THE POLITICS OF NEEDS INTERPRETATION:
A STUDY OF THREE CJS-FUNDED JOB-ENTRY PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education)

We accept this dissertation as conforming
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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
December 1992
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Date February 1, 1993
Abstract

This inquiry explored the everyday struggles of several women who worked as coordinators and instructors in three government-funded job-entry programs for women in the non-profit sector. The programs studied included an entry program for native women, a program which trained immigrant women in bookkeeping skills, and a program which trained women on social assistance to enter the construction trades. The work of the staff in these programs was considered in light of a theoretical framework developed by Nancy Fraser.

Fraser has called for a different approach -- a more critical discourse-oriented inquiry -- to the study of social-welfare policies and programs. This approach focuses on the political struggle over the interpretation of needs, particularly women's needs, which she sees as central to social-welfare policy-making. In her study of the American system, she has found that "needs talk" is the medium through which inequalities are symbolically elaborated and challenged. She also has found that needs talk is stratified and differentiated by unequal status, power, and access to resources, and organized along lines of class, gender, race, ethnicity and age.

For this study, information was collected through interviews with the staff in the three programs, observations of lifeskills classes, and examination of program proposals. Government and government-related
documents were also examined. The analysis revealed that, in the official policy documents at the national level, women's needs were interpreted within a dominant policy framework which focused on reducing spending, matching workers to the market and privatizing training programs. Programs for women were developed based upon a "thin" understanding of women's needs -- one which focused on women's lack of training and job experience and ignored the structural inequalities of the labour market and women's different racial and class struggles.

At the local level, analysis of the interviews, observations and documents indicated that the staff struggled to respond to the trainees' diverse and complex needs which the official policy discourse addressed in only a limited way. In their negotiations with the state, the staff employed a plurality of needs discourses, engaging in a process which both challenged and reproduced the dominant policy orientation toward getting women "jobs, any jobs". There were moments of resistance by the staff to the dominant policy orientation, most notably in the program for native women. The trainees also challenged the narrow interpretation of women's needs, particularly in the program training women to enter the construction trades.

Generally speaking, the analysis indicated that the staff played a crucial role in mediating between women and the state and in producing a kind of discourse which tended to construct the trainees as subjects needing to be "fixed".
The analysis also revealed that the relationships between staff, trainees and the state were organized around unequal access to resources based on gender, race and class.

In order to transcend the limitations outlined in this study, efforts are required to democratize decision-making, collectively organize the non-profit private sector, challenge privatization and the exploitive practices of the state, and bring alternative approaches which support participatory and dialogical processes of need interpretation.

The analysis brings to light the importance of studying the implications of state policies on adult education practice, particularly policies which promote privatization. It also reveals the explanatory power of a feminist theoretical framework which provides a more critical, discourse-oriented approach to examining policy and practice, and the usefulness of this framework for further research and political advocacy.
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Acknowledgements

I want to thank my research committee members -- Kjell Rubenson, Jane Gaskell and Dawn Currie -- who have been ever-faithful and have given me guidance and constructive criticism from beginning to end. My partner in life David Thomson has been a great editor and essential to my survival. I must acknowledge the women and feminist organizations I have worked with, including the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women and the Women's Employment and Training Coalition. I also owe a great debt to the women who are the focus of this study, who provide front line service in these difficult and uncertain times.

Many friends and colleagues have been a major source of learning and support including Lesley Bellamy, Marcy Cohen, Andrea Kastner and Celia Haig-Brown. The faculty and staff of the Administrative, Adult and Higher Education department at U.B.C. have also assisted me. Finally, I have been very privileged to receive funding from the Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Foundation, the University of B.C. Graduate Fellowship Fund, the Adult Education Program Coolie Verner Memorial Research Prize, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

I think it is vital that feminist and other progressive teachers remember the power that social forces exert on themselves and on their students and that they recognize the limits of what it is possible to accomplish in a classroom. But by recognizing the limits of what is possible, teachers (and all of us) should recognize the value and the importance of doing what is possible. (Weiler, 1988, p. 153)

The focus of this study is the everyday struggles of several women who worked as adult educators in three job-entry programs for women within the non-profit sector which were funded under the Canadian Jobs Strategy, a federal labour market policy introduced in 1985. This research is grounded in an interest in exploring both the opportunities for and the constraints on feminist emancipatory practice within adult education. The study is also an attempt to provide a historically sensitive and locationally specific analysis of the practice of providing women's job-entry training.

My particular interest is in understanding the relationships between women - that is, the women who ran these programs and also those who participated as trainees - and the state, in the context of government-funded adult education programs. I am also concerned with the implications of the ongoing fiscal crisis of the state and the privatization of job training programs on the practice
of feminist adult educators and the employment training opportunities for women.

An important caveat needs to be stated at the beginning of this inquiry. The notion that the adult educators who are its focus are feminist practitioners is my own interpretation. Some, but not all, of these women would agree with this characterization. For the purposes of this study, I argue that their work can be considered as contextualized examples of feminist practice because all of them were striving, as Weiler has articulated, to do what is possible within the limits of what is possible.

Another important clarification is needed in this introduction. I have not begun this inquiry with any *a priori* definition of what "good" feminist practice is, nor do I assume that this study will result in the identification of a recipe for feminist practice with generalized principles and procedures. Rather, the assumption is that strategies for feminist practice must be worked out practically in relation to specific situations.

As a feminist researcher, I am interested in employing a research process which creates knowledge and understanding for women, rather than about them. This perspective has been richly informed by the work of Dorothy Smith (1987), in particular her criticisms of mainstream sociology and its objectification of women. She has argued for an approach which begins with women's everyday world, which recognizes and illuminates women as knowledgeable actors and which
maintains women as subjects and not objects of the research process. Smith also insists that inquiries go beyond everyday experience to reveal how these worlds are organized and determined by social relations immanent in and extending beyond them.

Thus, in addition to illuminating the everyday world of running CJS programs for women, the concern of this study is to examine how this everyday or "micro" world is organized by larger or "macro" themes, particularly the dominant policy framework of the Canadian Jobs Strategy within which these job-entry programs were structured.

The central argument of this inquiry is that the women running these job-entry programs were key players in a political struggle over the interpretation of needs—specifically, what women "needed" in order to enter the labour market. This conceptualization is based on a framework developed by Nancy Fraser (1989) a feminist critical theorist and philosopher. The analysis indicates that in their position as coordinators, counsellors and instructors, the staff acted as mediators between the women who participated as trainees, and the state—in particular Canada Employment and Immigration (CEIC), the major government department having responsibility for managing labour market programs. As mediators between women and the state, and as players in the political struggle over needs interpretation, these women put forward various constructions of women's needs.
This study has found that in producing a discourse about what the trainees needed and how these needs could be satisfied, the women who ran these programs challenged and resisted the dominant policy framework and its simplistic interpretation of women's needs. At the same time, however, aspects of this discourse also reproduced and reinforced the dominant policy interpretation of women's needs. Fraser's conceptualization of the politics of need interpretation is further elaborated in Chapter Two.

**Context of the Study**

The women who are the focus of this study worked for three non-profit organizations in the lower mainland of British Columbia. All three agencies ran programs which were federally funded under the Entry program of the Canadian Jobs Strategy (CJS), a labour market and job training policy introduced in 1985 by the Conservative federal government. The Entry program of CJS was developed primarily to assist youth and women who were having difficulty entering the paid work force. One of the programs studied was a "SED" program for native women who were considered to be "severely employment disadvantaged". Another program was designed to train immigrant women with intermediate English skills in bookkeeping and accounting. The third program trained women, most of whom were single
parents on social assistance, to enter the construction trades.

The selection of job-entry programs for women as the focus of this study emerged from my work as an active member of a feminist community concerned with government policy and how it affects women's employment and training opportunities. My curiosity about these programs grew as a result of my experiences as a research assistant in a previous study of a government-funded office training program for women.

I had also been interested in exploring women's job training programs as sites of consciousness raising (CR) or using Freire's term, conscientization. There appeared to be few modern counterparts of the CR groups of the 1970s. I wondered whether CR was still an important aspect of the women's movement and whether, instead of disappearing, it had shifted away from informal gatherings of women in their respective communities and was now occurring in activities like job-entry programs for women.

These concerns and experiences directed me toward further exploration and critical analysis of the constraints and opportunities within government-funded job training programs for women. As an activist feminist, adult educator and researcher, I attempted to understand the enabling and constraining aspects of state-supported programs for women. On the one hand, government policy and programs seem to maintain women's subordinate position in the labour market.
because the majority of these programs assist women to enter low-paying, "feminized" job ghettos and have made little impact on structures of domination. On the other hand, government-funded programs provide the only alternative for many disadvantaged women to receive assistance to enter the labour market, and women are finding opportunities within labour market programs to create women-positive learning environments.

**Contributions and Limitations of the Study**

By employing a critical feminist approach to an exploration of CJS-funded programs for women, and by focusing on the role of the women who run these programs in the political struggle over women's needs interpretation, this study brings an alternative approach to policy analysis. Such an approach addresses the concern, as outlined by Jarvis (1988) and Silver (1980), that adult education research should pay more attention to the implications of social policies on practice. This approach also provides a kind of policy analysis similar to that proposed by Finch (1988), who called for "bottom up" studies that examine how practitioners interpret and operationalize policies in the course of their daily work. This study also addresses Fischer's (1986) call for a more critical assessment and evaluation of the arguments central to policy-making.
I hope that this study can contribute to the fields of adult education and feminist scholarship in education. In particular, this analysis can deepen understanding of the crucial role labour market policy plays in shaping practice and in the future organization of women's job training, an important aspect of adult education. As Jackson (1987) has indicated, further research into such training is important because, in general, it remains poorly examined and understood even by feminist scholars. This is unfortunate because short-term state-funded job training situations are often the only learning opportunity for women who are marginalized. This lack of research, Jackson has argued, perpetuates some powerful and unexamined assumptions about knowledge, skills and learning that are related to women's working lives.

Generally speaking, this study can contribute to a further understanding of the relationship between the practice of adult education and the state. Examining this relationship is particularly important given the impact of economic restructuring, the demand for more adult education opportunities and the government's desire to reduce spending and privatize training. This study of training in the non-profit sector also helps to illuminate the reality of state-provider relationships as the federal government continues to privatize labour market programs.

The focus of this study was the work of several women running three CJS job-entry programs for women, all of them
located in the non-profit sector. I have attempted to collect as much detailed information as possible, through interviews, observations, informal conversations and documentary analysis, so as to provide a "thick" description of the policy and programs. Further information on the focus of my data gathering is provided in Chapter Three.

Given that I am interested in revealing the contextually specific practices of these programs, the argument could be made that generalizations to other programs and situations are not possible. Because I have attempted to illuminate the relationship between policy discourse and everyday practice, however, I believe that certain claims can be made about the ongoing struggle that occurs across the broad spectrum of state-funded job-entry programs for women. I hope that this research will form a partial yet critical contribution to feminist theorizing about the state and feminist practice within adult education.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter Two begins with a "mapping" of the themes and issues I found in my exploration of various literatures which helped me to determine a conceptual framework for the analysis. This is followed by a more detailed account of Fraser's approach to studying "the politics of need interpretation". Chapter Three outlines the methods used to
collect information for the study, the process of selecting programs, ethical considerations and my role as researcher.

Chapter Four examines the policy context, specifically the political, economic and social concerns that the federal government was attempting to address through the Canadian Jobs Strategy and how women's needs were interpreted within this framework. The next three chapters describe the three job-entry programs and include accounts of the staff of their work with the state, the trainees and with the community. Chapter Five presents the job training program for native women, in Chapter Six the program for immigrant women is discussed, and Chapter Seven presents the program for women in the construction trades.

Chapter Eight analyzes the information gathered and attempts to reveal the interpretations of women's needs constructed by the women running these three programs and how the dominant policy framework, and the processes and struggles within these programs, contribute to these interpretations. Implications for practice, policy-making and theory are discussed in Chapter Nine, as well as suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALIZING THE STUDY: GENDER, POLITICS AND RESISTANCE

I have tried to provide the sort of big diagnostic picture necessary to orient political practice while at the same time respecting historical specificity, societal differentiation, and cultural multiplicity. I have tried, in short, to develop a new type of socialist-feminist critical theory that overcomes the limitations of the currently available alternatives. (Fraser, 1989, p. 11)

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the ideas and concepts which have served as conceptual sign posts, directing me to attend to various issues in my search for a framework which would help me make sense of the everyday struggles of those running government-funded job-entry programs for women. Following this review, the work of Nancy Fraser is introduced along with the reasons why I selected her approach as my conceptual framework. The remainder of the discussion elaborates on Fraser's "critical discourse-oriented" approach to the study of welfare state practices. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the key issues I have employed in the analysis.

Mapping the Territory

A significant part of the initial stages of this study involved an exploration of a variety of literatures
including critical theory, critical and feminist analysis of education and adult education, analysis of the link between practice and policy-making, and feminist theorizing about women's relationship to the state.

Much of the critical education literature which emerged in the early 1970s explored the link between education and capitalism and the role that schools play in the reproduction of inequalities (e.g. Althusser, 1971; Bourdieu, 1977; Bowles and Gintis, 1975). This literature was helpful in challenging the notion that education was neutral or independent and helped to reveal the links between schooling and the structures and practices of capitalism. Building on these initial analyses, but concerned with the deterministic character of these 'correspondence' arguments, other researchers and theorists explored the resistance of teachers and other actors, in particular the efforts to develop more democratic institutions (e.g. Apple, 1981; Connel, 1985; Giroux, 1983; Willis, 1977).

I found this relationship between structure and individual action a recurring theme throughout much of the critical analysis of schooling. In my search for theorizing about this relationship I encountered Giddens' (1989) theory of structuration and found his arguments intriguing, although difficult at times because of the rather abstract language. Giddens suggests that rather than there being a dichotomous relationship between agency and structure, there
exists a duality - that is, social structures are constantly being created and recreated through individual action, but individual action that takes place in determinant social conditions.

I also found the work of critical theorists such as Gramsci (1971) illuminating, particularly his notion of hegemony and the role of worker education in developing organic intellectuals and supporting "counter-hegemonic" activities. Gramsci's work has been employed, sometimes problematically, in critical analyses of education. It appears that Gramsci's assertion that hegemony is never complete and is always contested has been lost and replaced by a fixed and static view of power and control in capitalist economies (Weiler, 1989). I have also taken note of those who have cautioned against using Gramsci's notions without understanding the changes that have occurred since he articulated his ideas, particularly the relationship between civil society and the state (Adamson, 1978).

The notion of hegemony and counter-hegemonic practices has been central to much of the critical analyses of adult education. Some have argued that it is in the practice of adult education that resistance and radical education moments will be found, not in schools (Entwistle, 1979; Rubenson, 1990). Interest in notions of resistance and educational processes that support learner's empowerment is reflected in the impact of Freire's work (1971, 1973, 1978, 1985). More recently, there has been growing concern for
the market orientation of much of adult education practice and a desire to rekindle the liberatory possibilities of adult education.

Given that my work involved studying programs which were developed as a result of new labour market policy initiatives, I also explored the policy analysis and policy implementation literature. Much of the more traditional approaches I found problematic because of the assumptions about how policies were developed. Recent developments have challenged the notion that policies were developed within a continuous and consensual process and have pointed to the crucial role that "front-line" or "street level bureaucrats" play in policy implementation (e.g. Berma, 1978; Dale, 1989; Kogan, 1975; Weatherley and Lipsky, 1977). These studies have directed my attention to the political process of policy-making and the various interests at stake in policy development and implementation.

Critical feminist analyses of education also added to my understanding of the role that education plays in producing and reproducing gender relations (Deem, 1981; Gaskell: 1978, 1981, 1983, 1987; MacDonald, 1981; Wolpe, 1981). Earlier contributions to the exploration of gender and schools were limited, however, because they tended to construct women as passive victims of a determined system. Other scholars have attempted to shift this emphasis by focusing on girls' and women's resistance, although earlier explorations continued to dichotomize the relationship
between agency and structure (Acker, 1988; Anyon, 1983; Davies, 1983). Transcending this dichotomy between agency and structure has been the focus of more recent studies although the focus continued to be on the schooling system (Lather, 1983; Weiler, 1988). Fortunately some studies have been done within the field of adult education (e.g. McClaren, 1985; Rockhill, 1989; Westwood, 1984). I am particularly excited by those who have pointed to the importance of examining women's agency as historically and contextually specific and have recognized the interconnections of gender, race and class (Briskin, 1990; Molyneux, 1986; Wharton, 1991).

Given that the adult educators on whose work this study focused were working in state-funded programs, I also explored feminist theorizing about the relationship between women and the state. Much of this work pointed to the contradictory outcomes of state responses to women's struggles (Andrew, 1984; Diamond and Shanley 1983; Dale and Foster, 1986; Franzway, Court and Connel, 1989; Eisenstein, 1983; Jenson, 1986; Lipman-Blumen and Bernard, 1979; MacKinnon, 1989; Maroney and Luxton, 1987; Peattie and Rein, 1983; Showstack Sassoon, 1987). In studies of the experiences of women working both in and against the state, the importance of critically examining issues of accountability and opportunities was emphasized (Barnsley, 1985; Findlay, 1988; Mueller & Newton, 1986; Randall, 1988).
I have also drawn upon other empirical examinations of state-supported women's programs (e.g. Harlan and Steinberg, 1989; Horseman, 1991; Lewis, 1988; Mueller, 1988; Ng, 1988; Prentice, 1988; Tom, 1987; Walker, 1990). This research and conceptualizing has proven invaluable to my understanding of state-funded job-entry programs for women, particularly the tendency for women's issue, once taken up by the state, to be reinterpreted and institutionalized.

Recent contributions by feminist scholars who employ poststructuralist and postmodernist approaches to theorizing about the state have cautioned against employing a monolithic notion of the state and have emphasized the importance of historical and contextual specificity (Kenway, 1992; Yuval-Davis and Anthia, 1989). They argue against studies which assume there is something called "the state" that is a unifying, omnipotent structure.

Postmodern approaches have also focused on the discursive practices of the state, in particular the role these practices play in maintaining women's subordination (e.g. Gordon, 1992; Jensen, 1988). These studies have begun to examine the "gendered discourse" of social welfare policies and the contradictory outcomes as women's needs are interpreted by various interests, particularly those of capital.

This exploration of the literature played an important role in mapping the theoretical territory for this study. It pushed me to continue my search for a conceptual
framework which transcended some of the limitations of earlier developments such as the high level of abstraction, the lack of empirical analysis, and the focus on class domination with little attention given to gender, race and ethnicity. This exploration of the literature emphasized the importance of examining the larger framework of social relations of which education is a part. It also directed my attention to the influence of political and economic agendas on adult education practices.

My mapping of the territory also indicated that I should attempt to illuminate the structural and ideological forces and avoid a deterministic approach. Such framework would be one in which I could understand the tensions which, as Giddens has outlined, exist between structures and the moments of resistance and disruption. Such an approach would also recognize the state as complex and contradictory and would illuminate the detail and subtlety of the workings of the state.

With these concerns in mind, I came upon the work of Nancy Fraser and found her approach to address many of the issues I believed were critical for this study. In the following section, I outline the particular strengths of Fraser's work and my reasons for employing her approach for my analysis.
Choosing a Conceptual Framework - Politics, Resistance and Gender

Within the postmodern feminist analyses of the discursive practices of the state, and in particular the state's role in producing and reproducing gender and race relations, I encountered the work of Nancy Fraser (1989). Fraser asserts that policy-making and the provision of state-funded programs involve a political struggle over how women's needs are interpreted and satisfied. This political struggle, which she refers to as "the politics of need interpretation", takes place within a contested terrain characterized by unequal access to resources based on differences in gender, race and class. In this contested terrain different interests, such as oppositional movements, business and government, struggle to politicize and interpret needs.

Fraser argues that a feminist analysis of social welfare policies and programs that serve women should focus on "the politics of need interpretation". Central to this approach is the examination of the production of "needs talk". Fraser argues that "needs talk" has become the medium through which conflict is played out and inequalities are elaborated and challenged.

Fraser's approach was selected for a number of reasons. It seemed to have transcended some of the limitations of the literature I had been examining in my earlier explorations,
including discussions which were too abstract and had little empirical basis, theorizing without attention given to gender or race, and dichotomization of the notions of agency and structure. Situated in a postmodern realm of theorizing, Fraser's approach consciously avoids seeking out grand theories of the state, and directs attention instead to historically specific, conjunctural struggles. I found her analysis to be an exciting and powerful account of the practices which reinforce relations of domination and, in particular, how the state itself is constituted by gender and race relations.

As was mentioned in Chapter One, Dorothy Smith's critique of mainstream sociology greatly influenced my initial approach to this study. I found her arguments about how power, organization and regulation are pervasively structured to be extremely important in my understanding of the relationship between women and the state. Her notion of the "ruling apparatus" -- a complex of organized practices, such as education, that manage to take the particular and construct it into the abstracted and generalized, was also very powerful.

I found it curious, however, that Smith's explication of the ruling apparatus was in itself generalized and abstracted which made it difficult to tie her conceptualizations to actual concrete situations. I selected Fraser's approach because her categories are historically and contextually specific to my study. For
example, her focus on "needs talk" made sense when I began to consider what I was hearing within the local and national feminist community about CJS programs for women. For example, there was frequent reference to what the women who came to these programs really needed and how difficult it was to address those needs. There was much talk about how the government did not seem to understand women's needs and that CJS was really a policy which served the government's need to reduce spending through privatization of training. There was also talk about what the women who ran these programs needed to do a decent job.

As I reviewed the policy documents of CJS and related material, I also found that "needs talk" was central to the discussion. For example, CJS was based on the claim that Canada needed highly skilled and flexible workers in order to remain competitive in a changing global economy. The government also claimed that the private sector needed to become more involved with the provision of training and that the government needed to be more fiscally responsible in its spending on programs. Finally, CJS programs were developed to ostensibly serve those "most in need".

Both Smith and Fraser directed my attention to practices which contribute to maintaining unequal power relationships. Although Smith's discussion deepened my understanding of relations of domination, it left me with little room for imagining practices which resist, challenge and seek to transform the ruling apparatus. I found
Fraser's approach embraced what I found critical in Gramsci's notion of hegemony -- that it is never fixed but always contested. I also share her interest in exploring the relationship between intellectuals and social movements and the processes of constructing oppositional practices which are resistant and disruptive and therefore "counter-hegemonic".

Given my desire to illuminate both the structural and ideological constraints organizing the work of the adult educators in this study and my desire to explore the agency or resistance of the actors involved, I found Fraser's work to provide both a language of critique and a language of possibility. This tension between critique and possibility is threaded throughout her work, particularly in her critical analysis of Foucault (1979, 1980) and Habermas (1987). She has taken up the accounts of these postmodern theorists and attempted to integrate the useful dimensions of their work and to avoid their weaknesses.

For example, Fraser draws upon Foucault's account of the "capillary" character of power to strengthen her arguments regarding the possibility of multiple sites of struggle. But she also finds that Foucault does not distinguish the forms of power that involve domination from those that do not. In her critical review of Habermas, she finds his contribution to the understanding of the structural dynamics and forms of conflict of advanced
capitalism useful; however, she also finds that his work suffers as a result of his apparent indifference to gender.

Fraser goes on to argue that there are lessons to be learned from the "blind spots" of these critical theorists - lessons which direct attention to what a "...categorial framework of a socialist-feminist critical theory of welfare-state capitalism should look like" (p. 138). One feature of the framework would be that it does not separate or see as oppositional the male-headed nuclear family and the state-regulated official economy. Instead, a framework for socialist-feminist critical theory would see them as similar institutions which enforce women's subordination, albeit in different ways. The second requirement would be that the framework be sensitive to "the ways in which allegedly disappearing institutions and norms persist in structuring social reality" (p. 138). The third requirement outlined by Fraser is that the framework seek to reveal the "evil of dominance and subordination" in welfare state capitalism, not simply the evil of reification.

The clarity of her conceptual framework speaks to her commitment to developing a socialist-feminist critical theory which she has tested in her own political practice. She argues that "it is in the crucible of political practice that critical theories meet the ultimate test of validity". I support such a principle and have attempted myself to bring such a "bifocal" gaze which looks for both theoretical and political viability. I also appreciate and
share Fraser's efforts to combine her role as an academic intellectual and her role as an active member of the women's movement.

It also seemed important to bring to the scholarship of adult education a critical discourse-orientated approach to the notions of needs and needs assessment, notions which are central to much of the practice and adult education program planning literature. Fraser problematizes an aspect of adult education practice which is often taken for granted by pointing to the political process of interpreting needs, a process which often marginalizes those whose very needs are in question.

Finally, I selected Fraser's approach because her analysis provided both a structural and an interpretive account. Such an approach seemed to address the limitations of studies which have ignored how social-welfare programs -- in this case, labour market programs -- "provide clients and public at large with a tacit but powerful interpretive map of normatively, differently valued gender roles and gender needs" (Fraser, p. 9).

A "MEANING-ORIENTED" INQUIRY

Fraser's analysis of the gendered discourse of social welfare policies in the United States grew out of her frustrations with the limitations of what she describes as objectivist-functionalist models. Such models, Fraser
argues, focus only on how systems are reproduced, and therefore ignore the efforts of those who resist and disrupt the reproduction of dominant social practices and institutions.

In their place, Fraser argues for research which illuminates rather than hides conflict and the ongoing tensions between the construction and deconstruction of cultural meanings. She is particularly interested in furthering feminist understandings of late capitalist forms of male dominance that can be found in social welfare programs. Her discussion of policy-making within advanced capitalist western societies directs attention to both the structures of the state and how they tend to reproduce women's subordination, and the activities of individuals and the women's movement which resist these tendencies.

Fraser argues that the feminist movement must focus more attention on the struggles around social welfare. This is critical because women's "needs" are central to the coming "welfare wars" emerging from the current fiscal crisis of the state, which coincides with the feminization of poverty.

Because women constitute the overwhelming majority of social-welfare program recipients and employees, women and women's needs will be the principal stakes in the battles over social spending likely to dominate national politics in the coming period. (p. 144)

Because so many women depend on social-welfare programs as workers and clients, and indirectly because of the "safety net" these programs provide, feminists must argue
against cuts in spending. At the same time, feminists must challenge and criticize the same policies and programs for their tendency to reinforce women's dependence and poverty. Thus, feminists face a struggle fraught with contradictions where they can neither simply criticize nor defend social welfare programs.

Fraser identifies both structural and ideological problems facing feminists who become involved in the struggle over social spending. She does not offer any solutions, but rather proposes a "framework for inquiry that can shed light on both of them simultaneously" (p. 145). Fraser takes up the notion of "public patriarchy" -- an approach which has attempted to show how social welfare programs, such as "workfare" in the United States, reproduce the sex-segmented, dual labour market. This structural approach, Fraser argues, does not tell the whole story, for it does not address the discursive or ideological dimension of welfare practices -- "the tacit norms and implicit assumptions that are constitutive of those practices" (p. 146). In order to examine both the structural and ideological dimensions of welfare practices, Fraser calls for a "meaning-oriented" sort of inquiry.

To get at this dimension requires a meaning-oriented sort of inquiry, one that considers welfare programs as, among other things, institutionalized patterns of interpretation. Such inquiry would make explicit the social meanings embedded within welfare programs, meanings that tend otherwise simply to go without saying. (p. 146)
The Politics of Need Interpretation

Fraser proposes a kind of inquiry that would do two things simultaneously: first, it would reveal aspects of the structure of welfare systems by identifying "underlying norms and assumptions that lend a measure of coherence to diverse programs and practices" and second, it would examine "the politics of need interpretation" by exposing the processes which construct women's needs.

It could expose the processes by which welfare practices construct women and women's needs according to certain specific -- and, in principle, contestable -- interpretations, even as they lend those interpretations an aura of facticity that discourages contestation. (p. 146)

The ideological problems arise from the discursive character of social welfare policies. Fraser argues that "needs talk" is the medium now used to construct policy. That is, policy discussions are organized around talk about what various people need and who should have a say in the matter of policy-making.

Needs talk functions as a medium for the making and contesting of political claims: it is an idiom in which political conflict is played out and through which inequalities are symbolically elaborated and challenged. (p. 161-62).

Fraser calls for a "more politically critical, discourse-oriented alternative" to examining policy. Social-welfare issues, Fraser suggests, are often presented as if the definition of the needs in question were self-evident and beyond dispute. Most approaches to policy
analysis do not focus on the politics of constructing need and as a result ignore the fact that the interpretation of people's needs is itself a political matter. Fraser describes this as "the politics of need interpretation".

This way of framing issues poses obstacles for feminist politics, since at the heart of such politics lie questions about what various groups of women really need and whose interpretations of women's needs should be authoritative. Only in terms of a discourse oriented to the politics of need interpretation can feminists meaningfully intervene in the coming welfare wars. But this requires a challenge to the dominant policy framework. (Fraser, p. 145)

Given the central role of needs talk in policy making, Fraser calls for research which illuminates the often taken-for-granted needs claims within dominant policy frameworks. In challenging dominant policy frameworks, feminist analyses must bring into view the relational structure of needs claims.

It is the implication of needs claims in contested networks of in-order-to relations to which I call attention when I speak of the politics of need interpretation. (Fraser, p. 163).

Needs claims implicitly or explicitly have the form "A needs Z in order to Y". Fraser suggests that when discussions about needs are at a "thin" level, there are few problems. For example, in a "thin" discussion about homeless peoples' needs, there would be little dispute that homeless people who do not live in tropical climates need some kind of shelter in order to survive. But soon as the discussion moves on to a "thick" discussion about what kind of shelter is required and who should be responsible for
providing it, then needs claims become more contested and controversial.

Fraser emphasizes that her approach is not about needs themselves, but about the discourses various groups and interests produce about needs. She contrasts her focus on the politics of need interpretation with what is usually understood to underlie the politics of needs - a concern for the distribution of satisfactions.

Fraser outlines three analytically distinct but practically intermingled struggles within the politics of need interpretation. First, there is the struggle to secure or to deny the political status of a need. In this struggle traditional boundaries between public and private are often challenged. The second kind of struggle is for the power to define a need, and thus to determine how to satisfy it. These struggles often involve challenges to the apparently natural, traditional interpretations still enveloping needs as they move from the domestic and private realm to the political. Third, there is the struggle over the satisfaction of the need which includes efforts to empower women to determine their own needs and the satisfaction of these needs.

Oppositional movements play a major role in the first struggle to move needs onto the political agenda. For example, the feminist movement has struggled to move the problem of wife abuse out of the private and domestic realm onto the political agenda. As feminists attempt to
politicize needs, they face fixed assumptions within male-dominated, capitalist societies about what is of a public or political, as compared to a domestic or private nature. Women's issues are often viewed as being located within the private, domestic realm.

Fraser has found that domestic institutions such as the family and economic institutions such as paid workplaces and corporations are also involved in the resistance to politicization of women's needs. These institutions depoliticize matters by either "familializing" them or "economizing" them, thus preventing them from being considered as public, political matters. These boundaries can be and are disrupted and challenged, however, when alternative, oppositional and politicized interpretations emerge in their stead.

A Plurality of Needs Discourses

Within the political struggle over needs interpretation various interests produce a plurality of discourses about needs. Fraser has identified three major needs discourses which she calls oppositional, reprivatization, and expert. "Oppositional needs discourses" offer alternative interpretations and create new "discourse publics". Feminist and other social movements have played a major role in creating oppositional needs discourses which contest
established categorizations such as "domestic" or "economic" and which offer alternative interpretations.

"Reprivatization needs discourses" are produced in an effort to maintain previous boundaries and contain needs in the domestic or economic realm. These discourses are often a reactive attempt to depoliticize the needs identified by the work of social movements. Business and government are often producers of reprivatization discourses.

"Expert needs discourses" are those which translate needs into objects of potential state intervention. Fraser has found that expert needs discourses often act as bridge discourses because they link social movements to the state. Professionals who work in state institutions are often producers of expert or bridge needs discourses.

As Fraser has worked to classify the needs talk found within the contested terrain of policy making, she has also identified the moments of tension when different interests which construct different versions of needs compete. One axis involves the struggle over the politicization of needs. The contestants in this struggle are often social movements who employ oppositional needs discourses and interests such as business and government who employ reprivatization needs discourses. In the process of politicizing a need or needs, groups such as women or workers are contesting their subordinate status and creating new forms of discourse. These efforts are often met with attempts to defend old
boundaries between public and private and to cut back on social-welfare services.

Another axis involves struggles over the interpreted content of contested needs once their political status has been secured. The main contestants are, once again, social movements and organized interests such as business, which both try to influence public policy. Fraser uses the example of day care to illustrate the different interpretations involved in this axis of struggle. Some would argue that day care helps poor children and serves their "need" for enrichment. Others argue that day care helps single mothers get off welfare, thereby reducing welfare costs. A third view suggests that day care can help businesses and employers improve their productivity. Finally, a fourth perspective is that day care helps women by redistributing resources and therefore easing their workload. Many parties are involved here, including feminist organizations, employer groups and children's rights advocates.

A third axis of needs struggle comes into being when the satisfaction of politicized needs points to the involvement of the state. Here the struggle is between politics and administration. These struggles are usually found in the various private and semi-public institutions. Fraser identifies a number of different discourses produced in this struggle as various experts suggest the most appropriate response to satisfying the need or needs. These
include the social science discourses of universities, the legal discourses of judicial institutions, the administrative discourses of various agencies of the state, and therapeutic discourses which circulate in public and private medical and social service agencies.

The production of expert or public policy discourses often involves professions such as law and psychiatry. Social movements can also become involved when they use the knowledge of these professions or when the members of these movements are also professionals, who then create oppositional segments of expert public policy discourse. An example is women who have become lawyers and are working within the profession to create expert discourses that challenge traditional judicial arguments.

Fraser suggests that such discourses often become bridge discourses, linking social movements to the state. For the most part, expert or public policy discourses are administrative in that they translate politicized needs into administrable needs. In the process, however, these needs can become decontextualized, that is, abstracted from their gender, race and class specificity. This translation process also repositions those whose needs are being redefined so that they become individual cases instead of members of a group. As people are redefined as individual cases, they become recipients of predefined services rather than agents who interpret their own needs and construct services to meet those needs.
By virtue of this administrative rhetoric, expert needs discourses, too, tend to be depoliticizing. They construe persons simultaneously as rational utility maximizers and as causally conditioned, predictable, and manipulable objects, thereby screening out those dimensions of human agency that involve the construction and deconstruction of social meanings. Moreover, when expert needs discourses are institutionalized in state apparatuses, they tend to become normalizing, aimed at "reforming," or more often stigmatizing "deviancy." (p. 174)

The feminist struggle to politicize the issue of child care is a useful example of the various interests which come together along different axes of struggle and of the types of needs discourses outlined by Fraser. Placing the issue of child care on the public-policy agenda has been a focus of feminist efforts for many years. These efforts involve challenges to old boundaries which had kept the issue firmly within the domestic or familial realm. Much of the argument by various organizations within the women's movement represents an oppositional discourse, one which argues that the caring of children should not be the sole responsibility of women, but should be considered a national and public responsibility. Efforts have also been made to create a "bridge" discourse which translates the issue of child care into a demand for state intervention. For example, child care advocates are asking for a national government-funded child care system.

Resistance to this challenge to old boundaries and to making child care a political issue is evident in the federal government's response, which has attempted to depoliticize and reprivatize child care. This response
represents an effort to familialize child care through the introduction of new child care tax credits, the provision of allowances to cover child care costs for women in government-funded training programs, and the introduction of expanded parental leave coverage with changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act. More recently, the government has clearly stated that a national child care policy will not be forthcoming.

The government's position has been supported by arguments grounded in concerns for fiscal responsibility and the necessity of cutbacks in spending to reduce the national deficit. This rationalization also represents an effort to economize the debate about child care. The neo-conservative agendas of other groups have also contributed to the depoliticization and familialization of child care, bringing in another kind of reprivatization discourse, one based primarily on arguments about the trauma to children of non-parental care.

A Model of Social Discourse

Fraser has developed a model of social discourse which assumes the multivalent and contested character of needs talk. In her model, Fraser describes the "sociocultural means of interpretation and communication" or "MIC". The MIC refers to "the historically and culturally specific ensemble of discursive resources available to members of a
given social collectivity in pressing claims against one another" (p. 164). She includes among these discursive resources the following (p. 164-165):

1. The officially recognized idioms in which one can press claims, for example "needs talk", "rights talk", "interests talk".

2. The vocabularies available for instantiating claims in these recognized idioms; thus, with respect to needs talk, therapeutic vocabularies, administrative vocabularies, religious vocabularies, feminist vocabularies, or socialist vocabularies are available for interpreting and communicating one's needs.

3. The paradigms of argumentation accepted as authoritative in adjudicating conflicting claims; thus, with respect to needs talk, the methods for resolving conflicts over the interpretation of needs may include appeals to scientific experts, brokered compromises, voting according to majority rule, or privileging the interpretations of those whose needs are in question.

4. The narrative conventions available for constructing the individual and collective stories that are constitutive of people's social identities.

5. Modes of subjectification - the ways in which various discourses position the people to whom they are addressed as specific sorts of subjects endowed with specific sorts of capacities for action; for example, as "normal" or "deviant," as causally conditioned or freely self-determining, as victims or as potential activists, as unique individuals or as members of social groups.

These means of communication are not part of a coherent web, but rather are multiple and diverse. Fraser cautions, however, that they are not simply pluralist, but stratified and differentiated by unequal status, power, and access to resources, and organized along lines of class, gender, race, ethnicity and age. Needs talk, therefore, is a struggle among different groups with unequal resources.
... needs talk appears as a site of struggle where groups with unequal discursive (and nondiscursive) resources compete to establish as hegemonic their respective interpretations of legitimate social needs. Dominant groups articulate need interpretations intended to exclude, defuse, and/or co-opt counter-interpretations. Subordinate or oppositional groups, on the other hand, articulate need interpretations intended to challenge, displace, and/or modify dominant ones. In neither case are the interpretations simply "representations." In both cases, rather, they are acts and interventions. (p. 166)

Fraser has called the place where these struggles occur "the social" - a highly contested political arena which is outside of the familiar institutionalized spaces of family and official economy. She sees "the social" as not exactly equivalent to the traditional public sphere, nor an extension of the state. Rather, it is the place where "runaway needs" are debated. The state may become involved as attempts are made to develop interventions to satisfy these needs.

The social is a site of discourse about people's needs, specifically about those needs that have broken out of the domestic and/or official economic spheres that earlier contained them as "private matters". Thus, the social is a site of discourse about problematic needs, needs that have come to exceed the apparently (but not really) self-regulating domestic and official economic institutions of male-dominated, capitalist societies. (p. 156).

Fraser's Analysis of the U.S. Social Welfare System

Fraser charges mainstream policy analysts with being blind to the feminized terrain and the unmistakable gender subtext of social welfare policies which reflects a common core of assumptions about the sexual division of labour and
the division between the domestic and public spheres. She has identified two subsystems of the welfare state: masculine and feminine.

The "masculine" subsystem consists of programs like unemployment insurance where the normative ideal-type is male. The recipients of these programs are seen as "workers" with "rights". They are purchasing consumers. In the "feminine" subsystem, which includes programs like welfare, the ideal-type is seen as female. They are regarded not as consumers, but as beneficiaries or clients of public charity. They do not have "rights" like those receiving unemployment insurance.

Fraser sees the welfare state as having linked together a series of juridical, administrative and therapeutic procedures to form a structure that she calls the "JAT". Within this structure, political issues such as poverty are translated into legal, administrative or therapeutic issues thereby depoliticizing them. There is also a strong tendency for feminine social welfare programs to redefine gender-political and political-economic problems into psychological problems. As a result, the clients of the system must be "fixed" in order to bring them into line with their administratively defined situation.

Fraser argues that the effect of the JAT is to disempower people. The system identifies individuals as "cases" and ignores the reality of the oppression of groups of people by a dominant order. It imposes definitions of
need which deny any attempts at self-definition or self-
determination. The "clients" are rendered passive and their
discontent becomes a focus of adjustment, rather than of any
consciousness raising effort. In this way, the social
welfare system "... substitutes the monological,
administrative process of need definition for dialogical,
participatory processes of need interpretation" (Fraser,
1989, p. 156).

**Distinguishing Good from Bad Needs Interpretations**

Fraser claims that it is possible to distinguish better
from worse needs interpretations. She cautions that it is
not simply a matter of matching the interpretation with the
"true" nature of the need, nor of indicating that one
particular group has a privileged standpoint.

I claim we can distinguish better from worse
interpretations of people's needs. To say that needs
are culturally constructed and discursively interpreted
is not to say that any need interpretation is as good
as any other. On the contrary, it is to underline the
importance of an account of interpretive justification.
(Fraser, p. 181)

She identifies two distinct considerations when judging
needs interpretations: procedures and consequences.
Procedural considerations refer to "the social processes by
which various competing need interpretations are generated"
(p. 182). Attention should be given to two key issues: the
inclusivity of needs discourses and the relations among the
interlocutors (e.g. hierarchical or egalitarian). Fraser
suggests that the best needs interpretations are those which have been constructed in a process that is fair, democratic and equal.

The second consideration is the consequences of need interpretations. Attention should be given to a number of issues: whether acceptance of a needs interpretation would disadvantage some groups and advantage others, whether the interpretation reinforces or challenges relations of domination, and whether it rationalizes inequality. When considering consequences, "the best need interpretations are those that do not disadvantage some groups of people vis-a-vis others" (p. 182).

For Fraser, the struggle over needs interpretation is here to stay. Feminists, as political agents, must operate in this new terrain. Research into this struggle, Fraser argues, should aim to "... clarify the prospects of democratic and egalitarian social change by sorting out the emancipatory from the repressive possibilities of needs talk" (P. 183).

Applying Fraser's Framework To The Analysis

The concern in this study was to explore the difficult and contradictory work of the adult educators working in three government-funded job-entry programs for women. Several of Fraser's key notions and concepts have been taken up in the analysis of this study. Generally speaking, I
have attempted to examine the ideological and structural forces influencing the process of interpreting women's needs at both the macro and the micro level.

More specifically I have examined the policy context in order, as Fraser has argued, to "... identify some underlying norms and assumptions that lend a measure of coherence to diverse programs and practices". Attention has been given to revealing the dominant needs discourse and the gendered subtext of the policy and how women's needs have been interpreted within this framework.

I have also attempted to illuminate the contested and contextual character of the process of interpreting women's needs and the plurality of needs discourses employed by the staff and the process of constructing these various interpretations. Specific attention has been given to how this process is characterized by unequal access to resources, particularly how the gender, class and race of the staff and trainees influenced the process of needs interpretation.

I have also attempted to consider the implications of the analysis for the three main struggles outlined by Fraser: politicizing women's needs, bringing a feminist perspective to the interpretation of these needs, and arguing about how these needs will be satisfied.
CHAPTER THREE
GATHERING INFORMATION

I suggest we recognize that if there were some simple recipe we could follow and prescribe in order to produce powerful research and research agendas, no one would have to go through the difficult and sometimes painful - if always exciting - processes of learning how to see and create ourselves and the world in the radically new forms demanded by our feminist theories and practices. (Harding, 1987, p. 33)

This chapter outlines the process of gathering information for this study -- a process which, as Harding suggests, involves learning how to see. The discussion begins with a review of discussions by several feminist scholars regarding feminist approaches to social inquiry. The remainder of the chapter outlines the selection process for identifying programs to be included in the study, the methods used, my role as researcher, and ethical considerations.

Towards a Feminist Sociology

As was mentioned in the first chapter, Smith's arguments for a sociology for women has greatly influenced both the theoretical and methodological approach taken up for this study. Smith has developed a particular approach to gathering information about women's everyday world and the complex of social relations shaping that experience which she calls "institutional ethnography". She contrasts
this approach with standard ethnographic research which describes a local setting as if it were a self-contained unit of analysis. Smith argues instead for inquiries which locate the dynamics of local setting within the complex institutional relations giving shape to the local dynamics.

According to Smith, there are three main features of institutional ethnography. First, attention must be given to the ideological procedures which render work organization accountable. Second, institutional ethnography involves a process of exploring how individuals are involved in the production of their everyday world and how this process is organized by and sustains institutional practices. The third feature of this approach is the concern for social relations organizing the everyday world of work.

Smith's cautions that institutional ethnography should not be considered as a single fieldwork enterprise, rather, it is part of a larger project which "grapples with the actualities of extensive social relations ... taken up by inquiries opening up a number of different windows, disclosing a number of different viewpoints from which the working of a whole complex of relational processes come into view" (Smith, 1987, p. 177). The ultimate goal of Smith's sociology is to provide methods of making women's experience accountable to themselves and other women, rather than to the ruling apparatus.

Harding's (1987) discussions about feminist methods also contributed to my decision-making about the
information-gathering process. She argues that there exist three basic information-collecting techniques: talking with and listening to people, observing them and historical analysis. Harding's position is that what is distinctive about feminist research is its focus on gender, the identification of research problems based on women's experiences, and the recognition of the researcher, particularly her race, class and gender assumptions, as a critical element of the study. Harding proposes that the concern of feminist researchers should be not to search for a distinct feminist method, but rather to identify sources of power.

Similar arguments are made by Lather (1991) who suggests that "to do feminist research is to put the social construction of gender at the center of one's inquiry" (p. 71). Lather, however, does suggest that there are aspects of gathering information that are distinctly feminist. In particular, empowering approaches to inquiry should be based on reciprocity between researcher and researched which involves a dialogical and interactive information collection process. Achieving reciprocity involves self-disclosure on the part of the researcher, sequential interviewing to allow for deeper probing of research issues, and negotiating meaning through recycling description and sharing with the participants emerging analysis and conclusions.

As I have gathered information for this inquiry, I have attempted to respond to the aforementioned concerns outlined
by Smith, Harding and Lather. I have used the three basic methods outlined by Harding to gather information: I listened to what people had to say, I observed their work and I examined documents. Specifically, I gathered information through in-depth tape-recorded interviews of the program staff lasting from one to two hours, informal follow-up discussions with the staff both in person and by telephone, participant and nonparticipant observations of lifeskills classes, informal discussions with trainees, and analysis of documents.

**Selecting the Programs for Study**

This study involved a comparative analysis of the work of adult educators from three different programs, rather than an in-depth study of one program. Having had the opportunity to study one program in detail during my work as a research assistant, I found myself wanting to know what was happening in other programs as well. I also had employed a comparative approach for my masters thesis (Bereday, 1964), which examined the feminist notion of consciousness raising and Freire's notion of conscientization (Butterwick, 1987). The outcome was a greater understanding of the principles of consciousness raising that seemed to transcend specific situations.

My decision to employ a comparative approach was thus based on my previous positive experience with this approach
and my belief that a comparison, rather than an in-depth study of one program, would provide a richer understanding of the politics of needs interpretation. Using a comparative approach has allowed me to identify common themes present in different situations. It has also allowed me to identify differences, in particular the different interpretations of women's needs produced by the staff.

The identification of the programs included in this study was facilitated by my links with a feminist advocacy group which had been formed to examine labour market policy and its impact on women. Most of the members of this group were providers of CJS programs and were familiar with others who were also running CJS programs. I asked several members to recommend programs in which the staff were committed to developing a program within the constraints of the CJS policy which could address women's needs. From their responses, I generated a list of several CJS re-entry programs. Time constraints and limited resources obliged me to consider only programs in the geographical area in which I lived. In the end, six programs were identified.

A letter was sent to the coordinator of each of the programs, describing my research and what would be involved if the staff decided to participate (see Appendix A). Follow-up phone calls were made and three programs which would allow me access and which had indicated an interest in participating were selected.
The selection of these three programs was influenced by a number of concerns, in addition to that of access. Three programs seemed a manageable number for one researcher. The three programs were similar enough to allow for comparisons: all programs were funded by the same CJS program, all were managed by the same regional office of Canada Employment, and all were provided by non-profit agencies. They were also sufficiently differentiated by the variety of skills training provided, their client focus and length of training.

The Process of Gathering Information

As the focus of this study was the work of several women running job-entry programs and the role they played in the political struggle over the interpretation of women's needs, it was important to hear their descriptions of what they do in their everyday work, and to ask them about their perspectives of the policy under which the programs were funded, about their relations with the government department responsible for implementing the programs and about their work with the trainees.

I conducted a total of 13 interviews. The interviews were open-ended, but to aid in asking questions, I used an interview schedule which outlined several key areas I wanted to cover (see Appendix B). With one exception, all the participants agreed to have the interview tape-recorded. In
the latter case, detailed notes were taken and a transcription was produced and returned to the interviewee for comment. All tape-recorded interviews were transcribed, and individuals were given pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

Copies of the transcriptions of the tape-recorded interviews were provided to each of the interviewees. The purpose of this was to allow the practitioners to elaborate or even change the responses they had given if they so desired. A further reason was to provide the participants with copies of their accounts in the form that would be used in the analysis. Seeing the discussion in the form of a transcript helped the interviewees to see the text that was created from these interviews. As it turned out, only one of the participants wished to make any changes and that was to elaborate on a particular point and to fill in where the quality of the recording had been poor. Most did comment, however, on how different it looked to have their verbal replies produced in a written form.

I also visited the sites of their practice and observed, where possible, the work that the staff was engaged in. All three programs had a "lifeskills" component in the curriculum, which seemed an appropriate place and time to collect information about the staff's classroom practice and to observe the interactions between and among trainees and staff. Other important sources of information included the proposals developed by the staff and the
curriculum materials they used in their teaching. The initial contact and field work covered a period of approximately one year beginning, in 1990 and extending into 1991.

In order to further understand the work of running these programs, I also examined the policy under which these programs were funded. To this end, I collected and analysed CJS documents and related background material. I also spoke with CEIC staff who were directly involved in decision-making regarding CJS re-entry programs for women. These discussions helped to illuminate the process of decision-making, particularly how proposals were developed and how decisions about funding were reached. In addition, I spoke to a women's representative who sat with other representatives from business and labour on a council which gave advice to local CEIC managers about labour market programming. I was interested to hear about her experiences of these advisory structures and their relationship to decision-making.

Focus of the Data Collection Process

It is important to clarify the boundaries and limitations of the methods used to gather information for this study. Although both interviews and observations are frequently identified as ethnographic techniques, this research cannot be considered a traditional ethnography.
The information collected was partial. It focused mainly on one group of participants, the adult educators running the programs, and on the policy context in which the programs were funded. Several visits were made to each of the programs, but I did not observe all the various activities taking place. It would have been both difficult and inappropriate to observe some activities such as private counselling sessions between staff and trainees and meetings between staff and CEIC personnel. I also did not collect the kind of information that would have been available if I had maintained contact with the programs from the beginning of proposal writing to the graduation of the trainees.

Another important limitation to this study is my relationship with the trainees. Although I spoke informally with the trainees during my visits to the programs, I did not undertake to do in-depth interviews with them. This does not mean that I considered the trainees unimportant. I was very concerned to observe how the staff and trainees interacted and to hear their talk when I visited the programs. The focus of this study, however, is the work of the staff, those women who ran the three CJS-funded job-entry programs for women, and it is their accounts of their work that I attended to.

It is also important to understand that this study is not about uncovering women's needs per se. Rather, it is about the interpretation of needs produced by adult educators in the provision of programs. Again, this is not
to say that the trainees' interpretation of their needs is not important. A focus on the interpretation or construction of women's needs produced by the adult educators and staff within these programs raises important questions about the role the trainees play or should play in the creation of curriculum and activities that will truly empower women.

**Ethical Considerations**

There are many ethical considerations to be addressed in any research project, including informing the participants of the nature and purpose of the study and providing for their protection from possible risks. Written and verbal descriptions of the nature and purpose of this research were provided to all participants and written consent was obtained (see Appendix C). I explained that I would keep all information collected in my confidence except where disclosure to my research committee members was necessary. Given the political and competitive nature of funding for such programs, care was taken to anticipate and avoid any embarrassment of or sanctions against the subjects of the study. I used pseudonyms to identify subjects and work locations. A summary of the study will be sent to participants.

Another critical ethical issue is the process of knowledge building and whether, as Lather has argued, the
process I engaged in was a reciprocal one. As I became involved with each of the programs I included in my discussion with the staff, to the extent that time constraints allowed, ideas and issues that were emerging as the study progressed. Their reactions to these suggestions were very important for furthering my work. I also continued to be an active member of both local and national feminist advocacy groups, where I employed my analysis and theoretical knowledge to help further our work and develop strategies for influencing policy.

Finally, some discussion is required regarding my relationship to the participants as researcher in this study. My position as both an academic researcher and a member of a feminist community that was familiar with CJS programs and concerned with influencing policy made me both an insider and an outsider. As an "insider", my sympathies lay with the practitioners who were the focus of this study. However, I was also an "outsider" - a doctoral student within a large university, a researcher, not a member of the staff, nor someone who was invited to study these programs.

My position as a white, middle class, heterosexual woman certainly influences how I see, hear and understand the world. Because of my position as a privileged woman, I struggled to pay attention to issues that I might be unaware of. At times, it was obvious that my experiences and assumptions were different from those of the participants. For the most part, I was warmly welcomed and felt
comfortable in my role as researcher. My experience did vary in important ways, however, as I visited the different programs. Further details of my experiences as researcher and my relationship with the staff and trainees are provided when each of the programs are described in chapters five, six and seven.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the process of gathering information for this study. I conducted formal and informal interviews with staff of the programs and some government personnel. Observations were made of classroom activities and documents such as proposals were analysed as well as other curriculum materials.

In order to understand the dominant policy framework in which these programs were funded, I also examined the policy documents of the Canadian Jobs Strategy and related government material. This policy information is the focus of the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE CANADIAN JOBS STRATEGY: SERVING THOSE "MOST IN NEED"?

Job Entry provides for individual needs, while at the same time addressing local labour market requirements. It also offers unique opportunities for the business and voluntary sectors to ensure that specific training projects relate to real labour market needs and that the skills provided are meaningful for women and youth. (Working opportunities for people, Canadian Jobs Strategy, July 1988, p.4)

In order to understand the everyday struggles of the adult educators providing the three job-entry programs, and how these struggles are organized by social and institutional relations immanent in and extending beyond the everyday, some sense of the dominant policy framework in which these programs were funded is necessary. Employing Fraser's approach, this chapter attempts to reveal the ideological and structural aspects of the Canadian Jobs Strategy. It is hoped that this examination of CJS can illustrate "the underlying norms and assumptions which lend a measure of coherence to diverse programs and practices" and illuminate how women's needs were interpreted within the dominant policy framework.

Fraser has argued that "needs talk" has become the medium of welfare state policy-making and that the process of interpreting needs is characterized by unequal access to resources based on gender, race and class. In this examination of CJS and the context in which it was developed, I hope to illustrate a similar pattern to
decision-making that Fraser found in her examination of U.S. social welfare policies and practices. There are several arguments I want to make in this regard.

Although women's needs and those of other marginalized groups were addressed in this policy, they were subsumed and reinterpreted within a market-driven, neo-conservative framework in which the primary concerns were supplying the changing labour market with skilled workers, reducing government spending and privatizing training. Furthermore, I suggest that CJS is consistent with Canada's liberal approach to welfare state practices in that it is based on an assumption that by addressing the needs of the labour market, the needs of workers will be also taken care of. I also suggest that the structure of CJS programs was organized into "feminine" and "masculine" spheres. Examination of women's participation in CJS reveals the dominant masculinist ideology upon which this policy was based, an approach that considers worker as male and women as 'other'. Finally, I want to indicate in the following discussion the contested character of labour market policy-making in order to challenge the notion promoted by government that CJS reflects a consensus of views.

The discussion in this chapter is organized into two main parts. The first half attempts to outline the historical, political and socio-economic developments at work prior to the introduction of CJS in 1985. The second half focuses specifically on CJS. The first part contains
three subsections beginning with a discussion of Canada's liberal tradition of welfare state policies and practices and also includes a brief overview of the changes in federal intervention into labour market training. The next subsection looks more closely at the third and latest period of labour market interventions including the political and economic forces which were beginning to take shape in the 1980s. The next subsection focuses on the discourse of the newly elected Conservative government evident in several key documents.

The second half of the chapter begins with an overview of the main changes introduced by CJS including the program areas, decision-making and training expenditures. The next subsection considers these changes and points to the masculinist character of CJS and its impact on the structure and funding of women's programs. The final section reviews some of the criticisms of CJS in order to challenge the assumption that CJS reflected a consensus of labour market partners.

I. Prelude to CJS

Canada's Welfare State Practices - A Liberal Tradition

In order to illuminate the underlying norms and assumptions upon which CJS was developed, this section begins with a brief discussion of Canada's welfare state policies and practices, followed by a review of previous
labour market interventions. Although CJS was introduced as a completely new approach to labour market programming, it was still consistent with a market-oriented liberal approach that has characterized Canadian welfare state practices.

There are a variety of approaches to defining what is meant by the welfare state, but for the purposes of this brief overview, I have used Abler's (1988, p. 456) description.

[The welfare state represents] ... a set of policy responses to the process of modernization, consisting of political interventions into the functioning of the economy and the societal distribution of life chances that seek to promote the security and equality of citizens in order to foster the social integration of highly mobilized industrial societies.

Canada has been described as a liberal welfare state (Esping-Anderson, 1989; O'Connor, 1989). The ideology of the liberal approach is reflected in a belief in the market as an effective means of achieving equality and the redistribution of resources. Structurally, the social welfare programs of liberal states such as Canada often include means tested assistance, modest universal transfers and modest social insurance plans. In some respects, Canada does not fit completely into this picture with its high civil consumption expenditures on health and education. When Canada's social transfer payments are considered, however, Canada performs poorly by OECD standards. Expenditures on housing and employment creation are also minimal. Finally, not since the 1960's have policies been oriented toward the goal of full employment.
The liberal character of Canada's welfare state has been attributed to the strong links between the corporate elite and the state and to the fragmented and regionally isolated character of pressure on the state by organized labour (Panitch, 1977). Other explanations have pointed to the federalist approach to governing and its negative associations with welfare effort (Cameron, 1986), although some have counter-argued that federalism supports the growth of public expenditure (Swank and Hicks, 1985). Canada's open economy, particularly its close relationship with the volatile American economy, has also been associated with the liberal approach (Cameron, 1986).

Against this backdrop of the liberal character of Canada's welfare state, the development of Canadian labour market policies is now considered. Although the provinces have responsibility for education, the federal government has become increasingly involved in the training of workers, which have been for the most part men. Federal government activities in relation to labour market and job training began at the turn of the century and can be seen as falling into three periods (Thomas, Taylor and Gaskin, 1989). In the first period, beginning with the Agricultural Instruction Act of 1913 and extending to 1939, the focus was on promoting certain industries such as agriculture and helping those not being served by formal schooling. During the second period, beginning just prior to the Second World War and extending to 1967, the focus was on training for
specific groups such as the disabled, war veterans and youth. At this time, the government was also becoming more actively involved with decisions about the selection of trainees and the types of training to be offered. In the third and present period, beginning with the Adult Occupational Training Act (AOTA) introduced in 1967, the federal government began to increase its independent authority over training and education and also began to deal directly with employers.

Labour Market Training As An Economic Strategy

The third and present period of labour market intervention is significant for it was during this time that the federal government began to focus on the training and development of the labour force as a key feature to its economic strategy (Witter, 1991). It became a buyer of training services which were then provided for individuals who matched federally defined eligibility criteria. In addition to purchasing training from public and private institutions, the government also introduced job-creation programs. Under the Basic Training for Skills Development Program (BSTD) introduced in the late 1960s, the government also introduced restrictions on the length of training, with the maximum now defined as 52 weeks.

These changes took place within a contested terrain involving a plurality of interests including different levels of government, business, labour, and equality seeking
groups. Provincial institutions such as colleges and technical institutions argued that education was their jurisdiction, not the federal government's. The job-creation programs were challenged as short-term with little impact on long-term creation of productive employment. There were also criticisms of the restrictions on the length of training which meant that those considered to be "most in need" because of limited education were further marginalized.

This most recent period of federal labour market intervention is also significant in relation to the concern for increasing the involvement of business and industry in the training of its workers. Compared to other OECD countries, Canadian industry gave little support to the training of workers (Economic Council of Canada, 1976, 1982). In studies of participation in adult education activities, not only were employers reluctant to provide training, they gave little support to women compared to men (Devereaux, 1985).

In response to these concerns, particularly the mismatch between shortages in critical skilled trades and high unemployment, the Allmand Task Force was established in 1980. As a result of its report Work for Tomorrow: Employment Opportunities for the Eighties (1981), the National Training Act (NTA) was introduced by the Liberal federal government in 1982.
The overall objective of the NTA was to match the skills available in the labour force with the needs of the labour market. This new legislation gave authority for the first time to the government to deal directly with private and non-profit training institutions. Adult basic education was further marginalized under the NTA as funds were shifted to areas where it was determined there was a "critical skill shortage" which included those occupations in which there was a labour market demand and which were considered to be of national importance.

There were three main programs initiated under the NTA. The National Institutional Training Program involved the direct purchase of courses from community colleges and vocational schools. The National Industrial Training Program included employer-centred training based on a shared-cost incentive. The Skills Growth Fund provided capital to provincial governments and non-profit organizations to establish, develop, and expand facilities for training for occupations of national importance.

This new act also identified women, natives and disabled people as new "target" groups with attention given to ensuring that the employability and/or earning capacity of these participants be increased and that their access to training be improved. In order to assist women to enter the labour market, particularly those occupations considered to be in demand, employers were to be reimbursed for 75% of wages paid to women in return for on-the-job training.
Through the National Industrial Training Program seats were reserved for women in non-traditional courses.

As with previous federal interventions, there were many criticisms. With the actual numbers of women in non-traditional training declining under the NTP, women's organizations pointed to the ineffectiveness of the seat reservation policy (CCLOW, 1984). Seat reservations, it was argued, would have no effect unless this approach was tied to aggressive recruitment campaigns. Women's groups also noted that the policy of reimbursing employers had limited impact. Both of these efforts were considered to be neutral rather than proactive measures which neither promoted nor encouraged women to take non-traditional training nor did they push employers to support women's training.

Labour organizations were also critical of the NTP with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) arguing that no attempt was made to ensure that those taking programs would find employment. The CLC also supported the notion of more flexible programs and child care subsidies for women. Others criticisms pointed to the confusing array of programs which were poorly coordinated.

Business and industry were also critical, arguing that the policy had not been effective in reducing the gap between the training provided by the public sector and the needs of the labour market. As industry struggled to find trained workers, employers in the primary and secondary
sectors began to withdraw their support for state intervention.

Economic Restructuring and Changes to Supply and Demand

Many of these concerns were emerging at the same time as Canada's economy and international markets were undergoing significant restructuring. Canada's economy was moving away from a resource based economy toward a service sector economy with associated structural unemployment and changes in the skills and workers required in the new economy. For example, by the 1980s, all of the net job creation was occurring within the service sector (Economic Council of Canada, 1990).

With these changes, there were shifts occurring in both the supply of workers and the demands of the labour market (Labour Market Development in the 1980s, 1981). There was significant reduction in labour force growth (less than 2%) and also significant changes in its character, with women's participation increasing by 70%, men's by 40% and youth declining by 10%. In addition to these new entrants, the labour force was also aging, with a significantly higher proportion of workers who were over 55 years of age.

Along with the change in supply of workers, it was also predicted that the demand for workers would shift away from the primary industries toward non-residential construction, capital goods, communication and information, high technology and the business services sector. Further
changes were also predicted in the industrial base of central Canada which would require major labour market adjustment. It was also noted that there would be increased international competition in standard technology goods industries employing a high proportion of unskilled workers which would result in declining opportunities for these workers.

As the demand for more and different kinds of training of workers was emerging, there were also calls for significant changes to funding, particularly interventions that would encourage employers to train their own workers (Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects of Canada, 1984). It was argued that "substantial changes in financing mechanisms [be made] in order to create a more competitive, dynamic and diversified system". Many of the recommendations argued for wage subsidies to employers to compensate for their costs related to providing entry-level training.

In addition to discussions about how to establish new funding mechanisms, how to increase the involvement of the private sector in training and how to determine the training needs given the shifting economy, there were also concerns about how policies could address issues of inequality in employment opportunities (Abella, 1984). Given the formidable barriers to equality for the "designated groups", including women, a massive policy response to systemic discrimination had to be initiated.
How were these economic and political pressures being addressed by the newly elected Conservative government? The dominant concerns of the government can be detected by examining several documents released by the Conservatives prior to the initiation of CJS in 1985.

The Neo-Conservative Agenda

One of the first issues addressed by the newly elected Conservative government was labour market policy and programs. In 1984, the government released the Consultation Paper on Training which they described as a tool to stimulate business, labour and "individual Canadians" to consider the trends and challenges facing Canada as a result of economic restructuring. Three main concerns were threaded throughout the text of this paper: efficiency, effectiveness and equity.

The Conservatives indicated that the central challenge for the new government was to respond to the increasing demand for retraining because of technological and economic changes at a time when resources were shrinking. The government claimed that although retraining was important more funds would not be available, and therefore efforts were to be made toward improving the effectiveness of training dollars. A related concern was how best to increase the involvement of the private sector with business and labour frequently cited as key players in the process of
deciding what kinds of training would be important and where this training should take place.

The focus on effectiveness and equity was also taken up within the discussion of whether the "right people" were being trained with particular attention given to young people, adult workers facing major career shifts, and special groups including "women, Native Canadians, the disabled and visible minorities" (p. iv). The government claimed that assisting these groups would be an efficient use of resources because they were "comparatively under-trained in relation to the likely pay-off from further training". The government also indicated that many "women would benefit if training were structured to meet their needs in such areas as flexible scheduling and child care arrangements".

Different funding strategies were also being explored as the government discussed the roles and responsibilities of providers which were identified as employers, unions, individuals, educational institutions and governments. The government argued that as the links between workplace and training become blurred, greater cooperation was needed between interested parties. More specifically, it stated that federal and provincial interventions should be complementary and employers must play a larger role in determining the priorities of educational institutions. It also stated that "different arrangements" among the parties were necessary in order to deal with the anticipated
increase in training without a corresponding increase in funding.

In the final section of the Training Paper two possible responses to the changing supply and demand for workers were outlined. The first strategy was described as a "strategy of renewal", which would concentrate on improving the existing arrangements covered under federal programs and policies. Such a strategy would maintain policies such as government support to community colleges. The second strategy was described as one of "balance and new directions", in which more attention would be given to developing different options than the traditional industrial and institutional training. Here, the government's labour market policy direction became clearly visible. This second strategy would reflect the reality of spending restraint and shift funding to those areas where the need for federal support was clearest, such as training for the transition from school to work, training for the unemployed and special groups, and training related to major career shifts. Regardless of the strategy selected, the paper indicated that priority should be given to "... consultation, cooperation, flexibility and support of innovation".

Further evidence of the Conservative approach to labour market intervention could be seen in their Agenda for Economic Renewal released in 1984. This document outlined three central principles upon which labour market policy would be based: first, the best way to create jobs is
through private initiative; second, good government does not mean more government, it means more efficient government; and third, Canadian economic prosperity depends upon restoring responsibility to government finances.

Other clues as to the Conservative agenda were revealed at the First Ministers' Conference in February 1985 where Employment Opportunities: Preparing Canadians for a Better Future was released. This document further outlined the government's priorities in relation to labour market policy: support for small businesses and entrepreneurship, flexible programming that was responsive to regional needs, shared responsibility between government and the private sector, commitment to equality of access, and simplification of programs.

The focus on fiscal restraint as the key to economic renewal was further emphasized at the National Economic Conference in March of 1985, which included representatives from business, labour, and consumers', women's and seniors' groups as well as government officials. The government argued that deficit reduction was the best approach to satisfying the need for economic renewal and job creation.

Given this prelude to CJS, the second half of this chapter will look at the programs, decision-making and expenditures of CJS with particular attention given to examining how the ideology and structure of CJS reflected a masculinist approach to labour market programming.
II. The Canadian Jobs Strategy

In June of 1985, CJS was formally introduced and described by CEIC as:

... a whole new approach to training Canadians - a complete redesign of the government's labour market programs and a fundamental change in the way we develop and invest in our most important resource - individual Canadians. (CEIC, Annual Report, 1985-1986, p. 18)

The main differences introduced in relation to the previous labour market programs of the NTP was the focus on employability of workers, rather than direct job-creation. Other changes included the decentralization of decision-making, and the private sector orientation in the implementation of training. Concerns for particular disadvantaged groups such as women, people with disabilities and native peoples, had been part of the NTP. This continued under CJS but was organized around a more selective mode of programming.

Serving Those Most In Need

Under NTP, programs had been defined in terms of specific labour market problems such as seasonal or structural employment. With CJS a "programming" approach was adopted with specific programs developed to serve those "most in need" which were identified as the following: the long-term unemployed; those having difficulty entering the
labour market, particularly youth and women; workers threatened by technological or market changes; employers needing workers with skills in short supply; and non-metropolitan communities facing high unemployment and major layoffs or plant closures. Six program areas were identified in response to these designated groups: job development, job entry, skills investment, skill shortages, community futures and innovations.

The following descriptions and parameters where taken from *Working Opportunities for People* (Employment and Immigration Canada, WH3-725/7/88). Participation rates for women were reported by Prince and Rice (1989) and taken from *Departmental Expenditure Plans*, (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1988-89, p. 3.42). Examining these descriptions of eligibility criteria and financial support among the six program areas together with the participation rates of women helps to reveal the gendered character of the CJS policy. The implications of these differences are discussed later in this chapter.

Job Development was a program area developed for the long-term unemployed and included both general projects and individually subsidized jobs. Programs could be up to 52 weeks long and could include on-site training with an employer and/or off-site training at a training institute. Those sponsoring projects could receive wage subsidies of up to 100%, to a maximum of $7.50 per hour. Forty six percent of participants in these programs were women.
Job Entry was a program with several options developed to help new employees enter the labour market. The Entry option provided training and work experience for youth. Eligible participants were "unemployed youth out of school for at least three months and lacking a post-secondary degree or diploma". The Re-entry option provided both on-the-job and classroom training for women who were having difficulty making the transition from home to work. Eligible participants included "women having difficulty making a successful transition into the labour force, i.e. obtaining employment that realistically meets both their expectations and the local labour market needs, due to a lack of adequate training and/or work experience". Not surprisingly, 100% of the participants in Re-entry programs were women.

The Severely Employment-Disadvantaged option provided on- and off-the-job training for persons facing significant barriers in securing and maintaining employment. An "unemployed severely employment-disadvantaged person" was defined as someone who faced "significant barriers in securing and maintaining employment for such reasons as poor work habits; attitudinal or motivational problems; a serious lack of education/training; functional illiteracy; prolonged periods of institutionalization; a history of drug or alcohol abuse; or a lack of ability to communicate in either official language". Co-ordinators would receive funds to pay for participant allowances as well as other related
costs including wages of staff, employment related costs, overhead costs, off-site training costs and participating costs for disabled participants.

The Skills Investment program provided financial assistance to employers to train employees to adapt to changing technological and competitive conditions. Financial assistance was provided to employers for up to 60% of wages or up to $7.50 per hour per participant. Funding was also provided for training costs but in a substantially higher amount than the Entry program.

In the Skill Shortages program, training costs, wage subsidies and other allowances were provided to employers "to train employed or unemployed persons in areas of regional or potential occupational skill shortages". Eligible employees were newly hired workers capable of undertaking designated occupational training. Financial assistance included up to 60% of weekly wages paid during off-the-job training and up to $7.50 per hour during on-the-job training. As with the Skills Investment program, $20 per hour per participant was available for the training portion. This program had the lowest participation rate of women at eight percent.

The Community Futures program was developed to help communities adjust to the changing economic environment and expand permanent employment. Those communities considered eligible were "non-metropolitan areas in greatest need with exceptionally high unemployment". Five program options were
available to communities: Business Development Centres, Self-employment Incentive, Relocation and Travel Assistance, Direct Purchase of Training, or Community Initiatives Fund. Thirty six percent of participants in Community Futures programs were women.

One additional program, the Innovations program was established to provide financial assistance to pilot projects and other short-term activities testing new and cost-effective ways to improve the functioning of the Canadian labour market.

CJS Decision-making Processes

Another change introduced by CJS was the decentralization of decision-making to the regions and increased consultation with employers and the business sector. Examining the processes of decision-making further illustrates that the dominant concern was the needs of employers and the local labour market, not the needs of individuals. In order to involve business and industry in decision-making, Local Advisory Councils (LACs) were established. The purpose of these councils was to "bring together interested parties from the community in order to hear their views of CEIC services and programs" (Local Advisory Council Secretariat, 1986).

These councils did not review specific projects or approve funding. Rather, they made recommendations with respect to priorities, achieving the goals of target group
participation and other issues relating to the achievement of CEIC operational objectives. The councils were supposed to meet at least four times a year and were to be provided with local labour market data, although many councils met only sporadically.

Members of the LAC were appointed by the local Members of Parliament and were to include local business and union leaders, community group representatives and members of local organizations representing women, youth, workers with disabilities and visible minorities. Also participating on these councils were the local Canada Employment Centre Managers with other representatives of federal departments and other levels of government participating when necessary as resource persons.

Final decisions within each CEIC office were made by the manager. The decision-making process involved gathering labour market information and determining occupational opportunities and where the demands were from employers for workers. CEIC made contacts with employers through employer groups to inform them about the intent of the programs and the funding available. CEIC staff also contacted non-profit organizations and assisted them to develop proposals for training for their client groups in demand areas of the labour market. For example, if office automation was identified as a growth area within the local labour market, the non-profit organizations were encouraged to develop proposals for training in such an area.
Proposals were then submitted to a review board which consisted of the CEIC manager, the assistant manager, the project officer responsible for the proposal and, at times, other project officers. Proposals whose cost exceeded $100,000 required the approval of the Minister, and would be submitted to the national headquarters of Employment and Immigration Canada. For those under this amount, the local CEIC manager had final approval.

Spending Reductions

The focus on reducing government spending and shifting funds to the private sector was clearly illustrated when the federal expenditures on training were examined (Employment and Immigration, Annual Reports, 1984/85, 1986/87, 1988/90; Learning Well, Living Well, 1991). For the fiscal year 1984-85, just prior to the introduction of CJS, expenditures by CEIC for labour market programs were $2.1 billion. By 1986/87 expenditures were reduced to $1.54 billion and in 1988-89, they further declined to $1.4 billion. By 1990-91 the expenditures totaled $1.3 billion.

The shift of funding away from public education to the private sector was also significant. On the one hand, from 1985/85 to 1987/88 payments to public institutions dropped by 10% (Education Statistics Bulletin, 1989). By 1990, there had been a 50% decline in direct federal purchase of training from community colleges since 1986 (Witter, 1991).
And on the other hand, between 1984/85 to 1987/88, support to the private sector had increased by almost 12%.

The Gendered Subtext of CJS

Although targets were set for the participation of the four equity groups (women, peoples with disabilities, visible minorities and native peoples), the majority of women were served by the Entry program. Upon closer examination of these programs and considering the actual participation of women, it can be argued that, like Fraser's analysis of the U.S. welfare system, CJS also had constructed "masculine" and "feminine" spheres.

The "feminine" sphere of CJS - that is, the area where most of the participants were women - was the Re-entry program designed to assist women to re-enter the labour market after being absent to care for children. The participants in these programs received training and child care "allowances" and made claims based on their status as unpaid domestic workers, homemakers and mothers. Like the U.S. welfare recipients in Fraser's analysis, they were beneficiaries of government Largess" or "clients of public charity".

The "masculine" sphere of CJS included programs such as Skill Shortages, Job Development and Skills Investment where the majority of participants were men. These programs were differently structured and had higher subsidies for participants' training costs and the participants received
wages rather than allowances. Most of the recipients of these programs could be considered as "rights-bearer" - that is, they were receiving what they deserved or had a right to - and often worked in partnership with employers.

In the previous outline of the Re-entry program and its eligible participants, eligible participants were identified as "women have difficulty making a successful transition into the labour force ... due to a lack of adequate training and/or work experience". This rather narrow interpretation of the causes of women's struggles to find paid work are illustrative of a "blaming the victim" approach. This "thin" description does not acknowledge the unequal power relationship which organize economic processes and the discriminatory practices of the labour market. This interpretation also does not suggest any understanding of the differences among women, rather, they are viewed as a homogeneous group. Difficulties with access to training and decent paying jobs resulting from systemic inequalities based on race, class and ablebodiness were not addressed in the framing of Re-entry programs for women under CJS.

Examining the official policy also illuminates how the discourse suggested a logic of coherence to a problem which was in fact complex and contradictory. For example, given the description of women's struggles, one would think that assisting women to enter the labour market involved a straightforward process of providing information, skill development and job experience. The policy discourse
indicated that the best approach was a combination of classroom and on-the-job training, with the latter being considered as more effective. Women's struggles with poverty, violence, sexism and racism were not acknowledged nor addressed in the structuring of the programs.

The Re-entry programs and "SEDS" programs were also problematic in that they presented the needs of the participants as already predetermined and the participants as passive recipients, not active agents who were invited into a process of determining their own needs.

**Challenges to CJS**

CJS was not without its critics. The following discussion indicates the contested terrain in which CJS was being implemented. Challenges to CJS came from labour organizations, women's organizations, public institutions, the business community, and community-based groups. Labour organizations such as the CLC, as well as other groups, charged that the real rationale for the policy change was not to improve training but to reduce spending. The CLC in its *Position Paper on Canadian Jobs Strategy* (1987) argued that the LACs were not working well, that there was limited involvement of labour representatives and a heavy bias by the local MPs toward business. Labour also expressed concern over the privatization of training and raised such issues as: the loss of jobs in public educational institutions, the lack of monitoring of private sector
training, the difficulties experienced in transferring skills from private sector to public training programs, and the lack of public sector job creation efforts.

Public educational institutions also had many concerns about CJS. In the Brief of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges Report on Practical Experiences with the Canadian Jobs Strategy (1986), the central criticism focused on the redirection of funds away from community colleges and technical institutions toward private sector programs. The report also included criticisms of poor research into local and regional training needs, lack of flexibility, unclear operational guidelines for proposals resulting in costly delays, and rigidity of eligibility criteria creating barriers to the disadvantaged.

In A Community Critique of the Canadian Jobs Strategy (1986), criticisms by community-based educators included similar observations about the overall reduction in training funds, the privatization of training and the reduced funding of non-profit organizations, and the elimination of funding for bridging and non-traditional programs for women.

In a review of the impact of CJS on Ontario's community colleges, Luker (1990) has concluded that CJS was driven by an exclusive interest in assisting the short-term interests of capitalists and an interest in exploiting the working class. "[CJS] is a profoundly anti-working-class policy wrapped in the rhetoric of productivity" (Luker, p. 157).
Several reports were prepared by women's organizations, including CCLOW (1986 & 1987) and ACTEW, the Association for Community-Based Training and Education for Women (1986). These reports raised concerns about the implications for women of CJS policy and practices, particularly the reduction in funding, restrictive entrance requirements, low participation rates of women in many of the CJS programs such as Skill Shortages, the focus on training for low-paying clerical, sales and services jobs, and, with the shift to private sector and employer-based training, the lack of access to transferable, certified training available through technical institutions.

A report prepared for the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (Gunderson, Muszynski and Keck, 1990) pointed to the negative implications for women of the market orientation, the emphasis on training rather than job creation, and the privatization of training. Although disadvantaged groups, women included, were targeted under this policy, this report argued that the CJS supply side approach emphasized "equality of access", rather than results. There was also concern that there had been no attempt to use training or job creation to compensate for a legacy of discrimination and inequality. These criticisms argued that the basis of supply side policy was human capital theory, which assumes that the most effective intervention is to enhance the human capital of the disadvantaged. Once this is done through education or
training, jobs will be found along with opportunities for upward mobility.

There were a few changes made to CJS programs as a result of these challenges. For example, under the initial eligibility criteria for Re-entry programs, women had to have been unemployed for not less than three years. Women's groups argued that this criteria was not reflecting the reality that many women were not leaving the workforce for such extended times. They also noted that most of the programs where most of the participants were men, did not have such restrictions. This requirement that women must have been engaged in homemaking activities on a full-time basis over the last three years was removed.

Other changes were made to increase training allowances and to shift some program options into different program areas, however, substantial changes were not made to the structure of programs, nor to the resources available.

Summary

This chapter has sought to illuminate the dominant policy framework under which the three job-entry programs were funded. The discussion began by situating CJS in an historical context with specific attention given to the thrust of previous labour market interventions and the political and economic pressures the newly elected Conservative government was responding to. The concern for
limiting public spending while at the same time responding to increasing demands for training dominated much of the discussions. Another key theme was the concern that there be a closer connection made between training and the needs of the labour market.

The examination of the policy and programs of CJS revealed a discourse in which women's needs were rather narrowly defined. It also illuminated the high participation rates of women in programs that could be characterized as "feminine" in comparison to the greater resources made available to the program areas which were dominated by men. The contested terrain in which CJS was introduced and implemented was outlined revealing the many challenges to the assumptions informing CJS and the interpretation of women's needs.

In the next three chapters, the work of the staff in the three CJS-funded job-entry programs is explored. These chapters reveal the contradictory aspects of working in a policy context which attempted to address both equity and efficiency. In talking to the women who ran these programs and visiting the classrooms, what became apparent was the diversity of women's needs, which quickly exceeded the narrow interpretation in the official policy, and the struggles facing the staff as they attempted to respond to these needs.

These chapters also illuminate the variety of approaches and discourses employed by the staff which both
opposed and reinforced the dominant policy. These chapters reveals that the implementation of the CJS policy at the local level is also a contested terrain in which the staff assumed a strategic role in the political struggle over the interpretation of the needs of the trainees and their own needs as workers.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROGRAM FOR NATIVE WOMEN: CULTURE AS CURRICULUM

What [the government] is failing to recognize is who we're dealing with here. We're dealing with a very abused population of women and what that means. They don't understand what that means. All [the government] cares about is the goal of getting a job. (Norma, Lifeskills Instructor)

The program for native women I visited for this study was offered through a non-profit native organization which was established in 1984 to, according to the proposal, "prepare Native women to participate fully in society and achieve and secure employment in an urban environment". The agency had been offering job entry programs for six years and had based its original funding proposal on a survey of the employment needs of urban native women. Funding was provided through the Entry program of CJS under the SED category (severely employed disadvantaged). Proposals were submitted yearly to Canada Employment and reviewed by a District Advisory Board (DAB) - an all native review board.

The program I visited was one of three programs offered each year. Each ran for 15 weeks: five weeks in the classroom where the trainees received lifeskills instruction, four weeks with host employers, one week back in the classroom, another four weeks with host employers and a final week back in the classroom.
In the proposal to CEIC, the goals of the programs were stated to be:

1. To prepare Native Indian women to present a positive self-image in the Native Indian and non-Native Indian environments.
2. To help a trainee develop growth within herself, in addition to gaining communication skills, community development skills, and techniques for job search in preparation for employment and independent family life.
3. To give the Native Indian woman a positive view of herself, family, friends, employment and community resources.
4. To explore mental, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects in a culturally stimulating way so as to be able to cope with the differences between cultures.
5. To be able to market one's self.
6. To increase the Native Indian women's understanding of the attitudes and behaviours necessary to get and keep employment in an urban society.
7. To have the trainees form realistic vocational goals.
8. To increase the Native Indian women's ability to choose communication skills and other behaviour appropriate to the Native Indian and non-Native communities.
9. To increase the Native Indian women's ability to lessen the impact of discrimination.

Seventeen women participated in the training program, most of them on social assistance. Their educational
backgrounds ranged from grade six to high school diploma with most having not completed grade twelve. Their domestic situations varied. About half had school aged children and were either married or living with a partner and the remainder were either single mothers or single with no children. Recruitment for the program took place over a two week period with information going out through newspaper advertising, native organizations, community services and by word of mouth from graduates of previous programs.

Women interested in the program attended an information meeting and those who applied were then interviewed by three of the staff. Successful candidates were those who indicated a commitment to the program and who fit the SED eligibility criteria: that is, they were considered to be severely employment disadvantaged. The SED criteria developed by CEC included: inability to communicate in English or French, serious lack of education or training, prolonged institutionalization, alcohol and drug abuse, functional illiteracy, attitudinal problems, motivational problems and poor work habits. When appropriate, information about the potential trainees was also obtained from other agencies.

The offices and classroom were on the second floor of a commercial building within the city urban core with access by public transportation. The rooms were bright and spacious and appeared to be recently renovated. The noise from buses, traffic and sirens, however, was noticeable. A
lounge with couches and chairs, coffee maker and microwave oven was located next to the large classroom. Part of the lounge area was partitioned off and contained five computers. Each of the staff had a separate office.

The first contact was made when I telephoned the coordinator and explained my research and interest in studying their program. She suggested I send her a letter and outline of my research project, which she would present at the next meeting of the board of directors. The board approved my request but advised that I should wait until a new program had begun. Several months later, when the next program was about to begin, I interviewed the coordinator of the program and was introduced to the president of the board. I was also introduced to the two lifeskills instructors and the employment counsellor and made arrangements to interview them. As part of the agreement to explore this program I was also asked to speak with one of the seven native women who served on the board. I received permission from the senior lifeskills instructor to visit three of the lifeskills classes. I spoke with the trainees informally during classes, at coffee breaks and lunches. I also was invited by the coordinator of the program to attend the annual general meeting.

Although I was warmly received, I was acutely aware of being an outsider, a temporary visitor. As a white, well-educated, middle class woman, I had shared few of the experiences of both the staff and trainees. I felt much
more cautious and tentative in my role as researcher compared with the other programs I studied, taking great care to always obtain permission for any visits or to speak with any staff or trainee.

As a researcher I was both a participant and a nonparticipant observer, depending on the situation. During my visits to the lifeskills classes, I was asked to wait outside the class until the morning circle, a time of personal sharing, had finished. I did not feel comfortable taking notes during any of these visits and, as a result, I waited until I had returned home where I tried to reconstruct some of the conversations and record the activities and interactions. At times I participated along with the trainees in viewing films, working on exercises and small group discussions. At other times, I tried to help the staff by assisting the trainees with their work, such as describing previous work experiences and developing their resumes. During the annual general meeting of the organization, I was a nonparticipant observer.

**Working With CEIC and Government**

The program for native women was one that had evolved over the six years of CJS funding. A great deal of work and thought had gone into creating a curriculum which in many ways challenged the official policy discourse. I found a very committed but frustrated staff which worked both with
and against the policy. They expressed ambivalent feelings about the CJS policy and the government department and agents which managed the programs.

On the one hand, they felt the programs were important because they filled a major need in the community, being the only service of this kind available. They also emphasized how critical it was to have a native-run agency serving native women. At the same time, they also indicated their frustration with what they viewed as the government's limited understanding of native women's lives and unrealistic administrative practices. As Judith, a board member, indicated they had to both support and challenge the policy objectives in order to serve their community.

We must use [the policy] to provide programs... because we see what the women struggle with, we see the cultural differences and help women get through. Because we're it, the only opportunity.

Norma, one of the instructors, also felt strongly about the program continuing in spite of her frustrations with it:

I think it's really a good thing that this program exists. I really believe in it. This organization's done a lot of good for women, it would be a terrible thing if they ever stopped funding it.

All the staff felt that CEIC had little understanding of what the women were up against and had unrealistic expectations about what could or should be accomplished within the bounds of the program. They challenged the CJS policy objective of simply getting women into the labour market and argued that the program was a space where women
could begin a long process of recovery from violence, racism and low self-worth. They emphasized long term goals, rather than short term. As Norma stated, the women needed much more than the program could offer.

What they [Canada Employment] are failing to recognize is who we're dealing with here. We're dealing with a very abused population of women and what that means. They don't understand what that means ... All they care about is the goal of getting a job.

Norma went on to challenge the official position that success meant getting the trainees jobs. In her experience, it was a major accomplishment to simply have the women keep at it and remain in the program. She and the other staff believed that building self esteem was the biggest task and one that would not be accomplished in fifteen weeks.

The part they don't get is that number one just keeping them in the program, secondly, recognizing the issues, for them to even have to begin to have any self esteem, it's such a complicated thing. It's not going to happen in this program, it may do if they go to five years of therapy.

Judith, the board member, shared this view but was aware that it was one not shared by the government. In her experience, the government's approach to these programs was too rigid.

Building self esteem is one of the most important issues but the government doesn't see it as part of the formula.

Norma believed that the government's focus on the trainees getting a job at the end of the program led to
exploitation and underemployment, which she felt were far worse than unemployment.

They say isn't it wonderful that eighty percent of the women got jobs that paid $6 per hour. Are we doing them a favour? Are we just allowing companies and employers to exploit the women? I think it's far worse and detrimental to those women being underemployed, not unemployed. There's nothing as demeaning, as depressing, as awful as that.

She also questioned the government's view of the women in the SED program and what their potential was. She felt that the government had a very limited view of what the trainees could do in the labour market.

...they have the potential to go on for further training. We're not dealing with somebody who's mentally handicapped or maybe [has] limitations and getting a job at Orange Julius would be like they died and went to heaven. It's whole different thing.

The senior lifeskills instructor, Anne, argued similarly that getting a job at the end of 15 weeks of training was not necessarily the best outcome. She believed that helping the women develop longer term and sustainable goals was more important.

One of the things that I like to stress is they can actually have a career and not just go out and get a job - any job. I stress that because we'd like to see them working years from now and being happy with it and I know that unhappy people don't stay working. So we think that it's better to give them a little bit of extra time for them to figure out when they get going, what direction they want to take... it gives them a sense of the long term.

Norma also felt that CEIC's goal of getting the trainees a job was counterproductive and that the trainees
could only achieve success through further education and training.

Whether we meet CEC objectives or not, we're not aiming to get women any old job, it's not where we are at. It's to get one that they want and that means they have to be trained or educated.

Anne shared her colleagues' view regarding the government's lack of understanding about the needs of the women:

The government has very unrealistic timelines for these people. Just coming into a whole new way of looking at things and looking at life and it's unfair, it gives these programs a lot of extra stress. We already have enough stress working with these women. I think that Canada Employment would do well to recognize and not just intellectually, be cognizant of these issues, but to really get it on a gut level that this is where these people are living.

Like her colleague Norma, Anne had a different view of success from the government's. Given the major barriers these women faced, attending the program regularly and on time was quite an accomplishment.

The fact that they're still here at the beginning of the third week of the program is amazing.

Anne also believed that, rather than short term goals, the important struggle was to create for the women a sense of possibility, of the long term. Given their experiences to date, this represented a major learning experience.

So many of our women are second or third generation of being taken care of by the government ministry and they don't have a sense of a year from now, or five years from now what they can be doing because every month, they go from cheque to cheque.
Judith also challenged the government's focus on simply finding women a job. She felt the programs were developed to serve the government's need to be doing something, and that in the long run, neither the trainees nor the employers were being served well.

The government is serving themselves through this policy - looks like they're doing something. Employers aren't getting a good deal either because training is poor, too short and the women coming out are not well trained. Women have high hopes about these programs but the government is only interested in just getting them jobs, any job, there is no thought about careers as far as the government is concerned.

As the staff described the day to day running of the program, a recurring issue was sorting through conflicting views regarding authority and responsibility. The coordinator, Claire, described her job as a political process where she had to work continually at responding to the demands of several actors.

I have to report not only to the board of directors, but [also] the project officer for Canada Employment. I try to make everybody happy .. the board of directors, the project officer and the staff. When I'm making a decision I have to consider all these different areas.

In her previous experience with a nonprofit native organization, Claire found the project officer very helpful and had expected the same in this program.

He came in and made sure we were doing things properly and also gave us a lot of support and a lot of encouragement and so I guess I just thought this was what all project officers did.

Claire's relationship with the current project officer was, however, a major source of concern for her. She felt
she was being continually monitored and that the project officer was interested only in finding problems and using her authority to put her in her place.

[In this program] We're getting a person coming in all the time and monitoring the program, going through the financial books and just feeding back negative. It's like isn't there anything that she can see good in what we're doing? ... When we discuss salary, she's always reminding me "just remember, you might not be here after August"... She wants to do everything right because she's climbing the corporate ladder.

Claire also found there were conflicting views about who she was responsible to. Both the board and the project officer indicated that she was to report to them. In response to this situation, Claire brought the issue to a board meeting as a way of clarifying lines of authority and her role.

She's [the project officer] giving the impression what she's my boss and not my board of directors. ..... I brought [the issue] to the board. It was difficult to do because she was sitting right beside me. I wanted to have clarification of who my boss was.

Judith, the board member, also described conflicting viewpoints about roles and responsibilities. She argued that monitoring of the program was the responsibility of the board.

One area of struggle has been about setting policy. The staff have felt it was their realm. We've had to establish our authority in relation to the project officer. We have the administrative authority, not them.

The board plays a very important role. It is a monitoring role, a directive role, we ensure that the curriculum is followed, that the program stays within budget. We follow the agreement with the government very carefully.
Judith felt there had been a lack of trust from the government during the early stages of developing the programs. She felt things had improved and outlined what she believed were important lessons when working with government funded programs.

For the first few years of the program, they acted as if we didn't know what we were doing, as if we needed constant guidance. We felt they were always watching over our shoulders.

It's a very responsible board and we have a good relationship with CEC. The board members have the respect of CEC. ... It's important when dealing with CEC to not give up your power. We maintain a good relationship with not only the project officers, but the district manager. We invite them to meetings and graduations, pot lucks. We've also kept in touch with project officers that have moved up the ladder. We've gained their respect because we're always very professional. We've never gone with a bleeding heart approach or said you owe us this. We document very carefully, think carefully about the changes that are needed and then present it to them.

Anne also identified tensions between CEC, board and staff and different perspectives on their individual roles. In her view, there was confusion about the role of the board and the staff, but it was not a major problem.

The board in my opinion is really a council of advisors, they are there to offer advice and collective wisdom. The person who's hired to run the program is the person who should be running the program. ... There needs to be clarification of roles, what's appropriate and what isn't. The board is for big policy changes, not day to day stuff. But we're getting by, we're doing OK, it's not awful and terrible.

Anne also expressed frustration and sensed a lack of trust on the part of CEC. She believed that part of the problem came not necessarily from the project officers, but
from higher up in the bureaucracy where there were
unrealistic expectations about the program.

I think it's good to have something high to shoot for
but I also think that sometimes CEC attitudes are a
little heavy handed. They usually come from much
higher up. We hear back from our coordinator about
what they have said, it's a heavy thing on us rather
than OK we're a team, we're on the same side.

A common theme running throughout discussions with the
staff was the overwhelming demands of the job. The
difficulties of this work has been reflected in a high staff
turnover rate since the agency had been running these CJS
funded programs. All the staff I spoke with were relatively
new to the program. They commented on the difficulty of
juggling their responsibilities roles including teaching,
counselling, outreach, administration and curriculum
development. They felt that CEC had little understanding
about the work required to run the programs. There was
frustration at the constant monitoring by CEC for every
dollar spent. Anne, for example, was outraged that CEC felt
they had little work to do when the trainees were not in the
classroom.

Calling the time my trainees are out of class "down
time" .. there's nothing "down" about that time, we
have paper work to get caught up on, we have to be in
contact with the women, we have women calling from
other programs that need our assistance and people
phoning from the community that need our assistance.
We have to be doing intake, ... postering, brochuring,
letting other people know that we're here, getting
ready for the next intake. They're saying why do you
need to be doing so much. There's no understanding.
When we're in class, we don't get breaks. During lunch
I usually work.
Norma, the other instructor in the program, also found the work very demanding and draining. Like Anne, she felt that the government had no idea what it took to run the program.

They get so overwrought about their functions. It doesn't have to be that difficult, whose side are you on? Are you assisting the native community to do their job, or are you acting like it comes out of your pocket? There are 15 million rules about where to file your paper, how much you have to have for each thing. Things won't run smoothly because they've always got this little book of rules and refer to them. We have rules here but at the same time we don't want to be bound and strangled by them - we're not a government agency.

Recent struggles with government were focused on acquiring more resources for the program, including a psychologist and updated computer programs. Norma felt the government's refusal to spend money on these items reflected a poor view of native women.

We've asked for a half-time psychologist. It would cost them too much money so they wouldn't give that. It's like saying the native women aren't worth it. We have to fight for every little thing we get, whether it's a cost of living increase, whether it's more office supplies or updating the computer.

An important part of the instructors' job was hearing and supporting the trainees as they struggled to overcome major obstacles. Norma found listening to the pain and trauma that the trainees had to go through very taxing. She tried to find some distance from the stories while at the same time remaining empathetic.

In the beginning I was overidentifying with everyone. Every story was my story. Then I got to the point where I went totally opposite - got really distanced.
Then I was in the position where I wasn't too distanced or too affected.

Norma frequently found herself exhausted by the end of the week. Given the work demands, she did not think that she would stay working in these programs.

By Friday sometimes I'm really burned out. It stresses you out physically, emotionally. You get really tired. I try to take care of myself. I doubt that I'll do it for more than two years. I don't think I'll have the energy after that.

Anne described her own personal philosophy which helped her to cope with the demands of this job. She drew on her native spirituality as a source of wisdom and strength.

I try to be caring and honest and humble and happy and have a good sense of humour. I mess up all the time but you don't fail unless you quit. I see myself as a spiritual being first. We are all children of our ancestors' dreams. We need to live our lives not just for ourselves but how it is going to affect the seventh generation. I feel that I've been able to contribute in a small way to keep things going. That's what keeps me going.

This section has considered the staff's views and understandings of the federal training policy, their experiences of working with the local offices of CEC and their everyday struggles of keeping the program going. They expressed considerable frustration with the policy and the government workers administering the policy, sensing that there was little understanding of the depth and breadth of struggle which many trainees encountered. At the same time, they expressed strong views on the importance of keeping the program going, arguing that it was "the only game in town" for native women.
Working With the Trainees

Having an all-native staff running a program for native women was viewed as critical to serving the needs of the trainees. The personal connection and ability to empathize with the trainees was clearly a unique feature of this program that both contributed to its success and increased the demands on the staff. Much of the curriculum and many of the classroom activities were centred around building the self esteem of the trainees through self-exploration and learning about their native heritage.

For Anne, the impact on the trainees of working in an all-native program was the key to their growth and essential to a healing process. Living in an urban centre, these native women were frequently marginalized, always in a minority position and having to deal with racism. In this program they were the majority, which created a safe space for self reflection and dreaming of a different future. The staff served as role models for the trainees, as mirrors of their potential.

We have comments from many of the women that they're really very happy that there's a native program because so often they'll feel out of place. Many of the comments are "I never spend time with native women. It's good to see that there are good native women and beautiful native women and powerful native women". So at this most basic level, it is healing.

Anne was quick to point out that there were many nations represented in the group and she wanted to avoid
reinforcing the mainstream notion that there existed a unitary native culture. She was also cautious about introducing native issues to the trainees because many did not have 'traditional' upbringings and some would likely resist reclaiming their native heritage. She went about introducing the idea of native culture slowly and gently.

We try to be very sensitive to the fact that many of these women were not raised traditionally and they're really not terribly comfortable with native ways per se. And there's the other issue that native is not homogeneous, it's many different nationalities and they are not the same.

Although Anne indicated that understanding the differences across native cultures was important, she also believed that there were some core values that could be found in all native cultures.

But there are certain values that transcend each of the native nations such as respect, gratitude, generosity, honesty and caring.

Anne described how the curriculum and daily classroom activities were organized around the medicine wheel, so that women's spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual needs were taken into account.

We start every morning with a circle - a spiritual sharing. Some people say prayers, some have poems, or short stories, some will relate their dreams. Whatever works for them. Whoever starts off begins the day with what's new and good in their lives. I also lead them in exercises every day, just a little bit so that they can stay in their bodies because we do a lot of mental and emotional work.

The trainees responded to the focus on native culture in different ways. There were some trainees who resisted
the idea of revitalizing native culture. During an afternoon session of one of the classes I visited, we watched a video about native struggles over land claims and elders working to keep traditional ways alive. The class then broke into groups to discuss the video. I participated in one of these groups. One of the trainees who had lived on a reserve most of her life, did not agree with trying to bring back native traditions. The other trainee was hesitant to comment on this issue, indicating that she had never lived on a reserve and was unaware of such traditions.

Martha: There's no way we can go back to the old ways. It's better to move on and live in white society. My reserve is all modern now.

Sarah: I did not grow up on a reserve. My father worked on farms and our family travelled around.

After these small group discussions we got together with the rest of the trainees. Anne asked the small groups to report on their discussions. One of the trainees indicated that the video showed how ignorant the natives were about treaties. Anne responded to her review by challenging the notion of ignorance.

Beth: This showed that we were ignorant about what the treaties were all about, about leasing and selling our land.

Anne: What do you mean by ignorant?

Beth: Not knowing.

Anne: This is a powerful word, it doesn't mean stupid, it means being unaware.

In addition to showing videos and frequent discussion about native concerns, Anne also kept the trainees informed
about native politics. At one point in the class, she encouraged the trainees to attend a gathering in support of the Mohawk people during the confrontation in Quebec.

Building trust was identified as one of the most important hurdles to overcome at the beginning of the program. Anne described the first few weeks as a fragile time where the most important goal was to make the trainees feel safe.

The first two weeks we try to build a sense of trust so that the women know that it's OK to be here and to show emotion to one another and it's confidential.

For Anne, part of building trust and making the trainees feel safe and respected meant that she avoided positioning herself as different or better than the trainees. She tried to show the trainees that she was like them and had been through similar experiences.

I just tend to be myself, rather than hiding behind that I'm the instructor and they're the trainees. I always frame it that I'm a human being first and I have had many of the experiences that they have had. So I'm not just theoretically saying that they should do this or that. I've been through a lot and I know that the things they will be learning in this program work.

A important part of the lifeskills classes also included exploring job options, and the instructors encouraged the trainees to think in the long term, to help them to see a broader range of options.

Anne: We think that it's better to give them a little bit of extra time for them to figure out when they get going what direction they want to take. Give them a sense of the long term.
The instructors encouraged the women to think beyond simply finding a job. They built upon the women's desires to get off welfare and become self-sufficient, to become good role models for their children.

We really try to stress that they get into something they enjoy and if they can't find work right away, they should be open to going to school and getting upgrading.

Another aspect of the program was learning about other resources, particularly those serving the native community, but also other mainstream services. This involved various activities including having visitors come in from different agencies, taking the trainees to visit other services and organizations, and having the women learn for themselves by visiting other resources in their communities.

We give them a tour [of different agencies]. Have someone talk to them and show them what it's like so that at least they've been there once and it wouldn't be so terrifying to go there on their own. We get them to practice doing information interviews and they go out as buddies and ask questions of different native organizations. They give a presentation to the class and then everybody else knows too.

The program was not without struggles between staff and trainees. One recurring concern was maintaining attendance and abstaining from substance abuse. At the beginning of the program each trainee signed a contract to attend regularly and abstain from drugs and alcohol. When problems did arise, the staff worked hard to keep the women in the program.

We try to review those expectations at least once a week. Try to keep reminding them, and doing it in an orderly way, not just coming down on them because
someone's been bad. One woman has had some serious problems. She missed four out of eight days but when we were able to welcome her back and not make her feel guilty and bad and judge her she's been here everyday since then.

The staff were also quite aware of how difficult it was for some of the trainees to keep to this contract. The ability of the trainees to abstain from drinking was viewed as a major achievement considering the pressure the trainees at times received from their families and friends. As one of the trainees said:

It makes me mad that I'm all alone and don't have friends. It's either one thing or another. You have to make new friends or have everybody reject you or drink and be part of it.

Part of the curriculum focused on information about the effects of drug and alcohol addiction and available resources. Norma felt strongly that it was important to educate the trainees about the issue and to avoid moralizing.

Each one of them has been affected by alcohol in their family - whether they were apprehended as children, their parents died of alcoholism, lost brothers and sisters to alcoholism. It's had devastating effects on their lives. When they start being made aware of what this is about then they start thinking about other options. That it's not about them being an awful person.

The instructors also struggled with their roles as authority figures. Anne described the kinds of resistance she experienced from the trainees.

We do have resistance from the women in the program. A lot of times it's the young ones and they have a lot of authority issues. They're projecting onto me all the negative things that they've got around authority. I
really have to stay on my toes as to how things are affecting people.

Another major struggle between staff and some of the trainees involved attendance, working to get the trainees to "hang in there". Norma described some of the measures they used including, at times, driving to their homes and bringing them to class. She felt frustrated when the trainees would not be straight with her about why they were absent, but also found that eventually they felt they could be honest without reprisals.

They will lie to us at first about why they're not here ... but it's clear to us what's going on. They go out on binges ... but after a while they start to say exactly what's going on.

There were also tensions between staff and trainees about their goals for work. The staff struggled to find a balance between being supportive and making the women feel safe, comfortable and respected and pushing the trainees to want more for themselves. Many times the trainees' notions of the kind of work they wanted to do were challenged by the staff who encouraged the women to set their sights a little higher. Norma spoke about trying to be both encouraging and realistic.

There is one woman who is very bright, she's got a quick mind, a good personality, energetic. Her career goal is to clean houses. But she's capable of so much more. We try to recognize what their talents are and not try to fool them, that they don't have their limitations.

In one of the classes I visited, the trainees were working in small groups, discussing what kind of work they felt they were good at and what they liked to do. House
work and caring for children were common themes as the groups reported on their discussions.

We're good with our kids - we have to be because welfare will take them away! We make a nice home, we listen and care for people. We're generous and help people. Give them our last few dollars if they need it.

Another exercise had the women working again in small groups identifying where they wanted to work and what their motivations were. Many of the women spoke about wanting to find a job for the sake of their children, be a good role model and prove to them that there were other possibilities than living on welfare. Norma spoke about one trainee who became an important role model for her daughter.

It was a big thing to come [here] and show her daughter that going to school is a good thing and that encouraged her daughter to go back to school, which she did. She wanted to be something for her daughter and granddaughter. That's what's kept a lot of them going.

Some of the trainees were developing long term plans for their careers. One woman I spoke to at length was interested in working in a health related area. She had a lot of experience caring for family and felt she had good skills and patience for the work. She was willing to go for further education and had been collecting information about how she could get her grade twelve.

I want to work in a health area, visiting people, advising them. I want a challenge and if it takes more training I'm willing to do it.

In addition to the problems the trainees came with, the instructors found that tragedies continued to occur throughout the program making it difficult for the women to
attend and to concentrate. Anne felt the staff should be keeping records of the tragedies affecting the trainees lives.

We need to keep better track of the tragedies that affect our trainees. There are tragedies that we don't hear about and there a lot of day to day kinds of tragedies. There's so many things and it's unfortunate that there are so many demands placed on these women, a stress added to their lives.

Norma also spoke of the violence that was common place in many of the trainees histories.

One trainee saw her father being murdered. Anything that could ever happen to a woman has happened here.

This section has outlined some of the day to day struggles the staff encountered in their work in the program. Helping the trainees to "hang in there" was the focus of much of their work. They struggled to find a balance between enforcing the rules for attendance and were working alcohol abstinence and encouraging the trainees to come back to the program after they had missed many days. Much of the curriculum was centred around helping the trainees learn about and find pride in their native heritage. This was difficult given the many cultures represented and the resistance to some of the activities. The staff were continually struggling to find a balance in their work, as they both supported and challenged the trainees.
Working With the Community

Discussions with the staff revealed their strong links with other community agencies, particularly in the native community. A new organization which was in the process of being established was a source of support for Claire, the coordinator, in developing strategies to deal with conflicts. This group was initiated by SED coordinators to get together regularly to share problems and discuss strategies.

Our mandate will be resources sharing among us, problem solving and liaising between projects and developing improved working relationship with CEC and training needs that cross individual project boundaries. We could have a psychologist we could share with different programs.

Claire found that these meetings were very helpful and made her feel like she was not the only one having difficulties.

We found after our first meeting, we all had different project officers and there's no consistency. Just realizing that we're not the only ones that have this problem with the project officer gives us more strength.

The idea of working collectively was a crucial point for Judith, the board member, in serving the community and bringing about change in policy and services.

You have to get involved, share concerns with others, work together and apply pressure. You can't operate in isolation. You need to work with men, non-native women and visible minorities.
There was a conscious effort to link with other agencies serving the native community, particularly those that were places of healing and counselling. Making contact with other public institutions was also required. Future plans for the program involved having two seats for women in conflict with the law. To this end, one of the board members was now serving on an advisory committee at a local correctional institution.

Building positive relationships with the trainees' families was also considered very important. The women were going through major changes which were at times very threatening to their partners. In previous programs the staff have had to deal with men who were angry with the program because of the changes they were experiencing in their relationships to the women. Attending on a regular basis, abstaining from alcohol and drugs, exploring options for the future was very threatening to some of the spouses.

In an effort to make the transition smoother, families and partners were invited on a regular basis to potluck suppers held at the offices. The staff hoped that these events would reduce some of the tensions by showing spouses and families where the women were meeting and also have an opportunity to meet the staff. Claire described situations where there had been concern for the safety of instructors.

We've had men come here threatening us because their spouses can't seem to handle the women growing. It's a threat to them. So how they can deal with it themselves is through violence. The lifeskills instructors try to deal with it as best they can -
they're really a support for the women. As a matter of fact, maybe too much of a support. [they] go right to the women's apartment ... Anne had to go to one of the women's places to help her move her stuff out. It's a dangerous involvement but it shows their commitment for these women.

One of the trainees I spoke with described her own struggle with her partner as a result of her involvement with the program. She found he was threatened by the possibility of her changing but also pleased to see her growing. She worked to reassure him and include him in her process of learning.

He sees me dressed up in the morning, then I'm gone all day and he wonders where I really go. I phone him at the break. He was really upset the other day - worried that I'll leave. He also feels proud of me. He wonders if we sit around and bad mouth the men and I reassured him that I only spoke about how supportive he was. He's really scared that I'm going to change.

The staff also worked hard to build good relationships with other social service agencies. They invited them to come to the program and speak to the women about resources and services. There were moments of struggle as well in dealing with other agencies. Anne spoke of her frustration with welfare staff's treatment of the trainees.

We had a social worker, instead of giving a cheque to a trainee to get her clothing, she was given a voucher for one store and had two days to use it. That is an incredibly demeaning thing to do to an adult woman, that we don't believe in you, we don't trust you.

Another important link with the community was with the host employers where the trainees spent their practicums. Finding work placements was the major task of the employment counsellor, Alice. She tried to find employers that would
hire the women after the training. I asked her how she went about her job.

I work in establishing prior contacts. People that are interested in hiring Native people. ... Some contacts are already established in past programs, some through the telephone book, through the red book, through newspaper, word of mouth, government departments.

The job sites included community centres, other native organizations, banks, small businesses, and department stores. Alice was also responsible for providing job search training both during and after the program was completed. I asked if she had encountered any racism in employers' attitudes to hiring native women. She found that only a few were resistant to having native trainees but they did not come right out and say so, rather they would use other excuses.

They say that they're not hiring now. And unionized places, you run into that. Some might have experienced a bad situation in the past, but quite often that won't come out ... One woman was interested in doing hotel work, front desk. Calling a number of different places but there wasn't a lot.

Once placements were found, Alice as well as the instructors kept in touch regularly with the trainees, giving them support and encouragement. At times this was not an easy task.

We like to have contact with them as often as we can, but it's not always easy to do. Some of the women have no phones and some are moving or in the process of splitting up with their mates.

She spoke about how difficult it was for the women to work when so much of their life was in turmoil.
The women have so many personal problems, so many issues to deal with and so many other problems and issues to get settled. Their home life is in a turmoil. It's hard to go to work and concentrate when home is worrying you. We need programs to prepare women even to come into these programs.

I asked Alice to describe those women who do succeed, who complete the program, and go on for either further training or find a job. She found that it was those with a combination of factors coming together at the same time.

They have more motivation. They're really tired of being on assistance. They might not have the competence to go out and find their own job. And they have a really good experience on the practicum.

Alice also worked closely with other agencies, particularly native counselling resources. Like the other staff, she felt that having an in-house counsellor would really help the program serve the women. There were other resources, although limited, that they could refer the trainees to, but this represented, for some trainees, another major hurdle.

Although there are other programs ... not always the women will go there. Sometimes it takes a big step for them to come here, and to go somewhere else ... that is another big step many of the women aren't prepared to make. So it would be nice to have a counsellor here.

Sometimes the trainees wanted to change their work practicums. This was quite time consuming and Alice described how she responded to these situations.

I like to have them meet the employer before they go in their actual practicum. I happened one time that the woman wasn't prepared to work at that place because it was a non-Native place. She wasn't comfortable there. I work with them and find out what the problem is and see whether or not we can fix it or if it does have to be changed.
Working with the community was incorporated into the curriculum as one of the activities for the trainees. It was considered an important element in ensuring their long-term success. There appeared to be few problems with the relationship between the staff, trainees and training place hosts. The employment counsellor was adept at determining those places where she felt the trainees would not be welcomed. A lot of attention was given to building positive relationships with the families of the trainees, particularly with their spouses and partners. In previous programs the staff had become involved in serious confrontations with the male partners of the trainees who were feeling very threatened by the program and the change that was affecting their relationships. There were also struggles with social service agencies and the way in which they responded to some of the trainees needs for resources such as clothing.

Summary

The program for native women was one of the few job-entry programs that was for native women only. The staff and agency volunteers regarded the all native environment as necessary elements in the creation of a welcoming and safe place where the trainees could begin to explore possibilities, learn about their native heritage and heal from violence. The staff in the program faced many barriers
in their struggles including limited time and resources, staff change-over and burnout, and strained relationships with CEC. For many of the trainees simply showing up was an important accomplishment when faced with violence from partners who feared change, and daily struggles to maintain sobriety which often meant cutting ties with friends and community.

There were many moments of contestation and resistance within this program. The staff resisted and challenged the dominant policy, in particular, the focus on getting women jobs at the end of the program. Instead, they argued that achieving this goal only meant poorly paid employment with little opportunity for further training and advancement. The staff encouraged the trainees to think beyond simply finding a job and urged them to imagine a career for themselves.

The staff attempted to create, within the limited resources provided, a program which responded to what they say were the "real" struggles the trainees were having. For example, for some of the trainees simply getting to class and remaining in the program was a major accomplishment. Although they were very aware of the CEC guidelines regarding attendance, they ignored them at times, encouraging those trainees who had missed many days due to violence and alcoholism, to return to the program.

The trainees also contested, challenged and resisted. Simply "showing up" was a beginning point to changing a
pattern so firmly entrenched in a racist and sexist society. By participating in the program, abstaining from alcohol and substance abuse, exploring their long-term futures, they were challenging those forces which sought to keep them poor, abused and dependent on the state.

Some trainees also resisted and challenged the staff's interpretation of their needs. Many did not agree with some of the notions informing those parts of the curriculum that focused on native culture. Some argued that there was no going back, that the best way to proceed was to live and work within the white, non-native society. The notion of revitalizing traditional ways was not seen as useful or viable. Many of the trainees also resisted the authority of the staff, particularly in their role as attendance takers and rule enforcers.

At the end of the program, seven women went back to school to complete their grade twelve and were planning to go on for further training in such areas as the health sciences and office automation. Most of these trainees were studying at a local native run post secondary institution. Three trainees were employed, one as a sales clerk and two in clerical positions. Three had not completed the program and two had not found work nor had they continued with their education. It appears that the message of avoiding poverty in low pay job ghettos and the importance of acquiring more education was taken up by the majority of the trainees.
In the following year, the staff's demand for an increase in the length of the program and an in-house counsellor were met by CEC. The extended training meant that two programs a year were offered, rather than three. The number of trainees had also increased to twenty four, with two of the trainees from correctional institutions. But the difficult working conditions and demands of the job had taken their toll and both of the lifeskills instructors I interviewed had moved on to other work. The coordinator and the employment counsellor remained.
CHAPTER SIX

JOB ENTRY FOR IMMIGRANT WOMEN:
STARTING OVER AGAIN

You have to forget who you were in your country. We have nothing to lose, so there's no risk! (Alice, trainee)

The job entry program for immigrant women that I visited was one of several government funded employment programs provided by an immigrant serving agency. The main objective of the non-profit agency, which had been in existence for almost 20 years, was "to assist non-English speaking people to overcome language and cultural barriers so that they can effectively contribute to Canadian society". Government funded employment programs were part of a variety of services provided by the agency, including information and referral, counselling, escort interpretation, and written translation. Other programs included health education, seniors groups, English language training and community education. The other government funded employment programs offered were office automation for women with lower English levels and job search clubs.

The program examined for this research was a re-entry program for "immigrant women with intermediate English levels and bookkeeping background who are experiencing cultural and language barriers". The skills training being offered focused on office automation with a strong emphasis
on computerized accounting. The program was the third one of its kind at the agency and had been modeled on a pilot project developed in the previous year with monies from Canada Employment's English Language Training budget. The first two programs had overlapped by several weeks. A fourth program was to begin just before this one had ended but shortfalls in government funds resulted in a delay of several months.

The program was designed to respond to several special needs of immigrant women with intermediate English skills. In the proposal several factors were identified that contributed to these needs:
1. lower level of English than their Canadian counterparts in the workplace;
2. cultural values that promote non-assertive behaviour;
3. limited and/or non-existent job search skills;
4. limited and/or focused job responsibilities;
5. increased and sometimes conflicting roles; and
6. ongoing adaptation.

The thirty-four week program included twenty weeks of classroom training and fourteen weeks of work-site training. The classroom training consisted of 79.5 hours of computer training, 145.5 hours of accounting theory and practice, 100.5 hours of office English, 105 hours of life skills, and 120 hours of job search. The job search component was somewhat different from other job entry programs because it was organized around a self-marketing approach. Self-
marketing took place over a two week period during which time the trainees identified potential training place hosts, wrote letters, made visits and arranged for interviews. This approach differs from many other re-entry programs where it is the responsibility of the staff to locate employers willing to be training place hosts.

Fifteen women representing thirteen countries of origin were enrolled in the training. One of the trainees had severe hearing loss, but dropped out early in the process. Most of the trainees were landed immigrants and the remainder were sponsored by their families. There were a few women who came to Canada as political refugees. Their time in Canada ranged from five months to seven years, with an average of 2.4 years. Most of the trainees were married and had children. All had earned the equivalent of high school education and several had some post-secondary education. Some had completed university and college degree programs. All had scored at an intermediate level or higher on the English language tests and all but four had previously trained in some kind in bookkeeping.

Information about the program was provided through community newspapers, by referrals from within and outside of the agency and by word of mouth. Recruitment for the program took place over a month, although the "official" recruiting time was only two weeks. Applicants with bookkeeping and office experience were contacted by phone and invited to take an English placement and math test.
Those who scored between 180 and 210 on the English placement test and who had a minimum of 75% on the math exam then took typing and bookkeeping tests.

Following these tests the applicants were interviewed by the coordinator and program assistant. Those qualifying were asked to provide letters of reference. Those who were not selected after the interview were referred to other programs or upgrading services and advised to apply again. During the first week of training an aptitude test was also given to determine the applicants' learning difficulties.

The full-time staff for this particular program included a project coordinator and program assistant whose jobs included proposal development, administrative tasks, lifeskills instruction, monitoring of training placements, budgeting and evaluation. An English instructor, computerized accounting and word processing instructor and her teaching assistant, and keyboarding instructor worked at the agency with this and other programs. All were hired by the agency itself rather than working on a contract basis for Canada Employment. Both the coordinator and the program assistant were relatively new workers at the agency. Both were white, English-speaking, Canadian-born women.

The classes were held on the second and third floor of a large building which was situated on a major commercial street. The same building housed several other community-based organizations and a few private consultants. The agency offices were on the second floor. Agency facilities
included several classrooms, a computer training centre, general offices, a coffee and lunch room, and staff offices. The agency was easily accessed through public transportation and was located in an area of the city where many immigrants lived.

My first contact with the program was via telephone when I spoke with the project coordinator, Marilyn, and described my research. She agreed to an interview and asked her program assistant, Bev, to participate as well. Following the first interview, Marilyn agreed to allow me to visit three lifeskills classes. I also spoke to these two staff members several times over the phone following my visits. My role as researcher in the classroom varied. During visits to the lifeskills classes, I sat with the trainees around tables arranged in a U shape. During one class where the trainees were developing lists of potential training placements, I assisted the trainees in using the business directories to locate potential companies to visit during the self-marketing segment of the program. During other classes, such as one which focused on assertiveness training, I was an observer taking notes and did not participate in the class. In another class, the instructor asked me to comment on my experiences of job interviews in order to indicate to the trainees that even people who are Canadian-born and English-speaking found the process difficult.
During my visits to the classroom I sat at the table with the trainees and felt comfortable enough to take detailed notes of the lectures and interaction. Several of the trainees were curious as to what I was writing and I openly shared what I was putting down. I spoke with the trainees informally during class, at coffee breaks and over lunch hour.

The staff appeared eager to discuss their struggles in running these programs, but I also sensed they were feeling burdened and pressured. As a result, I was hesitant to impose any more demands for their time. On one occasion, when I arrived to sit in on a class, Marilyn, the coordinator, apologized and asked me to come back another day because they were experiencing delays and the class schedule had been changed. I did manage eventually to visit three classes.

This section has provided some background information on the history and context of the training program for immigrant women as well as my experience as researcher. The next section will consider the experiences of the staff as they worked with CEIC and their views of the CJS policy.

Working With CEIC and the Government

This agency had been successful for several years in obtaining government funding for employment programs for the immigrant community. As was mentioned, the Intermediate
program was a relatively new one and had been developed initially as a pilot project, through a joint effort of CEIC and the staff. Marilyn described how the local CEIC office had informed the agency about the extra monies available and the agency had responded with the idea of offering an office automation program to immigrant women with intermediate English.

This started because there was some extra money in the English language programs and we were asked if we were interested in offering an intermediate program using that money.

The staff determined that an intermediate program was needed because many women who applied for the lower level English program were ineligible, having scored too high on the language test. However, the staff felt that these women, even with higher English scores, were still disadvantaged in their efforts to find decent paying jobs. They argued that a program was needed to strengthen their English and job search skills. They also felt that providing a program that developed the trainees' bookkeeping and accounting skills was better than running a clerical program. Bev, the program assistant, described their rationale.

We don't want these women having to take low pay entry level clerical jobs. Their English makes it difficult to get work as receptionists and secretaries... these women are not confident about their English skills. ... Such jobs are in demand and the pay is decent.

Bev and Marilyn had had mixed reviews about their involvement with CEIC. They were pleased that CEIC had
considered their agency to develop such a pilot project, but they were annoyed with the short notice and time constraints in which they had to work to get the proposal together.

We had to get the proposal together very quickly. There was a letter about going for the money about mid November and the program started in January, so it was only a few weeks [to prepare].

Both of these women felt they were playing an important role in changing things for women through their negotiations over program content and length. They also recognized that having a project officer on their side was central to these negotiations.

[We play a role] by struggling to have our programs funded, through our negotiations about the length of training, curriculum. ... We have a project officer who will go to bat for us which helps to push our ideas about policy.

The staff sensed that the government was beginning to recognize how important training was. But the staff members were frustrated with the lack of attention given to monitoring the training. Staff were also concerned that with the budget cut backs training would suffer and government workers would be taking the heat.

We're at a beginning point. What is now needed is much more monitoring of the training but they've been cutting back on resources for this and it all falls on the shoulders of the project officers.

Although this agency had successfully negotiated with CEIC over several years to develop employment programs for the immigrant community, the staff still struggled over key issues with this program. These issues included the running
of concurrent sessions, length and content of classroom training, hiring of staff, short term funding practices and poor communication about budget shortfalls.

Arguing that in order to make the best use of limited funding, CEIC had wanted to run two programs concurrently. The staff resisted this idea because they believed that the agency did not have the resources.

They wanted us to offer two programs at once, for the price of one - thought they could save money that way. We argued we didn't have the resources but they really wanted to go for it.

Negotiations continued about offering two programs concurrently. A compromise was reached between CEIC and the staff in which two programs were funded but with minimal overlap. Marilyn described how the decision seemed to satisfy both parties.

Eventually we did offer two programs but they only overlapped a few weeks at the end so CEIC saved money that way and they were happy about that.

CEIC also questioned the administrative costs and suggested that the rent they were paying was too high and that the program should be moved to a cheaper place. The staff argued that the space they worked in was very basic and that they should stay in their current location because it was accessible for many immigrant families.

The length of the classroom training was another focus of discussion. The time spent in the classroom was a significant issue in negotiations because it was the most
expensive component of re-entry training. In order to keep costs at a minimum, CEIC wanted only eight weeks "up front" in the classroom before the trainees went to work with their host employers. After some debate, this was lengthened to ten weeks. Marilyn expressed concern about what she felt were CEIC's unrealistic expectations of what could be accomplished within a short period of time.

They kept referring to a survey that was done of employers and trainees that said that eight weeks was all that was necessary. I don't know where they did that survey but we know that eight weeks is definitely not enough up front training time for women to get hired and to find a training host. The employers tell us that.

When the proposal for the second program went forward, the staff added another two weeks to the classroom training. Marilyn and Bev described how they simply added on more time when they submitted the proposal and there were no challenges from CEIC.

We got ten weeks for the first group and then we arbitrarily added on another two weeks for the second group ourselves without really saying anything to them.

The inclusion of lifeskills training in the classroom training was another subject of negotiation with CEIC. Bev, the program assistant, spoke of the importance of this component of the training and felt that CEIC did not share the same views about this kind of learning.

There are only two and one half weeks for lifeskills during which time we do self esteem, assertiveness, information about workers compensation, the labour market, conflict resolutions, so it's really a packed time. But it's absolutely essential to their success.
We still have to struggle over including lifeskills training as a priority - CEIC still doesn't see it that way.

One particular aspect of lifeskills training, self-marketing, was not readily accepted by CEIC as the best way for the trainees to find their training place hosts. CEIC felt the staff should take this on. Marilyn speculated on why they were resistant to the idea.

CEIC would like us to find the training hosts and then place the women ourselves. It's easier and cheaper because it takes less time, but then you still have to deal with matches that don't work and have to find another training host.

Marilyn and Bev went on to describe why they believed self-marketing was the best approach in the long run. They argued that one of the biggest barriers immigrant women had to face was employers' resistance to hiring immigrant women, particularly if they spoke English as a second language.

Marilyn asserted that if they got over this at the beginning, using their own resources, then they were going to succeed. Self-marketing was also seen to result in better matches between trainees and host employers.

If they can survive this process they will be successful in getting a job. If the woman is choosing her training site herself then a better match is made. We find the employers really like this process too. They see who the person is and many of them are really impressed by the abilities of these women to go out there and hustle like they do. We tell the trainees it's going to be tough and to do the hardest ones first - to crash and burn during the first few visits and then it gets better.

Marilyn and Bev went on to argue that as the trainees find their employers through such a process, they learn to
trust their own judgments and they are often hired by the same employers at the end of the program.

It's a way to affirm their choices they've made. Many of the women stay with these employers - sometimes we've had only four women out of fifteen looking for work at the end of the program, the rest have jobs with their training hosts.

Another source of concern for the staff was the pay for English and keyboard instructors. They argued that the salaries the government wanted to offer were too low and that experienced teachers would not be interested in working at that pay level. They challenged CEIC's argument that newly graduated ESL teachers could offer the quality of help needed by the immigrant women in the program.

We can't find people to teach at the rates they want us to offer. We don't want brand new graduates teaching the English language part. We say to them [CEIC] where are we going to find such people?

Another concern which involved hiring practices, also seemed to stem from CEIC's desire to keep spending under control. The staff in this program were hired to work for the agency, but CEIC preferred to contract with them directly. Negotiations over salaries were difficult because information about what other programs were paying instructors was not easily obtained.

Another item negotiated with CEIC was whether funding would be reduced if trainees were hired by their host employers before they had completed the full program. A previous practice had involved the removal of a per diem rate from the program funding when women were hired before
the training finished. Marilyn described how the staff argued successfully that this was unfair and the rule was changed.

For a while when women would be hired early on in the program, say during the first few weeks, CEIC would take away a per diem rate for these women. We argued that our overhead expenses are the same whether she's in the program or not and we shouldn't be penalized. We also questioned what the goal of these training programs were if not to get these women a job and here they were penalizing them for doing that very thing. They finally admitted or realized that our overhead costs do stay the same so they did not take away that money.

Both Marilyn and Bev encouraged the women to complete the program, insisting that they would be better off in the long-term. This was a difficult point to push, however, because they knew the trainees' financial pressures were great and that immediate economic needs were often a priority over more long-term career goals.

Another source of frustration for Marilyn and Bev was the sense that CEIC did not understand the demands made of them in running the programs. They often felt their work was unappreciated. As they were preparing to begin the next program which was to overlap with the one I participated in, CEIC experienced a budget shortfall and intake for the next program was delayed. Marilyn expressed great annoyance at the short notice and that CEIC only sent a fax, rather than phoning her. She felt that CEIC did not understand nor care about the implications for the next group of trainees.

I received a fax last week that said I could not start the intake for the next group, which was to be in
November, because there was no money. ... I'd already sent out letters regarding eligibility. They didn't call me or anything, I called them. What made me mad was that there was no acknowledgment of the incredible amount of time and energy that went into developing a schedule to accommodate two groups, because they overlap. So all that time is wasted. They said I could take in another group two months later.

As a result of this sudden notice and cut in funding, Marilyn began to wonder whether the past success of this agency had in acquiring government funding was resented by CEIC.

I feel we're paying for a relationship with CEIC where we've been the big fish in the little pond. We get lots of dollars from CEIC. We serve 15,000 immigrant women through these programs and make 90,000 client contacts. They resent the clout we have, that we're successful.

Generally speaking, the staff found that the funding practices of CEIC produced a lot of extra work and also produced feelings of insecurity. Both Marilyn and Bev expressed concern about the effect such practices had on their relationships with the women they wanted to serve. They felt very uncomfortable about being forced to make commitments they wondered whether they could keep.

We need more long-term funding commitments so that we are not continually operating from program to program and renegotiating every six months. Sometimes we've started the program before we really know we're getting the money. It's a bad way to do business.

Other areas of negotiation which Marilyn and Bev felt strongly about had to do with their own job descriptions and the multiple roles they had to play in order to respond to the needs of the trainees. Counselling, in particular, was
central to their work, but they felt that CEIC did not share such a perspective.

CEIC also doesn't understand the importance of counselling and the kinds of traumas these women experience. We have to argue continually about including that in our job description, but it's the first to go when the budgets are being trimmed. ... We do it ourselves, particularly the employment counselling matters. If there are psychological or emotional problems we try to deal somewhat with them but often refer them to outside resources.

The staff also lamented the little time available to develop curriculum. They described how this forced them to work under a lot of stress and, at times, with little preparation.

We have no time to develop curriculum, they never give you administrative time to do that. I would like to sit and spend a few weeks actually putting a manual together so I'm not always flying by the seat of my pants. You would think that curriculum development would be important but it's not.

Although both Bev and Marilyn expressed strong commitment to serving the immigrant community, they did not think they would be working with government funded programs over the long-term. They believed it would not help their own employment futures, particularly their financial situations, to stay working with such programs. Their low wages also produced tensions when the trainees were being hired for better pay than they were receiving.

We won't be here forever. We can't afford to, the wages are low, many of these women will be making as much or more than we do. As far as our careers are concerned, we really can't afford to stay here for a long time.
Working With the Trainees

Despite the demands of the job and stressful working conditions, both Bev and Marilyn expressed strong commitment to their work. The courage and persistence of the women who came into the program was a source of inspiration. They felt fortunate to be in the position where they could witness the trainees going through enormous changes. Both Bev and Marilyn expressed respect and admiration for the trainees and recognized that, as staff, they too were learning and changing a great deal.

It's the women who take these programs. They're strong, they take risks and their lives are changed forever. It's good to be a part of that. It's also a good learning process for us. We've learned a lot about what works and doesn't work, about fighting to provide a good program.

After attending one of the lifeskills classes, I asked Marilyn the coordinator, about her relationship with the trainees given that she was white, English speaking and Canadian-born. She replied that she was hired for the job because of previous experience in running such programs. She also felt that although her background was different from the trainees her perspective was useful to the program because she could speak from experience about the "reality" of working in Canada, about what employers were looking for. She also argued that as white English speaking women, she and the program assistant were important role models for the trainees.
During my visits to the program, I noticed a strong sense of group cohesion and that the trainees were very supportive of each other. For example, when they were viewing the videotapes of their mock job interviews, they frequently praised one another and were quick to encourage those who were hesitant and struggling to speak. They also shared their resources. One trainee who had worked in the fashion industry in her home country was often sewing clothes for the other trainees as they prepared for the self-marketing phase of the training. Another trainee whose husband worked in a bakery frequently brought food for everyone to share. The staff concurred with my observations, noting that compared to other programs, this group was more supportive and the trainees more committed to the program. Despite their different countries of origin and cultures, it seemed they had created a bond with each other as they struggled to adapt and adjust to immigration and to Canadian life.

One of the major issues the staff believed they had to help the trainees address was their experience of immigration and the resulting cultural dissonance and disillusionment. Bev spoke about the rude awakening many of the trainees experienced once they arrived in Canada and began to look for paid work.

These women are still dealing with immigration and that's an enormous adjustment. Many of them have been told stories about Canada as the land of milk and honey and then they get here and have to face the reality that they can't get the same jobs as they had in their
home country. They have to accept moving down the ladder to some lower occupation than what they did before.

Bev and Marilyn believed that an important part of the process required that the trainees had to lower their expectations and come to terms with Canadian customs. At the same time, they spoke about helping the women find a balance between their experiences from other countries and Canadian ways. In the introduction to assertiveness training, the staff argued that there was a "global" approach to asserting oneself regardless of culture.

As newcomers to this country you need to balance what works in your country and what happens here. There is a global way - ask for what you want without others feeling guilty or put down.

Some of the trainees, however, were not so accepting of the "Canadian" approach. For example, during the English upgrading classes, resistance to certain teaching processes emerged. The staff felt the trainees had been rather confrontative, but believed it was partly due to their language difficulties.

They have certain ideas and experiences about training and education. They challenge the English language instructors a lot because they have certain kinds of experiences with such training in their home country and they also don't have the right words to ask the questions. So we help them to learn how to ask questions without confronting the instructors so much.

Another topic which produced some resistance from the trainees emerged during the lifeskills class on sexual harassment. Marilyn discussed how the initial response from the trainees was to often deny any experience of harassment.
But as they discussed the issue many trainees realized they had experienced harassment.

They may say at first they have had no experience of this but then some realize that it's already happened to them here and they begin to see that such things do not have to be tolerated.

During the class on assertiveness training, I was somewhat uncomfortable when the staff seemed to dismiss one of the trainees' attempts to participate in an exercise about rights. Marilyn asked the trainees to think of ten basic rights they were entitled to. In the pursuant discussion, Marilyn challenged one of the trainees, Lily, as she provided her idea of a right.

M: Give me a right...
L: To ask questions ...
M: How? You're in the hot seat now...
L: In a nice way?
M: Let's not get into nice, nicey.
L: To say please?
M: No, confidently in a way that respects your needs. I'm fine tuning your skills. Let's hear the career woman, not the little girl.

Although the staff frequently encouraged the trainees to become accustomed to Canadian ways, they also wanted them to bring their different ethnic backgrounds when it seemed useful to promoting the program. During one of the lifeskills classes, the staff invited the trainees to come to the graduation ceremony of the group that was just finishing. There was a lot of excitement because several
politicians were to be there. Marilyn asked that a trainee from this group volunteer to be one of the hostesses. She encouraged the women to wear their traditional costumes, if they felt comfortable.

Preparing the trainees for the two weeks of self-marketing was another area where there was a lot of concern and anxiety expressed by the trainees. Some of the trainees resisted the whole notion of self-marketing. Part of the preparation required that each trainee participate in several video-taped mock job interviews which were later reviewed in class and evaluated. The trainees also had to learn how to use a variety of sources of information, such as business directories, to prepare a list of 100 companies to call and visit. The staff also provided information on those companies to avoid.

There was a lot of initial confusion when the trainees were developing their list of companies to visit. The idea of creating such a list and then actually going to each business to ask for a job was quite overwhelming to many of the trainees. Marilyn suggested a way of approaching the upcoming task.

Go to those ones first that you really don't want to work at, those in the wrong section of town, wrong product. Practice, get over stage fright. Work up to the ones you really want when you're hot!

During one class, Marilyn was reviewing the interview process and the kinds of information the trainees needed to gather about a potential employer. There were many
questions during this class as well as a general feeling of uncertainty and fear about the upcoming self-marketing process. Teresa, one of the trainees, felt the staff should be finding the host employers. She suggested that the agency should place ads in local newspapers, rather than have each of the trainees create their own list and contact employers themselves. She also referred to previous experiences with college training where she was guaranteed a job.

I have a suggestion. Why not publish in the [newspaper] about trainees ready to work in accounting. Isn't that a good idea? Where I studied in college, they promised students jobs at the end.

Marilyn countered this view, arguing that having the staff make the contacts gave the wrong impression to employers. She also emphasized that self-marketing was an important learning experience that helped to prevent employers exploiting the trainees. At the same time, Marilyn reassured the trainees that the staff were responsible for clarifying the terms of being a training placement host with the employers.

M: Putting an ad in the paper doesn't help you get over fright. It would give you a false sense of security. Article in the newspaper gives a sense that you're needy - the impression of another society looking for help. You have to dive into cold water. You'll get great feedback. You're doing something scary for the average Canadian woman. If you go yourselves, they won't see it as three months of cheap labour.

T: But you go and talk to them too, does that give a bad impression?
M: No, you do it first, then we clarify. Our job is to make sure you get good training. You've got the job of getting a list together.

Some of the trainees supported the self-marketing approach. Anne, another trainee, believed that the process of learning how to sell oneself was critical to opening opportunities and avoiding dead end jobs. She also argued that to succeed, immigrant women had to leave behind what they had worked at before. She talked about other immigrant women she knew who were stuck in a poor paying jobs, who had not learned such job search skills.

I think it's important to find out for ourselves. I know immigrant women who've been here fifteen years but they have no self-marketing skills. They even have good English but, they will be stuck until they die. Here it's different. We can get better jobs. You have to forget about who you were in your country. We have nothing to lose, so there's no risk!

Although many trainees understood the benefits of self-marketing, they were anxious about how informed employers were about training placements and how much the trainees had to tell them about the program. Marilyn replied that employers should be told to call the staff about their responsibilities of being a training place host. What was important for the trainees to emphasize was that they needed Canadian experience without a lot of supervision.

Explain that you're looking for Canadian experience and that they should call the coordinator about the responsibilities of being a training place host. The covering letter explains a lot. You're looking at minimal supervision.

Another issue raised during this class was the possibility of changing training place hosts. One of the
trainees, May, was concerned about interrupting the schedule but also needing to find a better host. Bev replied that they hoped that self-marketing would eliminate a lot of moving around, but that if there was a problem they would respond. However, she also indicated that if the trainees were dissatisfied because they were working at a lower level than they were used to, this would not necessarily be a valid reason for moving them. She reminded the trainees that they should not expect to find the same job as they had had in their home country.

We hope that it will be a match. We do a lot of work with training place hosts, getting more efficient at not signing if it doesn't look good. You can usually tell in the first week how it's going. If you don't like it we need to know why. If it's not a senior position -- you have to work your way up like everyone else in Canada.

Both Bev and Marilyn repeatedly emphasized during this class that the objective was to get Canadian experience and an opportunity to try their skills in accounting and bookkeeping. They cautioned the trainees to view this only as a beginning point, not a process during which they could reach their career goals. The staff also emphasized the importance of intuition and being tenacious. In an attempt to get their point across, they spoke about situations from previous programs as examples.

You have to go with your intuition. Stick it out. Remember that you can't reach your career goal in three months. One trainee was unhappy because she had a high level position in her own country but had to take an accounts payable job. She was not pacing herself. We do want you to get accounting training though, not secretarial training.
Later in the program, after the self-marketing segment was over and the women were at their training placements, I phoned Bev and Marilyn and asked how the trainees had fared during this process. They reported that most of the women had been successful during self-marketing. A few were having quite a struggle finding an employer. The staff expressed admiration for some of the trainees who were "toughing it out". Others, they felt were impatient and having personal struggles.

One woman went to 106 companies and only got one positive response, but she stuck to it. She's very quiet and persistent. There are a couple of "whiners" and we moved two immediately. Some have personal growth problems - they're always on the attack, they can't trust yet. They had a lot of trouble with self-marketing - fear, desperation, anger.

I asked the staff if they felt the training provided by the training place hosts was actually in accounting and bookkeeping or whether they were being used as general office help. Marilyn felt that, generally speaking, most were getting appropriate training experience. She felt the source of much discomfort arose out of making the move from the relatively "safe" environment of the classroom training to the "real" world of work.

They're experiencing the real world - it's different from training here [at the agency]. It's boring, mundane work. They don't believe us at first about the real world. CEIC wanted them back every few weeks to be grounded in training but they have to do it there with host employers, not here where it's comfortable.
She also found some of the trainees were pushing themselves too hard, striving for perfection and trying to accomplish too much in a short time.

It's their expectations that get in the way. They have to be perfect. They think they have to do it and get it all today even though the employer has said it will take three months to a year.

Both Marilyn and Bev believed that much of the source of difficulties for some of the trainees was linked to language and culture.

Some of the trainees' English needs to go up. Part of being overwhelmed is due to language and culture. Some forget how to think when they start jobs. They think they have to do it and get it all today - how to learn to do the job. It happens to a handful, but the rest are fine.

Marilyn also expressed ambivalence about the successes of the trainees, particularly when the trainees were receiving higher salaries than they were getting as training staff.

What really gets us is that trainees are getting hired for better pay that we're getting! It's hard because I really want them to get good jobs and good salaries.

Part of the work of the staff involved visiting the training place hosts to check on how the trainees were doing and to evaluate the employers' role. During this time and also during the self-marketing phase, when the trainees were out on their own and often isolated from the other trainees, the staff worked to monitor the situation. Both Marilyn and Bev gave their work and home numbers to the trainees and encouraged them to call whenever they had any concerns.
Working with the Community

The main links the program staff had with the community were with other immigrant service agencies. They also communicated regularly with government offices such as social assistance, housing, immigration and refugee services. Most of their support came from within the agency itself, where they discussed their concerns with other staff and board members.

The staff experienced some problems with one particular trainee who they felt was not being treated very well by an immigrant resettlement agency. Early in the trainee's training placement she had been offered a job by the employer but had declined the offer, wanting to finish the entire training program. Marilyn supported this trainee's decision and was negotiating with the other agency which was insisting that the trainee take the job.

The staff also found that the trainee with severe hearing loss could not benefit from sitting in the class without an interpreter. They had referred the trainee to an organization with resources for the hearing impaired. Unfortunately, the cost of an interpreter for the program could not be accommodated in the budget. The staff felt badly about this situation, but had been too busy to follow up on her situation.

Although the staff has some contact with immigrant serving agencies, there was little communication with other
re-entry programs. Marilyn and Bev both felt rather isolated and out of touch with others working with similar programs. They described how difficult it was to find the time and place to link with other programs.

It's hard to find out what other training programs are doing. It's also hard to arrange for times when we can all get together given our different schedules and work loads.

They both felt disadvantaged due to their isolation. Marilyn thought that working together would be much more effective in bringing about change and negotiating for improved and expanded resources.

It would be so much nicer and easier if we got together and collectively tried to deal with these issues - find out where the good resources are that we can share, get together on these issues we are all struggling with.

Marilyn found that the contractual relationship with CEIC put them in competition with other programs. In her experience, CEIC encouraged such competition in order to get the most for their money. In this context they observed that CEIC was reluctant to have various programs sharing information.

We have had a few meetings [with coordinators of other programs] but CEIC didn't like that. They don't want us sharing information.

The relationship with employers was another major link between the program and the community. In discussing this link, the staff expressed a minimum of concern. However, this had not always been the case. Over the years of running employment programs, the agency had encountered employers that were unsuitable or that tended to exploit the
trainees. The agency made a list of these companies available during the preparation for self-marketing. They also avoided unionized sites because of the unions' resistance to taking on trainees from outside of the organization. The unions were concerned that trainees would take work away from other fully paid employees.

Another practice which had reduced problems with host employers was initiated during this program. Before the trainees started their job placements, the employers were required to provide a detailed job description. The staff were pleased to see that some of the trainees had found very "high powered" accounting firms. They had also received calls from employers commenting on how pleased they were with the trainees' performance.

In discussing their work with host employers, both Bev and Marilyn indicated that the main objective was to find a placement where the trainees were assured of getting a job at the end of the program. They also emphasized the importance of working with employers to clarify with them what their respective responsibilities were.

When we speak with host employers, the bottom line is was the woman going to be hired at the end of this? We weren't interested in those employers that could not give us this verbal assurance.

When problems arose, the staff indicated they were quick to respond. In deciding on how to intervene, the staff listened to both employers' and trainees' concerns. Employers were not always the problem.
The employers are very clear on the contract with us. They do have valid concerns sometimes. We check out whether it's the employer or the trainee's problem.

There were few comments from the staff and trainees about problems with families. In cases where the trainees were offered a job before the training was completed, Marilyn and Bev were aware that some of the trainees were feeling a lot of pressure from spouses to find paid work and, as a result, they were unlikely to finish the program.

This section has outlined the work involved in building links with the community. There was some interaction with other immigrant serving agencies but for the most part, the outreach involved working with host employers.

Summary

The bookkeeping program for immigrant women with intermediate English had been developed initially as a pilot project which was a joint effort between CEIC and the agency. It was one of several government-funded employment programs and one of many other kinds of services provided by this agency to a large segment of the immigrant community. The staff were familiar with the process of negotiating for government funding and were successful in their efforts.

In spite of a longstanding relationship, there were tensions and conflicts between CEIC and the staff in relation to the administration of this program. The two major areas of negotiation with CEIC focused on the content
of the program and the costs, with the two issues frequently interrelated. The staff were successful in their struggles to lengthen the classroom training, with little room to negotiate on other issues such as money for extra clothing allowances. The staff also worked hard to convince CEIC of the importance of using a self-marketing approach.

The staff I spoke to expressed concern with the government's limited understanding of the difficulty of immigration. They were also cognizant of the racist attitudes of many employers which created major obstacles for the trainees. The self-marketing approach was introduced in an effort to help the trainees address some of these problems head on. However, the staff also instructed the trainees to lower their expectations as they sought entrance to the Canadian labour market. Starting over and leaving "old" careers behind was a recurring theme throughout much of the classroom discussions. Adapting to Canadian and Western culture was a central issue in the lifeskills classes.

The trainees in this program represented over thirteen different countries of origin and a multitude of cultural practices and beliefs. To a certain extent the lifeskills curriculum assumed that the group was homogeneous and there was little opportunity to acknowledge their different cultures and experiences as immigrant women. The trainees' reaction and resistance to various aspects of the program were also diverse. Some of the trainees did not agree with
the self-marketing approach and argued that locating training place hosts was the responsibility of the staff. They also challenged the instructional process in the English language training. Other trainees agreed with the self-marketing approach and understood the importance of developing aggressive job search skills.

This approach is an interesting contrast to the program for native women, where the staff pushed the trainees to go for more than a low paying job and emphasized the importance of reclaiming their native identities. In the program for immigrant women, the repeated message was to lower one's expectations and think about short term goals. In both cases, the staff played a key role in challenging the trainees' desires.

When the program ended, thirteen of the fifteen trainees were hired by their training place hosts, suggesting that the process of self-marketing was effective. Two of the trainees went on to further training. The staff have remained with the agency, but have experienced many changes as the funding for job training programs has shifted. Marilyn moved to another program in the agency, while Bev remained with the Intermediate English project, which reduced the staffing of that program by one.
What has become clear is that many of the women didn't really want to be in construction. It was seen as a means to an end, a decent paying job, a way to survive the next six months. (Marian, Director)

The third program I visited for this study was a CJS women's re-entry program designed as an introduction to construction-related skills. The program, a pilot project initiated by CEIC, was provided by a non-profit organization which developed materials and provided job search to help women find paid work. The organization had been contacted by Canada Employment and asked to develop a nontraditional training program for women.

The organization offering the program provided a number of services to women such as pre-employment programs, workshops for schools, community groups and professional groups, and publications. They also provided assistance to help establish self-help groups for job-seekers and job-changers. The activities of the non-profit organization were overseen by a board of directors, many of whom were trades women. The organization had also maintained strong links with other groups whose work focused on women in trades.
After the organization had been contacted by CEIC, the staff, which consisted of one paid worker and ten volunteers, worked for over six months (with no funding from CEIC) to develop a program. A proposal was drafted and the necessary steps were taken to meet CEIC guidelines including identifying staff, developing an advisory committee, recruiting training place hosts, and locating space. The advisory committee consisted of representatives from the construction industry, government, women in trades, and trades instructors from several local colleges. This committee met once a month for three months prior to the start of the program and then met regularly throughout the training.

The program ran for 35 weeks with 22 weeks of "off-site" or classroom-based training and 13 weeks of "on-site" training with employers. For 12 weeks, the trainees attended a local post-secondary technical institution where they participated in an introductory carpentry program. A fitness program was also provided at the institute to prepare the trainees for the physical exertion of the job. The remainder of the classroom training included two weeks each of computer training, first aid, small business development, life skills training and job search training.

The objectives for the program, as outlined in the proposal, included:

1. To prepare women for employment at a living wage in a non-traditional sector of the economy.
2. To train participants in the basic carpentry skills.
3. To introduce participants to the computer and its application to small businesses.
4. To provide participants with an opportunity to acquire an Industrial First Aid Certificate.
5. To provide trainees with an introduction to small business skills.

Staff advertised the program through the local newspapers and through information flyers sent to various community agencies serving women, including social services. They recruited trainees over a two week period. Applicants were required to complete a detailed questionnaire and to take a math and English test. The staff also interviewed each potential trainees twice and asked the applicants to provide the names of three references of previous employers or from volunteer activities. Applicants were assessed for CJS eligibility which meant they had to be unemployed or working less than 25 hours per week.

A total of thirty-two women, divided into two groups of sixteen, were accepted into the program, with the second group starting six weeks after the first. Of the thirty-two trainees, twenty were receiving social assistance and another eight were receiving unemployment insurance. The average age was 31. Eighteen of the women were single with no children and thirteen were single parents. Twenty one trainees had grade twelve or more education, and eleven had less than grade twelve. There were two native women in the
program, two immigrant women and the remainder were white, English speaking women. There were no disabled women in the program.

The staff for the program consisted of two half-time coordinators and one part-time administrative assistant. Part of the coordinators' work also involved teaching lifeskills classes. The coordinators had worked as volunteers during the six months the program was being developed. As mentioned above, there was also an advisory committee consisting of fourteen members.

The office of the organization and the lifeskills classes were located in an office on the second level of an older two-story commercial building located on a very busy thoroughfare accessible by public transportation. The office consisted of a large open area, two enclosed areas and a small kitchen. The carpentry training was held at the trades school of the local technical institute. Computer training was held at a private computer training agency. The introduction to small business development was provided by a non-profit women's organization which focused on women and community economic development issues. The first aid training was provided by a local college.

As researcher, I obtained access to this program through the director of the non-profit organization who worked as administrative assistant to the program and was teaching some of the lifeskills classes. I interviewed her and the two other staff who acted as part-time coordinators
and who also taught different parts of the lifeskills training. I made visits to three of the lifeskills classes and was asked to accompany one of the coordinators as she visited the trainees and spoke to the employers during their "on-site" training. I also went along with her during one visit to the technical institute where the trainees were receiving their introduction to carpentry skills.

In my role as researcher in this pilot program, I was both participant and non-participant observer, interviewer, confidante, navigator (during the visits to host employers), and, to a limited extent, office assistant. I felt comfortable enough to take detailed notes during my visits to the lifeskills classes, sharing my writing with some of the trainees who were curious. In the classes I visited, a number of different topics were being addressed: on-the-job communication problems and strategies, Workers' Compensation Board regulations, opportunities in apprenticeship training, introduction to small business training, evaluation of training at technical institution, and self defence.

For most of my visits to the classroom, I was a nonparticipant observer, except during the self-defence class, where I participated along with the trainees in learning some new techniques. I spoke informally with the trainees at coffee and lunch breaks, during my visits to the technical institute, and when I accompanied one of the staff members to the job sites where the trainees received on-the-job training. During my first visit a few trainees
questioned me about my research and my own working experience. For the most part, they either appeared to accept or chose to ignore my presence. One of the trainees was very reluctant to talk to me and appeared very suspicious of my questions. Later in the program, after several confrontations with the staff and instructors at the technical institute, she dropped out of the training.

In my role as researcher, I experienced a collegial and reciprocal relationship with the staff. When visiting the office, I tried to help them with their workload by answering the phone and taking messages and helping one trainee with the computer. I was also present for some of the discussions between staff and trainees when conflicts arose. When asked, I offered suggestions as to how to respond to these struggles. After the program had finished, I gave some assistance to the development of an evaluation report that went to CEIC.

I felt quite comfortable in my role as researcher and visitor in this program. Although the staff were very busy, I did not sense they were frustrated or felt burdened with my questions or presence. This was due, in part, to an already established collegial relationship with the director of the organization and, I think, because I contributed a small amount to easing the workload. My comfort with the staff in this environment was also clearly related to our shared class, racial and educational backgrounds.
This first section of this chapter has provided some background information including the history of the program, the trainees, the staff and non-profit agency which ran the training, and my experience as a researcher. In the remaining sections, using the interviews and informal discussions with the staff, I provide their accounts of their work with the state, the trainees and the community.

Working With Government and CEIC

Generally speaking, the relationship between CEIC and this program was rather tense and cautious. The staff were confronted with many problems and challenges throughout the life of this program. From the beginning, there were disagreements with CEIC about the focus of the training and the resources needed to run such a program.

When CEIC had initially contacted this organization, they did not suggest an introductory program in construction skills for women. They were looking for someone to run a nontraditional program for women in other areas, such as carpet laying and dry walling. CEIC argued that there was a shortage of workers to fill these jobs. After looking into the nature of this work, the staff were not eager to train women in these areas. They agreed that there were jobs available, but they felt training women in these skills was not appropriate because it offered mainly temporary, short-term contract work. The staff resisted this initial
proposal, arguing that women's need for economic security and independence could not be addressed by training them for these occupations. They were also concerned about the physical demands of these jobs. Few workers stay in these occupations for more than two or three years.

In the end, training for these jobs appeared in the proposal as part of the on-site experiences. Marion, the director, spoke about the importance of compromising and developing a proposal that acknowledged CEIC's demands and gave women other choices as well.

They wanted us to have them do drywall and we fudged on that. ... so we'll get a drywaller as a potential employer and then we won't encourage anyone to take it unless they're really keen and then we'll make sure they are aware of the problems. ... 

You have to understand the needs of the bureaucrats - she has to go back to her office and say here's the list of employers and it does include drywall. So in effect we're helping her to cover her ass.

On the other hand, Barb, one of the part-time coordinators, believed that the important thing to remember when working in these programs was the women who take the training. For her, women's needs were central, not those of government workers or other members of the organization you work with.

I care about women, not project officers or what [others say]. I don't care what the government says.

During the developmental phase, the staff also contacted the unions about having the women work at organized sites. They were told that due to various rules and regulations, the women could not be trained at unionized
worksites. The staff did receive some reassurance that the unions would not discriminate against the women when they looked for work. Their experience with organized labour was mixed, with some organizations like the carpentry unions being very supportive, and others not.

Many of the major struggles during the proposal development were related to costs. The staff and volunteers felt very strongly that the women should receive recognized and accredited training. CEIC argued that this was too expensive and suggested that the program rent some warehouse space and construction tools and hire a carpenter to teach the women basic skills. Marion, the director of the organization, spoke about how they resisted CEIC's idea and argued for accredited training at a local technical institute.

We wanted accredited training. CEIC wanted us to rent some warehouse, some tools and hire some carpenter and call them a carpenter instructor. And we said no way. One of our major criticisms of CJS has been that you don't get accredited recognizable training that is more than job specific and they're not going to give that for women.

Marian speculated that CEIC's reluctance to use public institutions and their complaints about the high costs were part of a campaign to undermine public educational institutions. In the end, and after the institute lowered its price somewhat, CEIC very reluctantly approved this training.

Jill, one of the part-time coordinators/instructors, felt that the program served the needs of the government to
look good, not the needs of the women. She argued that to really help women requires that the government spends money, which it seemed very reluctant to do.

CEIC had a certain amount of money. They were intrigued with the idea. It was new, innovative, would make them look good. But I don't think the genuine needs of these women were ever thought about. ... So there's on the one hand the lip service to providing this kind of training, and, on the other hand, when it means it's going to cost money, then it's not there.

Barb, who shared the coordinator's job with Jill, had worked at other agencies for several years, running government-funded job training programs. In her view, the goal of the policy was not to help women, but to improve Canada's competitiveness. However, she also believed that the training was useful for women who found themselves in a particular situation.

It's hands on experience. Some jobs are good for women, say with three kids who doesn't want to think, just wants to do it and get home. It's a way to get out of the house, a ticket ... We shouldn't say these programs aren't good. They get the opportunity to try things out and make decisions. It provides experience and a framework to look at other options.

In her experiences with CJS job training programs, Barb had developed a strategy for working with government bureaucracy. She argued that in order to use the funding successfully you have to be flexible. She believed that the proposal was not a blueprint to be followed rigidly.

There doesn't have to be a consistency between the proposal and actual program. You need to have contingency plans. For example the proposal said we have two weeks of computer, but that's not enough, so we dropped another part and lengthened basic training. Programs can be as flexible as you are as a person.
You still have to honor a contract but you must be flexible within the contract guidelines.

Barb gave an example of working the system so that it benefits women. In the construction training program, one of the trainees was an immigrant woman facing major obstacles to both training and employment. The coordinators felt that at this time, other issues took priority over this woman's attendance in the program.

An example of success is the [immigrant] woman in our program. We found her a place to live, the kids are in school, there are four kids and a handicapped husband. We got more ESL. That's an incredible success.

When I asked Jill what she thought the government's responsibility was in relation to women's job training, she replied that they should first listen to women. But she felt this was not as simple as it sounded, because most government policy-makers do not have the experience women do. Their male experience also prevents them from really hearing what women's struggles are. Jill believed that this was a biased perspective that was not recognized.

The policy-makers are not female ... the majority are male and the male world is very different from the female world, the private-public domain split, the absolute lack of awareness of what women's realities are... It's male culture and a male bias. It shapes the response. That bias is never acknowledged.

Barb also believed that there was little understanding or recognition of women's struggles. She felt the policy looked at women's issues very narrowly and did not provide the resources to deal with the reality and complexity of problems women were facing.
You have to give credit to the baggage that women come in with, some recognition of the serious problems they deal with - issues such as abuse, alcoholism, violence. There's not a nickel of money that can be dedicated to those issues. You're paid to be there from nine to five, paid to stand there and teach, nothing else.

Jill was also sceptical about how effective government policy could be in achieving equality for women. She believed that women were identified as a target group in the CJS policy because they are needed as workers, not because of any commitment to equality. Women's increasing participation as paid workers would bring about change, she argued, not policy.

Women are recognized as important contributors to the labour market, because women's labour is needed now, because of the shift in demographics. Women will achieve equality in the market place not because of policies for women but because of demographics. There will be so many women in the labour market that the resistance to women will be broken down over time.

Jill felt that many of the problems they had with the program were due to inadequate attention being given to the realities of construction work and the built-in obstacles that women, particularly as mothers, would have to overcome in order to gain access to this nontraditional area.

I feel there is built in sabotage. This program has not recognized women as mothers, with child care needs, different transportation needs. These were not addressed in the proposal... No one thought that women's lives were different from men.

No one ever thought that construction starts at 6 a.m. and finishes at 3 in the afternoon. Nobody had the idea that in the construction industry you move around from site to site, how are the women going to get there?

When the staff made suggestions about dealing with these concerns, such as including transportation services in
the program, they found CEIC resistant to such ideas, arguing that this would make it too easy. Jill also was critical of the low training allowance. She interpreted the government's response and the low allowance as an expression of their devaluation of women.

No negotiating about a bus that we could rent to transport women to job sites because it was thought of as treating them too nicely, make their lives too simple. ... The training allowance of $122.50 a week is an insult. Because it says that your labour is worth $3/hour and it seems to me it reinforces the whole general attitude towards women's labour.

Jill challenged the rationale given by the government that these women were at the bottom of the skills ladder and therefore a minimum training allowance was appropriate. She believed that women did bring skills to these sites, but that these skills are not recognized.

Why can't they be paid [on the work site] and get the same amount of money as other people doing a full time job? The argument, that you start at the bottom ... these women bring a lot of skills to the work site, probably a lot more than a lot of the men do.

Jill found that the limited training allowance was not only a reflection of the government's view of women, but also a major barrier to women accessing training. Many women who wanted to take the training decided not to apply because they could not live on the low allowance.

So we end up doing the screening process, decisions are made based on the amount of money we're going to give. It excludes a lot of people who simply cannot afford to live on that kind of money.

Most of the negotiations in this program involved the project officer who acted as the major liaison with CEIC.
Barb's experience with other project officers had been generally positive. In her experience with other programs, she found that they knew the labour market well, gave support and had good negotiating skills. She felt that the project officer for this program was focusing on the wrong things.

They are picky about small things, receipts for $29.95. They're not accountants. It's legitimate that they want to know where the money's gone. It's not about a lack of trust, it's about sending inexperienced people looking for stuff that's not important.

Jill also believed the project officer for this program was concerned about the wrong issues. Jill had had generally positive relationships with government workers in previous experiences. She wondered whether the hostility she experienced with this project officer was also the view from the top.

These people are suspicious, authoritarian. They think it's their money. But it's a perspective that comes down from the top - the front line workers only reflect the top of the hierarchy.

Both Jill and Barb experienced a sense of being monitored while working with this particular program. They felt that CEIC had little trust in their skills and knowledge, evidenced by CEIC's insistence that an advisory committee be established.

CEIC demanded that there be more involvement of the committee because there was the assumption that we're a bunch of middle class women who didn't know what we were doing. ...
This lack of trust also emerged at other points in the negotiations with CEIC. Early in the program, the project officer visited the office and spoke to the trainees and encouraged them to contact her if they had any concerns. Later on, one of the trainees with whom the staff had had several confrontations, contacted the project officer and made serious allegations about the program, threatening to sue. The project officer then phoned and severely reprimanded Jill. Jill found the handling of this conflict unprofessional and felt it did not provide an example to the trainees of an appropriate way to handle disputes.

The project officer called me and really dressed me down, really chewed me out for over an hour. I was so angry. She is really being inappropriate in her siding with this woman. She had encouraged this by telling the women to call her. I suggested she try and think of the two sides to every story.

This situation created a lot of tension for the staff. Eventually the trainee dropped out of the program and the relations with CEIC seemed to improve. Jill wondered whether the project officer, who had arranged to get the trainee back on UI, was now having doubts about the validity of the trainee's accusations. Once back on UI, this trainee had subsequently disappeared and the project officer was unable to locate her. After working through this conflict, Jill recalled that during the recruitment phase, the trainee had been identified as "someone with troubles". Her working history indicated she had many jobs in one year with employers reporting poor interpersonal skills. As the
program progressed, the depth of this trainee's trauma as a survivor of childhood physical and sexual abuse became more apparent and Jill felt badly about the conflict with this trainee.

Jill found herself comparing her experience with other programs for women funded by different government departments. She was shocked by the mistrust that seemed to permeate the relationship between CEIC and women's job training programs.

There is a feeling of tension, an undercurrent of distrust, that we or the women who want the training will try to rip off the government. The message is that the government is giving a handout and must monitor the situation very closely. [It's] a feeling of being watched and not trusted that I find demeaning. It wasn't like that when I worked with [other programs]. There was more trust there, more relaxed.

Both coordinators felt the project officer and CEIC in general did not understand the day to day struggles to run the program. CEIC was invited to attend the monthly meetings of the advisory council, but had not participated. The staff noted that the project officer had visited the office and classrooms only once.

Working with the Trainees

Both coordinators who had many years of experience in working with women found this program to be unusually demanding. The working conditions left much to be desired and there were frequent conflicts between and among staff,
between staff and trainees, and between trainees themselves. Jill found the noisy and hot office an unpleasant space to work in. When she thought of the pink air conditioned office of the project officer, she found herself feeling resentful. Both Barb and Jill found that working overtime was absolutely necessary to keep up with the day to day demands. Jill had many hours of overtime which she knew she would never be paid for.

I have 100 hours overtime already and they are not going to be paid. That to me reflects a lack of awareness of what it's like to run this kind of program. [It reflects] policy decisions made in isolation which they all tend to be. The implementation site is entirely different.

Barb felt caught in a struggle to make the program a success and yet to not feel exploited as a worker.

They pay you for a 40 hour week but if you don't work 100 hours it won't go. It's a "Catch 22" for women employed in this area - have to make programs a success to get more funding and to stay working.

Barb and Jill felt caught in the middle with CEIC demands on one side and trainees' demands on the other. It became clear after the program had been running for a while that most of the trainees were not particularly interested in carpentry or construction work. These women were attracted to the program because they wanted decent paying jobs. The trainees were responding to their experience of poverty and trying to live on welfare, not the notion of working in a nontraditional area.

There were also tensions among the staff. Conflict arose over different communication styles and different
responses to disputes. Each of the staff used different approaches: one was more of a negotiator; another was more confrontative and direct; and yet another was more conciliatory, wanting to smooth over troubled waters. Differences also emerged as those who were more experienced with CJS programs struggled with the views of those who were relatively new to these projects.

Many of the trainees were impatient with, and critical of, various aspects of the program and had little reservation in expressing their views. A small core group of trainees who declared themselves "out" lesbians, were often the ones to speak out in class and did not hesitate to publicly challenge the staff and make their needs known. They were particularly critical and impatient with aspects of the lifeskills classes which focused on personal growth issues describing it as "share and care bullshit".

Rather than a sense of group collegiality, the trainees in this program seemed rather fragmented. There were occasions when some trainees became the focus of teasing by others. For example, after one group discussion when a trainee had complained a great deal, the next day a baby bottle was waiting for her when she returned to class. The staff noted that the first group was less supportive of each other, than the second. They also observed that the tension and conflict seemed to occur during transition periods as the trainees moved from job sites to the classroom.
Although the staff were frustrated with some of the behaviours of the trainees, they also respected and admired them. They found themselves challenged by the trainees' demands. Jill was surprised at the assertiveness and confidence of some of the trainees, given their personal histories and struggles.

They are an endless source of fascination for me. I really like them, I love their guts, their determination. I'm really impressed with their self direction. You expect that they might have low self esteem [but] they're the most self directed women I've come across in a long time.

Jill wondered whether some of their assertiveness had developed because they were fighting for their survival. The trainees had to work hard in order to live and as a consequence had acquired determination and skills.

These are not your middle class women - should I go to school, should I work? These are women who need to work to survive. They know exactly what they want to do. They've got a lot of guts.

Jill described her philosophy about working with the trainees. She avoided a "buddy-buddy" approach or making any attempt to "butter-up" to them. Instead, she tried to be open and direct and to negotiate, responding to their demands while still complying with the guidelines of the government contract.

I just negotiate with them ... I find it a real fine balancing act between the demands of the program imposed on us by CEIC and the demands of the women. It's accommodating, it's negotiating, keeping in contact with them all the time.

I asked her how she would deal with one woman in a lifeskills class I attended who declared that the classes
were not helpful and that she was going to stop coming so that she could use the time to look for work. Jill discussed how she tried to accommodate this kind of demand within the framework of the curriculum by allowing for other activities, but make them part of an agreement.

I would work out a contract with them that would become an assignment. They would have to come back in and produce some results of what they did. They might say I want to do some research on that and I'd say go and do the research and come back. This is the task you're assigned to do.

Although Jill had worked with women for many years in community settings, she had not encountered the animosity which characterized some of the group dynamics. She was not comfortable with the role she sometimes had to assume. She also reported that she was exhausted by the constant challenges of the trainees. She sought out advice from others in an attempt to understand what was happening with the trainees.

They're testing, testing, always. I'm not sleeping nights. It goes against all my ideas of working with adults. I've talked to a counsellor and she says they're not adult, they're damaged people.

She further speculated whether the group behaviour was related to the attraction of such a training program for women who had dealt with major obstacles in their lives.

We have women with poor education, they live and meet others who are poor and have low education. This always comes with lots of personal problems. This is an alternative program and attracts women who haven't been able to make a smooth transition to the labour market.
Jill went on to describe the efforts they were making to adjust the curriculum to better fit the needs of the trainees. She was concerned with the demands this made, however, on their finances and was frustrated with the government's expressed desire to help those most in need, without providing the necessary resources.

But we don't have the resources for providing all the support and training they need.

We've made seven referrals already for counselling, to transition houses, rape crisis, alcohol and drug abuse treatment which is going to cost us - [we're] trying to find a way to cover it in our budget.

One aspect of working in construction was obtaining the necessary working clothes and tools, including boots, hard hat, tool belt and tools. Jill discovered that the clothing allowance usually provided to trainees in re-entry programs could not cover the costs of minimal requirements for working in construction.

The clothing allowance has been allocated, so we knew we had a certain amount but certainly not enough to clothe the women and allow them to buy tools. There's enough to buy them a new pair of boots. We're looking at probably seven or eight hundred dollars just to get them ready for a job site with quality tools that will last them.

The trainees found various ways to find the appropriate equipment. Some went to flea markets and one group went together to purchase the equipment bargaining for a reduced price. The trainees raised the issue during the lifeskills class attended by a guest speaker from Worker's Compensation. He expressed concern that second hand or cheaper equipment would not pass safety inspection.
The staff were aware that, like the general population of women, many trainees were survivors of abuse. Jill was alarmed to hear some of the trainees talk about the abuse and violence they were dealing with during the program itself.

Since the beginning of the program two of the trainees have been sexually abused, one by her doctor who she'd been seeing for years who knew how vulnerable she was. She's now a mess trying to deal with it.

The staff found that other trainees had problems with alcohol and drug abuse. They made arrangements in one case for a trainee to go to a treatment centre while she was in the program. They were pleased that the project officer supported their decision.

We arranged for the treatment to coincide with the work experience, we figured she could get her work experience later one. Treatment was more important. When we told [the project officer] what we're going to do, she agreed.

The first group of trainees were particularly vocal in their frustration with the program, often expressing their criticisms during the lifeskills training. During two of the classes I visited, they frequently challenged the director of the organization who had been teaching the lifeskills classes early in the program.

During a discussion on communication strategies, several trainees were obviously impatient with the subject and the process. Marian had asked the group to talk about problems they were having on the job site with host
employers and was presenting a number of principles for communication.

Angela: What's the point of this? Are we going to do this all day?

Marian: No, here's the agenda.

Angela: (a few minutes later) I hate these formulas for communication.

Marian: If you're using it right, it doesn't seem like a formula.

Angela: But if it's not your own formula how can you express yourself honestly?

At a later point in the morning, Marian indicated that they would be working in groups and asked the trainees to write three names of people they would like to work with. The same trainee once again spoke up and expressed her frustration with the class. Other trainees, seeing an opening, also challenged Marian about the nature of the discussion.

Angela: This is tacky, like in grade eight: "who do you want to play with?"

Marian: No, I've done it before, and it works.

Janet: On the original schedule, it said we'd do resumes and now we're not.

Sue: I'm still mad about not knowing about the other training. I heard about it from the other trainees.

At one point, after several classes in which the trainees were very confrontative, Marian had had enough and refused to work with the group any more. As a result, the other two part-time coordinators took over some of the lifeskills classes. Barb and Jill also expressed their
displeasure at the trainees' behaviour but understood their resistance to some aspects of the lifeskills curriculum.

They're telling us they've done this before. They don't need this share and care stuff.

Dealing with absenteeism also affected the relationship between staff and trainees. This issue also produced tensions among the staff themselves because of different perspectives on what approach should be taken. Barb felt that there should be a commitment to this issue from the beginning, shared by everyone. She felt that conflicts arose because this had not happened.

You need to make it a commitment at the beginning, but need support from everyone that it's a serious issue. [Here] there were differences of opinion about whether you make it an issue or not. So we reached a crisis and had to present them with an ultimatum.

Barb speculated that one of the reasons absenteeism occurred was because the trainees felt they could get away with it, particularly during the training when the coordinators were not present.

It's a problem of the distance between coordinators and the program. They think that they can get away with it because they're not seeing you personally on a daily basis.

During the first week of the computer training many trainees were absent. After visiting the program, the staff determined that the quality of instruction was very poor and made arrangements with another agency to provide computer skills. Conflicts arose when some of the trainees who had been absent were not informed of the changes. During one of
the classes I visited, this issue was discussed and was
clearly a source of irritation for some of the trainees.
Barb challenged the group and told them they were going to
have to "shape up" for the real world of work. She argued
that if the trainees did not like what was happening, they
could not just stay at home. This kind of behaviour would
be remembered, she cautioned, if she was asked to provide a
reference for the trainees.

Jane: I'm still pissed about not knowing about the
other training. I had to hear about it from other
trainees.

Deborah: Some of the stuff in the program is not
relevant and taking my time. So I'll go and do other
stuff, look for work.

Barb: Well I won't be a good reference for you if
you've been away.

The issue of attendance grew into a serious problem in
which the staff found themselves, once again, caught in a
struggle with the trainees on one side and CEIC on the
other. The project officer contacted the program staff
about a call she had received from one of the trainees who
wanted to report the high rate of absenteeism during the
computer training. The trainee was not identified and the
staff found themselves in a quandary. They brought the
situation to the entire group indicating their dismay that
one of the trainees was trying to discredit the program.

Later on, Jill wondered whether they had mishandled the
situation. By bringing the issue before the whole group,
rather than dealing with the individual complainant (whom
they did not know), the tensions only increased. Jill also felt that the project officer should have told them who the caller was so they could deal with the source of the concern.

The staff continued to run up against the problem of absenteeism with some of the host employers expressing their frustration with trainees not showing for work. As a result, Jill and Barb decided to reluctantly impose rules, with serious consequences, if they were not followed. After trainees had been absent from either class or the work-site without informing either the host-employer or the coordinators, they were given a letter indicating they were on probation and further transgressions would mean the trainees were out of the program. Jill felt trapped by the situation and was not comfortable with once again having to behave in a way which went contrary to many of her principles.

I'm not happy about having to do this but I feel forced to because of the behaviour of the students and CEIC demands that students' whereabouts be accounted for.

This decision to enforce the rules was met with resistance not only by the trainees, but by some of the technical staff and a few employers. After hearing about the issue from the trainees, a few of the instructors at the technical institute phoned Jill and Barb arguing that this was unnecessarily harsh. After hearing that trainees would be put on probation, some of the host employers also
expressed reluctance to inform Jill or Barb about absences of the trainees.

During my visit with Jill to one of the work sites - a cabinet-making shop - we spoke with the trainee who wanted some advice after being offered a job by the employer. Annette had a fine arts background and was a single mother of a two year old child. She had been on social assistance since her child was born. She was pleased and surprised by the offer.

MSSH said I was not employable, but they've offered me a job which means I AM employable!

Jill encouraged her to not make a decision right away, to think through the costs and benefits of taking the job. She reminded her that if she started to work now, she would not finish the training and thus would not have the one year credit at the technical institute. Jill suggested she think about what kind of opportunities were available and whether the wages would cover child care costs. Jill also reminded her that she could negotiate with the employer regarding wages.

The trainee, Anette, expressed confusion about what to do. Wasn't the whole purpose of the program to find a job, she asked. She also felt the on-the-job training was superior to the instruction at the technical institute.

But isn't the goal of the program to get you a job? And this on-the-job training is better because it's specific to cabinet making. The [technical institute] was for heavier construction work. We have to wait a long time to get practice with tools because there are so many trainees and some take longer. This shop is
unique, it's not assembly line - it suits my fine arts background.

I also had the opportunity to talk with the trainees when we visited the technical institute. Several were keen to continue in carpentry and had applied to an apprenticeship program. Others were feeling disillusioned about working on construction. One had been offered a job at $8.00 per hour but was thinking that she did not have the passion to stay in the business. One trainee found that she really wanted to work at her art and was looking for studio space. Another trainee was thinking of working part-time as a "flag-girl" while completing the training.

At the end of the training program, the staff found that many of the trainees were feeling very anxious as they faced the transition from being a student in the program to worker. Both Barb and Jill realized that support for the trainees could not stop at graduation, but should continue for at least twelve weeks for the well-being of the trainees. To a limited extent, the staff made themselves available as volunteers to help during this transition phase. For some of the staff, this ongoing support was not possible, given their paid work demands.

The staff had a variety of approaches to the management of the program, to their relationships with the trainees and CEIC, and in their responses to the many problems and conflicts. Many of the trainees discovered their work aspirations were not for construction or carpentry jobs. In many respects, this re-entry program became a "bridging"
program where the trainees were given some foundation skills and an opportunity to explore the reality of working in the construction and carpentry trades.

**Working With the Community**

This next section looks at the relationships with other individuals, institutions and agencies involved with this program, including the advisory committee, instructors and staff at the technical institute, the computer training agency, the host employers, and social service agencies.

At the request of CEIC, an advisory committee was established to give direction and advice to the staff. This body represented several key interests in the community and played an important role. It also added another dimension of work as the staff were required to submit regular reports to the committee members and to organize the meetings. Because the advisory committee members were not involved in the day-to-day management of the program, they were not able to provide much assistance with some of the struggles the staff were experiencing.

Jill expressed frustration with the time and energy she gave to keeping the advisory committee informed, when some of the members did not bother to attend the meetings. She was particularly disturbed that CEIC did not attend these meetings nor the graduation of the program.
I find that it's mainly a rubber stamping exercise. We present a report and discuss issues that come up. The trouble is they're not on the project on a day to day basis, they don't have that kind of information. We try to get them information but a lot of them don't turn up and I refuse to phone them. I've sent out notices and I feel they have a responsibility to read their notice.

The staff were also challenged by some members of the advisory committee. The first group of trainees to go to the technical institute for their carpentry instruction had been rather critical of the training. In response to the criticisms, the technical training representatives on the advisory committee had questioned the process the staff had used for the evaluation filled by the first group. As a result, Jill found herself instructing the second group to complete their evaluations on their own and not discuss it as a group.

We will take these evaluations to Jim on the advisory committee. Make sure you do it alone because we've been accused of bias with the last group, because they were so very negative. They wondered how the evaluations were done.

Beyond the limited contact with some members of the advisory committee, once the program began the staff had little opportunity to meet with others providing nontraditional programs or to connect with women's organizations that might have resources or curriculum information. They expressed an interest and need for opportunities to share information and resources, but they found the demands of keeping the program going were so great that there was no time for outreach.
There was also a great deal of work involved in connecting with the numerous instructors and agencies who taught different parts of the curriculum. As was mentioned, the original computer training site proved to be of poor quality. Responding to this situation required several visits to the classes, precipitated confrontations with the administration of the training company, and necessitated negotiations over payment, finding a new training site and dealing with trainees. Barb assumed the major responsibility for this situation, drawing on her previous experiences with other training programs and network of trainers.

I've done enough before to know and have access to networks... I checked it out personally ... phoned the principal, Marian wrote a report, we arranged a meeting and outlined the problems....phone the instructor involved. They sent me the bill - I know I had to pay something, so I renegotiated.

Many visits and hours were spent in responding to problems at the technical institute. Jill and Barb worked on the problems with the main instructor who they found was very sensitive to the needs of the women, aware of their fears and their lack of experience with the tools and machinery. The trainees, however, reported difficulties with other instructors and harassment from male students. Barb and Jill were not surprised with these struggles, but they had expected that the trainees would experience more sexism on the job sites compared to the training institute. As they worked to resolve these issues, they found that the
first group to get the technical training experienced more resistance, compared to the group that followed.

It was interesting that it hasn't come up on the job sites really. There is also a difference between group one and two. Group one broke the ice - those women weren't taken seriously. [Bob] is good, he understands what the women are up against - they haven't lifted a hammer before, they're afraid.

In one of the lifeskills classes I visited, the trainees were filling in evaluation forms for the technical training. They spoke about the harassment they received from some of the male students at the institute and how they responded.

This guy stuck his head in and said "oh cute - women carpenters!" Other students accused us of taking their jobs. I say "you already have your job, we want to support our families just like you".

Jill spent a lot of time mediating between the instructors and the students. As a result of an incident during one of the classes, the trainees were demanding an apology from one of the instructors who had lost his temper and, they argued, had used inappropriate language that was sexist and rude. Jill spent many hours at the institute talking to the trainees and the technical instructors trying to resolve the conflict. In the end, the instructor apologized for losing his temper, but did not agree that his remarks were sexist.

Many of the conflicts which occurred during the technical training seemed to emerge from attempting to fit women into an introductory carpentry program designed for the typical student, who of course was male. The
instructors at the technical institute were finding that the learning needs of the women were very different from the male students they usually dealt with. In particular, they found the complex nature of the struggles some of the trainees were having affected their ability to learn. When some of the staff attempted to respond to these problems by staying after class to talk to the trainees about their concerns, the administration then issued a memo indicating that the instructors were to discontinue such behaviour. It was considered to be inappropriate and not part of their jobs.

During one of the lifeskills classes, some of the trainees spoke to me about their frustrations with the technical training. They felt the training was set up for men, many of whom had taken shop at school or had some opportunity to work with tools. As a result, there was little understanding of the trainees' needs as women and it was not an appropriate environment in which to learn. The trainees also argued that within their groups, their needs varied greatly, with some trainees requiring a lot of reassurance and instruction. They complained that while the instructor spent extra time with such individuals, the others simply had to wait. There were also not enough tools. Some trainees were also concerned that given the fear and inexperience of some of the women, there was not enough supervision, and therefore safety was a concern.
Another important aspect of the work of the staff involved developing relationships and negotiating with host employers during the "on-site" training. During the developmental phase of the program, recruitment of employers took approximately ten hours per training place host. Maintaining links with the trainees during this phase of the program also produced different kinds of struggles. The staff had to deal with a wide variety of employers who each had their own approaches to the trainees and had different understanding of their roles.

The trainees also faced new struggles during their on-the-job training. In the classroom, the trainees were always in groups and often resisted the staff using various group strategies. But when they went to work with their host-employers, the trainees were isolated from each other and, as a result, the strategies they had developed as a group for dealing with problems were no longer useful. They were on their own.

The trainees' experiences were varied, with some expressing great excitement with the work and their new found skills. Others had a harder time, finding the work environment quite threatening. During one of the classes I visited, the trainees had just returned from their first time at the job sites and were discussing their experiences. The tension and excitement were palpable, each trainee wanting to talk about her experience. Several remarked that the technical training had started to make more sense now
that they were on the job. Some felt they had just got a
momentum going and were annoyed with having to return to
class. Others commented that they were dismayed with the
sexism that still persisted. For some, the job sites were
not very welcoming, compared to the technical training where
they felt they had been taken more seriously.

I fit right in with everybody, part of the job is
having fun.

I thought it would be easier, that the ground had been
broken before.

I've had some men say women on work site is a
distraction.

One guy was really bad, sexist, racist, the whole
thing, but you can't be confrontive, can't leave.

The guys are OK, young ones especially - the old ones
are another generation.

Some don't know they're being sexist, one guy is a
sweetie but says sexist things - I call him on it and
he says he doesn't realize it.

I told one guy he was a jerk.

Well my crew deals with it with humour, it helps to
diffuse things.

Many of the trainees described the initial shock of the
physical demands of the work, and their exhaustion at the
end of the day. They also found that they quickly adapted,
their bodies getting used to the routine. One of the
trainees, Myra, was thoroughly enjoying herself. She was
given the chance to operate some heavy machinery and was
finding she had some skill. Another perk for her was the
reaction she got from other workers, particularly women.
We went to McDonalds for lunch. It was great - look like part of the crew, jeans and sweat and dirt. Others think it's disgusting. On the Sky Train all those prim and proper women really stare at you. I love it!

The staff worked through a number of conflicts with the host employers, which frequently involved mediating between the needs of the trainees and the employers' demands. In one situation, one of the trainees asked Jill if she could stay working with one of the carpenters, rather than move to another site, because she was getting good instruction and support. Jill agreed to this only if the trainee obtained permission from the supervisor of the other training site. Jill discovered later, after an enraged call from a supervisor, that the trainee had not bothered to inform him.

Jill was pleased to find that on some of the job sites, the trainees were getting good support and the men were interested in helping the trainees learn. During a visit to a house renovation, we spoke with one of the carpenters who was working closely with a trainee. He seemed keen to help her learn, describing how he was organizing his work so that she was taught something new everyday.

One the same site, however, Jill found that the supervisor was less enthusiastic about another trainee. He expressed hesitation at having her return to the job site, arguing that there was not enough work. Later, Jill described how she felt that something else was going on.

He's not being straight with me. What's really happening is he doesn't like this trainee.
The staff tried to monitor the on-site training, watching for problems with employers and for difficulties with trainees. This was not an easy task, given their other work demands and the large geographic area where the trainees were working. As was mentioned before, there were problems with absenteeism with several employers expressing annoyance when some of the trainees did not show up for work the day after a long weekend. The staff also had concerns about exploitation when some of the trainees reported working ten hour days and also on weekends. Marian expressed her concern and pointed out that this was inappropriate and exploitive, but some of the trainees wanted to continue, arguing that it would give them more experience.

Working with other social service workers, particularly those in CEIC and welfare offices, was another part of building links with the community. Jill and Barb reported frustration with CEIC offices in outlying areas. They had three women referred by outreach projects who were, by definition, eligible for the training. They were screened out, however, because staff in their local CEIC offices refused to sign their eligibility form. The staff believed that better liaison was needed and also better training of CEIC workers regarding employment equity.

Most of the trainees were on social assistance when they applied to the program, and this proved to be another source of frustration and struggle. Once accepted, the
trainees were given a letter to take to their social workers which explained the program, the training allowance they would receive and their need for a clothing allowance. Although they had given this documentation to their workers at the beginning, the trainees had to provide duplicates two or three times throughout the duration of the program.

The staff also found that it was not unusual for the trainee's cheque not to arrive at the end of the month. The trainees then spent many hours, often missing a full day of training, while they dealt with the social service bureaucracy. The stress level for some of the trainees was extreme when they could not contact their social worker, the rent was due and their children were hungry. There were tensions among the trainees as well when some received larger clothing allowances than others.

In the important work of building links with the community, the staff had to develop relationships with numerous individuals and institutions or organizations. In this work, the staff played a key role in negotiating with others for appropriate resources and were often mediators when conflicts arose between the trainees and the community.

Summary

This chapter has presented a description of the third program included in my study, a re-entry program designed to assist women to enter carpentry and construction-related
jobs. Of the three programs I visited, the contested character of competing needs discourses was most evident in this project. The struggles and problems seemed to be never-ending throughout the day-to-day running of the program and in the relationships between and among staff, CEIC, trainees and the community.

This program was an experiment of sorts, a pilot project which clearly illuminated the problems of employing the traditional re-entry framework to train women for non-traditional work. The staff frequently challenged CEIC's administrative practices and the constant concern for reducing costs. They were at times successful in their negotiations, for example when CEIC agreed to the technical training. The staff also challenged some of the trainees, particularly their rather aggressive behaviour which emerged when they worked as a group. They also worked hard to respond to the demands of the trainees and adapt the program to fit those needs. They were often caught in contradictory roles as they demanded compliance to CEIC regulations and also tried to develop trusting and empathetic relationships with the trainees.

The trainees were continually resisting and challenging in this program. Many were unwilling to spend time working on skills or issues they regarded as not useful and made it clear to the staff what they believed they needed. They also challenged the pervasive sexism that still persists within post secondary education and within the trades. It
became clear as they progressed through the program, that their motivations for taking the training were based on poverty and a desire to find a decent paying job, not a commitment to work in trades.

Many came with histories of poverty, violence, abuse, and drug related problems. Their difficulties in making a successful transition into paid work were grounded in these situations which had to be addressed if they were to make changes. The staff attempted to find the resources to respond to these issues. They also believed that the trainees' troubled pasts had created ineffective and aggressive group behaviours which made the staff's work difficult.

At the end of the program few of the trainees went on to work in construction-related jobs. Employing a very narrow sense of success, in which the goal is to have the majority of trainees successfully obtaining work in construction-related industries, this program failed. Those that did pursue this kind of occupation decided to continue their training and became students of a new carpentry apprenticeship program for women. But if another definition of success is considered, in which the goal is to assist women to make informed choices, this program did make a difference. Most of the trainees discovered that they did not have the passion to persist in this kind of work.

At the end of this project, the staff submitted a detailed evaluation of the program to CEIC outlining many of
the problems considered in this chapter. This document was critical of the main assumptions informing CJS re-entry programs and was open and direct in describing problems they encountered. The staff also included many specific recommendations to remedy these problems. Building upon their experiences and knowledge gained from working with the pilot project, the staff developed and submitted another proposal to CEIC for a bridging program for women wanting to explore work in carpentry and construction-related jobs. CEIC turned down their application.

All but one of the staff have since moved on to other agencies and work. One of the trainees is now serving on the board of directors of the agency. A proposal is being developed to be submitted to CEIC for a "bridging" program, one that would allow trainees to explore different construction trades before making decisions about entering specific skills training that would lead to paid work.
CHAPTER EIGHT

THE POLITICIZATION VERSUS

THE ADMINISTRATION OF WOMEN'S NEEDS

In the previous three chapters, detailed descriptions of the three job-entry programs for women were provided. In this chapter, these accounts are analysed with specific attention given to revealing the contextual and contested character of needs claims. I will focus specifically on analysing the kind of needs talk produced by the staff and the relationships among the actors, that is staff, CEIC and the trainees.

In order to understand the struggles occurring in the everyday world of running CJS job-entry programs, it is important to begin the discussion with a review of the dominant policy framework and how women's needs were interpreted within that framework. This interpretation played a significant role in the structuring and content of women's job-entry programs. In Chapter Four, analysis of the needs claims of CJS revealed that the dominant policy framework was organized around the "need" to reduce spending, supply workers to a changing labour market and privatize decision-making and provision of training. As a result, programs for women were, for the most part, relatively short term and had limited resources, with a focus on assisting women to find entry-level work.
CJS was a "supply side" policy, which means that the fundamental concern was to supply workers to the labour market. In this orientation to labour market programming, women's struggles with the labour market were viewed as a result of their inadequacies, specifically their lack of training, labour market information and recent job experiences. The segregated character of the labour market and the discriminatory practices of employers were not directly addressed by this policy. In addition, within the dominant discourse, women were constructed as a rather homogeneous group abstracted from their race and class and other significant positionalities.

The dominant framework also reflected the belief that on-the-job rather than classroom learning was the most efficient and effective way to assist women. As a result, all CJS Entry Programs were structured around classroom training (off-site) and on-the-job training (on-site) with host employers. Given this orientation to job training and the cuts in spending, the structure of and availability of resources for the three programs in which the staff worked was thus somewhat predetermined. Analysis of the dominant needs claims of CJS and the "top-down" approach to policy-making, illustrates a policy process which contructed women -- both the staff and trainees -- as passive recipients, rather than active agents involved in a dialogical process of needs interpretation.
The Needs Talk of the Staff: A Plurality of Discourses

With this overview of the dominant policy discourse of CJS, the needs talk of the staff and the relations among staff, trainees and CEIC are now considered. As outlined in Fraser's model presented in Chapter Two, bringing women's needs to the attention of Western capitalist welfare regimes involves three analytically distinct but practically intermingled struggles. These include the struggle to politicize needs, the struggle to interpret needs and their satisfaction, which often involves public and semi-public agencies of the state, and the struggle to empower women to self-determine their own needs.

The three programs studied can be viewed as examples of semi-public agencies of the state in which most of the work of the staff (coordinators, instructors, and counsellors) involved struggles over the interpretation and satisfaction of the needs of the trainees. This analysis also reveals the practical intermingling of these conceptually differentiated struggles. That is, the staff, in addition to discussions over the best way to satisfy the trainees' needs, were also involved in a process of politicizing needs which had not been heretofore taken up within the dominant policy discourse. This involved a process of recontextualizing women's lives, of challenging the decontextualization or abstraction of women's struggles from
issues of race and class which was evident in the dominant policy framework.

This analysis indicates that the staff in these programs employed a plurality of discourses about women's needs including oppositional, reprivatization and expert needs discourses. As they attempted to have the state pay attention to the diversity and complexity of the trainees' needs, they also employed administrative, therapeutic, feminist, and anti-racist interpretations. Although the needs talk produced by the staff in each program was unique, the staff in all three programs resisted some aspect of the dominant policy discourse, whether it be the interpretation of women's needs or the satisfaction of those needs. All of the staff to some degree challenged the main goal of CJS Entry programs - to assist women to get a job, any job. They also resisted the dominant interpretation of the best way to reach this goal by challenging how the programs were structured and the kinds of resources provided. In this process, the staff also had to address their own needs as workers and their relationship to the state.

In the program for native women, the staff resisted the CJS focus on helping the trainees find paid work. As an alternative, the staff claimed that the trainees needed to build their self-esteem, think of careers as opposed to just jobs, and make plans for further education and training. They argued that it would be detrimental rather than helpful to most of the trainees to help them become employed in a
low-waged, low-skilled job. In their interpretation of how best to assist the trainees to improve their self-esteem, the staff claimed that the trainees needed to develop a positive sense of themselves as native women and they needed to heal from their experiences of violence and alcohol abuse.

In arguing for an alternative to simply accessing the low-skill, low-wage labour market, the staff in this program produced a kind of oppositional anti-racist and feminist discourse, one in which they struggled to politicize needs which had not been identified in the dominant policy framework. In their discussions about the trainees' struggles with alcohol abuse and violence, the staff in the native program also produced a kind of expert therapeutic needs discourse when they called for on-site counselling services and argued that many of the trainees needed years of therapy.

In the program which trained immigrant women, the staff also resisted the notion of helping their trainees find only entry-level work. There are several noteworthy differences, however, between this program and the program for native women. The staff in the program for immigrant women wanted the trainees to find decent paying jobs and thus negotiated with CEIC for a curriculum that included English upgrading and which provided skills training in bookkeeping and accounting. These skills would help the trainees find jobs which were in high demand and which paid better wages with
more opportunity for advancement. The staff further claimed that self-marketing, which involved the trainees securing their own host-employers, was an appropriate and effective way to help improve their job search skills, and their self-knowledge and self-esteem.

Like the native program, the trainees' self-esteem was an important issue, but it was approached in a different way. Rather than develop activities in which the trainees were encouraged to revitalize their cultural heritage, much of the lifeskills curriculum focused on learning "Canadian" ways. For example, in the classes on assertiveness training, the staff argued that many immigrant women have difficulties because their culture encourages them to be passive and nonassertive. In contrast to the native program, the staff claimed that the trainees needed to think about the short-term, rather than the long-term, and accept the fact that they must, to a certain extent, start over. Rather than encourage the trainees to think about their careers, the staff in this program claimed they had to help some of the trainees lower their expectations of themselves and their work.

Although there were obvious differences from the native program, the staff in the program for immigrant women also produced an expert therapeutic needs discourse. The staff, through their focus on helping the trainees adapt to the Canadian culture, were also producing a reprivatization discourse, one which maintained old boundaries, keeping the
focus of the problem on the immigrant workers, not on the discriminatory practices of employers or the government. It could be further argued that this approach helped to reinforce the dominant view in Canadian society that new immigrants must bear the burden of change, rather than the labour market becoming more responsive to the needs and resources immigrant women bring to the labour market.

In the third program studied, the staff also resisted the notion of helping women only find low-paying entry-level jobs. The staff were committed to helping women get jobs that paid a living wage. As the program progressed and various struggles emerged, however, the staff began to challenge the effectiveness of the re-entry model as appropriate for helping women enter this kind of work. They also began to reconsider whether entry-level construction work, even with its above minimum wages, provided enough for women who needed to pay for child care.

As they learned more about the motivations of the trainees and their diverse and complex lives, and about the demands of working in these nontraditional trades, the staff argued for more flexibility and different resources. In this process, the staff produced an oppositional feminist needs discourse, one in which they attempted to politicize issues such as the limits of the re-entry model and the different resources the trainees needed to deal with issues such as lack of proper housing, experiences of sexual assault, child abuse and substance abuse. They also argued,
with limited success, for different and expanded resources to address the trainees' needs for transportation, early morning child care, and higher "clothing" allowances which would cover costs of tools and proper work clothes and safety equipment.

Like the other two programs, the staff also employed an expert therapeutic needs discourse when they claimed that some of the trainees had serious personal troubles which required extensive counselling and professional help. Some of the staff, in their struggles with some particularly outspoken trainees who challenged the structure of the program, also employed a reprivatization needs discourse, one in which they argued that the trainees' had to "behave" in order to succeed in the "reality" of the work world.

The previous discussion focused on the multivalent and contested character of needs talk produced by the staff in the three job-entry programs. The next section considers the relationships between staff, the trainees and the state. Attention is given to how the staff negotiated with both the trainees and the state and how this was influenced by the different working contexts, the bureaucratic practices of the state, and the shared and different race and class positions of the actors involved.
Mediating Between the Trainees and the State

In the native program, the challenges to the dominant policy and the staff's production of an oppositional, anti-racist needs discourse took place within a context that was strongly influenced by the native-only environment. This agency had been created and the program developed following a needs survey of the urban native women's community. The staff's claims that the trainees "needed" further education and training, that they "needed" to build their self-esteem as native women emerged from this initial analysis.

Although the hierarchical institutional practices of CEIC tended to maintain unequal relationships between staff and trainees, in this program, their shared racial and gender identities allowed for a blurring of the division between staff and program recipients. Many of the staff and the volunteer board members had had experiences similar to those of the trainees and their claims about what the trainees needed reflected this sense of having "been there". This shared experience as native women was critical to developing a more fluid continuum of relations. Such a continuum, as Fraser has found in other social welfare programs, is critical to the process of politicization, the creation of an oppositional discourse and the empowerment of women to determine their own needs.

Although there was an attempt to maintain equal relations between staff and trainees in this program, there
were also power struggles. A few of the trainees struggled with the staff over regular attendance and abstention from substance abuse. Some of the trainees also resisted the curricula which focused on native issues. Although the staff wanted to avoid hierarchical relations, the structure of decision-making, their different economic situations and higher education levels and their position as staff worked to maintain unequal power relations.

This somewhat fluid continuum was not reflected in the staff's relationship with CEIC where there were ongoing struggles and tensions. CEIC had been concerned about the completion rates of the trainees and the low number of trainees finding work. The staff experienced a lack of trust by CEIC in their abilities. This tension persisted in spite of the fact that the program had been "successful" enough to receive government funding for several years. The recent staff turnover was likely a factor in maintaining tensions.

Another important element which affected the nature of the relationships in this program was the role of the board of volunteer directors. This all-native structure played a significant role in the web of relationships within this program. The staff also reported some tensions in the relationship with this voluntary board, which seemed to arise out of the different perspectives of board and staff responsibilities. The coordinator, in particular, found
that working with both the board and CEIC required significant effort and political skills.

The recent turnover in staff affected the working environment of this program. Staff reported a high degree of work stress and frustration arising from their multiple and at times competing roles, limited program time and resources, and their low pay and job insecurity. Working on short-term government projects perpetuated these features of their work. The previous staff had little time for curriculum development, planning and organizing, leaving the new workers with minimal guidelines. The demands of their work left them with little opportunity to take the time to develop such resources.

Like the native program, in the program for immigrant women, there were moments of conflict in the relationships among staff, trainees and CEIC. In comparison to the other two programs, however, these appeared to be minimal. There appeared to be less of a hierarchical quality in the relationships between the program and the state. The staff described their CEIC project officer as supportive and they experienced a sense of trust in this relationship. The staff were less isolated in their work, with other workers in the same agency also running government funded employment-related programs. Another factor reducing friction may have been the long-term relationship with CEIC and the many years of success in securing government funding. The staff were also relatively experienced in the
process of proposal writing, negotiating and instructing in job-entry programs.

As with the other two programs, opportunities for the trainees to interpret their own needs were limited. Potential trainees may have had some input into the development of this program, however, since the staff based their planning on information from women who could not get into the lower level English training. In contrast to the native program, there was less blurring of the division between staff and trainees. As employed, white, English-speaking, Canadian-born women, the staff had, to a certain extent, radically different experiences compared to the trainees. As for the trainees, all were struggling with the process of immigrating to a new country and some were also political refugees.

As women, the staff were sympathetic to the trainees' struggles and brought forward into the discussions the sexism and racism of the Canadian labour market. But at the same time, they argued that the trainees needed to lower their expectations and that they also needed to, in a sense, start over again. Although the staff acknowledged the traumas and disappointments of immigration, the program focused on adapting to the Canadian culture and gaining Canadian work experience which left little opportunity for the trainees to reflect on and discuss as a group their diverse experiences as immigrant women.
As the program progressed, the relationships between staff and some of the trainees shifted and the distinctions became blurred. Although many trainees had worked in professional jobs in their home countries, as new immigrants they found themselves with lower status and in reduced economic circumstances. This situation changed, however, as some of the trainees found work. Tensions emerged when some of the trainees succeeded in finding work with wages that were significantly higher than those of the staff.

As in all the programs, there were concerns among the staff over the work environment, the low wages and long hours. There was, to a limited extent, more job security in this program, given the longstanding relationship with CEIC and the agency's success in securing government funds for employment programs. In spite of this more secure working environment, the staff had similar difficulties serving the needs of the trainees and their own needs as workers.

In the program for training women for construction trades there were frequent struggles between the staff and CEIC, as well as between the staff and trainees. This program was a pilot project, and in many ways was a testing ground for CEIC and the agency. Although the agency had provided employment-related services before, such as job search clubs, this was its first government-funded job-entry program, and the agency had not previously developed relationships with the CJS division of CEIC.
As women aware of the difficulties of finding jobs in the changing economy and the barriers that poverty created for the trainees, the staff expressed much empathy with the trainees. Because most of the trainees in this program were women struggling to survive on welfare and many had no post-secondary education, there were clear divisions between staff and trainees. The majority of trainees had been on social assistance for several years and were knowledgeable about and somewhat impatient with the social welfare system. The staff also faced resistance from a core group of "out" lesbians who were particularly outspoken and had little patience for participating in activities they considered useless. For example, they had no time for lifeskills classes which discussed personal growth issues and the staff were aware that they didn't want "this sharing and caring bullshit!"

The staff had much experience working in various women's programs, although only one had been recently involved with government-funded job-entry programs. None of the staff, however, had worked as tradeswomen. There were also important differences in the strategies employed among the staff in response to various challenges and crises. One of the staff tried to negotiate with those trainees who were critical of the program, attempting to build alternative activities as assignments. Another would confront the trainees, claiming that they had to learn what the world of work was like. She argued that not showing up because they
were unhappy was not going to help them succeed in the labour market.

The tensions and conflicts facing the staff in this program were intensified since they were to a certain extent more isolated compared with the other two programs. As with the native program, there was an advisory body and a board of directors. And as in the native program the staff experienced tensions in their relationships to these advisory structures. For example, when the first group of trainees had given a rather negative evaluation of the carpentry training at the technical institute, some of the advisory committee members reacted by insisting on a different process for the second groups' assessment. In both the native program and in this program, the staff experienced frustrations in their relationships with the advisory committee or board because the members were not dealing with the everyday struggles of running the program.

Summary and Discussion

As in the process of developing CJS, "needs talk" was a key element in the discourse of the staff in each program. All the staff in each program resisted in some way the interpretation of women's needs as outlined within the dominant policy framework. They argued for more funding and the provision of different resources. They faced resistance from the state when their proposed curriculum and program
activities deviated from the predetermined structure and orientation. Some of the staff directly challenged the notion that success in the programs meant matching women with jobs, any job. In this struggle the staff produced a variety of needs discourses including oppositional, reprivatization and expert needs discourses.

Although there were common elements to their struggles, there were also important differences, reflecting the different agencies, different clients and different curricula as well as different relationships between the state, the staff and the trainees. Some of the staff were experienced negotiators and had years of practice in government funded job-entry programs, while others were new to the process. Some staff shared similar racial and class positions to the trainees, while others were differently positioned. In each program, the staff also had different relationship with other structures such as advisory committees and boards of directors which affected their negotiations with CEIC and with the trainees.

This analysis has also revealed that negotiations with the state and the trainees involved a contradictory process of politicizing and depoliticizing the needs of the trainees. At times, the work involved a process of politicizing needs and expanding the discussion to include needs that had not been addressed in the dominant framework, such as those needs arising from the trainees' experiences of violence and discrimination. The staff's opportunities
to bring forward an oppositional discourse, however, were severely constrained by the dominant policy framework which structured programs around predetermined needs.

In the process of arguing that different needs should be addressed in these programs, the staff had to translate these needs into objects of state intervention. Given the structural constraints and ideological orientation of the dominant policy context, it is not surprising that the staff tended to employ discourses in which the trainees were identified as "deviant" subjects, needing to be "fixed". Such contradictory outcomes reflect the difficulty of working within the dominant policy framework, which to a certain extent had predetermined the structures and content of each program, and the needs discourse of the staff.

The staff's struggles to improve and expand the resources needed to deal with the trainees' multiple and complex problems were closely tied to their needs as workers. The process of privatization along with the focus on reducing costs has resulted in adult educators who are working in the nonprofit and who are committed to serving the needs of their constituencies are being exploited.

As was outlined in the accounts of the three programs, much of the developmental work was done on a voluntary basis. There was no funding available under the Re-entry Program of CJS to cover costs of this initial state. Given the limited finances provided by the government, the program staff also had to give volunteer time to fund raising.
efforts. This exploitation of the staff's commitment to the trainees and to the programs success, together with the low wages and minimum job-security, created a situation with high levels of work stress and dissatisfaction. The rate of staff turnover was high, leaving the programs with ongoing problems in finding skilled workers and providing high quality instruction.

The staff's process of interpreting the needs of the trainees and their own needs as workers must also be viewed within the context of the hierarchical character of CEIC. The institutional practices of CEIC tended to, for the most part, position staff and trainees in unequal relationship to each other and the state. This structuring of relationships constrained the opportunities to politicize needs which had not been taken up within the dominant policy framework and also contributed to the staff's experiences of not being trusted by the government. Furthermore, the unequal power relationships between staff and trainees and the bureaucratic practices of CEIC tended to marginalize the trainees' efforts to interpret their own needs.

This chapter has presented an analysis of the struggles of the staff in the three job-entry programs with particular attention given to the plurality of needs discourses they employed as they discussed their work with the state and with the trainees. In the next and final chapter, the implications of this analysis for policy, practice and further research are considered with attention given to
replacing the "monological administrative process of needs interpretation" with a more "participatory, dialogical process".
CHAPTER NINE
TOWARDS A MORE PARTICIPATORY DIALOGICAL PROCESS OF NEEDS INTERPRETATION

For the time being, needs talk is with us for better or worse. For the foreseeable future political agents, including feminists, will have to operate on a terrain where needs talk is the discursive coin of the realm. (Fraser, p. 183)

In this final chapter, implications for practice, policy and further research are discussed. The analysis of the CJS policy discourse, the needs talk of the staff and the relationships among staff, trainees and the state has revealed that the dominant policy approach promotes a monological administrative process of needs interpretation. In this chapter, I address a variety of issues emerging from this analysis and theoretical framework, with attention given to implications for policy development and the provision of programs for women which would support a more participatory dialogical process of needs interpretation.

Within the dominant policy discourse, women's needs were reduced to entry-level skills training, labour market information, "lifeskills" and job experience. It is in one sense difficult to argue against this characterization of needs which appeared to address some of the barriers women face in their struggles to enter the labour market. In other words, at this "thin" level of discussion about women's needs there was little controversy. However, this
"thin" interpretation of women's needs was still problematic, for it did not address or recognize the diversity among women. Thus, the dominant discourse of CJS helped to neutralize the differences in, for example, women's race, class and ablebodiness. This simplified view of women's needs and ways to address them also rendered invisible the contextually specific practices at the local level.

As the diverse and multiple needs of the trainees emerged in the everyday struggles of running the job-entry programs, claims about what women needed became more complex and contested. Once the discussion moved to a "thick" description of women's needs, the process became one of contestation with different interpretations put forward by the different players -- the staff, the trainees and CEIC. Generally speaking, I sensed that the trainees had little opportunity to act as self-determining agents. Some did resist, however, and found spaces for their voices to be heard.

In this struggle, the staff assumed a central role, employing a plurality of needs discourses which at times challenged the dominant interpretation and, at other times, reinforced the monological administrative approach to needs interpretation. The accounts above reveal a variety of approaches employed by the staff in their interactions with trainees which both encouraged and discouraged the trainees' self determination of their needs.
The analysis of the production of needs talk by the staff in these programs illuminates the constraints and possibilities of working in a policy context in which women's needs had been, to a certain extent, predetermined. Within a rather simplistic interpretation of women's needs the staff found space to include activities which in many ways challenged the dominant discourse. However, the structure of the programs and the relationships tended to reinforce the monological administrative approach, which was further reinforced by the hierarchical institutional practices of CEIC.

The failure of the "thin" interpretation to address the complexity and diversity of the needs of the women participating in the programs suggests that labour market policies continue to be developed on notions of workers as male and women as 'other'. Women's participation in paid work has dramatically increased and will soon equal that of men. However, women for the most part have had to adjust to the existing structure of work which has not been significantly altered as a result of their increased participation. It is unlikely that issues such as early morning child care for women working in construction and resources to support women healing from violence and sexual abuse will be part of the consciousness of male policymakers. Policies should not be developed for the needs of white middle class women alone either, for their issues and struggles will be different from women struggling with
issues such as poverty and racism. For example, the Re-entry model was based on a view that the participants were women who had the family resources which supported a choice to stay at home to care for their children. Other women such as those on welfare and immigrant women were eventually included in the eligibility criteria, but the model of the program remained the same.

The "spilling over" of women's needs as they began to participate in these job-entry programs and the staff's struggles to politicize these needs in their negotiations with the state suggests that these programs represent, in Fraser's terms, a new "social" arena - an arena which is a site of discourse about "runaway" needs which can no longer be contained within old boundaries of public and private.

The accounts of the three programs provided in chapters five through seven indicated that the needs of the staff were interwoven with the interpretation of the needs of the trainees. Many of the struggles facing the staff in their work context were related to the impact of privatization and spending reduction. This impact of privatization is explored in the following section.

**Privatization and the Exploitation of Workers**

The process of privatization - of shifting programs out of public educational institutions to the private sector, which includes both for-profit and not-for-profit
training agencies - has created both constraints and opportunities for adult educators committed to programs which empower women. On the one hand, many non-profit groups now have access to public funding to provide programs for women. Many of these groups and agencies have a commitment to serving the interests of women and are knowledgeable about their multiple and diverse needs.

On the other hand, privatization has taken place within the context of greatly reduced government spending. The government's concern to keep costs down has led to competition among private sector trainers. This focus on reducing costs has unfortunately helped to create an exploitive situation in which adult educators working in various programs must contribute significant numbers of voluntary hours in order for programs to be funded and to survive. The government is exploiting the staffs' commitment to the trainees.

Not only does the government's agenda to privatize training add to the expansion of the "bad jobs" sector of the economy (i.e., lower wages, less security), but it also makes it difficult to build upon and expand the knowledge base of workers in this sector. In the three programs studied, only a few of the staff had worked for any length of time in CJS programs. Since the research was completed, many have moved on to other kinds of work. The weak attachment to the labour market which characterizes these
jobs makes it extremely difficult to maintain and build a knowledge base.

Given that privatization is a process which will continue, it will be difficult to transform this situation into a nonexploitive one. However, some interventions would make a difference, for example the introduction of new policies to address issues of employment security for workers in the those areas of the labour market where part-time, part-year, contractual work is the norm. The development and implementation of national training standards could also help by outlining ways government-funded training programs should be developed, delivered and evaluated.

The issue of wages is also important. Although government-funded job-entry programs are being offered by the private sector, they are still funded by public money and information about wages and other costs should therefore be made available. Wage scales should be introduced and used consistently, and should reflect the level of knowledge, skills and responsibility necessary to provide these kinds of training programs. Alternative schemes for workers to receive benefits while employed in short-term programs should also be developed and made available. Workers in these programs would benefit as well from opportunities for professional development and further training.
The staff in the three programs studied frequently challenged the government about their working conditions, but as individuals working in isolation their effectiveness was limited. More opportunities to organize collectively would help those adult educators working in the increasingly competitive environment of the non-profit sector to share knowledge and skills in relation to proposal development, negotiations with government and employers, classroom instruction, curriculum development, counselling and crisis management. Through collective organizing, workers can also more effectively address issues relating to wages, working hours and benefits.

Workers acting collectively and not just within their individual programs can be more effective when arguing for alternative approaches to program development that are based on a participatory dialogical process of needs interpretation. A necessary aspect of alternative approaches is the provision of funding and resources for this kind of developmental work -- funding that would support ways to reach out to women in their own communities.

Evaluation and monitoring of the training programs provided in this privatized context are very important. Governments which continue to provide public funding to these activities should be working with agencies and trainers to establish guidelines and a monitoring process. The licensing and accreditation of private sector training agencies also should be examined and changes introduced to
ensure ongoing evaluation takes place and minimum standards are established. The experiences of participants in government-funded job-entry programs should be part of the evaluation process.

Addressing the issue of privatization is an important aspect of challenging the dominant needs claims of labour market policy. Providing a non-exploitive work environment and engaging in collective problem solving are critical to supporting a more participatory dialogical process of needs interpretation within the decision-making process.

Democratizing the Needs Interpretation Process

Although this study indicates that the staff in these three programs resisted the narrow interpretation of women's needs within the dominant policy discourse, they were limited in their capacity to challenge the monological administrative approach to needs interpretation. The trainees' opportunities to determine their own needs were even more constrained. Bringing a more participatory dialogical process to decision-making requires that changes must happen in the micro politics of everyday interactions with staff, CEIC and trainees, as well as the macro politics of policy-making.

In order to promote a democratic needs interpretation process, attention must be given to the three main struggles: politicizing needs, maintaining an oppositional
interpretation of the satisfaction of these needs, and empowering women to participate in these discussions. In promoting a more democratic process, one in which "better" needs interpretations can emerge, attention must also be given to supporting a process which is inclusive rather than exclusive and one in which the interpretation of needs does not disadvantage some groups of people over others.

In order to build programs that are flexible and that respond to the diversity and complexity of women's needs, the decision-making process must become less hierarchical, more permeable, and one in which all the actors participate, including the trainees, the staff, the government workers, the employers and the policy-makers. Under CJS, the Local Advisory Councils (LACs) were an attempt to involve a variety of labour market partners in decision-making. However, since the members were selected by local MPs and these structures remained outside of the CEIC traditional decision-making process, in some cases they had little influence and in others the interests represented were mainly those of business and labour.

In order to illustrate the implications for everyday practice and policy-making, I will take up the issue of violence, a "runaway" need not addressed within the "thin" description of women's needs in the official policy discourse, but one which emerged as an issue within all three programs. Many of the trainees were survivors of sexual abuse and other forms of violence which created
significant barriers for their ability to participate effectively in the programs. The issue of violence was also significant for the staff who struggled to respond within the limits of the programs. In one program, the staff risked violence when they intervened on behalf of some of the trainees, helping to move them out of abusive situations. Staff received threats from partners who were fearing the changes that were happening for the trainees. It was also a concern for the staff as they struggled to respond and in the process employed a variety of interpretations in their negotiations with CEIC for expanded resources.

Politicizing the issue of violence against women and demanding state intervention in relation to this issue has been a major focus for many feminist groups. The women's movement has achieved some success in bringing this issue out of the private/domestic domain and into the public/political domain. As feminists succeed in politicizing the issue of violence against women, they also face the challenge of identifying the issue as relevant to women's labour market programs and not only women's needs for shelters and healing.

Linked to the politicization process is the important work of interpreting how women's needs can be satisfied. There has been a strong tendency for the state, in response to this issue, to institutionalize services and create a new area of social welfare professionalization. In the process
of defining women's needs in relation to their experience of violence and determining the satisfaction of those needs, those who are involved with training programs and women who are survivors of violence must be empowered to participate and determine what kind of interventions would be helpful.

The diversity of women's experiences with violence must also be recognized and included in the discussion so that their experiences are not abstracted from struggles they face through racism, classism, ageism, ableism and heterosexism. The goal should be the development of programs based on a process of needs interpretation that is inclusive of each constituency of women who are to be served by these programs.

This dissertation began with a quote from Weiler (1988) in which feminist practitioners are encouraged to "do what is possible", while recognizing the limitations of the context in which they work. Many of the barriers such as violence and racism which women face in participating in job training programs and finding well-paid employment can only be addressed in a limited way within the confines of labour market programs and policies. A broader variety of interventions is therefore necessary, not simply programs whose focus is on getting women into the labour market. The limitations of labour market programs must be recognized and support and resources made available for "pre-training" or "bridging" programs. The focus of these kinds of programs is not getting women jobs, but assisting them to get to a
stage where they can benefit from short-term job-entry projects.

Focusing on the needs of women for particular support and resources must be balanced with attention given to the structure of the labour market itself and the discriminatory and exploitive practices of employers. Other kinds of labour market policies and programs in addition to those which focus on providing workers with skills are necessary to address the negative aspects of economic restructuring which creates "bad jobs" as well as "good jobs". To a limited extent, new Employment Equity legislation was introduced to address the systemic barriers that exist in the structure of the labour market. This approach has not proven to be very effective, however, in bringing about significant changes to employment practices.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study has employed Fraser's critical discourse-oriented approach to policy analysis. This approach directs attention to the politics of needs interpretation and the central role that needs talk plays in the development of labour market policies and programs. Her conceptualization of the struggles facing adult educators and feminists working in state-funded programs is a powerful and insightful approach which I will continue to employ in further research.
The results of this study suggest that more attention should be given to examining labour market and other policies which affect the practice of adult educators. Employing a critical orientation to the arguments central to policy-making is an important aspect of this kind of research. Examining policy from the "bottom up" - that is, from the perspective of the everyday struggles of adult educators - is also useful to further understanding of the emancipatory possibilities of adult education activities. Further research is necessary to monitor the impact of privatization on the provision of job training programs for women. This further research should involve critically analysing the needs discourse of new labour market policies.

This study did not explore the politics of needs interpretation that occurs within the confines of government departments, particularly CEIC which has responsibility for labour market policies and programs. This would be a fascinating and important contribution to a rich and "thick" description of policy and decision-making. Searching in other fields, other countries and other areas of state activity for policies and programs that are based on participatory dialogical processes of needs interpretation is another important research activity that would deepen understanding of the possibilities for such an approach.
Summary and Conclusion

Based on a theoretical approach which focused on the construction of "needs talk" as the medium through which conflict is played out and inequalities are elaborated and challenged, the everyday struggles of several women working in three CJS programs were explored. The central goal of the study was to illuminate the contested and contextual character of the political struggle over needs interpretation and how the staff in these three programs participated in this struggle.

One of the central assumptions informing this inquiry is that running government-funded job-entry programs is difficult and contradictory work. It is work that is significant because it is in these kinds of adult education programs that many women are served -- women who face multiple barriers and have limited access to other training opportunities. My goal was to illuminate the opportunities and constraints arising from dominant discourse of the CJS policy, the structure of programs, and available resources. It was important, therefore, not only to attend to the structural and ideological constraints, but also to illuminate the moments of resistance and empowerment.

This analysis indicates that the dominant policy discourse which influenced the structure and content of programs, and the hierarchical decision-making process left
little opportunity for the staff to respond to the diverse
needs of the trainees and to empower the trainees to
interpret their own needs. The challenge for practitioners
and others advocating for change in policy-making is to
develop programs based on participatory dialogical processes
in which all actors involved, including the state, the
employers, the staff and the trainees, can participate in
identifying needs and the most effective way of satisfying
needs. In order to replace the monological, administrative
process of needs definition with participatory dialogical
processes of needs interpretation, changes need to occur at
all stages of decision-making from the development of policy
to the delivery of programs.

Finally, although needs talk does seem to be the
"discursive coin of the realm" as Fraser has noted, perhaps
other orientations to discussing and developing policies and
programs that empower women should be included. That is,
other idioms such as rights and responsibilities should be
added to the discourse. Perhaps when justified needs claims
have been translated into social rights, such as the right
to collective self-determination, to participate in
decisions affecting our lives, women will be further along
the path to equality.

In closing, I want to return to everyday struggles of
providing meaningful programs for women who are seeking paid
employment. The following poem by Jane Munro (1992)
captures, I believe, the richness and complexity of women's
lives as well as the resistance which eventually "cracks" the narrow confines of programs which have been structured with little understanding of the complexity of women's needs and of their strengths.

Hyacinth

Basting the faces together, just to try this place on for size. Basting stitches. Basting in my own fat, that's what. The best place here's the coffee shop. All the pretty girls don't have kids at home, and the grey-haired, super-natural women scare me. They've thought about too much. It shows in their choice of shoes. My shoulder hurts--this bag's too heavy. In the registrar's office they told me "You've got all deficiencies!" No grade point average. No math, No science. No foreign language. No English composition. No employer's name. No spouse to speak of.

An no softness in my voice. That cuticle's bleeding again. They're polite, but no one has the slightest idea of the mess in the kitchen or the kid with bronchitis. What did she mean, reentry woman? I never had the chance to be here before. Women's work turned to the inside. Blind hems. Hidden seams. Who counts the stitches it takes to make a deficient life? One that doesn't fit anymore.

Mama left me grandma's gold thimble. Good women, daughters of farm women, raised in the church. At sixteen, grandma put up her hair and wore long skirts. At sixteen, mama embroidered linens. At sixteen, I failed math and made that green dress. My farm's the window sill. By the time I was nineteen, I had a daughter, and a husband. There's been plenty of growing-up around me. Deficiencies? Maybe. But raising kids gives you persistence.

Last night, I heard the hyacinth crack its plastic pot. A root clawed through the green shell. I heard a scratching, breaking sound --thought some black beetle was in there-- but it was just this one white root tip
lengthening through the split it made.
No needle. No thimble. Just that thread.
Ate a peep-hole, then let her rip—the coiled growth
from inside straightening out, nosing into space.
Tree roots heave paved roads.
Seed leaves lift pebbles.
Morning glory rises through
cement step, base board, window frame.
Climbs summer long inside the front hall.

All the deficiencies? Reentry?
The force that drives a hyacinth root
comes from the years it bloomed and sank.
Just because you're vulnerable
doesn't mean you're weak.
Made, mended, remade.
A thimble's a tiny cup, a shining cap
Mama would push me into this if she could.
Perhaps that's reentry—generations
packed into my head and heart,
a full bulb, freshly planted.
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INFORMATION LETTER

Date

Name and address of contact

Dear ,

I am a doctoral student at the University of British Columbia in Adult Education. My dissertation entitled Doing What Is Possible: Working With and Against Policy Affecting Women's Job Training is a study of the opportunities and difficulties feminist practitioners face as they work with government policy in order to improve women's job training and employment opportunities. The experiences of women providing government-funded job training programs are the focus of this research.

I am writing to request your participation in the study which would involve a one to two hour tape-recorded interview which could be conducted at a place and time of your choosing. During the interview, I will be asking you about the nature of your work and efforts to bring about change. Another aspect of the study involves analysis of government reports, policy statements, government documentation, briefs and proposals. In this regard, I would also like to examine written materials you have been working with in your programs and efforts to bring about change. Examining these materials will help me to understand the context of your work.

Please be assured that your responses to my questions and any copies of written materials you give me will be kept confidential and anonymous through use of pseudonyms and numerical coding of data. Once the study is completed, each participant will receive a summary of the study. You are free to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time and your decision to do so will not be held against you in any respect. If at any time you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to contact me at my home at 733-7480, or at UBC at 228-5853.

Sincerely,

Shauna Butterwick
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. I'd like to hear about your program:

   How/when did you begin working with government funded job training?

   What kinds of programs do you offer?

   Does your program help women? Which women and how?

   How/why do you decide on the kinds of training/curriculum?

   What government rules/criteria/documentation must you work with? Do they help or hinder? How?

   Where are the obstacles or difficulties?

   Where are the opportunities?

   Do you have opportunities to talk about and exchange ideas about your program with others? If so, how and when?

2. Tell me your thoughts on government training programs:

   What do you think is the government's role regarding women's access to the labour market?

   What do you think of the current policy? Does it help women? If so, which women and how?

   Should the policy and programs be changed? If so, how and why?

   Can you change government policy/programs? If so, how?

   What is important to remember when working with government? What advice would you give to another?

   What are the dangers/obstacles?

   How do you know you've been effective? What are the rewards for yourself/for others?

   What is your bottom line? (How do you keep your principles intact when working with the state)?

3. Is there anything you would like to add or comment on?
CONSENT FORM

I am willing to participate in the study Doing What Is Possible: Working With and Against Policy Affecting Women's Job Training. I understand the purpose of this study is to explore the opportunities and difficulties in working to bring about change in government policies affecting women's job training opportunities.

I understand that participation in the study involves a one to two hour tape-recorded interview, conducted at a place and time of my choosing. I also give permission to the researcher to examine written materials such as briefs, reports, proposals and communication with government that relate to my work.

I understand that the confidentiality of my responses and any written materials I submit for analysis will be maintained through numerical coding. I understand that pseudonyms will be used in the final document when individuals or places are referred to. I understand that all data will be destroyed once the study is completed.

I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions and to withdraw at any time from the study and that such decisions will not be held against me in any way. I understand that I can call the researcher, Shauna Butterwick, at 228-5853 or 733-7480 if I have any questions or concerns.

I have received a copy of this consent form and the letter of introduction outlining the nature of the study.

_________________________________________  Date
Signature of Participant

_________________________________________  Date
Signature of Researcher