 3. EVALUATION OF CONTENT/ACTIVITIES

One comment she made relating to activities related to the spontaneity of the session, with no homework ahead of time. She thought that while some may benefit from such an arrangement, her learning of new information about her son may have actually been aided by the fact that they hadn't worked through a booklet ahead of time and prepared answers.

## POST-SESSION

## 4. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES

She was quite sure the session provided some benefit to her son. What seemed evident to her was a kind of encouragement he received from being able to express himself in the conversation, to share his career thoughts and feelings with adults and strangers without being too nervous. She thought that confidence and skill in this area was very essential to success in the working world.

## 5. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS &amp; ACTIONS

They have not spoken much about the session or career planning since, but she has observed that he seemed more motivated to get some work experience after the session. He also started to get more serious about doing well in school, and she had specifically noted this observation in a letter afterward.

#### 6. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP,

She didn't think the session affected how they interact and communicate about his career planning, though she did learn more about his thoughts and feelings, as related above. A couple of examples she related were learning about his preference for working in a group rather than on his own, and hearing how a difficult situation with one of his sports teams had affected him more significantly than she knew before.

She takes a relaxed approach to her son's career decisions, because she feels that his ideas could likely grow and change much in the next years. He may end up needing to pick up certain types of courses later, but she is confident that he will have the self-motivation to do whatever will be necessary to get where he chooses to go.

#### 7. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The informal nature of the interaction was excellent and she would highly recommend that it stay that way. She also doubted whether she would have participated had the session been videotaped, although she now wishes she had an audiotape of the session to reflect back on and recall significant portions.

The room seemed quite small and very hot; she would have liked a bit more space and freedom to move around as well.

She recommended keeping the other student-parent pair in the session, feeling that the content of the session might start to go deeper than some people's comfort zone if the interaction were more intensely one-on-one.

A follow-up wouldn't be strictly necessary, but thought such a session each year might be good if it could be timed to give students a chance to make the most out of analyzing their course experiences and making their next selections.

It might be an idea for other parents to consider 'doing lunch' afterward with their teen.

## PRE-SESSION

## 1. EXPECTATIONS

She had no specific goals, since she didn't know what to expect. Her daughter hadn't told her much about the program, and she simply went along to be of support for her daughter in something she wanted to do.

## IN-SESSION

## 2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS

They both enjoyed the session very much, having the opportunity to share their own thoughts as well as hear those of the other student and parent. She felt it was very important in particular for the two students to have a chance to hear each other's points of view. Since the other student was a boy, that added an extra dimension to the learning, since boys and girls probably do not talk together in the same way that girls might with other girls. Having another parent in the session also could reinforce what they might say to their own daughter, but it was nice for the opportunity to hear it from a different source this time.

## POST-SESSION

## 3. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES

She has not observed any particular changes, but still very much valued the opportunity for her daughter to review and express her career thoughts and goals, both with strangers and also with her own parent there. She feels her daughter must have gained something positive from the experience.

## 4. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS &amp; ACTIONS

Again, she felt that the effect was not very concrete, but that the session helped her review and organize her thoughts about her career planning.

Her daughter has been most focused on doing well in school, so she hasn't seemed to have the time at this point to think much about career decisions.

## 5. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP,

She hasn't felt that they communicate any differently now, but that they have always been very close. Her daughter would normally share her thoughts, feelings, and goals with her. Talking in the group was a positive experience for them to have together though.

She did feel she understood her daughter a bit better and was more tolerant of her weakness for giving up on things. This came about because the other student shared a surprisingly similar weakness and it helped this mom realize

that her daughter wasn't so unusual after all. Now she is trying to focus more on learning how to encourage her daughter, to help her become better in her problem solving.

6. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The idea of career counselling is a new concept for her, so she is still getting used to it. She definitely thought the pairing of a boy and girl was useful for them, as stated above. She also would suggest that new immigrants be paired with a family who had been her longer, since that would also add to the diversity of viewpoints.

She hadn't thought a follow-up session was necessary for them, rather that it had done what was possible at that time; another session too soon afterward would have just brought up the same things.

## PRE-SESSION

## 1. EXPECTATIONS

Before the session he felt he knew his daughter's general interests, but not necessarily her specific goals for the program. He wasn't sure what the session would involve, but went into it simply hoping that it would be of some benefit in terms of her career planning process.

## IN-SESSION

## 2. EVALUATION OF PROCESS/DYNAMICS

He appreciated the informal atmosphere, and didn't feel inhibited by the presence of any of the participants or observers. He felt the students had some good conversation between them, and he ended up with some good interaction with the other parent as well. The facilitator helped make everyone feel at ease, and was very "down-to-earth".

The organization of the session made it useful for both the parents and the students, especially becoming more aware of the things they shared in common with their counterparts. As a parent, it was good to hear that the other parent was also encouraging their kids to take their studies seriously and learn to work hard: "We're not the only people beating the drum!"

## 3. EVALUATION OF CONTENT/ACTIVITIES

He felt most emphatic that homework ahead of time would have deterred from the session's goals, rather than enhanced them. Without the prior warning, participants had to be much more candid and spontaneous; they couldn't prepare what might be considered 'right' answers, so they had to give their own on the spot. This is what he's observed in his business experience, and it seemed to work here as well.

The session worked to apply a structure onto what at first may have seemed to be a random collection of thoughts, feelings and interests, and it worked well. It did lead to some new ways of looking at things that we hadn't fully seen before.

## POST-SESSION

## 4. IMPACT ON CAREER PERSPECTIVE/ATTITUDES

One thing he observed was that it crystalized the idea in his daughter's mind that working for short-term goals today (like exams) will have its rewards further down the road, even if it is hard to see that far ahead. It is hard for kids to see the longer-term perspective and the session helped her make that connection better.

He has noticed also that as the year progressed she had to devote more time and energy to school work and the pressure has been mounting in terms of getting good grades

and thinking about the future.

5. IMPACT ON CAREER PLANS & ACTIONS

It was difficult to say what impact the session has had on her specific career plans, but he suspected that she may be more encouraged to pursue something she would really like, as opposed to making other values more predominant. The other student in the session had a fairly identifiable interest in the area of electronics, and through the analysis of what he could do with that, it also emphasized choosing to make the most out of what you liked doing.

Although it is hard to say how much this relates to the PICE session, she has gotten more serious about completing her swimming training, which has been a lot of hard work. She has shown interest in things before, but this is the first example of her really working long and hard to achieve a goal.

6. IMPACT ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP

He couldn't see any sort of impact on their communication as a result of the session involvement. They are a very uniquely close and communicative family as a rule, talking daily with their daughter about school happenings and her feelings about them.



#### 7. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The session could have gone a bit longer, but it was also fine the way it was. If there were to be any follow-up, probably the ideal timing would be within about a month afterwards, giving time to assimilate the session's information.

One thing that the students may really benefit from in the school would be to have a program where parents come in and talk about their own careers--what led the parent into the career, what motivates them, what it is like, etcetera. Students need more tangible, 'real life' information, less theoretical words on paper information.

**Appendix I**  
**Participant Validations**

**PARENT INVOLVED CAREER EXPLORATION:**  
**Responses to Interview Summaries**

STUDENT #1

It was fine. Everything was there.

STUDENT #2

It was fine...no problems.

STUDENT #3

It was fine.

STUDENT #4

I can't think of any changes. It looks fine to me.

STUDENT #5

It looks pretty accurate; it looks fine.

STUDENT #6

It was fine.

STUDENT #7

Fine as it is. Are you going to keep doing it with other students?

STUDENT #8

It's ok; it's perfect.

PARENT #1

It was fine.

PARENT #2

It was pretty accurate.

You've captured the essence quite well.

PARENT #3

It looks fine. The only thing was I didn't mean to say we don't talk about plans, just that I don't try to influence her. We do talk about it quite a lot. The rest of it is fine.

PARENT #4

That was fine. I was glad to see it; it was very positive. It relayed what I was kind of heading for. I feel a little more in tune now and I see that he's capable of conducting himself.

PARENT #5

It's ok; it's very good. It was a very good opportunity for my relationship with my daughter.

PARENT #6

It was fine--no problems. I thought it was pretty much to the point.