THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY ON ADULT WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENTAL

EDUCATION: A MULTI-METHODOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

by

JAMIE L. CAUDILL

(Under the Direction of Thomas Valentine)

ABSTRACT

Women decide to go to college for many reasons and the support of their

families can be crucial to their success. Returning to college for women with

families, especially those with children and spouses or partners, can be a

delicate balance between the "greedy" institutions of school and family. The

three studies that comprise this document look at the different ways in which the

family impacts women enrolled in college developmental education classes. The

first study is a critical literature review article that looks at the impact that role

conflicts have on the well being and success of women in college as well as the

importance of the balance of power and load in the lives of these women. The

second study focuses on how children in the home impact a woman's

educational journey. An interview-based study was completed with twenty-two

female students at a mid-sized urban college in the southeast. The analysis of

the interview data revealed six strong themes that connected these women.

These themes reveal both positive, including encouragement and praise, and

negative ways, including new behaviors problems and childcare issues, that

children in the home impact a woman's education and her decision to stay

enrolled in college. Finally, study three was a survey-based study completed

with 230 women enrolled in developmental education classes at the same

southeastern college. These women were asked questions to determine the

amount of spousal or partner support or sabotage actions are present in their

lives and how these actions affect their educational journey. Analysis of the data

from the completed 53-item survey revealed four distinct types of relationships

present in the lives of these women, ranging from the Optimal relationship

experience to the Toxic relationship experience with almost half (42%) of the

participants falling in the Troublesome relationship experience. When taken

together, these three studies show the challenges that women with families face

when they return to college to pursue their college degrees.

INDEX WORDS: Women, developmental education, adult education, families,

nontraditional students, role conflicts, spousal support,

spousal sabotage

THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY ON ADULT WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENTAL

EDUCATION: A MULTI-METHODOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

by

JAMIE L. CAUDILL

B.A., Piedmont College, 2003

M.Ed., The University of Georgia, 2005

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2015

THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY ON ADULT WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENTAL

EDUCATION: A MULTI-METHODOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

by

JAMIE L. CAUDILL

<table>
<tr><td>Major Professor:</td><td>Thomas Valentine</td></tr>
<tr><td>Committee:</td><td>Bradley Courtenay</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Juanita Johnson-Bailey</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Maureen Grasso</td></tr>
</table>

DEDICATION

Like the many women who were interviewed or surveyed during the completion of my dissertation, I am immensely impacted by my family and it is to my family that I owe a tremendous and heartfelt thank you. My daughter has spent many years supporting her mother as I have worked a full-time job, been a part-time student, and tried to be there for her in any way I could. Lara, I could have never completed this tremendous task without you and your unfailing and unwavering support. I love you and I am in awe of the wonderful woman that you have become. To my "other" family, Kim, Brett, Conrad, and Sean, I cannot begin to thank you enough for all of the daily support, guidance, and love that you have given me throughout this process and so much more. Finally, to my parents, thank you for pushing me to be my very best.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The process of completing a dissertation is just more than research and statistics, more than words on pages, and so much more than credits on a transcript. This is a process that can help define who you are and what kind of person you want to be, and for me it helped to define the type of educator that I have become. I have been blessed with amazing professors who have taught me invaluable content, but most importantly have taught me how to treat students with kindness and understanding and with dignity and honor. Thank you Dr. Johnson-Bailey for opening up yourself to your students and showing us how to teach with pride and love in your heart. Your teaching style has affected me more that you will ever know and I can only hope to be half as an amazing professor as you have are. Thank you Dr. Courtenay for showing us that spirituality and higher education can yield amazing results for deeper adult learning and positive change, not only in our students, but in ourselves as well. Last, but so definitely not least, thank you Dr. Valentine for all that you have done for me over the past decade. Your sense of humor, concern for all students, and your ability to see beyond the issues has helped me to be a better student and a better educator, and that is all I could have ever asked for in a mentor. Thank you for your guidance and direction.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

According to recent reports from the American Association of Colleges and Universities, 53% of all incoming freshman students will be placed in one or more developmental education classes for remediation in English, math, or reading (Miller & Murray, 2005; Tritelli, 2003). In 2009, there were over three million freshmen admitted to colleges in the United States and approximately 1.7 million of those students were required to take at least one developmental education class (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2010). Women are often heavily represented in these remedial classrooms, often accounting for up to 57% of students in college developmental education classes (Boylan, 1999).

Students enrolled in developmental education classes, also known as learning support or remedial education classes, have a consistently more difficult time succeeding in their college studies and reaching their educational goals. These students have a college dropout rate between 70% and 90% based upon how many support classes they have to complete (Boylan, 2001). Students who are required to complete support classes have one of the highest drop out rates based simply on the difficult task of increasing their reading, English and math

abilities in a college setting (Williams, 2008; Plucker, Wongsarnpigoon, & Houser, 2006).

When we consider that many of these students in developmental education classes are women, we can also add the additional stressors of household duties, children, spouses or domestic partners, and extended family since many women are still ensconced in the traditional role of caregiver and caretaker in the home (Edwards, 1993; Home, 1998; Hostetler, 2008; Vaccaro & Lovell, 2010). A woman's family is often listed as one of the most influential factors in her success in higher education (Laubach, 1993, McGivney, 2004, Stalker, 2001), and this success can be dependent on the support given to her by these family members (Home, 1998).

Background of the Research

Women often have many roles in traditional society including that of wife or partner, mother, daughter, and worker and these roles often require a great deal of time and energy. When a woman decides to return to college for personal, professional, or financial reasons another layer of responsibility and commitment is added to her life. The time and dedication that college entails can be further intensified when she is required to take developmental education classes.

A preliminary review of the research on the impact that a woman's family has on the success of her return to higher education shows a consistent duality. Some research finds that women are very happy with the supportive role that their families play in their return to education while other research shows the

polar opposite (Ballmer & Cozby, 1981; Edwards,1993; Kelly, 1982; Malicky &

Norman, 1996). Questions have also been raised in recent literature (McGivney,

2004) as to the extent to which women interviewed in previous research have

been completely forthright in revealing their level of satisfaction with the degree

of family support for her educational pursuits.

Overview of Developmental Education

Developmental education classes were created to help underprepared

students hone the skills needed to be successful in their college courses. The

U.S. Department of Education defines developmental education classes as those

courses that are designed to help students gain necessary skills in basic areas

such as math, English, and reading and to provide students with the scholarly

aptitude needed to succeed in college-level curriculum (Provasnik & Planty,

2008). These programs are also often responsible for providing guidance and

support for academically underprepared students, including instruction in study

and test-taking aptitudes and counseling in time management and life skills.

(Laine, Laine, & Bullock, 2000).

Mandatory developmental education classes, for students who do not

obtain a passing entrance test score, often place additional burdens on students.

These courses are considered pre-college courses and as such are not part of a

prescribed curriculum. Each additional developmental class extends a student's

college workload, thus potentially causing further stress on a woman and her

family relationships. Women who live within the bonds of family already face

issues of stress based upon the demands of certain structured life roles

(Edwards, 1993; McGraw & Walker, 2004; Stalker, 2001). When coupled with the commitment that returning to higher education requires and the additional stress of taking developmental education classes, many women have found it impossible to deal with the conflicting demands of these "greedy institutions" (Edwards, 1993; Hayes & Flannery, 2000). Understanding how women navigate both the world of academia and the home environment can help to guide faculty in creating curriculum that involve a critical look into self-efficacy and goal setting.

Women In Developmental Education Classes

Women have many different reasons for returning to college including the need for an advanced degree for professional reasons, the desire for increased financial returns, and a multitude of personal desires. Most of these women, though, never expect to start their college experience by having to attend developmental classes to increase their basic skills. The added stressors of having to attend these non-credit remedial classes only increase the multiple demands that these women already have in their lives including their homes and families. These women often find themselves having to balance their time between the two demanding worlds of family and education, which may cause both internal and external struggles.

There are many reasons, both intrinsic and extrinsic, that motivate women to return to college. There are just as many aspects of their experiences that can cause women to falter or even abandon their higher educational quests. Enrollment in developmental education classes may have a tremendous impact on these women's ultimate decision whether or not to finish their education.

Often, these women have to weigh both the benefits and the costs of attending college and of the additional time and money spent in development education classes. These factors can weigh heavily in their decision of whether or not to continue.

Women often have very personal reasons that motivate them to return to education. Some of these women are looking for a life change or are responding to changes in their lives that spur them to return. These changes are often associated with family issues such as divorce, restrictive home environments, or a desire for personal growth (Brown, 2002; Cuban & Hayes, 1996; Horsman, 2006). Unfortunately, it can be these same personal reasons that can prevent these women from completing their college goals. Women in developmental education classes have between a five percent and a twenty percent chance of ever graduating due largely in part to their commitments and roles outside of the classroom (Maddox, 2002). A woman's commitment to family responsibilities and family roles greatly affect her chances of ever graduating college and an unsupportive family can lead to the abandonment of educational goals (Home, 1998).

Families

The term "family" often takes on different structures for different people, but for the purpose of this dissertation the family is defined as those individuals who demand the personal time and attention of women including spouses, children, domestic partners, step-children, parents, and extended family members that have direct and frequent contact with these women (Cuban, 2003;

Hayes & Flannery, 2000). Women with family responsibilities are the fastest growing group of college students, but these responsibilities can lead to issues of overload and higher dropout rates (Home, 1998; Vaccaro & Lovell, 2010). Lack of support from family members can make attending classes difficult or even impossible, especially if these members begin to feel as though college attendance interferes with a woman's continued participation in the family structure (McGivney, 2004; Laubach, 1993). Women dealing with these strained family relations may have to make the choice between continuing their education and accepting the disintegration of their families (Malicky & Norman, 1996; Bradshaw, Hager, Knott, & Seamy, 2006).

Families and higher education both require an inordinate amount of time and commitment on the part women and are often deemed "greedy institutions" (Edwards, 1993). According to Ballmer and Cozby (1981), as women return to college, time that would have been normally spent taking care of family members and their activities has to be reallocated to the requirements of school (p. 1019). While authors such as Thomas (2001) find that women students in higher education are constantly torn between their education and their families (p. 139) other researchers have reported that women students consider their families to be their greatest sources of strength and inspiration (Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002).

Focus of the Research

Family and education have both been described as "greedy institutions" (Coser, 1974, p. 692) that seemingly require very different aspects of a woman's

life, and each can be time and resource consuming (Edwards, 1993; Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002). We need to better understand how these two worlds can co-exist in a woman's life without requiring her to sacrifice her own goals and dreams and if required participation in developmental education classes has an effect on this delicate balance. Much of the literature on the subject of the coexistence of education and family in a woman's life shows a definitive dichotomy between the belief that families are one of the greatest support systems that a woman has, and needs during re-entry into higher education, (Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002: Malicky & Norman, 1996) and the belief that families can be a barrier to women returning to school (Edwards, 1993; Hostetler, 2008; Vaccaro & Lovell, 2009).

Women represent the largest percentage of students in development education classrooms; yet, there is very little research into how enrollment in these classes affects their continued education, especially in relation to familial influences and support. Considering the additional burden that these classes may place on the already responsibility laden woman (Vaccaro & Lovell, 2009), the possibility may exist that these classes increase family resistance to her higher education journey and result in eventual withdrawal from school.

Overview of the Dissertation

The articles written for this dissertation are a complete work and as such each article includes a separate references list. There is also a cumulative reference list at the end of the dissertation. As this dissertation is structured,

there is no freestanding literature review. Instead, relevant literature is discussed in each of the studies in its article format.

The knowledge gap addressed within this dissertation can be summarized in terms of the following three broad objectives:

1. Research and discuss what the literature says about how women navigate family and higher education.

2. Research and discuss how children help or hinder a woman's educational journey.

3. Research and discuss how spousal or partner support and sabotage behaviors affect women in college.

Structure of the Dissertation

The body of this dissertation is comprised of three journal-ready articles focused on women in college developmental education courses and the role that their families play in their college experiences. Each article is a stand-alone study that contributes to the overall picture of how families influence, either negatively or positively, the success of these women who have to start their college journey in a developmental education classroom. Three journal-ready articles comprise chapters two, three, and four of this dissertation. For economy of presentation, a unified reference list is included at the end of this dissertation instead of after each of the separate articles. All references are included in this list.

Chapter Five of this dissertation serves as a summative conclusion of the findings of each of the three studies and discusses the similarities and

differences between the separate manuscripts as they relate to the project as a whole. This chapter ties each individual article into a coherent body of work. Chapter Five also shows how the different studies, when viewed as a whole body of work, will add to the knowledge base regarding women in developmental education classes. Furthermore, this final chapter will address any knowledge gaps and need for additional research that may not be seen by the individual studies.

<div align="center">**Overview of the Research Studies**</div>

Three journal-ready articles constitute Chapters Two though Four of this dissertation. Descriptions of the articles are listed below.

- Chapter Two of this dissertation is a critical review of the pertinent literature on families, women, and higher education. The article that will be submitted to *The Journal of Developmental Education* is entitled "The Influence of Family on Adult Women Enrolled in Developmental Education"*.* The article employs content meta-analysis to identify important themes, patterns and relationships found in the literature and builds a base of both current and seminal literature that scaffolds the importance of the two additional research studies in this dissertation. The literature review focuses on the ideas on women in college, developmental education, family roles, student roles and family support and sabotage. The article also builds a case chronicling the importance of a woman's family, however that is defined, in her higher educational journey. Chapter Two is the complete journal-ready manuscript, except for its reference list.

For economy of presentation, a single reference list appears at the end of this dissertation.

- Chapter Three of this dissertation is a qualitative research study that focuses on the ways in which children influence, both positively and negatively, a woman's experience in the developmental education classroom (see Appendices A – C). This article pays particular attention to the role of women as primary care givers to children in the home and how these relationships affect a woman's enrollment in higher education. During analysis of participants' individual and group interview responses, six important themes were revealed. These themes discuss both the positive and negative affects that children have on these women in college. This article is entitled "The Impact of Children on Women Enrolled in Developmental Education" and will be submitted to the *Journal of College Reading and Learning,* whose audience includes faculty and administrators from two and four-year colleges, especially those colleges that have a focus on student learning support. Chapter Three is the complete journal-ready manuscript, except for its reference list. For economy of presentation, a single reference list appears at the end of this dissertation.

- Chapter Four contains the final journal article, entitled "Experiences of Spouse Support and Sabotage for Adult Women in Developmental Education". The quantitative article employs survey methodology to measure four aspects of support and sabotage, emotional support,

logistical support, subtle sabotage and overt sabotage, that women experience from their spouses or partners. The survey for this study was derived from an existing survey, Spouse Support and Sabotage of Adult Women Students, that was originally created to study women enrolled in credit-based classes that would eventually lead to an degree. The original survey was modified to fit current student populations (see Appendices D – G). This article, co-authored with the major professor serving as the second author, will be submitted to *Adult Education Quarterly* due to its audience of higher education faculty, academic advisors, college administrators, and student affairs personnel. Chapter Four is the complete journal-ready manuscript, except for its reference list. For economy of presentation, a single reference list appears at the end of this dissertation.

Significance of the Dissertation

The dissertation consists of three studies that, when taken together, represent a research program on the effects of family support and sabotage on women enrolled in college developmental education courses. Each of the studies is designed to produce different types of information that, when viewed as a whole, present a broader view on how certain family members affect women enrolled in developmental education courses. The significance of the dissertation is in terms of both the theoretical and practical knowledge produced.

The theoretical significance of these studies is in the production of knowledge on how families, specifically spouses, domestic partners, children and

stepchildren, support and sabotage a woman's return to higher education. Knowledge produced on this complex subject adds to the current academic conversation on the effect specific family members have on a woman's higher educational pursuits and on how the additional factor of mandatory enrollment in development education courses affects this balance. Adding knowledge on how both the influence of specific family members and the additional course load of developmental education courses enables academic personnel, including faculty members, student services staff, and administrators, understand any additional issues of stress that this particular group of women may face in college.

On a more practical note, higher education administrators, support services personnel and faculty members could use knowledge produced during this research as they seek ways to better understand and facilitate the needs of this important population. Administrators are often on the lookout for ways to increase student retention and with the ever growing student population who are required to take development education classes understanding the educational needs of women in these classes is a good place to start. College administrators could use the knowledge generated by this research to structure class times, attendance policies, childcare, and other important supports for women in developmental education programs. In addition, administrators and support services personnel could work with this particular population to offer services such as group counseling to help to address any common barriers to education that may be revealed by this research. In addition, faculty could use information from this research to design group activities that allow these students to use their

backgrounds and experiences outside of the classroom as a springboard for
multifaceted learning situations.

CHAPTER 2

THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY ON ADULT WOMEN

IN DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION [1]

_____

[1] Caudill, Jamie. 2013. To be submitted to *The Journal of Developmental Education.*

Abstract

The developmental student population is continuing to grow and many of these students are adult women who continue to struggle to exit learning support classes. It has been reported that family members play a significant role in the success of women enrolled in higher education. What is not known is how enrollment in learning support affects their existing family dynamics or how this family support affects these women students. This paper examines the literature related to this struggle and makes recommendations about how these issues can be resolved.

According to recent reports from the American Association of Colleges and Universities, a disproportionate number of all incoming freshman students are being placed in one or more developmental education class for remediation in English, math, or reading (Tritelli, 2003; Miller & Murray, 2005). In 2009, there were over three million freshmen admitted to colleges in the United States and approximately 1.7 million of those students were required to take at least one developmental class (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2010). Women are often heavily represented in these remedial classrooms, often accounting for more than half of students in college developmental programs (Boylan, 1999).

Students enrolled in developmental classes have a consistently more difficult time succeeding in their college studies and reaching their educational goals. These students have a college dropout rate between 70% and 90% based upon how many support classes they have to complete (Boylan, 2001). When we consider that many of these students in learning support programs are women, we can also add the additional stressors of household duties, children, spouses or domestic partners, and extended family since many women are still ensconced in the traditional role of caregiver and caretaker in the home (Edwards, 1993; Home, 1998; Hostetler, 2008; Vaccaro & Lovell, 2010).

Overview of Developmental Education

Developmental education courses, also often referred to as learning support or remedial courses, were created to help underprepared students hone the skills needed to be successful in their college courses. The U.S. Department

of Education defines developmental education as courses that are designed to help students gain necessary skills in basic areas such as math, English, and reading and to provide students with the scholarly aptitude needed to succeed in college-level curriculum (Provasnik & Planty, 2008). These courses are considered pre-college courses and as such are not part of a prescribed curriculum and do not count toward graduation credits.

Developmental education courses are offered in a variety of venues including four-year public and private colleges as well as community and two-year colleges. The number of colleges and universities offering learning support classes has increased dramatically over the past twenty years in response to the swell of students entering or returning to higher education. In 1990, approximately fifty-percent of all colleges and universities offered these learning support classes and by 2002 that number had risen to ninety percent (Maddox, 2002; Maloney, 2003). The sharp rise in offerings of learning support classes can be attributed to the growing number of students entering colleges and the large number of students who have been deemed academically unprepared based upon entrance exams, interviews, and application essays (Tritelli, 2003). As shown in Figure 1, the number of students placed into developmental education courses has continued to rise. In 1999, 28% of all incoming freshmen were placed into at least one developmental education class and by 2007 that number had risen to over 36% (Aud, S., Hussar, W., Kena, G., Bianco, K., Frohlich, L., Kemp, J., & Tahan, K., 2011).

Women In Learning Support Classes

Women have many different reasons for returning to college including the need for an advanced degree for professional reasons, the desire for increased financial returns, and a multitude of personal desires. Most of these women, though, never expect to start their college experience by having to attend learning support classes to increase their basic skills. The added stressors of having to attend these non-credit remedial classes only increase the multiple demands that these women already have in their lives including their homes and families. These women often find themselves having to balance their time between the two demanding worlds of family and education, which may cause both internal and external struggles.

According to the data from the National Center for Educational Statistics' latest report (2011), not only is the college developmental population continuing to rise, so is the number of women in these programs (p.27). Figure 1 shows that during the ten-year span between 1999 and 2008, the number of women placing into developmental education classes has risen from 34% in 1999 to almost 40% in 2007. The data also shows that a disproportionate number of these students, 65.4%, are adults twenty-four and older. (p. 27).

Factors for Dropout

Even though women make up the largest portion of nontraditional, undergraduate students, non-traditional women are still more likely to experience slower progression and to have inconsistent enrollment patterns (Grimes, 1997, p. 49). Oftentimes, these women may have to put their educational goals on
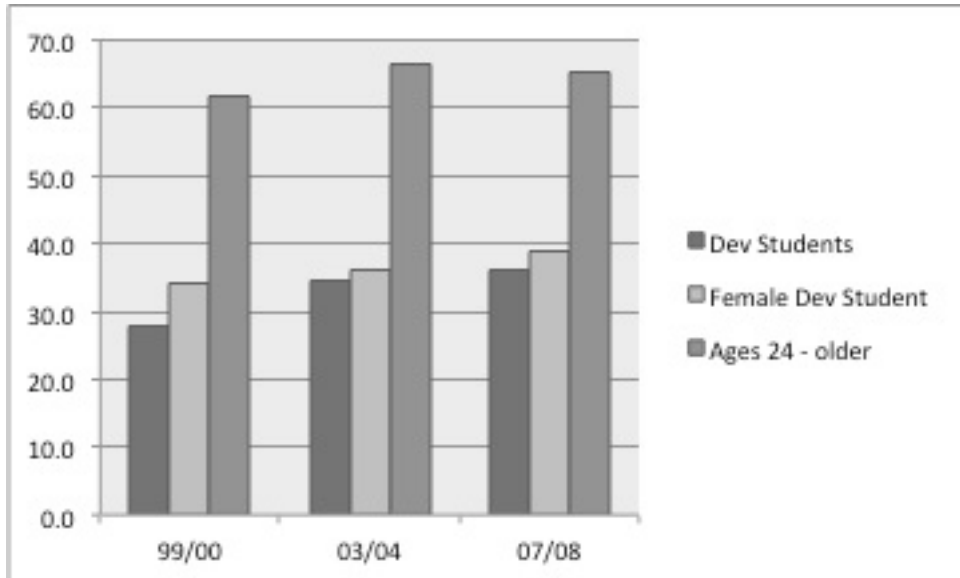
Figure 1: Change in Developmental Population

hold as they deal with other roles and demands outside the educational arena

(Vaccaro & Lovell, 2010; Johnson, Schwartz, & Bower, p. 2000). If these

nontraditional students are also identified as students who have to enroll in

developmental education classes before being able to take traditional college

courses (Zaft, Kallenbach, & Spohn, 2006, p. 6) and placed into learning support

classes, the likelihood that they will persist to completion of their higher

educational degrees drops drastically. According to Rodriguez, DiBrito, Torres, &

Talbot (2000), some nontraditional student populations, such as Latina students,

who are placed in learning support classes have only a fifteen percent chance of

ever completing their college degrees (p. 516).

Family Roles

Non-traditional women students who are taking learning support classes

often have families and home lives separate from their college identities. When

home and college lives collide there may be far-reaching repercussions that affect both how well a woman does in her coursework and her continued enrollment in college. The term "family" takes on different structures for different people, but for the purpose of this paper the family is defined as those individuals who demand the personal time and attention of women including spouses, children, domestic partners, step-children, parents, and extended family members that have direct and frequent contact with these women (Cuban, 2003; Hayes & Flannery, 2000).

Two roles that can be extremely important to many women are that of a wife or partner and that of a mother. These familial responsibilities can cause additional stress to the nontraditional female student, defined as a woman over the age of 22 who also occupies at least one other life role such as spouse, full-time worker or mother (Hayes & Flannery, 2000) in the form of emotional strains and time commitments. Traditionally, women still bear primary responsibility for children in the home as well as the daily operations of the household (Hirsch & Rapkin, 1986; Johnson & Robson, 1999). These familial needs can cause conflicting demands and time constraints for these nontraditional students and may lead to their dropping out of their college classes (Bowe & Dittmann, 2001, p. 410). According to Hayes & Flannery (2000), "a basic conflict for many women is between serving the needs of others and meeting their own needs" and that "many women have learned in the home to sacrifice their own interests to those of their families" (p. 40). Benshoff and Lewis (1992) also found that the

more traditional roles that women maintained in the home the greater the amount of guilt and stress they felt over their roles as students (p. 5).

One important aspect of familial relationships is the bond that a woman has with her husband or partner. While traditional students often depend upon their parental figures and friends for support in college, nontraditional female students depend mostly upon the support of their husbands or partners for this support (Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002, p.141). Unfortunately, the support from husbands or partners may begin to waiver the longer a woman is enrolled in higher education causing marital stress and higher divorce rates (Kirby, Biever, Martinez, & Gomez, 2004, p. 66). This trend is especially troubling for the nontraditional female students enrolled in learning support classes since their stay in these classes often increases the length of their educational journey.

Parenting is another important familial role for women and one potentially fraught with complications for the nontraditional student. In many societies, women are the primary caregivers for the children in their homes and this scope may include more than just their biological children. Johnson, Schwartz, and Bower (2000) state that "parenting not only occurs by a mother with her own children but can refer … to a significant population of women who care for and serve as parents for children living in an extended family relationship" (p. 298). Issues such as childcare and guilt over time spent away from the children have caused many nontraditional female students to interrupt their educations to fulfill the needs of their children (Laubach, 1993; Bradburn, Moen, & McClain, 1995).

Student Roles

Nontraditional students who also deal with family roles are susceptible to slow progress or non-completion of their higher education degrees. These adult students often maintain multiple roles, which can cause difficulty continuing in the student role. Studies have found that nontraditional students are twice as likely to drop out of college during the first year due to family or job stress as compared to the traditional college student (Brown, 2002, p. 70). According to Johnson, Schwartz, and Bower (2000), "many adult women who want to further their education do not complete their programs because they cannot cope with the double or triple burdens of family and school" (p. 289). This trend is different for female students as compared to male students in that nontraditional female students are more likely to withdraw from classes for reasons of family conflict whereas male students list reasons such as financial or work related issues (McGivney, 2004; Home, 1998).

One issue that female nontraditional students often cite for leaving college is the amount of time required for the student role. Nontraditional female students who also have families have less time to devote to the student role which can cause these students enough stress so that they have to make a choice which role they can live without (Chartrand, 1990, p. 66). These students not only have to find the time required to attend classes, but they also must find the time required outside of class to complete homework assignments and to study for tests so as a result these women must decide where they can

scavenger the time to meet these needs, often giving up sleep time to complete

these important school-related tasks (Hayes & Flannery, 2000; Laubach, 1993).

Role Conflicts

Role conflict is defined as the "presence of incompatible expectations

between a person's role so that by fulfilling the expectations of one role the

person is neglecting the expectations of the other role" (Gigliotti & Huff, 1995, p.

330). Role conflict results from demands that are occurring simultaneously but

that are also incompatible demands on a person's resources so that it is difficult

to deal with these demands at the same time (Fairchild, 2003, p. 13). This

definition lends itself well to describing the difficulty that many nontraditional

female students face when trying to merge, or at least trying to run

simultaneously, the roles of family caretaker and student.

The family role and the student role have both been described as "greedy

institutions", which demand a complete commitment of both time and energy

from nontraditional female students (Hayes & Flannery, 2000; Johnson &

Robson, 1999; Home, 1998). Both family responsibilities and higher education

commitments seek to gain a woman's undivided attention by expressing strong

expectations and through the use of guilt if these expectations are not met. One

of the biggest issues is the incompatibility of these two roles, where higher

education expects objective commitment to the student role above all others and

families expect emotional attachment and loyalty above education (Johnson &

Robson, 1999, p. 282). Johnson-Bailey (1994) states that black women enrolled

in higher education classes negotiated with family members for the right to attend

college classes with the understanding that they would continue bearing the major responsibilities for household and family duties (p. 320). These nontraditional female students are expected to show that neither role will suffer because of the other and the physical and mental stress of this juggling act can cause women to suffer from role conflict and eventually role overload and lead to the abandonment of their higher educational studies (Home, 1998, p. 336).

One important way that nontraditional female students deal with the incongruence of both the familial and student roles is though support systems. According to McGivney (2004), "adults who lack the support of their family…can find sustaining study over a long period particularly difficult" (p. 38). The burden of carrying these two roles simultaneously can be more easily negotiated if women feel as though their spouses or partners and children provide emotional and situational support (Hirsch & Rapkin, 1986 p. 1238), otherwise this lack of support can become a barrier to her attempts at higher education (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Thomas, 2001).

Family Support and Sabotage

The twenty-first century's definition of family should be considered a broad and varied category. According to McGraw and Walker (2004), the concept of family cannot be restricted to those related by blood and should also include non-heterosexual unions and cohabitants (p. 176). Kazak and Andrews (1992) more specifically define family members as "the circle of persons who provide long-term emotional and tangible support and structure to one's life" (p. 372). For the sake of this article, a woman's spouse or partner is defined in both heterosexual

and non-heterosexual unions and relationships and the concept of children includes biological children, step-children, adopted children, grandchildren, and children of family members and friends that live within the home.

Family Support

Nontraditional female students often rely heavily on the support of family members as they navigate the waters of academia. While the traditional female college student often relies on parents, grandparents and boyfriends for support, nontraditional students usually rely on spouses or partners and children for the same level of support (Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002, p. 147). As these nontraditional female students juggle their family responsibilities along with their academic responsibilities they count on their family members to help out with household chores. When this level of support fails, these nontraditional students often experience a jump in the perceived level of stress, which can lead to a breakdown in the delicate balance of their lives (Bradshaw, Hager, Knott, & Seay, 2006, p. 24). Table 2.1, is based upon the empirically derived framework presented at an AAACE (American Association for Adult and Continuing Education) conference by Valentine, Hopkins, Powers-Burdick and Schubauer (1987), shows ways in which spouses/partners and children show their support for a woman's education. As the table shows, important support measures can either be emotional, or perceived, or logistical in nature.

Home (1998) defines perceived support as the "extent to which supportive behaviors are considered available" (p. 337). Studies of nontraditional students indicate that their perceived level of support from family members, such as

encouragement and reassurance, is often more important than actual tangible

supportive measures, such as household chores and babysitting duties (Quimby

& O'Brien, 2006; McGraw & Walker, 2004; Martire, Parris, & Townsend, 1998).

Family Sabotage

For the many ways that family can support a woman's education, there

are as many ways that they can sabotage her educational journey. According to

Vaccaro and Lovell (2010), "adult students have reported a variety of reactions

from family about their enrollment in college, ranging from unsupportive attitudes

to outright hostility" (p. 2). A woman's relationship with her spouse or partner can

be one of the biggest influences on her success in education. When a spouse or

partner is not supportive of a woman's pursuit of her degree this relationship can

become a major barrier to her success in higher education. Marital and partner

stress, including breakups and divorces, become more common the longer a

student is enrolled in higher education (Bradshaw, Hager, Knott, & Seay, 2006;

Kirby, Biever, Martinez & Gomez, 2004; McGivney, 2004), which can be

especially troubling for students who may spend an additional year or more of

their college enrollment being required to take learning support classes.

One inadvertent way that family members can sabotage a woman's higher

education is in the amount of time and energy they require. When a woman is

unable to meet the demands of both her family and her schooling she often feels

guilty and selfish (Johnson & Robson, 1999, p. 281). According to McGivney

(2004), "women students often experience acute conflict between their

Table 2.1

Family Support and Sabotage Variables

Support Variable	*Example Actions of Spouse/Partner*	*Example Actions of Children*
Emotional Support	• Shows genuine interest in my learning • Show sympathy with any problems encountered at school	• Voices pride in parent • Studies while parent does school work
Logistical Support	• Varies work schedule to support schooling • Provides extra help with children, including transportation and school-related functions	• Helps parent around the house • Agrees to study or stay at a friend's house so mom can study
Sabotage Variable	*Example Actions of Spouse/Partner*	*Example Actions of Children*
Subtle Sabotage	• Complains that he or she is neglected because of time spent on schoolwork • Complains that school comes before the needs of the family	• Begins to get in trouble at school or at home requiring mother's intervention • Begins to have more unexplained minor illnesses, such as stomach aches
Overt Sabotage	• Threatens to leave if I don't quit school • Destroys school work, textbooks, or homework	• Pushes mom to quit school • Accuses parent of being selfish for time spent away for school

domestic and student roles" (p. 38). Children who are used to their mothers

being there more often may become fearful of the loss of attention and create a

home situation that is stressful of these women engaged in higher education

(Laubach, 1993, p. 3). Table 2.1 shows various ways that spouses/partners and

children can either inadvertently, or subtly, sabotage as well as overtly, or knowingly, sabotage a woman's educational efforts.

Discussion

Over the past twenty-five years, women have been the fastest growing population in higher education (Johnson, Schwartz & Bower, 2000) and in most cases; women are matriculating at rates that exceed their male counterparts. This trend does not seem to be the case for women who begin their academic careers in the developmental classroom. Women are definitely a growing population in higher education, but in this instance they are also a failing population. We, then, must ask why this is happening. By most educational measures women out perform their male counterparts, but in this instance we have them falling behind.

Women in learning support classes have between a five percent and a twenty percent chance of ever graduating due largely in part to their commitments and roles outside of the classroom (Maddox, 2002). One explanation for these low statistics may be found in the continuing life experiences of these nontraditional women students. In many, if not most cultures, women still bear the brunt of most of the domestic demands of house and home, including the day-by-day rearing of children and the care of the home and family. These women have to juggle their lives in order to fit in class time as well as time for homework. This regimented schedule leaves very little time for college life experiences and socialization. According to Scott, Burns, & Cooney (1996), one of the biggest predictors of college success and persistence to

degree is a student's ability to integrate themselves into the college experience, which increases motivation and performance (p. 235). This type of integration can be extremely difficult for the nontraditional female student who has limited amounts of free time to spend on a college campus (Watson, 2007, p. 235), especially when she has familial obligations that often have to take precedence over school socialization. Unlike the traditional female student, these women do not have a cohort with which to attach themselves, often making for a lonely college journey (Fairchild, 2003, p. 11).

Women with family responsibilities are the fastest growing group of college students, but these responsibilities can lead to issues of overload and higher dropout rates (Home, 1998; Vaccaro, 2009). Lack of support from family members can make attending classes difficult or even impossible, especially if these members begin to feel as though college attendance interferes with a woman's continued participation in the family structure (McGivney, 2004; Laubach, 1993). Women dealing with these strained family relations may have to make the choice between continuing their education and accepting the disintegration of their families (Malicky & Norman, 1996; Bradshaw, Hager, Knott, & Seamy, 2006).

One theory that may help to define what is happening with this developmental student population is McClusky's Theory of Margin (1963), which stresses that adulthood is a time of growth, change, and integration. During this time, adults constantly seek to balance the amount of energy needed, which McClusky defined as Load, with the amount of energy available, also called

Power. According to McClusky, both Load and Power consist of internal and external factors that help to explain how much energy we have and where we choose to spend that energy (p. 88). Load consists of energy required for our normal everyday tasks, including the energy needed for family responsibilities and for schoolwork. Power consists of external resources, such as family support, and internal resources such as motivation and self-beliefs (Chao, p. 907). According to McClusky (1970), as long as Power meets or exceeds a person's load she will have enough resources, both internal and external, to participate in learning (p. 88). However, if a woman's load, such as her family responsibilities, becomes greater than her power, for example her family support, then she may not have enough resources, both internal and external, to meet her college energy requirements. It could be at this point that we are losing many of these students as they simply become overwhelmed with the energy and resources that it takes to meet all of their life demands.

McClusky's theory can help explain how important a family's support is to a woman enrolled in higher education, especially to women enrolled in developmental coursework. Students in developmental education courses are often on the fringe of higher education. Enrolled in courses that do not count towards college credit extends a college stay often for several semesters. This extended stay can have disastrous side effects, including the abandonment of college degree aspirations, especially for nontraditional female students whose lives are often filled with other life roles. Women students who already have families at home have to juggle demands from both school and family on a daily

basis and are sometimes forced to make difficult choices between these two very different roles. One aspect of this equation of choices between school and families that the literature fails to fully help us understand is how time spent in learning support classes affects both college completion rates and motivation, both internally generated and family supplied. As a feminist developmental educator, I want to celebrate the fact that these women are willing to begin their educational journeys, but I also must mourn the fact that they are failing to make it to the finish line.
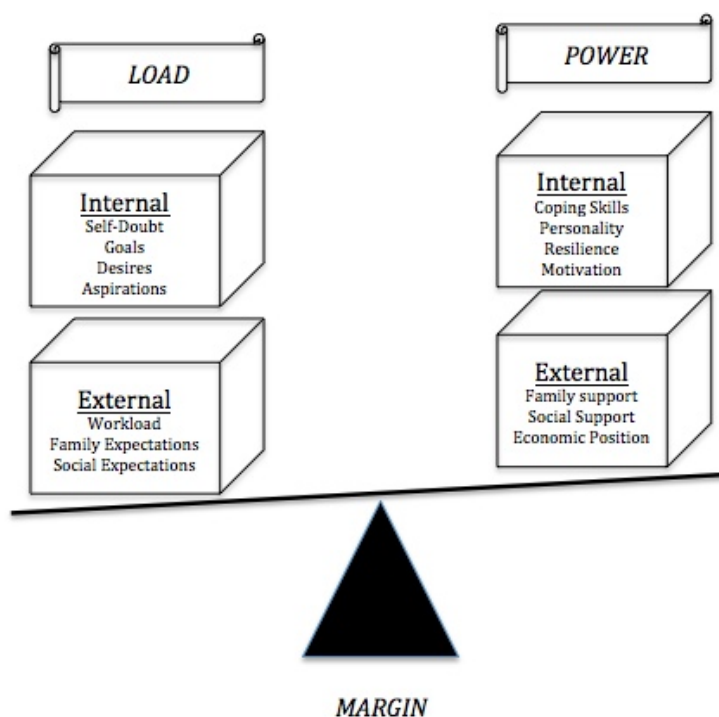
Figure 2: Theory of Margin: Internal and external influences on Power and Load.

Implications for Practice

Colleges and teachers can play an active role in helping women negotiate the variables in their lives and can help them confront the conflicting demands.

As seen in Table 2.2, colleges can help address issues of sabotage by providing

administrative functions to support women and their families. Factors of subtle

sabotage could be addressed using supports such as childcare options to relieve

the stress that many women feel when trying to find appropriate care for their

children so that they can attend classes and participate in school activities and

hosting family nights to involve family members in a woman's education in an

effort to demystify where she goes and what she does when she is attending

classes. Colleges can also address overt sabotage by offering support groups

developed to increase self-confidence and to provide a forum so that women can

discuss family-related issues.

Table 2.2

Implications for Practice in Higher Education

Variables	Colleges	Teachers
Subtle Sabotage	• Provide childcare options • Family nights to involve spouse/partner and children • Build learning sessions for family members to educate them on the college experience.	• Create open classroom dialogue • Journal on authentic life experiences
Overt Sabotage	• Develop women support groups • Provide women's counseling centers	• Create atmosphere of comfort and sharing in the class • Provide space for one-on-one student/teacher dialogue

Finally, as important as administrative support is to these women, teachers provide the first line of defense in providing women tools that they can use to address issues of familial sabotage and resistance. Educators see these women face-to-face on a regular basis and as such, build relationships that can be used to support their educational efforts. Building in writing assignments and discussions that center on the students authentic life experiences can open the door for women to voice their fears and concerns and to build supportive networks with fellow students and faculty. According to the works of Paulo Freire (2004), education should be participated in as an act of freedom in which students reflect on their own personal journeys instead of abstract situations and singularly global knowledge (p. 263). Freire (2004) also states that partaking in dialogue that focuses on personal problems and situations can help women "develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves" (p. 265). The opportunities to openly discuss familial concerns may help these students find ways to continue through their educational journeys despite obstacles that they may face.

CHAPTER 3

THE IMPACT OF CHILDREN ON WOMEN ENROLLED

IN DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION [1]

_____

[1] Caudill, Jamie. 2014. To be submitted to *The Journal of College Reading and Learning.*

Abstract

The number of women enrolled in developmental education classes in our nation's colleges continues to grow and it has been reported that children living in the home can impact their success in these classes. What is not known is how enrollment in these types of classes affects existing family dynamics or how the children's support or lack of support affects these women students. This paper details a qualitative study into how children living in the home affects the academic success of these women who begin their college journey enrolled in developmental education classes.

Women who decide to return to college after having children are often susceptible to higher drop out rates, or, at the very least, periods of time when they have to withdraw from college in order to deal with competing demands. Research often shows that women who have additional roles outside the educational arena often have to put their education on hold as they deal with family demands, which causes non-traditional female students to experience slower progression towards graduation (Grimes, 1997; Johnson, Schwartz, & Bower, 2000; Vaccaro & Lovell, 2010). Women with family responsibilities are the fastest growing group of college students, but these responsibilities can lead to issues of overload and higher dropout rates (Home, 1998; Vaccaro & Lovell, 2010). Lack of support from family members can make attending classes difficult or even impossible, especially if these members begin to feel as though college attendance interferes with a woman's continued participation in the family structure (McGivney, 2004; Laubach, 1993). Women dealing with these strained family relations may have to make the choice between continuing their education and accepting the disintegration of their families (Malicky & Norman, 1996; Bradshaw, Hager, Knott, & Seamy, 2006).

Families and higher education both require an inordinate amount of time and commitment on the part women and are often deemed "greedy institutions" (Edwards, 1993). According to Ballmer and Cozby (1981), as women return to college, time that would have been normally spent taking care of family members and their activities has to be reallocated to the requirements of school (p. 1019). While authors such as Thomas (2001) find that women students in higher

education are constantly torn between their education and their families (p. 139) other researchers have reported that women students consider their families to be their greatest sources of strength and inspiration (Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002).

Women are often the primary caregivers to the children in the home and if these women decide to further their education they must often balance this additional workload alone. These pressures can cause inordinate amounts of stress in the effort to meet the expectations of both commitments (Edwards, 1993; McGraw & Walker, 2004). Current literature is divided on the impact that children in the home have on women's pursuit of higher education. Choosing to become a part of two such greedy institutions may mean that these women have to learn to strategically navigate their way in both of these worlds while not compromising their commitment to either institution.

Women in Developmental Education

Developmental education courses, also labeled remedial or learning support courses, are non-credit classes in institutes of higher learning that are designed to help students who need additional skills in math, reading, and English (Provasnik & Planty, 2008). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES] (2010), in 2009, there were over three million freshmen admitted to colleges across the United States. These statistics also show that almost sixty percent of these freshmen were required to take some form of developmental education in college. Women often account for over half

of the students who are required to take these developmental classes (Boylan, 1999).

Recent NCES data (2011), also shows that the number of non-traditional students, defined as adults twenty-four and older, enrolled in developmental education classes has increased to 65.4% within the last ten years (p. 27). The same report also shows that the number of women enrolled in these developmental classes rose six percent between 1999 and 2008. These non-credit courses can increase the amount of stress placed upon these non-traditional female students since it can lengthen their time to graduation by several semesters. Women in learning support classes have between a five percent and a twenty percent chance of ever graduating due largely in part to their commitments and roles outside of the classroom (Maddox, 2002). A woman's commitment to family responsibilities and family roles greatly affect her chances of ever graduating college and an unsupportive family can lead to the abandonment of educational goals (Home, 1998).

This study was an attempt to understand the impact of children's support, or lack of support, on a woman's return to higher education, especially in relation to those students who are placed into developmental education courses. The research conducted with these women focused on how children who live in the home either help or hinder a woman's higher educational journey.

Method

During my investigation, I conducted interviews with a group of women who were enrolled in at least one developmental education course at a four-year

college. My overarching intent was for them to use their voices to describe what is happening with their education in relation to their children. A qualitative research design was used in this work to aid in understanding how children in the home affect these women and their pursuit of an education. From February 2013 through April 2013, twenty-two full-time undergraduate freshmen from a four-year college in the southeast were interviewed. These students were recruited from developmental education English, reading, and math courses. In order to be included in this research, students had to meet the following criteria:

- Female

- Enrolled in at least one developmental education courses offered at the college

- Have at least one child that she is responsible for living in the home

Participants were interviewed twice, once as part of a focus group and once for individual follow-up interviews.

Participants. Twenty-two female students were interviewed during this research. Nine of the students were enrolled in one developmental education course and thirteen were enrolled in two courses, which is the maximum number of developmental courses allowed for entrance to this particular college. The students ranged in age from 18 – 39 with the median age being 23 years old and all of the participants were responsible for a child or children living in their homes so they have assumed the multiple roles of student and caregiver. The number of children that each woman had living in her home ranged from 1 – 4 with the median number being 2 and the children ranged in ages from 6 months to 17

years old with the median age being 5 years old. Table 3.1 presents specific data for each participant.

Data Collection: Data were collected using semi-structured interviews during a two-fold process. The first interview was conducted in the form of a focus group where all participants met with me for in-depth discussions around open-ended questions that lasted for approximately 3 hours. Participants were encouraged to use their own words to discuss how their children either support or do not support the participants enrollment in college courses and how this support, or lack there of, affects their continued education. All participants were encouraged to not only respond to the presented questions, but to also add to the discussion based upon their own experiences. This focus group process provided for rich and lively discussions by the participants, which provided the main source of data for this study.

The second part of this interview process was completed using one-on-one interviews with each of the participants. I met with each of the 22 participants for one-on-one interviews for in-depth follow-up discussions based upon themes that revealed themselves during the focus group interview. The individual interviews lasted between 1 – 2 hours and were conducted approximately 3 weeks after the focus group interview. The reason for doing both public and private interviews is the benefit of added frankness. Some people are constrained by discussions of a personal nature, such as discussing problems you may be having with your children, in a public setting.

Table 3.1

Summary of Participant Information

Participant (Pseudonym)	Age	Marital/Partner Status	Number of Children in Home	Age of Children (Years)	Number of Developmental Classes (Current)	Race
Rosie	29	Married	4	4, 6, 9, 12	2	Hispanic
RayRay	18	Single	1	2	1	African-American
Lettie	19	Engaged	2	18 months, 3	2	Hispanic
Mandy	25	Married	2	3, 6	2	Caucasian
Lulu	39	Married	4	2, 14, 15, 17	1	Caucasian
Flo	33	Engaged	2	6, 10	1	African-American
Andi	21	Single	1	18 months	2	Caucasian
CeeCee	19	Married	2	6, 8	1	Hispanic
Dawn	18	Single	1	6 months	2	African-American
Angel	19	Single	1	3	1	African-American
Franky	19	Single	1	2	2	Hispanic
Gabby	24	Married	2	4, 7	2	African-American
Bella	20	Single	1	5	1	African-American
Holly	25	Married	2	3, 5	2	Asian
Jane	23	Single	4	2, 3, 4, 5	2	Caucasian
Layla	26	Married	2	4, 6	1	African-American
Ruth	20	Engaged	1	4	2	Hispanic
Mimi	23	Married	2	19 months, 3	1	African-American
Kate	31	Married	4	2, 4, 6, 10	2	Caucasian
Trish	28	Engaged	1	10	1	Caucasian
Max	19	Single	1	1	2	African-American
Pat	27	Married	2	5, 6	2	African-American

Data Analysis: Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method as was introduced by Glaser & Strauss (1967). This systematic procedure allowed for coding of the data, which revealed important themes in the participants' responses. Commonalities found in the participants' wording and phrases revealed experiences that these women shared when trying to successfully fulfill both the roles of mother and student.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to better understand how children's support or lack of support affects women in higher education who are also enrolled in developmental education courses. During the evaluation of the data, I found six distinct themes. Three of these themes were related to the positive influence of children's support, while the other three themes were related to the negative influences that children's lack of support have on these women. The six prevailing themes are summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Themes related to the positive and negative influences of children

Positive Themes:

Theme 1: Women encouraged to continue education to make children proud.

Theme 2: Women want children to have a better life financially.

Theme 3: Women see children doing better in their own schooling.

Negative Themes:

Theme 4: School has a negative impact on the mother and child relationship.

Theme 5: Mothers must constantly make tough choices between competing demands.

Theme 6: Women face strains on emotional and financial resources.

Positive Influences of Children

The participants spoke overwhelmingly of the positive impact that their children have on their lives, including their academic lives. Their pride in

their children and their dedication to the role of mother was evident in their easy smiles and infectious laughter as we began our focus group session. These women were quick to share their children's pictures and to relate anecdotal stories that put the women at ease and created an atmosphere that lent itself to easy discussion. As the women discussed their academic and familial roles, three themes emerged and remained a constant throughout both the focus group interview and the individual interviews. These three themes, numbered one through three, are summarized in Table 3.2.

Theme One: Women encouraged to continue education to make children proud. One of the most pervasive themes shared by a vast majority of the women in this group is the idea of making their children proud. These women want their children to look up to them both on their authority as a mother and their abilities as a student. Angel told the group that she felt as though her son would look down on her as he grew older if she did not get her college degree. It is also important to these women that their educational journey be a point of pride and that their children respect their efforts. Mandy, a 25-year old student with two children, stated that:

> With my oldest child starting school, I started thinking about how it
> would make him feel knowing that mom only had a high-school
> degree. I always planned to go to college, but just got lazy after I
> graduated and then life happened. I want my kids to be proud of
> me and be able to tell their friends that mom's gotta a good job…it's

like I wondered if they would respect me as much when they got

older.

This group of women also believed that it wasn't enough just to be going to college or to just have some college classes on their transcripts. These women thoroughly believe that it is important to do well in all their classes and to graduate with a degree. Rosie, a 29-year old mother of four, told the group that:

My children know when I have a project that I am working on or a

test I'm studying for because mommy is focused on something

else. They don't forget that either, ya'know. I ask them how they

did on their math tests and they ask me how I did on my test or

project. I don't wanna tell them I didn't do well so I work hard and

study hard. It pushes me to work harder.

Several other participants reiterated this point of pride and the desire for respect from their children, often citing the desire to be role models for their children and someone that their children could respect beyond their identities as a mother.

The participants desire for respect for their status as student from their children was often at odds with their current enrollment in developmental education courses at the college. Some college students are placed into developmental education classes in English, reading, or math based upon scoring below the minimum score on the college's placement test. These developmental courses do not count toward a student's degree completion and are often considered "pre-college" courses. Students must successfully navigate these courses in order to move on to college-level classes. Placing into these

developmental classes can cause embarrassment and frustration on the part of

these mothers who want to be an inspiration to their own children. A discussion

was started by Jane, a 23-year old student who is the mother to four children,

who told the group that:

> I haven't told nobody that I am in that English class. I mean all my
>
> friends are in 1101 and here I am in the developmental class. I
>
> haven't told my friends, my parents, and won't ever tell my children
>
> that I had to take this class because they would just think I was
>
> dumb or messed up in the head. I mean I took English like forever
>
> in school so it makes me wonder if I didn't get it then what makes
>
> me think I'll get it now. It's discouraging so I just don't say anything
>
> or just say I didn't take English this semester.

Holly, a married mother of two, echoed Jane's sentiments by telling the group of

her embarrassment when her 14-year old nephew saw her working on

developmental math homework and remarked that he had studied that last year

in middle-school.

Theme Two: Women want children to have a better financial life. An

additional theme that drove these women to be successful students was the

desire to give their children and families a better financial future. The women in

this group stated that they used this reason often as an incentive to get their

children to cooperate when the women had homework, projects, or upcoming

tests. The participants viewed this as a positive tool for both themselves and for

their children, especially for the older children who were more influenced by the

idea of monetary gain. Kate told the group that she often kept her children busy, so that she could complete homework, by having the children complete picture collages of all the things they wanted to buy when she finished college and got a better job. The women felt a sense of pride in believing that their work at college would benefit their families and this in turn motivated them to continue to work towards that goal. The children support their mothers' efforts while believing that the journey toward a more stable financial future was a team effort. Lulu, a 39-year old woman who has three biological children and one grandchild living at home, said:

> When I have a paper due or a test coming up I tell my kids and I put
>
> it on the calendar with a dollar sign to remind them that I am doing
>
> this for all of us. I tell them all the time that my degree will get me a
>
> better job, which means more money and a better life for all of us.
>
> Since they are older, they get that and they want that.

Several of the women agreed that by stressing that getting their college degree was a family effort they gained the help and support of the children who were old enough to understand that a higher educational degree usually means better jobs and more money. In turn, the children's expectations that the mother would continue to work toward that degree in an effort to raise the family's standard of living helped several of these women to stay motivated when classwork became difficult.

Theme Three: Women see children doing better in their own schooling. Another positive theme that encouraged these women participants

to continue working toward their educational goals was the desire to affect their children's future academic success. Several of the women who have children in middle school and high school discussed the desire to be able to help their children with homework. Lulu told me during the one-on-one interviews that she felt bad that she had been unable to help her oldest child through some tough classes in high-school so she was working even harder in her developmental math class so that she could help her other two children as they enter high school during the next few years. Lulu and the other women believe that the experiences, both academic and social, they have on the college campus can help their children be better students. One participant, Kate, who has a child in middle school, told the group that:

> Just last week my son came home with math homework that he
> was struggling with. Used to I would have just told him to wait 'til
> his dad got home but I looked at his homework and realized that it
> was something that we had just covered in our [developmental]
> math class. I sat down with him and worked out the problem with
> him and when we checked the answer we got it right! He was
> impressed and secretly so was I.

The women in this group agreed that even though getting their college degrees is an important individual goal for each of them it is also an important collective goal for the family. Gabby, a 24-year old participant with two children, stated that:

> I encourage my children to do well and in turn they encourage me.
> I can't separate myself from being the mom. I enjoy coming to

college and learning and my kids see that. They want to be like

mom and I want to give them the idea that school is important but

that you can also like to learn. I want them to see that it is okay to

be smart, in fact even better than okay.

Finally, Lulu seemed to sum it up for the group when she said, "How can I look

my kids in the face and tell them I want them to do well in school and to go all the

way if I give up now?" For many of these women, it seems as though their

pursuit of a degree has become less of an individual pursuit and more of a family

oriented goal.

Negative Influences of Children

As expected, the women in this group had a more difficult time talking

about how their children failed to support their educational journeys. The light-

hearted mood that had prevailed to this point slowly became more somber as

many of these women began to think about some of the struggles that they had

faced within their own families as push came to shove over academic

commitment. Some of the women became conspicuously silent during the focus

group interview only to become more vocal during the individual follow-up

sessions. During these two sets of interviews, three themes became a constant.

These three themes, numbered four through six, are summarized in Table 3.2.

Theme Four: School has a negative impact on the mother and child

relationship. One of the prevalent themes that revealed itself during our

discussion of obstacles that these women face in relation to the coalescence of

family and education was behavior problems that have arisen since these women

returned to college. Though obviously difficult to talk about, several of the women opened up about several behavioral issues that they have had with their children since enrolling in college. Most of the issues were deemed minor by the women, but were still enough to warrant time and attention from these mothers. Rosie discussed issues with her four-year old daughter that had arisen since she had started college. Rosie stated that:

> My little girl hates that I'm not with her during the days anymore.
>
> When I started school I had to put her in a daycare and she just
>
> hates it. She cries and screams when I drop her off and I've gotten
>
> calls about her throwing blocks at other children. I'm hoping my
>
> schedule will be better next semester so she won't have to go
>
> everyday, but even when I'm home with her she wants all my
>
> attention. She actually threw away my textbook the other day
>
> because I was trying to study when she wanted to play.

Another student, Flo, discussed issues that she is continuing to have with her ten-year old son. Until Flo returned to college she had been a stay-at-home mom who worked part-time on the side. Her studies are currently causing her to be away from her two children for much longer than any of them are use to happening. Flo discussed an example of ongoing behavior issues that she has been having with her son in relation to his behavior at school. She told the group that:

> My oldest boy got into a fight at school the other day and when I
>
> went to pick him up he had the nerve to tell me that it was my fault

because I didn't have time to pack his lunch that morning because I

was running late for class and he had to stand in the lunch line

behind a boy who likes to pick on him!

Though the issues that women, such as Flo and Rosie are having with their

children may seem minor, the frustrations these women feel are often serious

enough that they question their return to college.

Theme Five: Mothers must constantly make tough choices between competing demands. Another important theme that presented itself during the

interviews is the idea that these women must make choices that often have

dramatic consequences for the atmosphere at home. All of the women

interviewed divide their time between their families and college. Keeping a

division between these two institutions often takes a toll on these women and

they find themselves in a battle of give and take where something always suffers.

Several of the women participants are single mothers who are raising their

children on their own which can make the pull between family and college seem

even more dramatic. Flo, a 33-year old woman who is raising her two children

on her own, discussed this as a battle that she often faces between family

responsibilities and school responsibilities. When talking with the group about a

recent experience she had with her youngest child she stated:

My little girl got sick the other day so she couldn't go to school and I

didn't have anybody to watch her so I had to miss class. I missed a

test review that day and ended up with a D on the test. But what

could I do? My family has to come first.

According to several of the women participants who are single mothers, the struggle between home and school can be extremely stressful and can be an impetus to delay or drop out of college until such time that the children can either take care of themselves for a while or until the children have moved out of the home.

Many of these women also discussed their frustration with their professors in relation to the struggles they face. Several of the participants voiced their irritation with bad grades as a result of having to miss class due to family matters. Due to financial and family constraints some of these women had to miss classes or turn in late assignments because they had to care of their children. They were often faced with their professors' irritation and skepticism in response to their explanation of missed classes and late assignments. Many of the women voiced embarrassment and aggravation over their professors' lack of empathy to their plight. Layla, a 26-year old mother of two, told the group that:

> I wish my professors would understand more when I have to miss class because of my kids. I mean I can't help it if they are sick or out on a break from school. I always get my work done but some professors are so difficult and look at you like you shouldn't be in college if you have little kids. Not all of us could go to college right after high school and some of us have important responsibilities.
> Why can't we do both?

While many of the participants stated that several of their professors were compassionate about family responsibilities they all agreed that not all of their

teachers fell into this category. Most of the participants did seem to adopt the attitude that their families came first. During an individual interview, Lettie told me that, "some of my professors don't understand when I tell them I have to be out with my kids, but I have to do what I have to do for my kids and I can't put school first all the time."

Finally, the women discussed the importance of support, both familial and institutional, to their success and emotional well-being. Most of the participants expressed the desire for more support from both their families and the college while stating that they often felt alone in this journey. During the group discussion of support the participants often became emotional as they voiced their frustration and anger over the feeling that they are often left to drown in the over abundance of items on their to-do lists. Gabby, who is the married mother of two young children, stated that:

> I don't really have any body supporting me either. My husband and
> parents think I'm crazy for going to college with two small kids so I
> don't have anybody to complain to when I'm upset. They just look
> at me like it's my own fault. Forget about doing anything extra at
> college, just go to class, come home, and take care of the kids and
> my husband. It's frustrating to feel like I'm all alone here. But, I
> love my family so I just try to hang on.

Gabby's sentiments echoed around the room as other participants nodded in agreement and several of the women groaned at the mention of the growing list

of items that had to be placed on the back burner as they juggled their familial commitments.

On the other hand, Jane, a single mother who is raising three biological children ranging in ages from 2 to 4 years old and a nephew who is 5 years old, expressed her frustration with the college and what she believes is their lack of support for her journey. Jane told me during our one-on-one interview that:

> The college has really let me down. They told me before I even applied here that I would be able to take classes at night. It's the only time I can come to class because my grandma can come and watch the kids while they sleep. I could only take two classes this semester because the others were during the day. At this rate, it's gonna take me forever to get a degree and I just don't have forever. I need a better job now so I can get my kids what they need. My advisor told me I would have to find a way to take some classes during the day or I would never finish. He couldn't tell me how to make that happen though.

Theme Six: Women face a strain on emotional and financial resources. The final theme that seemed especially relevant to the women in this group was the idea of dealing with a limited amount of resources and how this affects their success both in school and with their families. Without the proper amount of resources, these women experienced frustration, depression, and anger. During the group discussion, the women referred to limited resources in reference to either time spent with their children or money to spend on their

families. Experiencing these limited resources often left these women feeling guilty and questioning their commitment to their education.

One of the biggest points of personal conflict for the participants was the concern that their children were now suffering because these women now had less time to spend with them due to school obligations. Several of the women discussed how difficult it is for the younger children to understand why mommy is no longer at home as much or how she can no longer spend as much time playing. Some women were fortunate enough to have others, such as parents, friends, and spouses who willingly stepped in and helped out with the children so that they could focus on school responsibilities. Many women, though, did not have this resource so were forced to find ways try to make sure that their children were not suffering due to their absence. Oftentimes, these efforts were met with resistance and rebellion from the children. According to Dot, a 27-year old mother of two, the amount of time she now has to spend away from home upsets her daughter and causes Dot to feel guilty and even angry. During our one-on-one interview she stated that:

> I have no patience any more at home. My daughter cries more now
> and sometimes I just want to run away! Guess that's why you
> should do this before you have kids. I keep telling myself that she
> just wants mommy's attention. I used to play with her so much
> more and now I'm telling her that mommy has to study or mommy
> has to work on homework and she just doesn't understand.

Lettie echoed the sentiments of Dot during my interview with her when she simply stated that, "You have to weigh the benefits of going to college against how angry you think your kids are going to be with you because you can't be there as much as you could before".

Another issue of limited resources that concerned the study's participants was that of money availability. While most of the participants agreed that both college and families were money-greedy institutions, few of the women chose to discuss their financial concerns during our group interview. During our one-on-one interviews however, several of the women were more forthcoming about their money issues. Holly, a 25-year old mother of two, expressed her frustration at having to pay for developmental education classes, which she views as money wasted. She stated that:

> My job won't pay for these [developmental] classes so I had to get
>
> a loan to pay for them this semester. I feel like that ends up taking
>
> money away from my children, money I really didn't have, you
>
> know. That's money that I really can't get back either.

Another participant, Lulu, stated that her youngest daughter fell off her skateboard at the beginning of the semester so Lulu had to drop one of the classes that she had registered for because she needed that money to pay the hospital bill. While another participant, Kate, told me that her oldest son was angry with her and refused to speak to her for over a week because she had to use money that had been set aside for him to attend a summer camp to pay for a summer class because her financial aid had fallen through for that semester.

Additional finding: Public versus private voices. During this study, there seemed to be dramatically different stories being told in the public interviews versus the private interviews in at least two of the 22 cases. In one case, Layla, who is a 26-year old, married mother of two children, gave conflicting answers to discussions that centered on the importance of support from family members. In the group interviews, Layla stated that,

> My family is my rock. If I didn't have my husband to help out at home and with the kids and to tell me I could do it I don't think I could keep doing this. I used to have a schedule for everything, like dinner at 6 every night for my family. Now, if it wasn't for my husband's help we would be ordering pizza a lot!

However, during our individual interview her reply to the same vein of questioning was dramatically different. During the private interview Layla gave me the following statement:

> I think my husband and I are getting divorced. He left the other day and I don't know if he'll be back. He wanted me to choose between my family and my education and I just don't want to quit now. I mean I love learning and I've waited so long to get here. It's not fair that he wants me to give that up because he's tired of doing laundry!

Another participant, Mandy, who is also a married mother of two children, also gave very different answers during the one-on-one interviews as compared

to the group discussions. During the group meeting, Mandy told the other women that,

> I am honestly glad I am married and have kids while I'm working on my degree. I think it makes me a more serious student. Yeah it's tough but anything worth having is. My husband is so supportive and tells me all the time how proud he is of me and how hard I work. He asks all the time how he can help with the kids and around the house. I'm really lucky.

When Mandy met with me individually, her response seemed to change from one who believed her family was her support system that kept her in classes to one who questioned if going to school while having a family was worth the stress. When I discussed her family's support with her again, she stated that, "I love my family and am glad I have them. But honestly, I think I'm crazy to try to go to school while I have two small kids and a husband who would rather be at work than at home."

There are several possible reasons that participants, such as Layla and Mandy, voiced dramatically different reactions to the same questions during the private interviews. These women are trying to develop an academic identity, which is often untouched by the other facets of their lives. Perhaps they do not want to project any weakness that they find in their personal lives to their new academic lives. It is also possible that they were introduced to the question during the group interviews and reacted based on the norms of the group but then were allowed to think about the questions between the two sets of

interviews and thought about their answers and then used their own language to identify their true thoughts on the matter. Dissention between public and private interview responses only occurred in two out of the 22 cases, and though it certainly warrants notation, did not affect the outcome of the data as a whole.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to better understand the impact that children's support, or lack of support has on women enrolled in college developmental education courses. The role that family support has on women enrolled in college has been documented by several researchers who have shown that family can be a pivotal influence in helping women achieve their educational goals (Benshoff & Lewis, 1992; Bowe & Dittmann, 2001; Hayes & Flannery, 2000). Twenty-two women were interviewed for this research and were invited to discuss how their roles as parent meshed with their roles as students.

During my research into the effect that children have on women enrolled in developmental education courses, six major themes were revealed. Three of these themes related to the impact that support from children had on the attitude of these women while three themes related to the impact that the lack of support from children had on these women participants. Taken together, we can see that the level of support from important family members, such as children, step-children, grandchildren, and other children living in the home that a woman is responsible for, can be a catalyst for success or failure in a woman's academic world. Women who experience a supportive environment in the home are more

likely to experience reduced stress in the college classroom (Bradshaw, Hager, Knott, & Seay, 2006, p.24). On the other hand, women who experience more conflict or discouragement at home may experience more overload and stress over their academic commitments (Home, 1998; Vaccaro & Lovell, 2010).

McClusky's Theory of Margin may help us to understand the importance of family support as it relates to a woman's success in her higher educational pursuits. In this theory, McClusky (1963) discusses the play between Power, which is the amount of energy a person has available to her, and Load, which is the amount of energy a woman needs to survive and thrive. According to McClusky, adults are constantly striving to balance their energetic needs. Load is the amount of energy we expend on daily lives, including family responsibilities and college coursework, while Power consists of our external resources such as the support we receive from our families and friends, and our internal resources such as our coping skills and motivations (Chao, 2009). As long as the amount of Power we sustain either meets or exceeds the Load that we carry, we will have enough resources to meet our demands, but if our Load begins to exceed our Power levels, then we can begin to have trouble meeting our goals and deadlines (McClusky, 1970).

During this study, it was obvious that several of the participants were suffering from an imbalance between their Load and Power. As the need of children and families increased, their abilities to attend class and complete assignments on time often decreased. Alternately, as the requirements of school increased, their abilities to effectively deal with their families often decreased.

This imbalance between Load and Power showed up in both Theme Five and Theme Six.

Implications for Practice

Colleges and educators can play an active role in helping female non-traditional students who are returning to college with lives that are already busy with homes and children. Colleges can help by providing flexible class scheduling, which would allow for additional evening and weekend classes. They can also help these women by providing access to women's counseling centers and support groups, which could help to alleviate some feelings of isolation and frustration as these women navigate between these two "greedy institutions". Finally, colleges could help by providing access to local low-cost daycare.

Educators can help these students within their own classrooms by creating space and activities so that these women have a place to express themselves freely without fear of judgment or ridicule. Educators can encourage dialogue, both through classroom discussion and journaling, which allows these women to express their joys and sorrows in an atmosphere of comfort and support. Educators can also encourage an open dialogue with the students that would allow them to discuss problems that they are having both inside and outside of the classroom.

Finally, as an implication for future research, I believe it is important to understand the discrepancies between the public and private voices that arose during this research. I believe that it is important for us to research and

understand how women's, especially our non-traditional female students, lives

change during their freshman year at college and how this change is affected by

a woman's family.

CHAPTER 4

EXPERIENCES OF SPOUSE SUPPORT AND SABOTAGE

FOR ADULT WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION[1]

_____

[1] Caudill, Jamie and Thomas Valentine. 2015. To be submitted to *Adult Education Quarterly.*

Abstract

More than half of the students taking developmental education classes in college are women and the stress that families place on these women can play a factor in their academic success. The purpose of this study was to survey women in developmental college classes, in an effort to understand their experiences and the extent to which their spouses or partners can be a positive or negative influence in their educational endeavors. The study identified specific spousal or partner behaviors that could support and sabotage these women students. In addition, it used a multivariate procedure to identify profiles of spousal and partner support and sabotage ranging from the toxic experience to the highly supportive optimal experience. Over 220 women in developmental education classes from a mid-sized urban southeastern university were surveyed during this study and key findings included the revelation of high levels of sabotage among certain groups.

For many years, the battleground for inequity in Adult Education was at the high school level, but, as the overall education level in the United States has increased, the place for that equity struggle is now college. College developmental education courses were created to help underprepared students acquire or improve basic education skills such as reading, English, and math. Without the benefit of such courses, these underprepared students would not have the option of a college education. According to a 2010 report from the National Center for Education Statistics, 53% of the nation's three million college freshmen were required to take at least one developmental class. This is a huge issue that adult educators must engage with on a daily basis as we deal with the specific needs of this population.

In the fall semester of 2012, almost 3 million first-time degree-seeking students entered higher education and 54% of these new students were women (NCES Profile 2013). Figure 1 shows that up until 1995 women underperformed men on achievement of Bachelor's degrees. At that point, they crossed over and since that time they have consistently out performed men in completion of Bachelor's degrees. Unfortunately though, the National Center for Education Statistics' latest report (2014) shows that almost 35% of these women were required to take at least one developmental education class, in addition to their regular coursework. Students who are required to complete developmental education courses in college are some of the most susceptible to dropping out of school and when we consider the many stressors that women also have in their

lives, it is crucial to develop ways to aid these women as they work toward their educational goals.
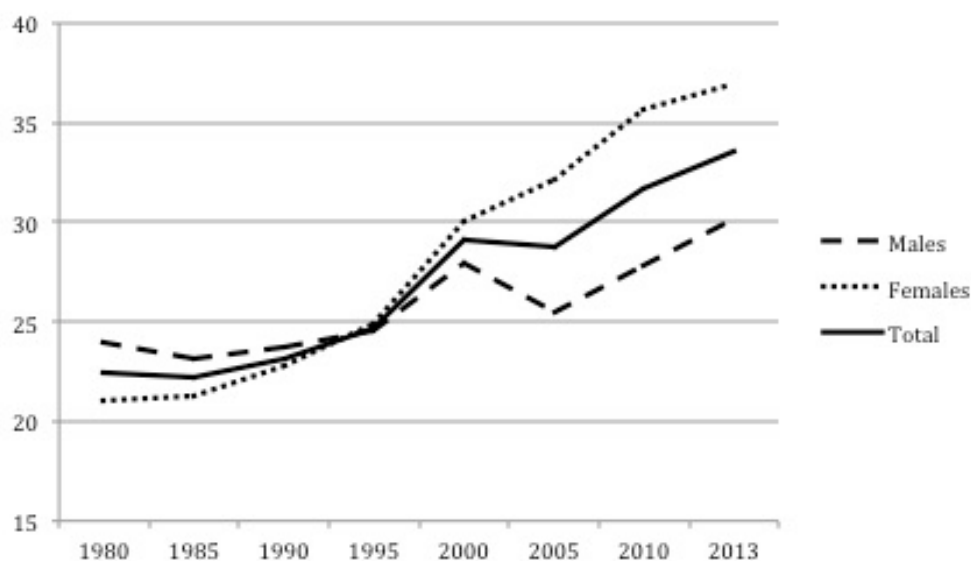
Figure 4.1: Completers of Bachelor's Degree – 18 to 22 year olds

Purpose of the Study

Despite the importance of education in the lives of many adult women, especially those who are trying to improve their lives or social standing, we have little empirical research to help us understand the extent to which spouses or partners affect, either positively or negatively, a woman's higher educational journey. The purpose of this study is to allow us to better understand the experiences of these women and the extent to which their spouses can be a positive or negative affect in their lives. In order to accomplish this broad purpose, the following research questions were used:

1 – To what extent are women in developmental classes positively or negatively affected by the support and sabotage behaviors of their spouses or partners during their higher educational enrollment?

2 – What are the predictors of spousal or partner support and sabotage behaviors?

3 – Is it possible to segment this population into meaningful groups with respect to the type of support or sabotage they experience?

Background of the Study

Women in learning support classes often have many facets to their busy lives and as such face a more difficult time succeeding in college. These women have less than 20% chance of ever graduating college, largely due to the roles and commitments these women have outside of the classroom (Maddox, 2002). Commitment to and support from their families can drastically affect women's chances of achieving their academic goals and unsupportive spouses or partners can dramatically diminish their chances of success (Home, 1998). Lack of affirmation from family members coupled with the stressors of college and developmental classes can be a major road block for women and can lead to not only college dropout, but can also contribute to these women not getting the essential reading, English, and math skills they need.

The Nature and Growth of Developmental Studies

According to the 2011 – 2012 Profile of Undergraduate Students published by the National Center for Education Statistics (2014), 35% of first and second year female college students were required to take a college developmental education course. A majority of these female students that were required to take these courses were either unmarried with dependents or married

with dependents. According to this report, 25% of these female students were white, 33% were black, and 38% were Hispanic.

Adult education for the undereducated population has been focused on literacy and basic skills efforts for many years. However, as educational access and educational attainment has climbed for the total population, the undereducated and marginalized groups are now becoming a major focus. Developmental classes, also called remedial or learning support courses, are defined by the U.S. Department of Education as classes that teach pre-college content. These classes are designed to provide students who do not place into freshman English, reading, or math an opportunity to hone these skills while still taking limited college content (Provasnik & Planty, 2008).

Women who are required to attend developmental classes often have a more difficult time succeeding in their college studies and reaching their educational goals. Students who require remediation in reading, English, or math, also have dropout rates between 70% and 90% depending upon the number of developmental classes that they are required to take (Boylan, 2001). Women can be even more susceptible to these drastic dropout rates when we factor in the additional stressors such as the maintenance of households, raising and caring for children, having spouses or domestic partners, and the demands of extended family members (Home, 1998; Hostetler, 2008; Vaccaro & Lovell, 2010).

Non-traditional College Students

According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), the number of non-traditional students entering college is still on the rise and is quickly becoming the new face of today's college campus. A traditional student is defined as between the ages of 18 and 22, attending college as a full-time student, living on campus and is still financially dependent on his or her parents. The non-traditional student is harder to define, often being described as someone who has delayed enrollment to college, one who works full time, one who is not dependent upon parents for financial support, or one who has dependents. The AACU estimates that as many as 84% of college students today can be classified as non-traditional (Worth & Stephens, 2011).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2014), almost 40% of students in the developmental classroom in college campuses around the country are non-traditional students, including students that are married and students that support children (p. 140). Non-traditional students who also maintain family roles are some of the most vulnerable to disruption. Studies have shown that these students are twice as likely to drop out of classes during their freshman year due to family and job stresses (Brown, 2002).

Women make up the largest segment of the non-traditional, undergraduate population in post-secondary education. While this is a positive progression in and of itself, these same women are still more likely to experience a slower progression through their higher education journey and are more likely to have inconsistent enrollment as they deal with life events (Grimes, 1997).

Subsequently, if these non-traditional female students are placed into developmental classes the likelihood that they will persist to graduation drops dramatically (Zaft, Kallenbach, & Spohn, 2006). When the responsibility of being a spouse, partner, or mother is added to the lives of these female students, it continues to increase the likelihood of dropout. The burden of school added to the lives of these already stressed students is the reason that non-traditional female students are more likely to withdraw from classes than their male counterparts (Home, 1998; McGivney, 2004).

Family Support and Sabotage

Non-traditional female students often rely on family members, in particular spouses or partners, to support them as they navigate the experiences of higher education (Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002). Research has shown that non-traditional students place high value on supportive measure, such as encouragement, praise, and reassurance when it is given by important family members such as spouses and partners (Martire, Parris, & Townsend, 1998; McGraw & Walker, 2004; Quimby & O'Brien, 2006). If these students perceive that these individuals or partners fail to provide an adequate level of support, they often experience increased levels of stress, which can lead to a breakdown in the delicate balance of their lives (Bradshaw, Hager, Knott, & Seay, 2006). Also, if these individuals fail to provide needed support, this relationship can become a major barrier to her success in education. In an article on the persistence of non-traditional learners, McGivney (2004), states that, "women students often experience acute conflict between their domestic and student

roles" (p. 38). Divorces and breakups of intimate relationships are shown to become more proliferate the longer an individual is enrolled in college (Bradshaw, Hager, Knott, & Seay, 2006; Kirby, Biever, Martinez, & Gomez, 2004; McGivney, 2004). This trend is especially troublesome for women who spend additional time in school enrolled in developmental courses.

Method

This study used a self-completion survey with women involved in developmental studies in a mid-sized, urban university in the southeast. The 53-item questionnaire was completed in face-to-face situations in classrooms to uncover circumstances of spousal or partner support and sabotage in these women's lives. The survey for this study was adapted directly from earlier work completed with adult women students in college classes.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is drawn directly from a large unpublished classroom project completed at Syracuse University in 1987 by Valentine, Hopkins, Powers-Burdick, & Schuber (1987). The original study, entitled Spouse Support and Sabotage of Adult Women Students, was designed to answer two research questions: 1) What are the basic components of spouse support and sabotage for adult women students, and 2) Are there conceptually distinct "types" of married women with respect to the nature and amount of support and sabotage they experience. Analysis of survey responses yielded an empirically based framework for understanding the ways in which spouses affect the lives of the women students. The analysis of the survey data from the 321

respondents resulted in the discovery of four important factors, which are further defined in Table 4.1, which can affect the success of a woman's attainment of a college education and provided the conceptual framework for this study.

Factors of support are designed to assist a woman's educational experience and are meant to help a woman be successful as she navigates college. Support factors included both emotional support and logistical support. Emotional support, such as encouragement given by spouses or partners can help women with their motivation to be successful in completion of their classes and degrees. This type of support is important to women, especially as they traverse the roles of spouse or partner and college student. Women have expressed that emotional support from family members allows them to more easily negotiate the often-contrasting roles (Hirsch & Rapkin, 1986).

Logistical support is more physical in nature than its emotional counterpart. It is the deliberate planning or organizing of activities, events, or daily routines so that these women are able to devote their limited time and resources to their studies. Activities such as taking on extra housework or extra child care can help a woman by freeing up precious time resources that she can then devote to classes or homework. Women whose families fail to provide this type of important support may experience additional stress, which can then interfere with the learning process (Bradshaw, Hager, Knott, & Seay, 2006).

On the opposite end of the spectrum of logistical and emotional support lies the act of sabotage. Overt sabotage is the willful and obvious act that is meant to disrupt, discourage, or even end a woman's higher educational journey.

Acts in this category include physical deeds such as tampering with schoolwork, or at worst, physical violence. Vaccaro and Lovell (2010) tell us that women in college report that family members, including spouses, have had a variety of negative reactions, including anger and hostility (p. 2). The longer a woman is enrolled in higher education the more deterioration in marriages and intimate relationships is reported allowing for more episodes of overt sabotage of their higher educational journey (Bradshaw, Hager, Knott, & Seay, 2006; Kirby, Biever, Martinez & Gomez, 2004; McGivney, 2004).

Subtle sabotage is often secretive or understated acts intended to disrupt a woman's education, both short-term and long-term. Items of subtle sabotage, as can be seen, often deal with actions that embarrass or weaken a woman's resolve toward her education. Though these items may not lead to direct physical confrontation, they have the cumulative effect of eroding a woman's strength as she navigates college.

Table 4.1

Definition of Support and Sabotage Factors

Factor	Definition
Emotional Support	Communicated feelings or disclosed attitudes that support and strengthen an adult's energy and commitment to education
Logistical Support	Observable behaviors that support and strengthen an adult learner's energy and commitment to education
Overt Sabotage	Communicated feelings or disclosed attitudes that weaken or erode an adult learner's energy and commitment to education
Subtle Sabotage	Observable behaviors that weaken or erode an adult learner's energy and commitment to education

Instrumentation

The original instrument, Spouse Support and Sabotage of Adult Women Students (1987), required significant revision in order to meet the needs of the current study. Using the four factors, subtle sabotage, overt sabotage, emotional support, and logistical support, we selected the top 40 highest-ranking items out of the original 61 items. After a thorough literature search, the items were updated to reflect the ideologies of current society. Focus groups and critique sessions were held to verify the accessibility of the language and ideas. As can be seen, there are not an equal number of items for each of the four factors because to a large extent, these items hinged on the frequency of item behaviors in both the literature and the focus group and critique sessions.

The original survey was crafted in 1987, which dated the instrument in relation to today's population. Due to the change in population characteristics over the past 27 years, the language of some of the questions needed to be updated. One of the major changes made in the original questionnaire was the addition of the word "partners" to the survey instructions and questions. Today's society is much more accepting and acknowledging of alternate lifestyles so the term "partners" was added alongside the familiar term of husbands. This questionnaire acknowledges the importance that intimate relationships, regardless of the label, plays in the lives of the women in our developmental classrooms. An additional change that was made to the original questioning was the inclusion of the idea of the importance that technology plays in the lives of

our students. In question 20, the idea of school messages passed through texts and emails was added to the original language of the question.

Data Collection

Data were collected from a large developmental program in a large urban area in a Southeastern state. Methods of recruiting participants included distributing flyers advertising the study to all developmental education instructors and placing them in strategic locations such as academic support labs. The flyers invited women who met the following criteria to participate in the study:

- 18 years old or older

- Living with a spouse or partner

- Currently enrolled in a college developmental education class

The lead researcher also recruited participants during visits to individual classrooms. We employed steps to make sure that students felt and were safe from any and all repercussions from honest answers and any refusal to answer any or all survey questions. The Human Subjects division from both researchers' colleges reviewed and approved this study and its procedures of data collection. During these recruitment sessions, potential participants were given a copy of a Research Information Sheet, which detailed the intent of the study as well as the safety measures in place to protect all participants. In addition, participants were also given a sheet detailing community and counseling resources that provided a list of free resources that participants could call upon if the questions in the survey caused any psychological discomfort.

During the actual data collection, the first author who also taught in that environment collected data. The author read the survey instructions and answered any questions before the survey session began. Generally, it took students 30 – 40 minutes to complete the survey and refreshments were served after the surveys were collected and sealed in a blank envelope.

Reliability, Validity and Distribution

The validity of this instrument hinges partially on the way in which it was originally developed. An exhaustive list of support and sabotage items was constructed from interview data. However, because the original instrument is dated and the population and social norms have shifted, it proved essential to take those measures and subject them to critique by more modern values. For instance, we no longer assume the term spouse necessarily referred to a husband. This required us to re-craft the items and add new items as necessary. The new instrument then went through a series of critique sessions to check for modernized language and consistency of ideas.

After data were collected they were entered into SPSS for analysis. The following table, Table 4.2, shows scaled scores for the four factors that are the basis for our questionnaire. Table 4.2 also shows the means and standard deviations for each of the four factors. The Mean Item Mean is also displayed, showing the overall strength of each factor, regardless of number of items in each group.

Table 4.2

Distribution and Reliability of Key Measures

Dimensions	Number of Items	M	SD	Mean item Mean	Coefficient Alpha
Emotional Support	10	29.3	13.5	2.9	.96
Logistical Support	7	20.1	9.9	2.9	.97
Subtle Sabotage	15	47.6	23.4	3.2	.98
Overt Sabotage	8	13.6	7.5	1.7	.90

Scores from the four dimensions were subjected to exploratory cluster analysis to identify holistic, multivariate types of social experiences. It is important to note that these types are based on relative differences within the groups of students. Multiple solutions were examined, with the four-cluster analysis exhibiting the best conceptual clarity. Table 4.9 displays the results of the four-cluster analysis. Finally, qualitative data, consisting of handwritten responses, were then examined to add to our understanding of identified types.

Sample and Description of Respondents

The 230 participants in this research study were women in their freshman year of college and were also enrolled in at least one developmental education course at a medium-sized public, four-year college in the Southeast United States. Table 4.3 gives the breakdown of important demographic data collected during the survey.

Table 4.3

Background Characteristics of Respondents (n=230)

Variable	Value		Means	SD
Age (in years)			23.43	4.65
Race			2.23	.93
Asian	n = 50	21.2%		
Black or African American	n = 99	41.9%		
White	n = 52	22.0%		
Hispanic or Latino	n = 24	11.4%		
Income (yearly)			4.21	1.64
Less than $10,000	n = 3	1.3%		
$10,000 - $19,999	n = 41	17.4%		
$20,000 - $29,999	n = 42	17.8%		
$30,000 - $39,999	n = 42	17.8%		
$40,000 - $49,999	n = 41	17.4%		
$50,000 - $59,999	n = 37	15.7%		
Above $60,000	n = 22	9.3%		
Length of Time in Relationship			4.48	3.48
Spouse/Partner Ed. Background			2.84	1.29

Findings

    The purpose of this research study was to look into the home and family lives of women enrolled in college developmental education classes. We sought to understand how a woman's spouse or partner both facilitated and disrupted her educational journey. The findings of the study are organized around the three guiding research questions.

Findings Related to Question One

Research question one asked, "To what extent are women in developmental education classes positively or negatively affected by the support and sabotage behaviors of their spouses or partners during their higher educational enrollment?" In Table 4.2, the Mean Item Mean is given for each of the four dimensions. As we can see, the Means for Subtle Sabotage was the strongest (see again Table 4.2). Overt Sabotage was less strong, but this position is offset by the severity of the acts chronicled in this dimension.

Tables 4.4 and 4.5 list the supportive factors by rank and means scores from the experiences women related as most frequent to least frequent supportive measures. Emotional support item means ranged from 3.52 to a 1.61 on a scale of 1 to 6 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). Logistical support item means ranged from 3.52 to a 2.34.

Table 4.4

Rank Order of Items Measuring Emotional Support

Rank	Item #	Item	M	SD
6.5	4	My husband/partner encourages my confidence when I'm feeling low about my schoolwork.	3.52	1.68
9.5	8	My husband/partner thinks the things I'm studying are important.	3.41	1.49
11	10	My husband/partner is very proud of my achievements at school.	3.33	1.75
12	15	My husband/partner shows a genuine interest in the things I am learning.	3.25	1.80
13	14	My husband/partner provides emotional support when I'm under pressure at school.	3.23	1.71
15	3	My husband/partner is sympathetic about problems I encounter at school.	3.16	1.57

22.5	10	My husband/partner makes sure I can find time to study.	2.68	1.45
25	11	My husband/partner keeps the house quiet so that I can study.	2.66	1.43
27	34	My husband/partner understands that I need a flexible schedule because of school.	2.54	1.53
37	13	My husband/partner attends school functions with me.	1.61	1.03

Table 4.5

Rank Order of Items Measuring Logistical Support

Rank	Item #	Item	M	SD
6.5	2	My husband/partner spends time with the children so that I can study.	3.52	1.57
9.5	1	My husband/partner lets the children know that my education is important.	3.41	1.51
18.5	26	My husband/partner shares the responsibilities for the child[ren] so that I can go to school.	3.06	1.62
20	38	My husband/partner shares household responsibilities so that I can devote time to school.	3.00	1.71
29	32	My husband/partner makes financial sacrifices so that I can get an education.	2.46	1.39
30	7	My husband/partner varies his or her schedule to support my schooling.	2.41	1.43
31	24	My husband/partner does extra housework when I'm under pressure at school.	2.34	1.55

Tables 4.6 and 4.7 list the means and ranks for both subtle and overt sabotage factors. The item means for subtle sabotage practices ranged from 3.78 to 2.50 and the item means for overt sabotage practices ranged from 2.12 to 1.11.

Table 4.6

Rank Order of Items Measuring Subtle Sabotage

Rank	Item #	Item	M	SD
1	29	My husband/partner complains that he/she can't wait until I'm finished at school.	3.78	1.95
2	36	My husband/partner dislikes the time I devote to school.	3.72	1.74
3	31	My husband/partner and I fight because I'm in school.	3.70	2.01
4	28	My husband/partner interrupts me when I'm trying to study.	3.59	1.57
5	27	My husband/partner feels neglected because of the time I spend on my schoolwork.	3.56	1.73
8	30	My husband/partner complains that the house is messy because I'm in school.	3.47	1.93
14	37	My husband/partner complains that I put school before the family.	3.17	1.91
16	23	My husband/partner gets upset when we can't go out because of my schoolwork.	3.12	1.60
17	18	My husband/partner complains about taking care of the children while I'm at school.	3.08	1.68
18.5	39	My husband/partner makes me feel guilty about the money I spend on education.	3.06	1.80
21	40	My husband/partner make me feel that going to school is selfish.	2.92	2.00
22.5	25	My husband/partner feels I should stay home with the child(ren) instead of going to school.	2.68	1.79
24	12	My husband/partner makes me feel that I am neglecting the family because of school.	2.67	1.63
26	5	My husband/partner feels that our marriage has deteriorated because I'm in school.	2.58	1.65
28	21	My husband/partner feels threatened because I'm in school.	2.50	1.70

Table 4.7

Rank Order of Items Measuring Overt Sabotage

Rank	Item #	Item	M	SD
32	17	My husband/partner belittles me in front of other people about going to school.	2.12	1.49
33	16	My husband/partner tries to undermine my confidence for succeeding in school.	2.10	1.39
34	33	My husband/partner lets other people know he suffers for my education.	2.01	1.47
35	35	My husband/partner has threatened to leave me if I don't quit school.	1.90	1.52
36	6	My husband/partner tries to turn the family against me because of school.	1.66	1.31
38	9	My husband/partner tampers with my school materials (books, papers, etc.).	1.48	1.12
39	22	My husband/partner gets physically abusive because I'm in school.	1.17	.48
40	20	My husband/partner neglects to give me messages (phone, texts, or emails) about school.	1.11	.53

Findings Related to Research Question Two

Research question two asked, "What are the predictors of spousal or

partner support and sabotage behaviors?" In order to accomplish this purpose,

we identified predictors for each of the four factors. Although we collected a

range of background variables to allow for sample description, five of those (age,

race/ethnicity, spouse or partner's education, length of relationship, and income)

variables were viewed as especially important potential predictors of the support

and sabotage these women receive. We conducted a series of bivariate analysis

in which we used these predictors to examine the extent to which these five

variables had an impact on each of the four dimensions. These correlations are depicted in Table 4.8. As can be seen in all cases, the four background variables listed were significant predictors. The co-efficient of determination (r^2), which is a direct expression of the amount of variance share between the predictor and the outcome, is included to explain the extent of the variation.

Table 4.8

Correlation of Predictor Variables

Factor	Predictor Variable	r	p	r^2
Emotional Support	Age	.43	.00	.19
	Yrs. in Relationship	.34	.00	.12
	Income	.59	.00	.35
	Spouse Education	.69	.00	.36
Logistical Support	Age	.41	.00	.17
	Yrs. in Relationship	.31	.00	.10
	Income	.55	.00	.30
	Spouse Education	.59	.00	.35
Subtle Sabotage	Age	-.41	.00	.17
	Yrs. in Relationship	-.30	.00	.09
	Income	-.51	.00	.26
	Spouse Education	-.57	.00	.33
Overt Sabotage	Age	-.37	.00	.14
	Yrs. in Relationship	-.30	.00	.09
	Income	-.49	.00	.24
	Spouse Education	-.57	.00	.33

An additional predictor, race, did not lend itself to correlational analysis so we conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) for each of our four factors. The significant effects of race are as follows:

- Asians are more likely to experience high levels of support and low levels of sabotage.

- Blacks are more likely to experience lower levels of support and higher levels of sabotage.

- Hispanics are more likely to experience average levels of support and sabotage

Findings Related to Research Question Three

Research question three asked, "Is it possible to segment our research population into meaningful groups with respect to the type of support or sabotage they experience?" The purpose of this research question was to allow us to understand not how women do overall (which is covered by research questions 1 and 2), but to examine the different types of experiences that these women have in college with respect to their families. In order to accomplish this task we ultimately settled on a four-way typology, which is depicted in Table 4.9.

As can be seen in Table 4.9, there are four distinct relationship types. The first relationship type listed is The *Toxic Experience* relationship, which makes up 8% of our population and consists of very low levels of support and high levels of sabotage, including very high levels of overt Sabotage. The next type listed is The *Troublesome Experience* relationship, which comprises a relatively high 42% of our participant population and includes high levels of subtle sabotage and low levels of support. The *Optimal Experience* relationship type consists of 23% of our population and is aptly named for the very high levels of support and low levels of sabotage women in these relationships experience. Finally, the last group is The *Average Experience* relationship where support is perceived as

average while sabotage is seen as low. Each type is described below in terms of defining characteristics.

Relationship Type 1: The Toxic Experience. In a Type 1 relationship, women experienced very low levels of both emotional and logistical support while experiencing very high levels of subtle sabotage and extremely high levels of overt sabotage. Eight percent of our research population was situated in this category. Some of the defining characteristics of this group include:

- Participants' spouses or partners had no college education and 56% had less than a high school diploma.

- Women in this group were married for 3 years or less with 50% of the group being married 1 year or less.

- Families in this group had a very low household income with 72% of the group earning less than $20,000 a year.

- Women in this group were younger with 56% of the women being 19 years old or younger.

- This group was comprised of 72% black women, 22% white women and 6% Latino women. There were no Asian women in this group.

Relationship Type 2: The Troublesome Experience. In this Type 2 relationship, participants experienced low levels of both emotional and logistical support, high levels of subtle sabotage, and average levels of overt sabotage. This group made up the largest portion of our population at 42%. Defining characteristics of the participants in this group include the following:

- 87% of the spouses or partners in this group had no college degree.

- The women in this group were married slightly longer that the Type 1 group with 37% being married longer than 3 years.

- Over 29% of the families in this group earned between $30,000 and $39,000 and almost 45% of the families earned $29,000 or less per year.

- The average age of this group is older than the women in the Type 1 group with almost 48% of the women being over 21.

- This group was comprised of 4% Asian women, 54% black women, 23% white women, and 4% Hispanic women.

Relationship Type 3: The Optimal Experience. The Type 3 relationship pertained to 23% of our participant population. The women in this type of relationship seem to experience the best of both worlds in that they experience very high levels of both emotional and logistical support and they experience very low levels of subtle sabotage and low levels of overt sabotage. Important defining characteristics of this group are:

- 87% of the women in this group had spouses or partners who had Bachelor's degrees or higher.

- The women in this group were married longer with 53% being married 4 years or longer.

- Income for this group was higher with 53% of the families in this group earning $50,000 or more per year.

- The women in this group were slightly older than average with 51% being over the age of 25.

- The racial make-up of this group was unique in that 43% of the women in this group were Asian, 30% were black, 23% were white, and 4% were Hispanic.

Relationship Type 4: The Average Experience. Our last relationship type made up 27% of our participant population. The women in this type of relationship experienced average levels of both emotional and logistical support

while experiencing low levels of both subtle and overt sabotage. Defining

characteristics of this group include:

- Education levels were average with 50% of participants' spouses or partners had a Bachelor's degree or higher.

- 50% of women were with their spouses or partners for 4 years or more.

- Women in this group had average incomes with 48% of families had income of $40,000 or higher.

- The surveys showed that 40% of women were Asians, 29% were black, 11% were white, and 21% were Hispanic.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to better understand the role that spousal or

partner support and sabotage plays in a woman's educational experience. In

particular, we looked at the experiences of women enrolled in developmental

education college classes. In an effort to understand their experiences, we

surveyed over 220 women in developmental classrooms at a mid-sized,

southeastern public university using a questionnaire developed and adapted from

a 1987 study, which used questions in the four broad categories of emotional

support, logistical support, subtle sabotage and overt sabotage. Using a variety

of statistical methods, we analyzed the data and categorized a woman's spousal

or partner relationship into four specific categories. These categories, the toxic

experience, the troublesome experience, the optimal experience, and the

average experience describe different levels of support and sabotage in the lives

of the women participants in our study.

Effect of Spousal or Partner Support and Sabotage

All of our participants are affected in some way by their spouses or partners' supportive or sabotaging actions. Though students may have never identified these practices as such, when given the language in the survey they were able to recognize these practices happening in their homes and lives. When looking at the extent to which women in developmental classrooms experience spousal or partner support and sabotage, we looked at the means and rank of the survey items. In Table 4.7, we see that subtle sabotage has the highest mean item mean score at 3.2, with emotional and logistical support at 2.9 and overt sabotage at 1.7 (see again Table 4.7).

Subtle sabotage is the highest ranking of all four of our factors. These observable behaviors can serve to weaken a woman's defenses and erode her commitment to continuing her education. One of our participants stated at the end of our survey in a section reserved for any personal comments, that her husband often made fun of her schoolwork and constantly teased her about trying to be a teacher's pet. Another participant wrote that her boyfriend would jokingly ask her if she was "sleeping with her teachers" in order to get good grades. Though the significant others in these women's lives did nothing physically to stop or interfere with her attendance of classes or completion of assignments they did serve to embarrass these students and to denigrate their already shaky confidence. These types of behaviors can easily serve to undermine a woman's commitment to completing her college degree.

Emotional and logistical support both held similar second-place rankings with the same mean item mean of 2.9. Participants discussed the importance of both the big and the little things when it came to the support of their spouses and partners. One woman discussed how much it helped when her husband took over the household chores so that she could study or work on assignments. Another student stated that when she received a failing grade on a project, her husband took her out on a date to get her mind off the project and encouraged her not to give up. Though these instances of support were chronicled in the survey responses, fewer students gave examples of important supportive behaviors.

Overt sabotage, those verbalized attitudes or enacted physical constraints that can make going to college even more difficult for these women, ranked last in our list of support and sabotage factors with a mean item mean of 1.7. Though this last place ranking in and of itself is definitely good news, the fact that even some of our students experience these types of behaviors from their spouses or partners is cause for concern. One student indicated in her comments that, during a fight with her son's father over her need to attend class, the boy's father hit her and she had to miss class anyway. These types of controlling behaviors can quickly erode a woman's will and desire to continue her education.

Table 4.9

Profiles of Spousal and Partner Support and Sabotage

Relationship Type	N (%)	Emotional Support	Logistical Support	Subtle Sabotage	Overt Sabotage	Descriptive Characteristics
I. Toxic Experience	18 8%	Very Low -1.31	Very Low -1.11	Very High 1.52	Extremely High 2.77	Disproportionately high number of black participants; Spouses/partners with no college education; 94% married 3 years or less (M=1.8); Very low income participants
II. Troublesome Experience	92 42%	Low -.75	Low -.78	High .83	Average .33	Low number of spouses/partners with college education; 63% married 3 years or less (M=4.1); Low income participants
III. Optimal Experience	49 23%	Very High 1.45	Very High 1.48	Very Low -1.20	Low -.75	Disproportionately high number of Asian participants (M=5.6) and low number of black participants (M=.5); High number of spouses/partners with college education (87%); higher income participants
IV. Average Experience	59 27%	Average .36	Average .27	Low -.63	Low -.66	Disproportionately high number of Asian and Hispanic participants (M=49); 50% of spouses/partners have college education

Predictors of Spousal Support and Sabotage

When looking at what can facilitate instances of spousal or partner support and sabotage we examined the five predictors of age, income, length of relationship with a spouse or partner, the educational background of a spouse or partner, and the participants' race. We looked at the levels of association that each of these predictor variables has with each of the four factors to discern the levels of effect. We used the Pearson Correlation to examine the first four variables and an ANOVA to examine race. Our analysis showed that all of these predictor variables were significant.

A participant's age showed a strong relationship with three of our four factors. Age in relation to emotional support ($r = .43$) and logistical support ($r = .41$) showed a strong positive relationship, whereas age in relation to subtle sabotage ($r = -.41$) showed a strong negative relationship and in relationship to overt sabotage ($r = -.37$) showed a moderate negative relationship. These trends point to the idea that as a woman gets older, she experiences more support and less sabotage in her relationships.

The next predictor variable, the number of years a woman has spent in a relationship showed us moderate numbers across all four factors. This variable had a moderate positive relationship with emotional support ($r = .34$) and logistical support ($r = .31$) and a moderate negative relationship with subtle sabotage ($r = -.30$) and overt sabotage ($r = -.30$). These values show us that the longer a woman is in a relationship with her significant other, there are more

likely to be instances of support and less likely to be instances of sabotage in relation to completing college courses.

Income as a predictor variable showed itself to be a stronger predictor than our previous variables of age and years spent in a relationship. Income's effect on both emotional support (r = .59) and logistical support (r = .55) shows a strong positive support, indicating that as a family's income climbs, there will be more emotional and logistical support given to a woman as she pursues a college education. Income's effect on subtle sabotage (r = -.51) and on overt sabotage (r = -.49) show a strong negative relationship, again indicating that as a family's income rises, the likelihood of sabotage in these cases declines.

One of the strongest predictors seen in this survey is the spouse or partner's education level. In our survey, we measured spousal or partner education levels from no high school diploma through bachelor's degrees or higher. Our indication is that the higher the level of education, the more support and less sabotage the participants faced. Spousal or partner education had a strong positive relationship with both emotional support (r = .69) and logistical support (r = .59) and a strong negative relationship with subtle sabotage (r = -.57) and overt sabotage (r = -.57).

Profiles of Support and Sabotage

After studying the demographics of our participants, as well as their responses to our questionnaire, we discerned that there were four types of spousal or partner relationships at play in the lives of our respondents. Women in our study were classified into one of four spousal or partner experiences: the

Optimal relationship, the *Average* relationship, the *Troublesome* relationship, and the *Toxic* relationship. Each of these experiences may share some similar characteristics, but there are enough important differences between the groups that may help to explain some of the support and sabotage behaviors that these women experience.

The *Optimal Experience* is the relationship that most women would seek in a partner, especially when they are attempting to take on the burden of returning to college to complete their education. This type of spouse or partner typically gives a lot of support, both emotional and logistical, to the women in this relationship. Encouragement, praise, and help with the children are common in this household, thus easing the burden of the woman so that she can dedicate more time to her educational pursuits. As educators, we wish this type of experiences for our students living with a spouse or partner so that they can have an even more fulfilling educational experience, but with only 23% of our respondents falling into this category, we still have a ways to go before this becomes the norm.

Women in the *Average Experience* type of relationship make up an additional 27% of our respondent group. These women have average amounts of support and low levels of sabotage in their home. The spouses or partners in these relationships are perceived as not getting in the way of a woman's education, but they are not necessarily perceived as being overly helpful either. One participant who fit into the *Average Experience* group stated that even though her husband did not seem to resent her dedication to her education, he

did not tend to contribute additional time or effort in the home to help with the children.

The largest relationship group in our study was the *Troublesome Experience* group, making up 42% of our respondents' relationships. These relationships were low on both emotional support and logistical support, average on overt sabotage, and high on subtle sabotage. A big concern of educators are the long-term life events outside of the classroom that take our students' time, attention, focus, and emotions away from what is needed to be successful in college, we are a greedy institution after all. These students receive little to no support from their significant others, often leaving them to take care of the home and any children alone, as well as having to contend with schoolwork. They also have to contend with emotionally or physically abusive situations, and often deal with behaviors from spouses or partners meant to erode their energy and confidence. From the characteristics of this group and from the experiences our respondents must face, it is indeed a troublesome relationship.

Finally, our smallest, but most concerning group is the *Toxic Experience* relationship. At 8% of our group the numbers might seem miniscule, if it wasn't for the behaviors that lay behind this experience. The women in the *Toxic Experience* relationship group experience very low levels of both emotional and logistical support, which often leaves these women to balance the greedy institutions of work, school, and home completely on their own. Often these women are singularly responsible for their children and homes, leaving them little time to complete schoolwork outside of the classroom. The women in this group

also are the recipients of very high levels of subtle sabotage and extremely high levels of overt sabotage, which means that it is likely that there is some abuse happening in the relationship. It is the women in this group that are highly susceptible to missing classes, failing courses, and dropping out of college.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS

The role of this dissertation is to use a variety of lenses to examine how a woman's family affects her educational journey in college and to allow us to have a deeper understanding of exactly what she faces every day, both at home and in the classroom in relation to this journey. The three articles that comprise the body of this dissertation examine the intersection of women, families, and higher education. Each of these articles uses a different scholarly lens to approach the question of family support and sabotage in these women's lives. The critical literature review identified common themes within both current and seminal literature and the qualitative and quantitative articles examined different familial influences and affects in the lives of our participants.

Principal Findings of the Articles

Together, the three articles written for this dissertation provide a broader look into the phenomenon of family support and sabotage in the lives of women enrolled in developmental education classes in college. The articles consist of a critical literature review article, a qualitative study focusing on the impacts that children have on these women, and a quantitative study into how a woman's spouse or partner supports and sabotages her educational journey. Although each article has weights and merits of its own, by looking at them together as a

whole body of work we are able to get a clearer picture of how a woman's family affects her educational journey. A number of themes were gleaned from the three articles as shown in Table 5.1 and the seven themes are further explored in the following section.

Table 5.1

Principal Findings of the Three Articles

Themes from the Literature Review:

Theme 1: Continuing life experiences of non-traditional women students causes strain on resources.

Theme 2: When the amount of energy a woman needs exceeds the amount she has available, the potential for failure increases.

Themes from the Qualitative Article:

Theme 3: Women are encouraged to attend college to promote better life experiences for their children.

Theme 4: Women struggled with the idea of what might be lacking in their children's lives due to their participation in school.

Themes from the Quantitative Article:

Theme 5: Participants are involved in intimate relationships types that ranged from the *Optimal Experience* to the *Toxic Experience.*

Theme 6: Participants are all affected in some form by spousal or partner support and sabotage.

Theme 7: There are specific predictor variables that have an influence on the amount of support and sabotage participants experience.

Important Themes Found in the Critical Literature Review Article

The article entitled, "The Influence of Family on Adult Women in Developmental Education" is a critical literature review of current and seminal

literature on women and their families and how this dynamic intersects with her

college education. This literature review employed critical content analysis to

search out themes in the literature relevant to the ways in which families impact a

woman's educational journey. Several themes were found within the literature

and Table 5.1 lists the two major themes in the literature (see again Table 5.1),

which revolve around the amount of resources she has access to in relation to

the amount of strain that she is under.

Theme 1: Continuing life experiences of non-traditional women

students causes strain on resources. The population for these studies in this

dissertation is mothers, caregivers, wives, partners, family members, and now

college students enrolled in developmental education classes. In many, if not

most cases, these women are the caregivers for the children in the home and the

caretakers of the household. They have responsibilities well beyond that of the

classroom and often fight daily battles to keep their lives and the lives of their

families moving forward. The delicate balance between family and school can

easily be disrupted by occurrences such as sickness, car trouble, job loss, or one

of the other many every day life experiences that others with stronger support

systems seem to handle with ease.

Theme 2: When the amount of energy a woman needs exceeds the

amount she has available, the potential for failure increases. An additional

theme that revealed itself in the literature was the idea of the amount of energy it

takes for these women to keep moving forward in their lives and what happens

when the amount of energy they have is exceeded by all they need to complete

each day. McClusky's Theory of Margin (1963) is focused on adulthood as a time of change, adaptation, and growth. It discusses the ideas of Power, which is all of the energy and help that we have, versus Load, which is all that we have to do each and every day. For the women in our studies, adding the additional role of student can lead to failure if they do not also have the additional power to help them meet the extra demands of classes and homework.

Important Themes Found in the Qualitative Article

The qualitative study article entitled, "The Impact of Children on Women Enrolled in Developmental Education" is a research study into how children affect a woman's educational journey. This study used group and individual face-to-face interviews to talk with women about how children living in the home impact their educational lives. Analysis of the interviews revealed six important major themes that connected many of these women. Three of these themes were considered positive themes in that the relationships with her children encouraged the women to continue along their current educational pathways. The additional three themes were considered negative themes in that the women's relationship with her children or her commitment to her education was considered to be harmed in some fashion.

Theme 3: Women are encouraged to attend college to promote better life experiences for their children. Two of the three positive themes found in article two centers around a woman's desire to make life better for her children. The study shows that the participants were encouraged to continue their college education, despite the obstacles they face, if it resulted in more

money for the family or a better education for the children. Since women often take on the role of caretaker for the family, it is a natural extension of that role to use her own educational journey to promote the well-being and success of her children.

The third positive theme that comes from the study showed that women were very concerned with how their children perceived their academic accomplishments. Several of the women in the study stated that they stayed on their academic course out of a desire to make their children proud. These women were determined to graduate college because to fail meant to fail their children. These women wanted to provide their children with a positive role model and were determined to be that role model for them.

Theme 4: Women struggled with the ideal of what might be lacking in their children's lives due to their participation in school. The three negative themes found during the analysis of the interviews all revolved around the idea of lack, whether it was the lack of money, lack of time, or lack of emotional connections and resources. Women in the participant groups talked of their children's behavior problems that had arisen since their return to college. These behaviors put a strain on the relationships, which in turn caused a great strain on these women. The women in this study also talked of having to make choices between competing demands, which put a strain on their roles as student and as mother. There were times that these mothers had to choose school over their children and this often created an almost impossible situation for them as their guilt took over their lives. Finally, many of the participants cited

a lack of emotional and financial resources to help them get through their college classes. These students stated that they were just not able to handle the emotional and financial strain alone as they tried to be both mother and students and lived in a perpetual state of lack. These issues with lack caused enough concern with these students that many were considering not continuing their education.

Important Themes Found in the Quantitative Article

The quantitative article entitled, "Experiences of Spouse Support and Sabotage for Adult Women in Developmental Education" is a survey-based research study into how spouses or partners affect a woman's educational journey. This study used a 53-item survey to question women about how their husbands or partners supported or sabotaged their educational journey (see Appendix F). After reviewing responses from our 230 participants we were able to identify four relationship types that our students were engaged in with their spouses or partners. With the information that we gathered, we were also able to identify effect and predictors of spousal support and sabotage.

Theme 5: Participants are involved in intimate relationship types that ranged from the Optimal Experience to the Toxic Experience. Analysis of responses from our participants yielded four distinct spousal or partner relationship types in respect to the support and sabotage they experience: the toxic experience, the troublesome experience, the average experience, and the optimal experience. The optimal experience makes up 23% of our participants' experience and is the relationship that most women would wish for with its high

levels of support and low levels of sabotage. Unfortunately though, most of the women in our study, 42%, were involved in the troublesome relationship, which consists of low levels of support, high levels of subtle sabotage and average levels of overt sabotage. Finally, the toxic relationship, as the name implies, had very low levels of support and very high levels of sabotage. Though this group made up the smallest portion of our participants, the amount of sabotage that they face ensures that this should be a great concern to educators.

Theme 6: Participants are all affected in some form by spousal support and sabotage. Through the analysis of our data, it became evident that all of our participants were affected in some way by the support and sabotage practices of their spouses or partners. A particular concern that arose was the amount of sabotage that goes on in the lives of these women. In our study, one of the most concerning trends to be revealed was the proliferation of subtle sabotage, which was the highest ranking of all of our four factors. This type of behavior begins to erode a woman's mental energy level and in turn can weaken her commitment to her education. Overt sabotage, though ranked last in our list of support and sabotage factors, still paced high enough for us to be concerned about the possibility of abuse happening in the lives of these students.

Theme 7: There are specific predictor variables that have an influence on the amount of support and sabotage participants' experience. In an effort to obtain a better understanding of the factors of support and sabotage in our participants' lives, we also collected background information and analyzed this data to look for any predictors of support and sabotage. Although

we collected 10 background variables only five yielded statistically significant results: age, income, length of relationship with the spouse or partner, the educational background of the spouse or partner, and the participant's race. We found that the education level of the participant's spouse or partner was the strongest predictor of the levels of spousal or partner support and sabotage. Participants who had husbands or partners with a Bachelor's degree or higher were more likely to experience higher levels of support and lower levels of sabotage than did women who had spouses or partners with high school diplomas or lower.

Discussions

This dissertation was crafted to take a more holistic look at the way families impact women who are non-traditional learners in college. In an effort to understand the family's effects, three different research studies were undertaken, looking at different aspects of a woman's family. An interview-based study looked at the impact that children have on a woman's return to college and a survey-based study looked at the ways a woman's spouse or partner supports and sabotages her collegiate efforts. Although there are several takeaways from the research, one of the biggest points that we must consider is that families do, in fact, affect a woman's educational journey in both positive and negative ways. This is an important fact, especially considering that the number of women college students needing developmental education classes has continued to rise, making this a serious issue in adult education. The stresses on this population,

especially their extended stay in developmental classes, can make them very susceptible to issues of delayed graduation or even college dropout.

Greedy Institutions

The literature study revealed several important facts about the lives of our women college students. In chapter two, the literature review discussed McClusky's Theory of Margin (1963) and the ideas of load and power. This theory states that adults are always seeking to balance what they need to accomplish (Load) with the amount of time, energy, and support (Power) they have to complete these tasks. If a woman has enough of the resources she needs to accomplish the tasks she has before her, she will have the ability to reach her goals. It is when she does not have the amount of support she needs, that she must make choices to reduce her load.

In the qualitative study, the women from our interview groups echoed this theme of load versus power when they discussed some of the negative effects that attending school has on their children and on their relationships with their children. Two of the six prevalent themes from this chapter show the negative effects of having her resources overloaded. When too much stress is placed on a woman's physical, emotional, or financial resources she can become overloaded and must make a choice as to what stays in her life and what has to be removed. As the traditional primary caregiver of children in the home, it is unlikely that she will be able to, or will desire to, place school above the welfare of her children. Since both education and families are considered "greedy institutions" in that they each require an inordinate amount of time and

commitment, women with little to no support system in place to help her handle the increased demands on her resources will have a more difficult time meeting her college demands (Hayes, & Flannery, 2000; Home, 1998; Johnson & Robson, 1999).

Support Systems

The quantitative study, reveals that having a spouse or partner in the home is not necessarily a guarantee that these women will have a ready made support system to help her handle these extra demands when she returns to college. The list of relationship types that the participants are in reveal that every woman experienced some sort of sabotaging behaviors from her spouse or partner. Fifty percent of our participants received high levels of sabotage while only 23% of these women received above average levels of support. In this same study, of the four factors examined, subtle sabotage ranked the highest with the top five ranked survey questions all being subtle sabotage behaviors.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The use of multiple lenses to examine the phenomenon of family support and sabotage helps us to realize that these women do not exist in a vacuum, but must live within the constraints of their lives. Educators can use this information to drive practices that acknowledge, and even honor, these constraints. All of the participants felt the pull between both the "greedy institutions" of family and college and those with less supportive measure in place are more likely to struggle with issues such as attendance, outside group meetings, and homework, as well as the purchase of expensive class materials and textbooks.

In order to facilitate the success of these students, colleges can implement programs that include alternate scheduling of classes such as online, weekend and evening classes as well as the adoption of low-cost or open-source texts. The use of online bulletin boards and collaboration software can also be used as virtual meeting spaces to reduce the amount of time these women have to be away from their families. Colleges can also help with childcare issues by providing low-cost, on-site daycare and flexible lab and computer times. Colleges can help these women with the emotional issues and strains that can often be overwhelming by offering access to individual and group counseling for free or at a reduced cost to the student and her family members if the need arises. Finally, colleges can host free events that include students and their families in an effort to create a more familial accepting attitude on campus.

Individual educators can also help to facilitate the success of these students by altering some of their methods of teaching. Educators, especially those in developmental classes where students may be more vulnerable, can structure some class time or assignments around topics that empower women while integrating multiple perspectives into the classroom. For example, including reading and writing assignments on strong female figures throughout history who have overcome adversity could serve as motivation to students as they struggle to alter their lives to accommodate the addition of their new educational endeavors. Educators can also encourage students to discuss areas of stress or concern through journaling or private blogging, which can open lines of communication between the student and teacher. Being able to put a voice to

their anxieties may help many of these students to realize that they are not alone in their problems.

Implications for Future Research

Though the intention of this dissertation is to examine familial support and sabotage of women in the developmental classroom from multiple viewpoints, there are still limitations to this research and questions that would lend themselves to future research efforts. One such limitation is the nature of surveying individuals in an academic field. All of the data collected for the qualitative and quantitative articles are self-reported and depends solely on the self-awareness of the individuals responding to the questions. The researcher relies on this information for the view into the participants' worlds. In the qualitative study, one of the additional findings of the individual interviews was the idea of public versus private voices. Two particular participants gave conflicting views of what was happening in the home with their children, painting a different picture of the behaviors of the children in the private interviews versus the group discussions. The reasons for these discrepancies can be numerous, including the fact that the interviewer is a teacher at that college and may be known to these individuals. A longer study that follows a group of students and creates more of a cohort atmosphere may be helpful in gaining the trust of the students. Additional conversations and surveys may be helpful in gathering additional information that may add to the picture painted in this dissertation. The impacts of family support and sabotage shown in the lives of these developmental women students may very well be present in the lives of all

women returning to higher education and possibly in the lives of some men as well.

Another implication for future research would be the further development and use of the survey instrument used in the quantitative study. The instrument, *Spouse Support and Sabotage of Adult Women Students,* worked well with this population and could be used to further explore the phenomenon of family support and sabotage and the ways that these actions affect women in colleges across the country for a broader look at this phenomenon.

Finally, more research is needed into ways, both direct and indirect, that colleges can help women deal with the sabotage factors that they face from their family members in relation to their pursuit of higher education. Many of the women who participated in this study voiced their frustrations over the amount of time and energy they spent dealing with their additional workloads while receiving very little assistance from their families. College administrators and educators who understand and aid students with the effects of this phenomenon could make a difference in the retention and success of this population.

REFERENCES

Aud, S., Hussar, W., Kena, G., Bianco, K., Frohlich, L., Kemp, J., Tahan, K. (2011). The Condition of Education 2011 (NCES 2011-033). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office

Ballmer, H., & Cozby, P. (1981). Family environments of women who return to college. *Sex Roles, 7*(10), 1019 – 1026

Benshoff, J., & Lewis, H. (1992). *Nontraditional college students.* Ann Arbor: ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Personnel Services (ERIC No. ED347483).

Bowe, J., & Dittmann, W. (2001), Identifying the needs of adult women in distance learning programs. *International Journal of Instructional Media, 28*(4), 406 – 413.

Boylan, H. (1999). Developmental education: Demographics, outcomes, and activities. *Journal of Developmental Education, 23(2),* 23-33.

Boylan, H. (2001). Making the case for developmental education. *Research in Developmental Education, 12(2),* 1 – 4.

Bradburn, E. M., Moen, P., & McClain, D. (1995). Women's return to school following the transition to motherhood. *Social Forces*, 73(4), 1517-1551.

Bradshaw, L., Hager, G., Knott, E., & Seamy, S. (2006). The undergraduate

odyssey: Experiences of older undergraduate women. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, (73)*2, 22 – 27.

Brown, S. (2002). Strategies that contribute to nontraditional adult student development and persistence. *Journal of Lifelong Learning, 11,* 67-76.

Carney-Crompton, S., & Tan, J. (2002). Support systems, psychological functioning, and academic performance of nontraditional female students. *Adult Education Quarterly, (52)*2, 140 – 154.

Chartrand, J. (1990). A causal analysis to predict the personal and academic adjustment of nontraditional students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 37*(1), 65 – 73.

Chao, R. (2009). Understanding the adult learners' motivation and barriers to learning. *European Society of Research on the Education of Adults.* (pp. 905 – 925). Macedonia: Greece.

Coser, L. A. (1974). Two methods in search of a substance. *American Sociological Review, 40*(6), 691 – 700.

Cuban, S. (2003). "Oh, so lucky to be like that, somebody care": Two case studies of women learners and their persistence in a Hawaii literacy program. *Adult Basic Education, (13)*1, 19 – 43.

Cuban, S. & Hayes, E. (1996). Women in family literacy programs: A gendered perspective. In P. Sissel (Ed.), *Family Literacy Models* (pp. 5 – 16). New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, No. 70. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Edwards, R. (1993). *Mature women students: Separating or connecting family*

and education. Bristol, PA: Taylor & Francis.

Fairchild, E. (2003). Multiple roles of adult learners. In D. Kilgore & P. Rice (Eds.), *New directions for student services: Meeting the special needs of adult students* (pp. 43 – 52). MA:Wiley Periodicals.

Freire, P. (2004). The banking concept of education. In A. Canestrari & B. Marlowe (Eds.), *Educational foundations: An anthology of critical readings* (pp. 255 – 267). CA: Sage.

Gigliotti, R., & Huff, H. (1995). Role-related conflicts, strains and stresses of older-adult college students. *Sociological Focus, 28*(3), 329 – 342.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* Aldine Transaction: Chicago.

Grimes, S., (1997). Underprepared community college students: Characteristics, persistence, and academic success. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 21,* 47 – 56.

Hayes, E. & Flannery, D. (2000). *Women as learners: The significance of gender in adult learning.* Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Hirsch, B., & Rapkin, B. (1986). Multiple roles, social networks, and women's well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*(6), 1237 – 1247.

Home, A. (1998). Predicting role conflict, overload and contagion in adult women university students with families and jobs. *Adult Education Quarterly, 48*(2), 85-98.

Horsman, J. (2006). Moving beyond "stupid": Taking account of the impact of

violence on women's learning. *International Journal of Educational Development, 26,* 177-188.

Hostetler, A. (2008). Educational careers, returning to school and work-family concerns. In S. Sweet and J. Casey (Eds.) *Work and Family Encyclopedia.* Chestnut Hill, MA: Sloan Work and Family Research Network. Retrieved February 16, 2009, from http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/encyclopedia_entry.php? id=871&area=All

Johnson-Bailey, J. (2004). Making a way out of no way: An analysis of the educational narratives of reentry black women with emphasis on issues of race, gender, class and color.

Johnson, S., & Robson, C. (1999). Threatened identities: The experiences of women in transition to programmes of professional higher education. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 9,* 273 – 288.

Johnson, L., Schwartz, R., & Bower, B., (2000). Managing stress among adult women students in community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practices, 24,* 289 – 300.

Kazak, A., & Andrews, A. (1992). Women and families: Individual and family systems issues. *Journal of Family Psychology, 5*(3), 360 – 378.

Kelly, S. (1982). Changing parent-child relationships: An outcome of mother returning to college. Family Relations, 31(2), 287-294.

Kirby, P., Biever, J., Martinez, I., & Gomez, J. (2004). Adults returning to school: The impact on family and work. *The Journal of Psychology, 138*(1), 65 – 76.

Laine, C., Laine, M., & Bullock, T. (2000). Teaching underprepared college

    readers: Where have we been? Where are we going? *American*

    Reading Forum Yearbook, XX, 50-64.

Laubach Literacy Action, (1993). *By women, for women: A beginning dialogue*

    on women and literacy in the United States. Syracuse, NY: Laubach

    Literacy International.

Maddox, T. (2002). The under-prepared student and the community college: A

    good fit. *Southern Association of Community, Junior, and Technical*

    *Colleges, (19)*1, 16-22.

Malicky, G., & Norman, C. (1996). Perceptions of adult literacy learners about

    themselves and their lives. *Adult Basic Education, 6*(1), 3 – 20.

Maloney, W. (2003). Connecting the texts of their lives to academic literacy:

    Creating success for at-risk first-year college student. *Journal of*

    *Adolescent & Adult Literacy, (46)*8, 664-673.

Martire, L., Parris, M., & Townsend, A. (1998). Emotional support and well-being

    of midlife women: Role-specific mastery as a meditational mechanism.

    Psychology and Aging, 13(3), 396 – 404.

McClusky, H .(1963). The course of the adult life span. In W.C. Hallenbeck

    (Ed.), *Psychology of adults*. Chicago: Adult Education Association of the

    U.S.

McClusky, H . (1970). An approach to a differential psychology of the adult

    potential. In. S. M. Grabowski (Ed.), *Adult learning and instruction.*

Syracuse, NY: ERIC Clearinghouse on adult education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 045 867).

McGivney, V. (2004). Understanding persistence in adult learning. *Opening Learning, (19)*1, 33 – 46.

McGraw, L., & Walker, A. (2004). Gendered family relations: The more things change, the more they stay the same. In M. Coleman & L. Ganong (Eds.), *Handbook of contemporary families: Considering the past, contemplating the future* (pp. 174 – 188). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miller, M. & Murray, C. (2005). Advising academically underprepared students. *NACADA,* Retrieved from http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/clearinghouse /advisingissues/academically-underprepared.htm

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2010). *Digest of educational statistics: 2009.* (NCES No. 2010013). Washington, DC: Education Publications Center. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs /digest/d09.

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2011). *Digest of educational statistics: 2009.* (NCES No. 2010013). Washington, DC: Education Publications Center. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs /digest/d09.

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2013). Levels of education. In *Digest of Education Statistics 2013 (Chap. 1).* Retrieved February 24, 2015, from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_104.20.asp.

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2014). *Profile of undergraduate students: 2011-2012.* (NCES No.2015167). Washington, DC: Education Publications Center. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid =2015167.

Plucker, J., Wongsarnpigoon, R., & Houser, J. (2006). Examining college remediation trends in Indiana. *Education Policy Brief, 4(5),* 1 – 10.

Provasnik, S. & Planty, M. (2008). *Community colleges: Special supplement to the condition of education 2008.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Quimby, J., & O'Brien, K. (2006). Predictors of well-being among nontraditional female students with children. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 84*, 451 – 460.

Rodriguez, A., Guido-DiBrito, F.,Torres, V., & Talbot, D. (2000). Latina college students: Issues and challenges for the 21st century. *NASPA Journal, 37*(3), 511 - 527

Scott, C., Burns, A., & Cooney, G. (1996). Reasons for discontinuing study: The case of mature age female students with children. *Higher Education, 31*(2), 233 – 253.

Stalker, J. (2001). Misogyny, women, and obstacles to tertiary education: A vile situation. *Adult Education Quarterly, 51*(4), 288 – 305.

Thomas, V. (2001). Educational experiences and transitions of reentry college women: Special considerations for African American female students. *The Journal of Negro Education, (70)*3, 139-155.

Tritelli, D. (2003). Purposeful pathways? A look at school-college alignment.

    Peer Review, 5(2), 3.

Vaccaro, A. & Lovell, C. (2010). Inspiration from home: Understanding family as

    key to adult women's self-investment. *Adult Education Quarterly, 60*(2),

    pp. 161 – 176.

Valentine, T., Hopkins, D., Powers-Burdick, P., & Schuber, L. (1987). *Spouse*

    support and sabotage of adult women students. Proceedings from

    AAACE Conference, 1987: American Association for Adult and

    Continuing Education.

Watson, J. (2007). Pretty darned cold: Single mother students and the

    community college climate in post-welfare reform America. *Equity &*

    Excellence in Education, 40, 229 – 240.

Williams, J. (2008). Aligning developmental reading pedagogy with persistence

    research. *Language, Literacy, and Culture Review, 5,* 80 – 94.

Worth, J., & Stephens, C., (2011). Adult students: Meeting the challenge of a

    growing student population. *Peer Review, 13*(1), 79 – 94.

Zafft, C., Kallenbach, S., & Spohn, J. (2006). *Transitioning adults to college:*

    Adult basic education program models. NCSALL (National Center for the

    Study of Adult Learning and Literacy) Occasional Paper. Boston, MA:

    World Education, Inc.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT FLYER (Qualitative Interviews)

(Photo Reduced)

Research Volunteers Needed!

You have the opportunity to participate in a research study into the impact that children have on women enrolled in developmental education classes.

Who can participate?

You can if you are:

- 18 years or older

- Currently enrolled in a Student Success course such as READ 98, ENGL 99, or MATH 99

- Currently raising at least one child, including step-children, grandchildren, or other children living in your home

What's involved?

- Focus groups

- Individual interviews

- Follow-up focus groups

For more information, contact:

Jamie Caudill
Faculty Member,
School of Education

Tel: 678-939-9149
Email: jcaudill@ggc.edu

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT (Qualitative Interviews)

Research Participant's Informed Consent

Doctorial Dissertation Project
The Impact of Children on Women
Enrolled in Learning Support Classes

I agree to take part in a research study, *The Impact of Children on Women Enrolled in Learning Support Classes*, which is being conducted by Jamie Caudill, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy, The University of Georgia, 678-939-9149, under the direction of Dr. Thomas Valentine, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy, The University of Georgia, 706-542-4017. My participation is voluntary; I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty OR LOSS OF BENEFITS TO WHICH I AM OTHERWISE ENTITLED. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed. Incentive: For my participation in this research project, I will receive a $10 Wal-Mart gift card.

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to discover to what extent children impact the education of women enrolled in developmental education classes at the college level.

Benefits: Benefits may include the opportunity to discuss family support with other individuals who share similar views, which may allow me to create support networks within the college setting.

Procedures: If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:
* Meet for one hour to participate in a focus group and provide any answers to questions presented to the group as related to my own experience with children living in my home and how they influence my college participation.
* Meet with me one-on-one for one hour to explore any topics related to the questions brought up by the focus group.
* Meet for 30 minutes in a group setting to participate in member checks to discuss relevant themes.

The interviews will be audiotaped. The audio recordings will be digitally erased immediately following transcription.

Risks and Discomforts: While there are no foreseeable risks associated with this study, it is always the case as one discusses one's family life there are possibilities of psychological distress.   I will be provided a list of contact information for the GGC counseling center as well as local women's centers and counseling facilities.   I may choose to skip any questions with which I am uncomfortable.

Confidentiality: Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with me will remain confidential unless required by law. The data will be labeled with a code that the research team can link to individually identifiable information. Paper records will be secured in a locked drawer in a locked room. Computer/electronic file data will be stored in a password-protected file. I have the right to review audiotapes. All data identified with me will be destroyed after the findings are written. In reporting the findings, no names or institutions will be identified.

Further Questions: The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, no or during the course of the project, and can be researched by telephone at 678-939-9149.

Final Agreement & Consent Form Copy: My signature below indicates that the researchers have answered all of my questions to my satisfaction and that I consent to volunteer for this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Researcher   Signature   Date
Telephone: _____   Email: _____

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Signature   Date

Please sign both copies; keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to: The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602; Telephone 706-542-3199; E-mail address IRB@uga.edu.

APPENDIX C

RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

(Qualitative Interviews)

<u>*Resources for Research Participants*</u>

The table below provides a list of counseling and mental health resources available to all students at Georgia Gwinnett College.

Name	Phone #	Address	Benefit
Georgia Gwinnet College Counseling Center	678-407-5592	1000 University Ctr. Lane Lawrenceville, GA 30043 www.ggc.edu/about-ggc/departments/counseling-center	Free and confidential individual and group counseling
Families First	404-541-3020	5151 Brook Hollow Pkwy, Suite 205 Norcross, GA 30071 www.familiesfirst.org	Family and individual counseling sessions – fee-based
Avita Community Mental Health	678-341-3840	125 North Corners Pkwy, Cumming, GA 30040 www.gamtns.org	Community mental health services offering family and individual counseling services – fee based
Gwinnett Christian Counseling Center	770-963-7472	220 Crogan St. Lawrenceville, GA 30046 www.upglad.com	Faith-based individual and family counseling – fee based
Georgia Crisis & Access Line	800-715-4225	www.mygcal.com	Toll-free phone access to counselors 24 hours per day, every day to assist with urgent and emergency counseling needs

APPENDIX D

RECRUITMENT FLYER (Quantitative Study)

(Photo Reduced

Female Research Volunteers Needed!

You have the opportunity to participate in a research study into the impact that husbands and partners have on women enrolled in developmental education classes.

What's involved?

It's Simple!

- Come to room A1085 on one of the following dates and times:
    - 3/15/14 at 3 pm
    - 3/16/14 at 10 am
    - 3/18/14 at 1 pm

- Complete an anonymous research questionnaire

Who can participate?

You can if you are:

- 20 years or older

- Currently enrolled in a Student Success course such as READ 98, ENGL 99, or MATH 99

- Currently living with a husband or partner

For more information, contact:

Jamie Caudill
Tel: 678-939-9149
Email: jcaudill@ggc.edu or jcaudill@uga.edu

Dr. Tom Valentine
Tel: 706-542-2214
tvnj@uga.edu

APPENDIX E

RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET

(Quantitative Study)

Research Information Sheet

We are currently conducting a study about how husbands or partners' support women who are returning to college to get their bachelor's degree. The study is entitled, "Spousal Support for Women Enrolled in Learning Support Courses". We are trying to better understand how a woman's spouse or partner can either help or hinder her during her enrollment in higher education, especially when they are enrolled in a developmental education course. The study is being conducted by Jamie L. Caudill, a doctorial student at The University of Georgia and a Literacy Instructor at Georgia Gwinnett College, under the guidance of Dr. Thomas Valentine, Professor of Adult Education (706-542-4017) from the University of Georgia. The information you provide will be used in a dissertation prepared by Jamie L. Caudill and supervised by Dr. Thomas Valentine.

The study will focus on women, ages 20 – 60 years old, who are married, or living with a partner, and who are enrolled in Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) and are currently taking a developmental education course. These courses include: English 99, Math 99, and Reading 98.

Your participation in this study is **strictly voluntary.** We hope that you will participate in this study by completing the questionnaire. However, if you choose not to participate in this study, simply place the blank questionnaire inside the collection envelope. There are no penalties or loss of benefits for refusing to participate by returning a blank questionnaire or by withdrawing your participation by leaving the room without completing the questionnaire. Your decision whether or not to participate will not influence your grades or class standing.

Participation in this study is **completely anonymous**. In order to protect your anonymity, your name will not be on or attached to the questionnaire and you will place the completed or blank questionnaire in the collection envelope. Outside of the researchers, no other person will handle the questionnaire once you place it in the collection envelope. The researchers will not be able to identify individual participants and when the findings are published, we will report our findings based on groups, not on individuals.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Most people will be able to complete the questionnaire in less than 30 minutes. Some participants may experience psychological discomfort as a result of answering questions about their spousal relationship, which are sensitive in nature. As a measure to minimize any distress, the researchers are providing Community and Counseling Resources, which will be distributed when you complete your questionnaire. Additionally, as a measure to protect participants' privacy, the researchers will not collect any names or information that could identify participants. However, should you be uncomfortable about completing the questionnaire, you may skip any questions you do not want to answer or simply return a blank questionnaire to the collection envelope.

If you have any questions about the research, now or in the future, please contact Jamie Caudill (jcaudill@ggc.edu) at 678-939-9149, or Dr. Thomas Valentine at 706-542-4017. The Department's mailing address is: Department of Adult Education, 407 River's Crossing, The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602. For questions or concerns that may arise during this study, please call or write: The Chairperson, The University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone Number, 706-542-3199; E-Mail Address: IRB@uga.edu.

By completing and returning this questionnaire in the collection envelope, you are agreeing to participate in the above described research project.

Thank you for your consideration! Please keep this letter for your records.

APPENDIX F

SPOUSAL SUPPORT AND SABOTAGE SURVEY

The University of Georgia
College of Education
Department of Lifelong Education,
Administration, and Policy

Spousal and Partner Support in Higher Education

A spouse or partner can have a major impact on a woman's educational activities. We have spoken to many women and read many articles and through these activities, have identified some important behaviors that women have told us can affect their educational journey. We want to know if you have experienced any of these behaviors from your spouse or partner.

Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? Please circle one number.	Strongly Disagree ← → Strongly Agree
1. My husband/partner lets the children know that my education is important.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2. My husband/partner spends time with the children so that I can study.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3. My husband/partner is sympathetic about problems I encounter in school.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4. My husband/partner encourages my confidence when I'm feeling low about my schoolwork.	1 2 3 4 5 6
5. My husband/partner feels that our marriage has deteriorated because I'm in school.	1 2 3 4 5 6
6. My husband/partner tries to turn the family against me because of school.	1 2 3 4 5 6
7. My husband/partner varies his or her schedule to support my schooling.	1 2 3 4 5 6
8. My husband/partner thinks the things I'm studying are important.	1 2 3 4 5 6
9. My husband/partner tampers with my school materials (books, papers, etc.).	1 2 3 4 5 6
10. My husband/partner makes sure I can find time to study.	1 2 3 4 5 6
11. My husband/partner keeps the house quiet so that I can study.	1 2 3 4 5 6
12. My husband/partner makes me feel that I am neglecting the family because of school.	1 2 3 4 5 6
13. My husband/partner attends school functions with me.	1 2 3 4 5 6
14. My husband/partner provides emotional support when I'm under pressure at school.	1 2 3 4 5 6

15.	My husband/partner shows a genuine interest in the things I am learning at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	My husband/partner tries to undermine my confidence for succeeding in school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	My husband/partner belittles me in front of other people about going to school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	My husband/partner complains about taking care of the children while I'm at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	My husband/partner is very proud of my achievements at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	My husband/partner neglects to give me messages (phone, texts, or emails) about school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21.	My husband/partner feels threatened because I'm in school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22.	My husband/partner gets physically abusive because I'm in school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23.	My husband/partner gets upset when we can't go out because of my schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24.	My husband/partner does extra housework when I'm under pressure at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25.	My husband/partner feels I should stay home with the child(ren) instead of going to school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26.	My husband/partner shares the responsibilities for the child[ren] so that I can go to school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27.	My husband/partner feels neglected because of the time I spend on my schoolwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28.	My husband/partner interrupts me when I'm trying to study.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29.	My husband/partner complains that he/she can't wait until I'm finished at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30.	My husband/partner complains that the house is messy because I'm in school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31.	My husband/partner and I fight because I'm in school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32.	My husband/partner makes financial sacrifices so that I can get an education.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33.	My husband/partner lets other people know he suffers for my education.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34.	My husband/partner understands that I need a flexible schedule because of school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35.	My husband/partner has threatened to leave me if I don't quit school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36.	My husband/partner dislikes the time I devote to school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37.	My husband/partner complains that I put school before	1	2	3	4	5	6

	To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? Please circle one number.	Strongly Disagree ←→Agree Strongly Agree
38.	My husband/partner shares household responsibilities so that I can devote time to school.	1 2 3 4 5 6
39.	My husband/partner makes me feel guilty about the money I spend on education.	1 2 3 4 5 6
40.	My husband/partner make me feel that going to school is selfish.	1 2 3 4 5 6

Part II: Background Information

41. What year were you born?   _____

42. What is your educational background? (check one)
- ☐ High school diploma
- ☐ GED diploma
- ☐ Other _____

43. What is your race / ethnicity?   _____

44. What is your husband/partner's educational background? (check one)
- ☐ Less than a high school diploma
- ☐ High school diploma
- ☐ GED diploma
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Other _____

45. How long have you lived with your husband/partner?   _____

46. How long have you attended Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC)?   _____

47. Have you attended a college other than GGC? If so, where? _____

48. How many children do you have living in the home that you are responsible for? __

49. What is your current household income? (check one)
- ☐ Less than $10,000   ☐ $40,000 - $49,999
- ☐ $10,000 - $19,999   ☐ $50,000 - $59,999
- ☐ $20,000 - $29,999   ☐ Above $60, 000
- ☐ $30,000 - $39,999

50. Who takes care of most of the daily household duties in your home (for example: cooking, cleaning) and raising the children? _____

51. What is the best thing your husband/partner does to help your education?

52. Are there things that your husband/partner does to make your education more difficult?

53. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your husband/partner and your education?

Thank you for your participation in this study!

APPENDIX G

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Community and Counseling Resources

We appreciate your time and efforts as participants in our research study. We hope that your experiences as a participant in this study were interesting and gratifying. However, we acknowledge that some of the questions we asked are sensitive in nature, and we understand that you may have experienced some psychological discomfort during the study. Please contact Jamie Caudill at 678-939-9149 or jcaudill@ggc.edu if you have any other questions or concerns. Also, below is a list a list of counseling and community resources available to all students at Georgia Gwinnett College and can help you deal with your feelings or concerns. We hope that you will take advantage of these resources if necessary.

Georgia Gwinnett College Counseling Center
1000 University Ctr. Lane
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
Building F
Phone: 678-407-5592
Website: www.ggc.edu/about-ggc/departments/counseling-center

Provides free and confidential individual and group counseling to all GGC students

Avita Community Mental Health
125 North Corners Pkwy,
Cumming, GA 30040
Phone: 678-341-3840
Website; www.gamtns.org

Community mental health services offering family and individual counseling services – fee based

Gwinnett Christian Counseling Center
220 Crogan St.
Lawrenceville, GA 30046
Phone: 770-963-7472
Website: www.upglad.com

Provides faith-based individual and family counseling – fee based.

Georgia Crisis and Access Line
Phone: 800-715-4225
Website: www.mygcal.com

Toll-free phone access to counselors 24 hours per day, every day to assist with urgent and emergency counseling needs

Families First
5151 Brook Hollow Pkwy,
Suite 205
Norcross, GA 30071
Phone: 404-541-3020
Website: www.familiesfirst.org

Provides family and individual counseling sessions – fee-based.