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Choice of College Major: An Exploration of Appalachian Female Choice of an Early Childhood Education Major

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Choice of College Major: An Exploration of Appalachian Female Choice of an Early
Childhood Education Major

Submitted to the Faculty of Eastern Kentucky University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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June 2013

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Choice of College Major: An Exploration of Appalachian Female Choice of an Early
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Paul,
for his unwavering support.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my Chair, Dr. Charles Hausman, for his guidance, support and patience. I would also like to thank the other committee members, Dr. James Bliss and Dr. Deborah West, and Dr. Carol Patrick for their comments, flexibility, and assistance. Without the continual love and support of my parents and spouse, I would not be at this point in my life. Finally, I thank Teresa New for her dedication in transcribing many hours of audio files.

ABSTRACT

First generation Appalachian female students are exposed to gender differences in roles and career choices that are modeled in the family. A case study approach was used to obtain qualitative data from five students at Eastern Kentucky University and their mothers regarding why these students chose to major in child development and early childhood education. Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory were used as frameworks for the study. The findings of the study are valuable in advising college students' on selection of a college major and recruitment of dedicated child development and early childhood education professionals through understanding the influences and motivations of the five students and their mothers.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

For the people of Appalachia, education has been viewed as needing a practical meaning in life. Learning comes from experiences at home and revolves around obligations or necessities. The tendency to be self-reliant in Appalachian communities means that educational choices are based on practical needs rather than growth opportunities to widen one's perspectives on the world (Boyd, 2007). DeMarrais (1998; Ali & McWhirter, 2006) wrote that rural central Appalachia is characterized by a rich cultural heritage with "a strong sense of kinship, a love of the land, a rich oral tradition, and a commitment to personal freedom and self-reliance" (p.90). Tang and Russ (2007; Bennett, 2008) described Appalachian culture placing more value on who you are rather than on the extent of one's educational attainment. When educated, Appalachians may have a tendency to abandon their traditional ways of life (Ali & McWhirter, 2006; Kinzie, 1999). In rural communities, there is often a division of labor, where women observe domestic tasks and female roles. Many women in rural communities also continue to be viewed as the caretakers and emotional support for the family that is needed for the community to remain intact (Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005; Oberhauser, 1995).

One study on the college expectations of rural youth explains that the low percentage of adults with college degrees results from Appalachian youth having fewer role models, less supports from family, and less access to information (Ali & Saunders, 2006; 2009). The study led the researchers to hypothesize that a lack of support, role models, and access to information can decrease student's confidence in their academic abilities. Because of rural isolation, strong preferences for self-reliance, and sense of

kinship, students may rely on family members rather than career counselors to gain information about college. Wilson, Peterson and Wilson (1993; Wilson & Peterson, 2000) pointed to research that demonstrates how the values and attitudes that parents receive from their education and work experiences and how parental experiences are linked to the ways in which they socialize their children for what they can expect from schooling and from higher education. Parental experiences can lead college students to select a major based on familiarity with a role that has been modeled for them rather than exploring alternatives. Some students may enroll at the university and change majors multiple times before committing to a major. Egan (1993; 1997) remarked in his research on Appalachian women in higher education that students make a departure from the norms of their rural communities when they pursue a college degree especially when they are the first in their families to attend college.

Women may choose careers that will allow them flexible schedules or schedules that coincide with times when children are out of school for the summer. As school districts are many times the largest employers in rural areas, women may consider teaching as a viable option upon completion of college if they plan to return to their home community. Often in rural areas, there are few child care providers, and extended family can be an important support for child care when mothers decide to work outside of the home (Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005; Oberhauser, 1995). Research has shown that often Appalachian women must accept that their career goals are secondary to pressures of family and many times must pursue occupations that are gender-stereotyped for women (Wilson, Peterson & Wilson, 1993; Wilson & Peterson, 2000). These family pressures come from family socialization and a common belief about women's obligations. If one

focuses on individual interests and goals in selecting a career, it may not be accepted if family interests become more important (Tang & Russ, 2007).

For many higher education students from rural Appalachia, ties to the community can mean accepting the limited opportunities of their towns. Accepting lower income levels or leaving their childhood homes become their choice and Appalachian students decide to stay or to go (Wilson, Peterson & Wilson, 1993). For women in rural Appalachian communities, options for employment may be even more limited than for men and, therefore, have more restrictive influence on their occupational choices. The limited opportunities affect female incomes and can make women less economically independent than men (Egan, 1997; Latimer & Oberhauser, 2005).

Theorists of early childhood development believe that imitation and identification affect sex-typed behavior. Social learning theorists (Bandura, 1986; 1999; 2010) posit that children imitate same-sex models more often than opposite-sex ones. This is attributed to differences in reinforcement, attentiveness, and the similarity one perceives to the model (Basow & Howe, 1980; Perry, White, & Perry, 1984). One becomes conditioned to exhibit certain behaviors according to the responses that they receive back from the environment (Tang & Russ, 2007). Ali and McWhirter (2006) write that social cognitive career theory (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994; 1996), an application of Bandura's (1986; 1999; 2010) Social Learning Theory, is the process where educational and career interests begin and levels of persistence with career performance is attained. According to Ali and McWhirter (2006), through repeated activity, modeling, and feedback from others, children develop specific skills, set their performance standards, develop levels of confidence in specific types of activities and tasks, and form

expectations about future outcomes. When children become aware of the differences in gender and body, they also begin to understand role differences, when women are the primary caretakers. Albert and Porter (1988) argued that observation of the division of labor between the sexes has more of an effect on gender stereotypes in children than does the role behaviors shown by parents. Research described by Cook, Hepner and O'Brien (2005) demonstrates that sex-stereotyping of occupations can occur as early as two years of age, and in the early elementary years, the perceptions become more rigid.

The Ecological Systems Theory developed by Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979; Swick & Williams, 2006; Tang & Russ, 2007) describes how people affect the environment and the environment affects each individual. People are involved in overlapping and interacting systems, known as the microsystem, exosystem, macrosystem, mesosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986, 1989, Swick & Williams, 2006). The Ecological Model involves several circles representing how each of these levels may have a distinct influence on the child and the reciprocal influence. The environment includes cultural aspects as well as social, physical, political, and economic aspects. Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1986) discussed how environmental factors affect the development of youth and the future decisions that they make. Tang and Russ (2007) describe a woman's career development as being tied to these factors in the ecosystem. The different levels of the ecosystem have an impact on girls and women, and can reinforce career choices and decisions. Chenoweth (2003) remarks that several factors unique to the culture, "such as economic climate and family and regional influences, have an indirect impact upon the development of an individual" (p.2). Swick and Williams (2006) wrote, "Each system depends on the contextual nature of the

person's life and offers an ever- growing diversity of options and sources of growth" (p. 371). Same sex role models in a child's microsystem, consisting of family and the close community in the child's daily life, may widen the ideas of available opportunities for potential careers if they are able to see women in non-traditional female roles (Cook, Heppner & O'Brien, 2005). Aspirations depend on the role models available in the family and community, as well as the expectations that are received from each level of the role ecological systems model in the ecological theory (Chenoweth, 2003). The cultural beliefs and societal values of the macrosystem influences how and where we may carry out our lives (Swick & Williams, 2006).

The Problem

Many first generation rural Appalachian female college students have limited knowledge of higher education and rely on parents and early community influences when choosing a major at college. The reliance on early background information may further disadvantage female students when they are also from rural areas. Students whose parents had not completed high school or attended college may have less information based on which to select a major. Rather than pursuing a major that would include their aptitudes and interests, women may follow what has been somewhat preordained for them in selecting a college course of study. That is, rural Appalachian first generation female college students may continue to feel the pressure of being responsible for child care and providing the nurturing support for the family. Given this context, research questions that guided this case study were:

1. How do the mothers of first generation rural Appalachian female college students influence their daughter's choice of major?

2. What reasons do first generation rural Appalachian female college students give for selecting a major in early childhood education?
3. What do rural Appalachian female college students know in advance of making some of the relevant choices about college majors?

Purpose of the Study

This is a study of first generation women's choice of an early childhood major at a rural Appalachian University. The purpose of this case study was to discover and theorize reasons why a small group of females in the Child and Family Studies program at a university serving rural Appalachian populations choose to major in early childhood education. Previous research shows that females historically have chosen to major in predominantly female fields, including nursing, teaching and social work (Austin, 1988). This study sought to explain why women choose the predominantly female field of early childhood education.

The decision to choose an early childhood education major can assist the university in developing mentoring programs and career counseling for female students. For the Child and Family Studies area, this study will be helpful in advising students who select a two-year program, four year non-teaching program, or a four year program leading to initial teaching certification. Course content can also be shaped by the findings of this study. For a professor in the field of early childhood education, understanding the influence of a teacher who models a potential choice of a college major would be especially beneficial in preparing students. Egan's (1993; 1997) research on rural Appalachian women concludes that higher education should assist these women in taking small steps to build successes so that they will take larger risks. Egan contended

that a sense of competence comes from the interactions with teachers that help to empower the female students. From the perspective of an early childhood educator and professor, this study can be helpful in recruiting students with a genuine interest and appreciation for the development of young children.

As more attention is given to the importance of early childhood education in the prevention of societal challenges and increasing skills needed to compete in a global world, it is crucial that students majoring in early childhood education understand that their commitment impacts future generations. In the same way that students admitted to medical school or nursing programs must exhibit a high standard of work, majors in early childhood education should also have an understanding of the need to exhibit high standards of work. New students in early childhood education may know little about the career possibilities, the requirements of the major, or the long term importance of the work. As department faculty assume responsibility for teaching and shaping future leaders, students should be committed to the important objectives of their field regardless of the reasons for choosing this college major.

This study explored the perceptions and opinions of early childhood college majors and the choices made by first generation rural Appalachian female students. This research examined how much the choices that they make about a career are based on prior knowledge about and what female students know. Part of exploring choices includes uncovering whether or not participants feel they can choose any college major. To understand their capabilities, the researcher investigated grades and favorite subjects in school of female students in Appalachia to learn more about their capabilities and preparedness for any college major. Early influences and ideas about gender identity

were examined to discover how deeply- rooted maternal influences on college career choices were manifested in the sample. The researcher will identify also whether first generation female college students plan to return to their home communities upon graduation and how that may help to shape the choice of major. It will be important to examine how the young women are viewed by family and community, as well as explore and report if women feel that a particular college major will allow balancing family responsibilities and career.

Significance of the Study

This study will add to the body of literature on the reasons why young Appalachian women may choose a particular college career focus. There appears to be a gap in the literature regarding maternal choices regarding their daughters' career choices. Although the literature states that mothers greatly influence their daughters (Basow & Howe, 1980 ; Basow, 1992; Flores & O'Brien, 2002; Rainey & Borders, 1997; Sholomskas & Axelrod, 1986; Steele & Barling, 1996) a qualitative study of mothers' influences on young college bound Appalachian daughters' college career could not be found.

The findings will be helpful in course development in programs that assist women with college programs and course taking. University recruiters and career counselors can benefit from this study to help understand why female students may choose to major in early childhood education. Finally, early childhood education researchers will benefit from a greater understanding of the career pathways that today's early childhood educators have taken.

Baum and King (2006) discussed the idea that developing self-awareness in the teacher can lead her to a greater understanding of working with young children. Baum and King acknowledge Levine's (2005) work which stresses the importance of assisting students in their career choices and deciding what the students want to do in the future. Once the early childhood educator understands their strengths and weaknesses, motivations, and capabilities, they are more prepared to handle the demands of working with young children. Kagan's (2009) research explains that the most important factor related to quality and important outcomes for children is the quality of the faculty working with young children. Early childhood educators should understand developmentally appropriate practice, child guidance techniques, and have a foundational knowledge of the rapid brain and overall development that occurs from birth to age eight. Young children who participate in high-quality early childhood programs score higher on math and reading tests, are less likely to drop out or repeat a grade, are less likely to need special education, tend to complete more years of education, earn higher incomes, have more stable home lives, and are less likely to encounter problems with law enforcement in the future (AERA Research Points, 2005; Ludwig & Miller, 2007; Reynolds, Temple, Robertson & Mann, 2001). Though a human brain may be prewired for certain functions (Pica, 2010, p.1), the daily stimulation and experiences can more so determine the child's nature and adult capabilities.

Research Method

The decision to choose a major in early childhood education can be understood best through qualitative research methods. Through the use of case study methods and one-on-one interviews, the collection of qualitative information related to early

influences, community and family information, and schooling experiences will enable the discovery of whether or not female students choose the major because of their perceptions of a so-called woman's role in society or because of other reasons. By interviewing the mothers of early childhood education students, the researcher can learn about the beliefs of female college students' maternal role models, including their beliefs regarding women's roles, their life satisfactions, and their parental advice and guidance given to daughters regarding college career options. Eco-mapping will be used to visualize the relationships and support of the students in the study. Qualitative research based methods will deeply explore and describe the thought process and decision making of women who have chosen early childhood education as a college career.

Case studies provide an in-depth look at one or more individuals in order to explore an activity, process, or event (Creswell, 2003). This study is bounded by the time spent in one-on-one interviews with ten research subjects. The discovery of the similarities and differences between the ideas and expectations of mothers and daughters in choosing a major in early childhood education will be examined. Case studies provide rich, detailed, and in-depth information (Berg, 2001; Lichtman, 2011).

Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

- **Appalachian-** Appalachians are a people born in the geographic area along the Appalachian Mountains, including the Great Smoky Mountains and the Cumberland Mountains. The boundaries include 406 counties and 13 states set up by the Appalachian Regional Development Act (Tang & Russ, 2007).

- **First Generation-**A first generation student is someone whose parents have not completed a college degree program (U.S. Department of Education, 1996).
- **Rural-** Rural is defined as counties having a population of less than 10,000 (Tang & Russ, 2007).
- **Self-Efficacy-** Self efficacy is the belief in one's abilities to organize and carry out the actions required to attain something (Whitmarsh, Brown, Cooper, Hawkins-Rodgers, & Wentworth, 2007).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout most of the 20th century, domestic service, factory work, and school teaching were three major occupations available to women outside the home (Perun & Bielby, 1981; Larson et al., 1994). In 1970, 46% of women entering college were planning careers in traditionally female fields such as teaching, but new fields outside of domestic service and factory work were being added such as nursing and allied health (Astin, 1984; Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2000). Similarly, Holder's (1982) study of sex equity for rural American women states that 70 percent of women in the labor force in 1982 were working in the traditional female occupations that included teaching. At this time, women were also entering the non-professional fields of clerical work and sales. Perun and Bielby (1981; Larson et al., 1994) describe that even though increased participation by women in the labor market is linked to a belief in less traditional sex roles, the occupational behavior of women is not linked to a reduction of sex segregation in the workforce. Roger & Duffield (2000) found that more men than women took mathematics, physical sciences and technology, while female students concentrated in English, modern foreign languages, and social studies. This can shape their educational choices. In the same study, Roger & Duffield (2000) found that negative female attitudes regarding science, engineering, and technology begin early in a child's life by reinforcement that it is not part of the female identity, as children in nursery and primary school already hold ideas about gender identity. Green, Baldrige, Zahs, and Ingels (1993; Trusty 1998) state in the National Center for Education Statistics that changes to postsecondary educational expectations led to female seniors in college

in 1992 being four times more likely than female seniors in 1972 to expect to seek education beyond a bachelor degree.

Appalachian and Rural Students

The Appalachian region often lags behind the rest of the country economically, culturally, and academically (Ali & Saunders, 2006; Hand & Payne, 2008). Hand and Payne (2008) described localism as the attachment that Appalachians have to the place where they were born and raised. In their study of first-generation Appalachian students, they use Baldwin's definition (as cited in Baldwin, 1996) of localism as "cultural place boundedness" (p.5). Chenoweth and Galliher (2004) researched Appalachian culture and described culture in the region as a sense of belonging, localism, historicism, and familism. In the same research study, Chenoweth and Galliher (2004) found that these four factors influence where and if rural students attend college, and observed that rural students are more likely to attend college if their parents or another family member attend college. First-generation Appalachian students also may tend to stay close to home.

Holder (1982) discussed the National Advisory Council on Women's Education

Programs statement that:

Rural girls and women need far greater exposure than they now receive to non-sexist, non-traditional occupational/career guidance information. They also need increased opportunities to become acquainted with women actively engaged in occupations and professions, both traditional and non-traditional (p.22).

As Grant (2000) studied gifted women over a period of five years, he noted references in female speech to phrases such as "close to home" (p.15) and emphases on marriage and family plans that women expressed instead of references to professional careers as one might expect. There is a conflict between pursuing academic opportunities associated with being gifted and the expectations of rural communities that females have

a responsibility for upholding community and family life. In this situation, pursuing academics would require leaving the home rural community. Grant also described the idea of “foreclosure” (p.15) as women decide from an early age what they want to do and pursue that path without recognizing too often how certain early decisions may foreclose future college and career opportunities. Grant (2000) also observed how women’s identities are based, to a great extent, on identification with their family origins. These gifted females were unlikely to risk disappointing their parents as family relationships loomed as more important than labor marked jobs. According to Grant’s (2000) research, being a teacher is one career option consistent with this identity. Holder (1982) found evidence from state-vocational education enrollments and employment statistics which illustrated women in non-traditional trades are resistant to change in gender roles. Holder concluded that rural education systems need to be aware of common attitudes about rural women and the expectations placed upon them. Lee and Ekstrom (1987; Rainey & Borders, 1997) found that girls in poor, rural areas have fewer opportunities, less career guidance, and little encouragement to take challenging academic courses.

First Generation College Students

Definitions of first generation college students may vary slightly. Hand and Payne (2008) use the first generation definition of Harrell and Fortney (as cited in Harrell & Fortney, 2003) that neither parent has enrolled in college. The U.S. Department of Education (1996) defines a first-generation student as someone whose parents have not completed a college degree program. According to Choy (2001), first-generation students (defined by the 1996 U.S. Department of Education) represent 34% of students in four year institutions. A 2001 National Center for Educational Statistics report found

that only 73% of first-generation college students enroll in a second year of college (Stuber, 2011; Warburton, Burgarin, & Nunez, 2001). Data from the 1998 National Center for Educational Statistics indicate that first generation students less often complete a degree, no matter the age, socioeconomic status, or ethnic background (Prospero & Vohra-Gupta, 2007). First-generation students are more likely to be from low income families, have weaker cognitive skills, and hold lower degree aspirations (Terenzini et. al.1996; Hand & Payne, 2008). Willet (1989; Inman & Mayes, 1999; McConnell, 2000) explained that first-generation students are often introduced to college by siblings and friends rather than by their parents. For students that are first-generation, they have less knowledge of college expectations, less high school preparation, and lower academic goals (Pike & Kuh, 2005; Stuber, 2011; York-Anderson & Bowman, 1991). Stuber (2011) found that these factors can lead to lower grades which can affect attendance to college classes and a student's eligibility or enthusiasm to continue. Lower high school GPAs and lower SATs are typical of first-generation students (Inman & Mayes, 1999; Riehl, 1994). The first-generation students are also concerned with having a college close to home due to being geographically constrained (Inman & Mayes, 1999; John Tyler Community College, 1995).

Hand and Payne (2008) reported that first generation students may not want to leave their past, and may also not be accepted into the new school culture. The first generation students also may feel a strong relationship to parents and feel guilty when leaving to attend college (Hand & Payne, 2008; London, 1989). Olenchak and Herbert (2002; Prospero & Vohra-Gupta, 2007) that found first generation students often have an unclear purpose for being in college, feelings of being isolated, and difficulties in

adjusting to the new environment (These reasons often lead to leaving college and abandoning pursuit of a degree. Hellman (1996) found that first-generation students have less self-efficacy. Stuber (2011) states

...first-generation students-especially those from low-income backgrounds- are unfamiliar with the dominant culture of higher education, lack support from family members, and may feel alienated by the impersonal, bureaucratic nature of the college campus. (Goodwin, 2006; Richardson & Skinner, 1992; Tierney, 1992; York-Anderson & Bowman, 1991) (p. 118)

A study focusing on the intrapersonal, familial, and cultural factors in the commitment to a career choice among Mexican American and Non-Hispanic white College Women addresses the impact of first generation college students in their choice of a college major (Caldera, Robitschek, Frame, & Pannell, 2003). The researchers in this study concluded that additional support and information about how to succeed in college was needed for first generation students as their parents may be less likely to have their own experiences with higher education to use in advising and supporting the success of daughters in college.

Gender Role Views

In a qualitative study of professional women's career choices (Whitmarsh, Brown, Cooper, Hawkins-Rodgers, & Wentworth, 2007), researchers noted a study by Gottfredson (2005) asserting that young children hold positive attitudes toward all occupations. As they develop self-concept and gender identity, they begin to restrict occupational preferences to those viewed as appropriate for men or women. In doing so, they may rule out many occupations based on gender. Astin's (1984; Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2000) research on the meaning of work in women's lives deduces that play, chores, and early paid work are differentiated by gender and these

differences relate to different skills, perceptions of the world, and identify activities that satisfy survival, pleasure, and contribution needs. Early and continuing socialization by gender and social class translates into gender-differentiated career choices and work behaviors. By examining the career orientation of adolescent women, O'Brien and Fassinger (1983; Ketterston & Blustein, 1997; Rainey & Borders, 1997) pointed to the importance of focusing on the career goals of adolescents so interventions can be implemented during this critical time when they may have lower hopes for their careers than males and are more likely to state that they are "not smart enough" (p.2) to attain their desired careers.

A study on the influences of students' choice of college major in business discovered that the second most influential factor for women was aptitude in the subject (Malgwi, Howe & Burnaby, 2005). This study suggested that more research related to gender differences in choice of major would be beneficial since their study focused on men and women in the business field. Temple and Osipow (1994, 1996; Durr II & Tracey, 2009) found that females consider a variety of factors when making career decisions that include ability, personal characteristics and sex-role attitudes. Corder and Stephan (1984; Larson et al., 1994; Looker & Magee, 2000) write that men and women that have some experience with nontraditional sex-role socialization, high self-esteem, and high levels of ability are more likely to believe that women can combine family and career commitments.

A study by Hakim (1996; Marks & Houston, 2002) suggested that the reason for women's lower career achievements and earnings is that women place family role above working role. Hakim also suggested that the occupational choices of young women are

partially determined by the way they prioritize work and family roles. Smithson (1999) interviewed British men and women and found inconsistencies between what participants thought were appropriate career choices for people in general and their own plans. Participants in the Smithson study that were interviewed indicated that they had gender-specified future plans for themselves.

Women's Self-Efficacy

In the research by Gottfredson (2005), an influential factor noted for career aspirations among high school girls and college-age women was the role of family members in developing the self-efficacy that is necessary to pursue and persist in a career. This is particularly the case with careers having a science and math focus. Whitmarsh, Brown, Cooper, Hawkins-Rodgers, and Wentworth (2007) revealed the role of encouragement patterns as career influences. Women that had chosen a female-dominated career noted that their parents sent strong messages that teaching and social work were good careers for women in their early educational years. Those who chose careers outside of the female gendered roles indicated support and mentoring from outside of their families, such as from bosses, teachers, and professors. In these instances, women that had chosen a female dominated career also received encouragement to achieve success in their chosen career path. Research by Flores and O'Brien (2002) on the career development of Mexican American adolescent women found that nontraditional career self-efficacy predicted nontraditional career interests, which is consistent with Social Cognitive Career Theory. Flores and O'Brien also found that "nontraditional career self-efficacy had a positive effect on career choice prestige and a negative effect on career choice traditionality" (p. 22). Kenny, Blustein, Chaves,

Grossman and Gallagher (2003; Wettersten et al., 2005), found that “social support has a significant positive relationship with school engagement and work role salience, whereas perceived barriers have a negative relationship with these same variables” (p.658). Social cognitive career theory, which is based on Bandura’s Social Cognitive Learning Theory, uses self-efficacy and outcome expectations as the facilitators of individual’s interests, goals, and performance attainment (Wettersten et al., 2005). Wettersten et al. (2005) concluded in their research with rural high school students that

Both social support and academic self-efficacy predicted career outcome expectations, only academic self-efficacy predicted academic outcome expectations, and neither predicted career salience (p.661).

Smith and Fouad (1999) discuss the Lent, Brown, and Hackett model (as cited in Lent et al., 1994, 1996), which illustrates how career interests develop and how the interests influence career choice. As Smith and Fouad (1999) explain, self-efficacy combined with career interests and outcome expectancies for the career are predictive of career goals. As one develops the self belief to master skills for an occupation and can foresee positive outcomes about the occupation, interests in a career develops (Smith & Fouad, 1999). Discussing his social-cognitive career model, Albert Bandura contends, “Personal efficacy is not a contextless global disposition...but a multifaceted phenomenon” (1997, p.42; Smith & Fouad, 1999). Smith and Fouad (1999) interpret this to mean that the amount of self efficacy or self-belief for different school subjects can lead to differing career choices.

Whitmarsh et al. (2007), found that early developmental experiences influenced the choice of female-dominated careers, and mothers and other female relatives who were teachers had a strong influence on those choosing a female-dominated career. Fernandez,

Castro, Otero, Foltz, and Lorenzo (2006) found that when women choose a career, they valued interpersonal goals such as self-determination, helping others, or working in a nice environment more highly than other goals. When women place this type of importance on interpersonal goals, they may be unable to perceive fields like science as enticing since it would not satisfy their interpersonal needs. Similarly, a “State of Our Nation’s Youth” (Horatio Alger Association, 1998) survey of 1,000 teenagers in 1998 found that females were more likely to indicate that making a difference is their main motivation in career choice and teaching remained the top career choice among women.

Role Models

Grant’s (2000) study on the influences of the career decisions of seven gifted females concludes that they were willing but not adequately prepared to make career related decisions. The findings suggested that career development may be a barrier facing gifted females and career guidance interventions as early as elementary school may be helpful. DeSantis (2006) concluded that role models have a small but significant influence on career choice over and above self-efficacy. DeSantis also cites research showing a relationship between role model influence and a variety of career-related outcomes, including career aspirations, attitudes toward nontraditional careers, and career choice. Similarly, Quimby and DeSantis (2006) reviewed studies which suggest that role models may be especially important to women because a lack of female role models in nontraditional careers is a barrier to choosing such careers. Quimby and DeSantis identified the internet as a way to connect women to non-traditional careers. One of their most significant findings indicates that role model influence was a better predictor of career choice than self-efficacy.

Young (1994), who described parents as the primary providers of encouragement to their children in reaching vocational goals through modeling “career related, goal-directed behavior by actively providing career-related learning experiences” (p.45; Turner & Lapan, 2002). Turner and Lapan (2002) found that young adolescents need parent support and involvement in a comprehensive school based guidance program to give them confidence around career planning and explore occupations. Turner and Lapan contended that it is important to increase middle school students’ career planning efficacy with the assistance of professional counselors that could provide career assessment instruments and professional counselors should assist parents in understanding the types of careers available for their children. Corder and Stephan (1984; Larson et al., 1994; Looker & Magee, 2000) discuss the role modeling effect of working mothers predisposing daughters to be career oriented. Corder and Stephan (1984) stated,

Overall, there is a role-modeling effect: having a working mother predisposes daughters to be career oriented (e.g., Almquist and Angrist, 1970, 1971; Stewart and Winter, 1974). However, the effects of maternal employment on the daughter’s career plans are mediated by the mother’s educational level (Tangri, 1972), race and prestige of the mother’s occupation (Macke and Morgan, 1978), whether or not the daughter identifies with the mother’s attitudes toward combining work and family roles and her own success with respect to this combination. (Baruch, 1972) (p. 392)

Flouri and Buchanan (2002) point to a study by Nauta and Kokaly (2001) that showed persons seen as role models can assist in school and career development through support and guidance and the degree that inspiration and modeling are provided. Furthermore, Rasinski et al. (1993; Trusty, 1998) noted that female high school sophomores in 1990 were more likely than female high school students in 1980 to be advised by counselors, teachers, and parents to attend college . Li and Kerpelman (2007) cite research that discusses how conversations with others about career plans can assist

young adolescents to make decisions about which career aspirations are best to pursue or avoid. Creamer and Laughlin's (2005) research that noted young women were likely to consult and be influenced by the opinions of others regarding career choices.

Family Influences and Effect on Choices

In a study of math and science career related choices, parental encouragement significantly influenced learning experiences, which were found to influence self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Ferry, Fouad, & Smith, 1990). Parents' verbal suggestion, support, and specific encouragement play an influential role in children's academic and career development. Whitmarsh, Brown, Cooper, Hawkins-Rodgers, and Wentworth (2007) found that their sample of women in female-dominated careers had only heard about and were encouraged to pursue careers perceived to be acceptable for women. Their self-efficacy and support from family was less than the women in gender neutral careers.

Burke and McKeen (1996; Whitmarsh et al., 2007) found that career patterns of women who revealed that organizations equate a woman's temporary break in employment with low commitment to career. The same research study found that some women were constructing their career to allow them to spend time with their families. Women seemed to be looking for more flexible schedules and family time. Women from female-dominated careers did not believe that a woman could balance the responsibilities of career and parenting young children (Whitmarsh et.al, 2007). Advice offered by women from female-dominated careers to younger women was consistent with their career and family decisions. Perun and Bielby (1981; Larson et al., 1994) point to research from Super (1966) that says,

Compromise is the crux of the problem of occupational choice and adjustment, the nature of the compromise between self and reality, the degree to which and the conditions under which one yields to the other, and the way in which the compromise is effected.” (p.102)

In other words, an individual reaches a compromise between their abilities and interests and what is expected in the environment. Corder and Stephan (1984 Larson et al., 1994; Looker & Magee, 2000) write,

Because their sex-role socialization has taught women that it is important to marry and that family roles are more important than a career, most adolescent women eliminate many careers or high prestige occupations from serious consideration, particularly those that require a high degree of commitment. (p. 391)

Gaskell’s (1983; Davey, 1998) study of high school seniors that revealed most girls expected to give up their work when they became mothers due to anticipating an inability to afford child care and the belief that future husbands would not share in caring for the children. On the contrary, Davey (1998) found that many young women are invested in attaining career and family roles by writing,

It is interesting to note that even women who wish to care full time for their children when they are young can have a strong image of themselves as career women. In other words, these women do not define career women in the narrow sense of women who place a higher priority on paid employment than on marriage and family. Instead, it would appear that they hope to strike a balance between career and family roles, or to alternate roles somewhat. (p.101)

Similarly, a study of British South Asian women choosing a career in teaching reported that they found a fit between teaching and their family lives (Butt, MacKenzie & Manning, 2010, p.74). The British South Asian women were able to have a continued connection to family and still have a career.

Research on Mexican American and Non-Hispanic White College Women reported that non-Hispanic white women were influenced to commit to a career choice

more by familial factors than by intrapersonal ones (Caldera, Robitschek, Frame & Pannell, 2003). On the contrary, Mexican American women were primarily influenced by intrapersonal factors and less by the encouragement and support of their parents. This was somewhat unexpected as Mexican American families are often viewed as tight knit.

O'Brien and Fassinger's (1993; Ketterston & Blustein, 1997; Rainey & Borders, 1997) research implied that a combination of attachment to mother and a move toward becoming an individual provide the basis needed for career development. They point to other research study findings that mother's relationships with their daughters may have a highly influential impact on their daughter's future pursuits.

A study on the importance of extra-family support on career choices of women found that women who did not aspire to careers stated personal and parental attitudes compatible with conventional choices (Heins, Hendricks & Martindale, 1982; Domenico & Jones, 2006). This study also noted that women that became physicians indicated that family influence and encouragement were important motivations for them. Grant's (2000) longitudinal study of gifted female's career choices cites research by Super (1990) on the occupational level that is attached to parental socioeconomic level, mental ability, education, skills, personality characteristics and exposure to career opportunities.

Turner and Lapan (2002) cite Astin's conclusion (as cited in Astin, 1984; Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2000) that parents act as "value socializers" that shape their children's perceptions of appropriate occupational choices (p.44). Basow and Howe (1980; Basow, 1992; Flores & O'Brien, 1997; Nauta & Kokaly, 2001) found mothers to be particularly important in influencing the career decisions and attitudes of their daughters and unhappy traditional women serve as a negative influence

on daughters. Cuiting and Kerpelman (2007) cite Poole and Gelder's (1985) and Tucker et al. (2001) research showing that female adolescents are more likely than males to think of their mothers' opinions as important and receive more advice about life plans than males. Cuiting and Kerpelman (2007) state that when adolescents receive feedback about their future goals, their parents views can strengthen or weaken future ideas about themselves. Marks and Houston (2002) point to Bandura's (1977; 1994; 1997; 2010) social cognitive learning theory and other psychoanalytic and cognitive-structural theories on how daughters' gender role attitudes may be influenced by their mother's expressed beliefs and behavior. Marks and Houston (2002) posit that this is due to the daughter's identification with their mother, and in turn, daughters begin to model themselves on those beliefs and behaviors.

Summary of Literature

First generation rural Appalachian college students may tend to stay close to home and may remain under the strong influence of traditional Appalachian culture and the sense of belonging attached to a family. First generation rural Appalachian women may need information, advising, and support related to achievement in college, and information regarding majors and career opportunities available. Although young children may have positive views towards various careers, adolescent girls and women may limit their career options based on early socialization. Young women may also begin to view themselves as not smart enough for some careers. Low self-efficacy and family discouragement are potentially detrimental to female career patterns. Research suggests role models may have significant influence over a choice of major and career

and mothers' satisfaction with traditional roles society can influence rural Appalachian female college and career choices.

Many of the students in the early childhood program from a regional public university are first generation college students and thus lack experiences and knowledge about college. These students often come from rural areas with high poverty. Family and community members have lower levels of educational attainment. These first generation female college students need the support and additional information addressed by the research on Mexican American females (Caldera, Robitschek, Frame & Pannell, 2003). Lack of knowledge of the major choices available could influence selection of major based on a student's or parent's familiarity with the subject area. Support for career aspirations beyond the degree could also be influenced by parental education levels.

Research on career development supports the assumption that family influences impact the choice of early childhood education as a major (Ali & Saunders, 2006; Tang & Russ, 2007). Early messages from the family and environment continue to influence what are acceptable roles for females. It may be helpful to continue exploring perceived barriers to other majors and perceived barriers to career aspirations beyond the degree.

This research offers insights into why young women choose a major in early childhood education. If it is still a widely held belief that women need to compromise in order to have a career and a family or that they cannot have a high commitment to a career, female college students may choose a career that would allow them to continue to care for their children. Early childhood education may seemingly allow more flexibility than other majors and focuses on the importance of family.

Family research supports the hypothesis that female college students pursue early childhood education as a major because of social and family bonds, particularly with their mothers. Early childhood education as a major allow young college women to return home periodically and to gain the approval of home communities and family, by upholding the value of family life that may be a preeminent value to adult men and women in rural Appalachian communities.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

This qualitative research project is an exploratory case study in which the investigator sought to compare similarities and differences in perspectives on college and career choices between first generation female students and their mothers. Pattern-matching is where several pieces of information from the same case may be related (Berg, 2001). Through a case study focusing on the phenomenon of women that choose to major in early childhood education, new hypotheses were discovered that may provide a basis for future studies of first generation Appalachian women who select early childhood education as a college career. By interviewing the mothers of the students, information on how mothers impact their daughters' choice of major was collected. This case study used an eco-map as discussed by McCormick et al. to indicate the interrelationships and supports for first generation rural young women that are available and the research subjects in the community (2008). Maps are frequently used for considering ecological concerns in a community case study (Berg, 2001).

Research Approach

This study utilized a qualitative approach to discover *how* first generation rural female women have been influenced by their mothers, *what* reasons are given for choosing to major in early childhood education, and learn *how much* the students know about choosing a college major. Qualitative research can be interactive and humanistic (Creswell, 2003), perfectly aligned with the investigator's preferences. Qualitative methods also allowed for refining questions as the investigator gained experience with "what to ask and to whom it should be asked" (Creswell, 2003, p. 181). In short, this

inquiry sought to examine the phenomenon a small group of first generation rural Appalachian women at a regional public university to understand why they chose to major in early childhood education.

Through the method of narrative inquiry, the coded quotes and vignettes told a story about first generation rural Appalachian women and how their experiences and choices were influenced by their mothers' experiences and choices. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), this method "gives contour to experience and life, conceptualizes and preserves memories or hands down experience, tradition, and values to future generations" (p. 153). Stake explained, "A good qualitative research project will deal deeply with a few of the complexities of human experience" and interpretive research "keying on the meanings of human affairs as seen from different views" (2010, pp. 15-38).

Research Questions

Research questions that guided this case study are:

1. How do the mothers of first generation rural Appalachian female college students influence their daughter's choice of major?
2. What reasons do first generation rural Appalachian female college students give for selecting a major in early childhood education?
3. What do rural Appalachian female college students know about college majors?

Interview Questions

The research questions were generated based on Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1986, 1989) Ecological Systems Theory. Questions also aimed to identify first generation rural women's self-efficacy and the influential modeling provided by their mothers (Bandura,

1977; 1986; 1999; 2010). For a list of demographic questions, questions posed to students and their mothers', and follow-up questions, see Appendix A.

Research Sample

This case study took place at a regional public university that serves students from rural Appalachian areas. Eastern Kentucky University is a regional, coeducational, public institution of higher education offering general and liberal arts programs, pre-professional and professional training in education and various other fields at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Richmond is a city of approximately 33,000 and the student enrollment for 2012 was approximately 16,000, with 13,000 being undergraduate students. The service region includes parts of the eastern and south-central counties, including; Casey, Powell, Lincoln, Jackson, Clay, Harlan, Leslie, Bell, Owsley, Lee, Whitley, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Estill, Garrard, Boyle, Knox, McCreary, Wayne, Madison, Perry, and Laurel counties. The target population for this study was identified as undergraduate students majoring in Child Development and Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (seeking a teaching certificate) in four year programs. Purposive sampling was used to identify the initial sample frame of ten participants, which included all four year female students in the Child Development program and Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education that volunteered to be interviewed and were first generation college students, meaning that the students parents or older siblings did not attend college. This information was obtained through department and university system records. Randomly selected, five collegiate child development and early childhood education majors and their mothers agreed to participate in the study. They were selected

from a list of collegiate child development and early childhood education majors unrelated to the investigator as a current student or advisee at the same university.

The researcher was able to search the database for home county information, first generation student status, parental education level, and current enrollment status. The researcher also generated a list of current assigned advisees as well as current class lists and matched those lists against the potential list of interviewees, and those students who were on the list were eliminated as potential participants. After eliminating by county, current student, advisee, and parent education level only six potential interviewees remained. Five students and their mothers agreed to participate. The sixth potential student interviewee agreed to be interviewed, but her mother would not consent.

The case study approach permitted examining in depth the ideas and beliefs of the participants. Once this researcher received approval from the Institutional Review Board, student participants were contacted in person or by email and provided a recruitment script and brief explanation of the study. After they expressed interest in participating and had an opportunity to speak with their mothers, a consent form was handed to the participants or emailed to them and an interview time decided upon. After the students agreed to voluntarily participate, the mothers were contacted by phone regarding participation and an interview time arranged. The mothers of students also were asked to sign the voluntary consent form. These were collected at the interview or mailed back to the principal investigator after the phone interview.

As shown in Table 3.1, a description of the study sample, counties of the participants and the relationships between the students and their mothers are provided.

Table 3.1 (continued)

Phyllis	Lincoln County	Influenced by her daughter to go back to school. Mother of Brittany.
Darla	Lee County	Her own mother died when she was young and her sister helped raise her. Mother of Tracy.
Virginia	Lincoln County	Described herself as self-motivated. Influenced to go back to school after her daughter did. Mother of Cindy.

Data Collection

For this study, data was collected from one-on-one semi-structured interviews with five first generation female students majoring in early childhood education, the mothers of the five students, and memos and reflections to triangulate the findings. Information regarding potential interviewees was obtained through department and university system records. For the one-on-one interviews, each semi-structured interview followed an interview guide and allowed for in-depth probing as necessary. Adjustments were made to the questions after the one-on-one interviews with students in order to obtain clarification and enough information for complete data collection from their mothers. Through the use of open-ended questions, the participants were allowed to “impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives” (Reissman, 1993, p. 2) without researcher influence. Interviews were between 30 minutes to one hour and fifteen minutes and were digitally recorded and transcribed

verbatim. Interviews were conducted with students on campus in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences building, using a private and secure conference room on the second floor, at their place of employment, or at the mother's homes. For the interviews with mothers, interviews were conducted in their homes, at an Eastern Kentucky University regional campus, or through phone. It was also unclear how participative mothers would be in completing the interviews and opening up about their views of women's roles, education, and their own experiences. In the interviews with mothers and the students, they were open to answering the questions and did not refuse to answer any questions. Notes were taken during all interviews and transcribed. These and any other field notes were included in the data collection process and stored in a locked cabinet located in an office of the Burrier Building on campus and in a locked cabinet at a home office.

Each participant agreed to an interview appointment time and date and was provided one copy of the consent form for the participant to keep at the time of the interview. The signed copy went into the study files. Included in the consent, each participant was assured confidentiality, and pseudonyms were used for all participants. Each participant in the study was asked to sign the consent form, and the consent form and procedures were provided verbally as well. Any questions regarding the study were answered to the best of this researcher's ability.

All audio recordings and data generated were maintained in a locked cabinet when not being used. All materials gathered for this study will be stored for a period of three years beginning at the completion of the study. Electronic files will be maintained on a password protected computer and backed up using Dropbox. In addition to laptop

storage, a flash drive and removable disk will store files and data. The researcher informed the participants that they may review the memos, transcriptions, and digital recordings if they choose. Throughout the one-on-one interview process, their viewpoints were respected. Although no more than minimal risks to participants were identified, participants were informed that they could refuse to answer any questions in the one-on-one interviews or withdraw at any time from the study without negative consequences.

Data Collection Tools

Interviews

The one-on-one semi-structured interviews with students and the one-on-one semi-structured interviews with their mothers followed a semi-structured interview protocol that allowed for probing questions. Memos, notes, and audio recordings reflected the experiences, ideas, values, and views of participants. Notes reflected the perceptions and rapport of the female participants and the interviewer's reflections of the setting, openness, interruptions, hesitations, and other experiences to bring authenticity to the interview process. Marshall and Rossman explain, "Combined with observation (looking, hearing, smelling, or touching), interviews allow the researcher to understand the meanings that everyday activities hold for people" (2011, p.145).

Observations

As an assistant professor in the Child and Family Studies program, frequent interactions are made with students and a few participants in this study in the classroom, through coursework advising, and through activities in the department. These daily observations provided information about their decision making behaviors, their

capabilities and their confidence. The purpose of this study was to understand the college major decision-making process of first generation female students, and observations made during the interviews added to this understanding. Stake explains, “The eye sees a lot, simultaneously noting who, what, when, where, and why and particularly relating them to the story or the assertions forthcoming, that is, to the research question” (Stake, 2010, p. 90). Observations by the researcher were noted throughout the process.

Memo-Writing

Through the case study, memo-writing, thoughts of the researcher and participants, ideas, connections, and comparisons were considered through the phases of the study. Connections were made from what participants revealed, by analyzing their thoughts and experiences in the interviews and through the memo-writing process. As Marshall and Rossman wrote, “Writing notes, reflective memos, thoughts, and insights is invaluable for generating the unusual insights that move the analysis from the mundane and obvious to the creative” (2011, p. 213).

Data Analyses

In qualitative research, analytic procedures fall into seven phases: organizing the data; immersion in the data; generating categories and themes; coding; interpretations through memos; searching for alternative interpretations; presenting the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Through data reduction, interpretation can begin by bringing meaning and description to events. Re-reading of the data took place, and theory generated codes were derived. Data were carefully sorted and coded by narratives to draw conclusions through analyses. Stake explains, “The code categories are progressively focused, changing as the research question takes on new meanings and as

the fieldwork turns up new stories and relationships” (Stake, 2010, p. 151). Codes that were used included: Appalachian and rural communities, self-efficacy, family definition and ideas, qualities of mother and father, mother at home vs. employment, child development, family attitudes towards major, changes in attitudes towards family and college, role of women, and benefits and barriers to the major. Additional codes emerged throughout the case study process. Stake (2010) explains, “Coding is sorting all data sets according to topics, themes, and issues important to the study” (p. 151).

Developing ideas were clustered and diagrams made outlining the most overarching themes. An eco-map was created to show the interrelationships of variables and supports of the students. Categories were derived from the concepts leading to the generation of interconnections. Lichtman (2011) quotes Glaser and Strauss’ perspective on constant comparative analysis:

Joint collection, coding, and analysis of data is the underlying operation. The generation of theory, coupled with the notion of theory as process, requires that all three operations be done together as much as possible. They should blur and intertwine continually, from the beginning of an investigation to its end. (2011, p. 52)

Data were used to support the emerging story and offer an interpretation of why first generation female students choose to major in early childhood education. In summary, data analyses incorporated the following steps:

1. Transcripts from each interview were read through once to provide insights and understand the feelings of each participant.
2. Each transcript was read a second time to discover themes and repetitions, represented in Figure 3.1. Memos and observations were also considered.

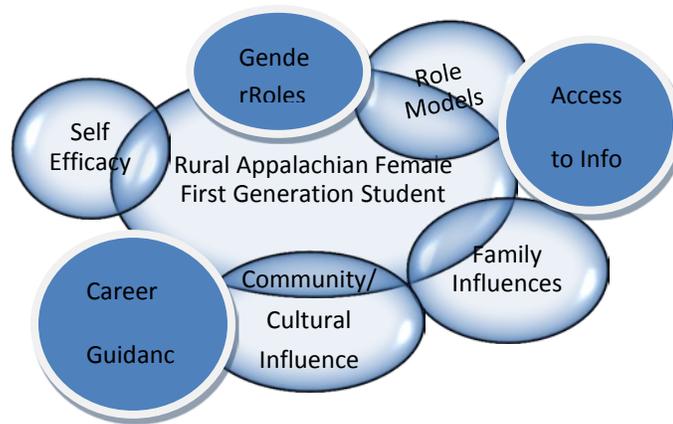


Figure 3.1: Possible Influences on First Generation Rural Appalachian Females

3. Portions of the interviews were copied and pasted into the section that the narratives supported. Then, comparisons were made between the first generation rural women and their mothers' responses.
4. An eco-map or contextual framework was diagrammed (McCormick et. al, 2008) to demonstrate the strength of the contextual influences for first generation rural women in choosing to major in early childhood education.
5. The eco-map allowed for collating themes and patterns from the interviews, determining which codes were recurrent and which were less frequent.

Trustworthiness of the Data

Audio-taped interviews were transcribed by a paid transcriptionist with no connection to the participants. A Statement of Confidentiality was requested and received by the transcriptionist. Electronic sharing of files was used with the paid transcriptionist, and the researcher had to give permission to the transcriptionist to access the files using Dropbox.

The researcher relied on intuition in determining how comfortable participants were in answering questions and asked participants if they were comfortable with

answering questions throughout the process. Participants were aware of their ability to refrain from answering questions during the semi-structured one-on-one interviews and knew that they could withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. Two participants asked for copies of the finished paper so that they could read all of the responses and keep as a reminder of their participation.

According to Stake (2010), to have objectivity there must be truth. To be able to explain and describe the experiences of this study, the researcher acknowledged that all researchers and people have bias. The researcher had to be aware of personal family and educational values. In addition, the experiences of the researcher as a female and major in early childhood education had to be examined. By doing so, the researcher's personal perspective may have been less influential in the data analysis. The use of memo writing, constant reflection, and looking for disconfirming evidence were helpful tools in keeping feelings transparent. Through the triangulation of two interviews, document review, and literature review, the reliability of the data was evident in the findings.

Value to the University and Participants

The value of the study to the university is that it provides information that may be helpful in recruitment of students, advising of students, career counseling, retention, and identifying the effect of role models. As the university attempts to retain students each year, knowing first year female students' capacities, choices, capabilities, confidence, and communities can assist the university in providing strategies to help them be successful. The participants themselves may have their awareness raised about their choice of college major. In doing so, they may reflect on their dedication to working with young children

at such an important stage of development. For other stakeholders at this academic institution, they may see the value of the study in advancing scholarship.

Limitations

Limitations of this study include the potential bias of the researcher. As Marshall and Rossman (2011) note, the way that the study is framed by research and scholarly methods places limits on the research. Additional limitations of this study stem from the use of interviews to collect data. Since respondents were asked to reflect back during the time when they chose a major, they may be unable to recall their true beliefs at that time.

Summary

This chapter outlines the qualitative study at Eastern Kentucky University of first generation female college students majoring in early childhood education. Secondary to this question, answers were placed into context by interviewing their mothers. Mothers provided information about women's roles, education, and their own experiences that are believed by the researcher to provide deeper information regarding the answers provided by the female first generation students. The case study method is discussed as well as how it was applied in the study. The position of the researcher and potential biases are explained. A description of the interview process, observation process, and memo writing is included. The possible limitations were discussed and relate to researcher bias and self reported nature of interviews. This study should not be generalizable to other contexts, as this qualitative study coded and interpreted the experiences of five first generation rural Appalachian female students majoring in early childhood education and their mothers.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

In the traditional Appalachian culture, self-reliance is valued, and educational attainment may be less important than is the person one becomes (Tang & Russ, 2007). A division of labor is observed, fewer role models are available, and access to information can be limited. Therefore, many rely on family for support, role modeling, and information regarding education and the types of occupations available to them. First generation rural Appalachian female students choose majors based on familiarity with the ways they have been socialized.

Interviews were conducted and data coded, using social cognitive learning theory (Bandura, 1986; 2010) and ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979, 1986, 1989; Swick & Williams, 2006; Tang & Russ, 2007). Tang and Russ (2007) explain that a person becomes conditioned to display certain behaviors based on the feedback received from their environment. The choice of a major and career development are linked to the social, physical, political and economic aspects in a person's ecosystem.

A qualitative case study method involving one-on-one interviews was used in order to probe how mothers influence their daughter's career decisions. During the literature review, a qualitative study could not be found that could demonstrate the direct link, although the influence of mothers and parents is often found in career literature. Quotes contained in the findings are combined answers to questions asked during the interviews that relate to particular themes.

In choosing to major in Child Development and Early Childhood Education, the findings describe the reasons why first generation rural Appalachian female students choose the major and how the mothers influence that choice. As self-awareness is gained by a teacher, that can lead her to a greater understanding of working with young children (Baum & King, 2006). It is important to have qualified faculty in the field of Child Development and Early Childhood Education during such an influential time in brain development.

Appalachian and Rural Communities

For many students from rural Appalachia, the ties to the community can include the acceptance of the limited opportunities of the community. When asked to describe the communities in which they live, student Tracy responded,

It's a very tight knit community. One of those where everybody knows everything about everybody kind of thing.....We were a low income family but my dad was always working constantly. It seemed like he worked all the time. It's just like we never could get ahead I guess. We were always taken care of. We always got everything we needed. Everything we wanted really. We never really knew that. I never really knew anything until I got older. My mom and dad did a really good job of making us secure. Other than being on food stamps every once in a while and things like that, there was really no noticeable difference from any of my friends.

Then,

It's a pretty good place for kids to grow up. There is a drug problem, but there's drug problems everywhere. Don't get me wrong, I'm not the 'I grew up there I'm going to stay there person.' I'm partly a city girl. I love the city when we go. I just couldn't imagine moving there (Louisville) and actually setting roots.

Tracy's mother, Darla, talked about the limited options for employment but the strong relationship to the people in the community during her interview stating,

Well, it's a small town. There's not many jobs. If you do get a job, you better try to stick with it... People around Lee County from what I have saw, they try to

help each other. If there's like a flood or somebody's house burns or whatever, they do like auctions to try to raise money for em. Most of the people go out of town and work.

Tracy and her mother both offer complimentary remarks about the social cohesion of their hometown. Both Tracy and mother speak of taking care of others and being the ones cared for. Helping others and being helped were common themes in the remarks of these women. Another student, Cindy relays feelings about the ties to the place and people where she lives:

[home county] consider it to be just a small area. Just a small community, where a lot of people care about each other and they take the time to help other people. We just recently had a tragedy in our community where one of the children got hurt. He doesn't go to school here, but the community has just really took that family and raised them. They're embracing them and meeting their needs. I think that's just what you find in small rural areas. A very small community-caring. Just a lot of support.

Cindy's mother, Virginia, addresses the intimacy and compassion of their small community, Appalachian communities saying,

I've lived in Lincoln County all my life. Well, where I live it's kind of remote. The school is very small, I think probably less than 200 students. It's just a little ole country place where everybody just about knows everybody.

Student Jessica describes contentment with her situation in the rural Appalachian community replying,

Small town. Everybody knows everybody. The good and the bad I guess. It's expanded from when I grew up....a lot of people wanted to get away. I chose to stay. It was a small town as far as my mom not being able to drive out and about. So I was content to stay where I was at.

Jessica's mother, Ginger, expresses her thoughts about the goodness of the people in her community,

So I've been in Casey County all my life. Over the years, people has been really good to me. They really have.

Both mother and daughter were satisfied with their small town. One of the most interesting comments came from Candy's mother, Ann, who describes common sense and everyday know how as being just as important as education by noting,

Candy's Mom Ann (Powell Co. /Fayette Co.): You know when I lived in Powell County, I thought 'oh, you're going to take me to the dumb hillbilly country.' June 8, 1962 and I thought- 'oh man'. My grandmother was from Kentucky. My mom was from Kentucky so I moved there, and I found these people are smarter than anybody. They got more common sense than anybody I know of from Ohio. I learned. I learned good in school, but I learned better when we moved to Powell County. I learned what it really meant family wise and everything. I learned how to do a lot of things.

Family Definition and Ideas

When thinking of her childhood, Darla describes a reliance on family and old fashioned values that restricted the access to sensitive information regarding women's health saying,

Family...being there for each other. Family is sharing things with. Having holidays together. Just enjoying each other. Everybody just getting together. To me family is...now I love God, that's my main thing in life. Family to me is loving each other, being there for each other. They taught us to clean. To treat people the way we want to be treated. That was a big thing in our family..... All in all, I had a good life. I think I was taught well. But a lot of things I had to learn on my own too. They were so old fashioned...I will put this in there. They were so old fashioned that they didn't believe in telling kids about having babies and women's monthlies.

Cindy described a team mentality of family, meaning that families support each other and will be on her side when needed:

[Family is] a group of people caring for each other. Meeting each other's needs. A support system. Love. Nurturing. A team. I think you're a team....(As children) We were respected. Our needs were met. We were important. I'm very thankful for my family. I had a really good home life. I had support from my parents.... they worked. They provided for our family very well. We wasn't rich, but I had what I needed. A very loving, nurturing home. I felt that I always had them on my side if I needed them.

Students Brittany and Jessica both explain that family expands beyond their immediate families, even those without blood relations:

Ours[family] is huge. Mine is dysfunctional (parents divorced, step-siblings) but it functions I guess. I don't know. The way I look at my family, it's small but it's just someone to lean on. Someone to be there for you. Family doesn't to me always mean blood, because I think of my husband's family. They've been there for me just as much as anybody else.

Family can be blood kin or it can be not so much blood kin. The people that I grew up with being a small knit community, I would consider those family even though there's no bloodline. Because we were close together growing up so it was some extended family.

Candy explains how issues of the family growing up made her resilient, although it did take her some time to overcome the mentality of living in poverty.

Currently I think I have a great big really great family. Growing up it was really a struggle. There was addiction problems big time. There was poverty which took a long time to get out of. Just the mentality of it, not the actual. I think it really affected my life but it made me persevere more.

Qualities of Mother and Grandmother

The similarity one perceives to their model as well as the attentiveness and the reinforcement they receive influences their imitation of same-sex models (Basow & Howe, 1980; Perry, White & Perry, 1984). As the students and the mothers of students began describing their mothers, many described the strength, creativity, and daily involvement of their female models. Tracy noted,

My mom was a strong woman. There was nothing that would keep her down. She was constantly working and wasn't going to ask my dad for anything and that sort of thing.

Tracy's mother, Darla, began to describe how her mother taught her by using what she had available to her.

You know, my mom had fourteen kids. She was adorable.... When we would go out there and we would dig the potatoes, she would make us count em as I was putting em in the bucket. I guess what I'm saying is anything she done at home, she tried to make it do with math or with school. She tried to have something involved in that. That's the way I was taught a lot of things.

Cindy's mom, Virginia, described her own mother as a support and friend,

When I would come in from school, I remember sitting down at that table with my mom while she was cooking supper. Telling her all about the school activities. My mother is my best friend and we just shared. She backed me in what I wanted to do. She seen that we went or did what we wanted.

Jessica's mom, Ginger, thought of her mother's roles and her observations of her mother cooking, canning, and working at the home.

Well honey, mama grew a garden and all that we bought was mainly coffee. ...mom canned everything they book. She made tomato preserves, she canned tomatoes. She picked blackberries and made blackberry jam for us kids to take lunches to school. It was very simple. I grew up not having much at all. The kids these days couldn't live like that. Get up of a morning and mom cooked breakfast. She made biscuits from scratch. I couldn't make biscuits at all like she did. She would set up at night by the wood stove and peel those peaches so they wouldn't ruin to can. She'd pick blackberries. She would go out in the field and take us kids with her before school started. She'd get a great big bucket and course back then we wore straw hats. We had a great big poplar tree and she'd take those poplar leaves and line her straw hat and fill her hat with blackberries. We'd have a gallon in that bucket but boy she couldn't leave any blackberries in the field. She cooked them to make jam for us to take to school. We was raised very simple but I was proud of the way I was raised.

Of particular interest was a short comment from Candy's mom, Ann, describing her mother as a housewife and recalling her canning and cooking;

Oh yeah, she was just like ...a housewife. She washed all the time and of course each of us did our own thing on the iron...She was a hard worker too. We'd all go blackberry picking when we was young. That's the way it was. We ate what we could. Then she'd can em. She never did make jam or jelly. She always canned em so we can have blackberry cobbler and dumplins all winter long. She didn't cook much, but when she did it was good. Her mother was an excellent cook. Just country, but it was good. When you sat down, you knew you was going to eat everything around, or a piece of it anyway.

Qualities of Father and Grandfather

For almost all fathers described in the study, they were viewed more in terms of work, taking care of the family, and the source of family discourse. Tracy, whose father divorced her mother when she was a teenager, describes the strain of their relationship:

My dad.... I always remember describing him as not the boss, but the boss of everybody else. The relationship is strained quite a bit because I guess.... step family. Not necessarily that I don't like them or they don't like me. Just I never expected my dad to be the person he is with this new family. If that makes sense. You grow up thinking, 'this is my dad... this is who he is.' And he did change. I guess that put a little strain there for me and him. We still talk. We still get along but as far as that goes, there's quite a little nitch in there.

For two of the mothers and one student, the alcoholism of their fathers impacted their family situations:

My dad worked in the coal mines....my dad became an alcoholic and things started going down then. It got so bad, that's when we left Buckhorn.

He [father] was around but he never did anything. Basically just my sister and her husband [to have as family]. If I remember correctly, he built barns. Well, after my mom died he [father] actually became an alcoholic.

Father in charge. What he said goes. In some ways, truthfully, when my father was drunk he was fun, but he was also violent later on. At the same time he was a hard worker.

Relating to the involvement of fathers, Cindy's mom, Virginia, describes:

My dad was the core of seeing that we had plenty to eat and wear. Clothes and you know, all of that. My dad didn't go to school functions.

Student Brittany's absent father is remembered,

I love my father greatly, but he had different priorities. He kind of left my mom to raise me until she got with my first step-father and had my brother. My dad was gone a lot so it was just me and my mom for a long time. My dad was in and out a lot.

For Jessica, her father has never really been a presence in her life and during the interview, she did not want to discuss him so she said,

...At a young age it was just mom.

Jessica's Mom, Ginger, described her father's farm chores and then discussed Jessica's father not wanting to be in her life:

Jessica's Mom Ginger (Casey Co.): Daddy grew corn and took it to the mill and had it ground for cornmeal. Daddy had cows. He had horses to plow the crop with. We had a very simple life but we survived. Daddy told us if we got in any trouble not knowing what we was getting into, he'd get us out.

When we [my husband and I] divorced, he told em' that he wanted me to have full custody cause I was capable of taking care of her. So that put him off the hook you know. I got no child support or anything for her. I took care of her the best I could and I'm proud of what she's done.

Division of Labor

As Albert and Porter (1988) described in their research, observing a division of labor between men and women has an effect on gender stereotypes more than the role behaviors shown by parents. Although there was not a lot of discussion about who would do the work, it was apparent to the students interviewed that their parents divided the labor. Tracy, a student, noted:

[Before her parents divorced when she was a teenager] It just seemed like they always had a plan. That's just from me growing up....Housework, dinner type things were mom's. Dad did the heavy lifting type stuff, garbage.

Virginia discussed the difference in the breadwinner and the homemaker by saying,

My parents didn't discuss [daily care and obligations]. They were kind of... daddy did his own thing and mama did hers. Daddy brought the money home and mama had to see that it was stretched to do what had to be done. Daddy worried about bringing it home and giving it to her and then she worried about where it went.

Particularly when living on a large piece of property in the rural areas, a division of labor was more pronounced, such as with Ginger,

Well, no we didn't talk about it [division of chores]. He'd just say, 'time to go get the chores done.' We'd just head out and do it. He'd say, 'You know you got

your chores to do before you go to school, you'd got to get it done.' We knew what we had to do so we'd go do it. They [brothers] was out with daddy. Like in the field hoeing tobacco and chopping the corn and stuff. Daddy would take the boys out in the field to mow the pastures and chop weeds out of tobacco and corn. If they didn't get it done and we had time, me and mama would go out and help em too. We all done it as kind of a family thing. Anyway, the boys kind of had their chores like milking the cows and feeding the horses and slopping the pigs and stuff like that.

The division of labor was often unspoken, as Candy explained,

Never [discussed household tasks]. My mom, it was pretty much her job (or ours) to cook. It was pretty much, the girls did the cooking and the cleaning and the guys got the wood in or cut the grass. It was pretty much divided and it was an unspoken rules and that's what you did. I never remember a discussion. It's just the way it is.

Meanwhile, Ann noted a lack of discussion about everyday tasks:

No. They never spoke of nothing like that in front of us. In fact, nobody in that little village did. My best girlfriend since second grade, we was talking about that one day. I was up there for 2 weeks and we was talking about that. She said, 'Did your mom and dad just ever sit down and talk to you about things, everyday life and stuff?' I said, 'No.' And she said, 'Well, mine didn't either.' They had twelve kids in their family. She said, 'Well, mine didn't either. They didn't tell us nothing.' I guess it wasn't none of our business. It was adult talk and we just didn't butt in. You had to obey your parents- that's for sure. We thought they were strict. We got to do things we wanted to do, but we also had to obey. Like dad always said, 'You live under my roof, you do as I say'.

Mother at Home vs. Employment

The research by Gottfredson (2005) explained that as children develop their self-concept and gender identity, they begin to restrict occupations based on appropriateness by gender. By observing their mothers, they see what types of occupations may be available for them. Several mothers did factory work, restaurant work, babysitting, or worked at home. Tracy described her experiences by saying,

I remember always being home with my mom. As I got older, my mom had to start working, so I was at home with my sister and brother...First, she went back to like a restaurant. She worked at a restaurant for a while...then she went to work for a senior citizen's where she delivers the meals and things like that.

She's still got that job. She quit for a while, but they took her back and she's stayed there for a while. She's still in that job.

Cindy relayed that her mother worked outside the home, but in a sewing factory and in a school setting by saying:

She worked in a sewing factory most of the time when I was young. She worked in Palm Beach (clothing manufacturing) in Danville. She got a job later making seat covers for Toyota. Trim Master in Harrodsburg with Ashley was the name of the factory. She worked there for several years and then she was able to become a preschool assistant. She worked in preschool for a while until my father passed away. My dad died, and it just didn't meet her needs financially so she had to go back to a factory where she could make more money...my grandmother, she also worked at Palm Beach.

Jessica's mother had an in-home daycare for a long time and remarked,

For a couple of years, I went to a babysitter. Then my mom she started doing in-home daycare. She didn't drive as far as having to find a ride back and forth to work. [How long did she have her own childcare?] Let's see, how old am I? I don't know, 7 to 10 years. Something like that. She babysat for that long.

Ginger described the home chore work of her mother as follows:

They worked every day in the garden and on the farm. All three of us kids stayed there at the house with mama and daddy. They took care of us and we done our chores. Mama cooked our food, and daddy seen we had stuff for the house.

Self-Efficacy

As Gottfredson (2005) found that family members are influential in helping develop the self-efficacy to pursue a career. For Tracy, she views her own family and children as motivation for education, although her mother views her much like herself.

Tracy reflected,

I've always had my voice. My little girl, she's really shy, so I do remember being shy to a certain extent. Then I don't know what it was that just broke me out of my shell. Ever since then, I've not been quiet about anything. I kind of marched to the beat of my own drum. So when I felt like I was tired [of school] and needed a break, I quit. I started a family and I started my thing, which I was in a very committed relationship. Then my kids motivated me to come back. Before I

even had em', it was a decision I made. I knew I was going to go back [to school].

As Tracy's mother noted,

Tracy is pretty much like her mother. She got out and done this on her own.

Cindy and her mother displayed characteristics that Fernandez, Castro, Otero, Foltz, and Lorenzo (2006) wrote about in their research. In choosing careers, many value interpersonal goals, including self-determination and helping others as more important than other goals. Cindy describes,

I pushed myself. I was really shy as a young person. My mom was like, 'I was worried that you wouldn't do anything.' Because I was so shy and timid. So it makes her really proud when she sees I was able to step out and do something. I've become this really obsessive-compulsive kind of person. I want my students to succeed, and I push them to succeed in the classroom. So it's important to me. I have high expectations and I guess as I've gotten older I've gotten more ...I'm not over confident...just the confidence. So I got my CDA and then whatever changed and it was like ok I'd gotten a teacher's job, and it was like you have to go get your teachers degree. So I was like, 'Ok I've got to do this.' I went and took my ACT and just got started.

Cindy's mother describes her own motivation and self-efficacy,

I just wanted to do something. Back then, money went a lot further and my husband made enough to support us, but I wanted my own money. I was an independent person. I was raised to be an independent person. I walked to school by myself. I didn't depend on other people. That was my nature and I just wanted to have my own money. Once you get used to it.....I really didn't let people influence me that much. I really was more self motivated and figured out what I wanted myself. My mother wouldn't have done it because my mother never worked out. My mother always supported me in most of the things I done, but more or less I was a self-motivator.

Brittany embodies a motivation that is seen in self-reliant Appalachian communities adding,

[Speaking of influences] Other than the choices of going to school, I would say....I don't want to say myself, but a lot of people say 'you can't do it'

because I had her (daughter) so young. They were like, 'oh, you're just going to keep having kids and do this that and the other.' Then my husband helped me through high school and is continuing to help me through college.

As Brittany's mother agrees and adds information about her own accomplishments saying,

I'll be honest with you, she [Brittany] was very head strong and smart and basically got all the information she needed on her own. She's very intelligent. I would like to take credit for that, but she was really head strong from the beginning.... When she says she's going to do something, she's going to do it. She would pull the baby down to the bus stop in a little red wagon and leave the wagon there and pull it back up at the end of the day. It's just determination. Actually I just graduated in May and got an Associate degree in Business and Management. I'm proud of myself, because I never seen myself as going to college.

Much like Brittany, Jessica displays her own self-efficacy and desire to work hard explaining:

I grew up with a class of doctor's kids, so it was kind of handed to them. Not the whole hundred were, but it was kind of you was here or you was here. Up or down [class]. I think that kind of instilment to continue and not have it handed to you [makes medifferent]. Because once you learn that you want more for yourself. Not for it to just be handed to you. I would like to keep advancing. That's always been...from my past history I've never been satisfied to stay I'll just say low totem pole. I've always tried to excel and continue.

Jessica's mother describes how a desire can be present, but a lack of information, support and self belief can deter their educational growth as she stated:

See after I got married and had her, this lady wanted me to take the GED. Miss Weddle that lives down here in the country. She came here and brought me all these papers and stuff and said I had to take this little simple test. She said it was simple, but it was stuff I never heard of before. Then she disheartened me after I did it cause I didn't make too good on it. She said, 'I thought you was smarter than that.' I told her, I said, 'Hey, I've been out of school 60 years.' I said, 'That stuff is out in left field and I don't know a thing about that.' She said, 'It'll come back to you.' I said, 'Come back my foot, I've never had it.' One of my friends said, 'Hey if it was bothering me like that I'd just quit it.' So I did. I seen her down at the store and she said, 'I ought to kick you for quitting.' I said, 'Honey if I knew what I was doing it would have been different.' I didn't know beans about

what I was doing. I didn't. Stuff they have now. We just learned to read and write and add and subtract and that was it.

Child Development

When describing their interest in Child Development and Early Childhood Education, the students described a growing interest and understanding of the need for qualified and caring educators. Mothers describe their happiness with their daughters in whatever they choose to do. Tracy reflected,

I'm more drawn back to the kids. The children. I've even tried to run away from it, and it just keeps coming back. I'm just like, 'Ok, I'm just meant to do this and that's ok'.... I helped out with Head Start when she started (daughter) and I guess that's really where it hit me. I thought, 'I really like this.' 'I really enjoy this.' It wasn't like, 'oh it's just an easy job.' It was like, 'these kids really need help.' 'They need someone to focus on what they're doing and how they're feeling.' I would see those kids and I would just go over to the ones you could tell needed and extra hug or needed something and talk to em'. It made the whole difference in my career choice..... Child care is a big deal and there's a lot of daycare's that just do not do it right. I know that sounds mean. I say I ran away from it because I kept trying to say, 'No I don't want to do this.' I always felt guilty when I worked in day cares. 'Oh I'm leaving out my kids and I'm doing all this with other kids.' I got past that because I thought, 'my kids are loved.' 'My kids get attention and get all this that some of these kids never do.' Then I just decided.

Her mother, Darla (Lee Co.), simply stated: "I'm happy with whatever she chooses to do." Cindy described a need to make a difference when she said,

I feel like I'm being interviewed for Miss America or something, that's a hard question [why the major was chosen] For early childhood, to me they're like little sponges. They're fresh and I can put so much into those little brains. I love to teach reading and the alphabet and all those kinds of things. I just love giving them everything that I can so they'll be prepared for kindergarten...I could be an advocate I guess for the early childhood program because I see the difference it makes in children's lives. There have been times when children are like, "I want to go home with you." And they're crying to go home with me because they feel what you're putting into them. That nurturing. Sometimes, I may be the only smile that child gets the entire day. It's important....but if I can teach you how to read and nurture you and you grow up and say, 'One of my favorite teachers was Ms. Cindy.' I think I've made a difference. I would never want to be the teacher that I think of in my mind as being the intimidator. You're not going to make a

difference in a child's life if you intimidate them into learning. You've got to make them want to do it to be successful.

Student, Brittany, responded to the encouragement of one of her daughter's teachers as she explains,

After Amy [daughter] was in Early Head Start or Even Start, I really did like what they did. I liked the classroom, the environment. One of the teachers said, 'I think you might like it, you would enjoy it.' It kind of opened the door for another person to tell me about subbing and then it just kind of snowball effect. So really the big thing that got my mind set toward this is having my daughter in the program and seeing that is helped her and I really liked it. I liked what it did for the kids. So far, I've been doing it 11 years and I think I've got a good relationship with all my previous parents. I've never had an issue with any of em. It just kind of fell that way (being in the early childhood education field). I was getting tired of where I was at and they just opened the door to something I'd seen before and I really liked it.

In response, Phyllis, Brittany's mother first seems surprised that after babysitting and mothering her step siblings and raising a daughter since age 14 that Brittany would be interested in the field. However, her mother then sees it as a continuation of what her daughter has always done when she stated:

It's really odd that she would do that considering she got pregnant at such an early age. It's something she's always done, and she's always enjoyed it.

Interestingly, Jessica sees the changing qualifications of Child Development and Early Childhood Education majors as a positive in viewing the field with more respect. She said,

Like I said as far as understanding the importance of the first few years.... no disrespect to the State or anything like that but a lot of times with Head Start (I think now they're changing) you didn't have a degree. You were kind of (not disrespect) but kind of babysitting more going into it. As far as understanding the importance of those first few years, I see so many kids now that are in high school and still can't read. So I was like "you know, this is my spot.

Jessica's mother relays her belief in the importance of an education and perseverance as she noted,

It's been rough but she's getting there. You know what I mean. It will pay off when she gets there. What she's taking, I don't even know what. See I didn't get to go no further than the 8th grade cause we lived out in the country far back and back then our parents was a lot stricter than what they are now.

Candy relayed how her employer simply signed her up for Child Development classes and kept pushing her further into the field when she said,

I started work at Head Start as a teacher's aide. I pretty much walked in cold and said here I am. High school transcript is not really good. I loved it. My Director came in after a year and said 'How do you like what I did to you?' I'm thinking what did you do to me? She said, 'I signed you up for CDA classes.' I said, 'What in the world is CDA classes?' I thought it was some kind of anger management. It was extremely hard. A classroom opened up and he said we want you to take this classroom but you will need to start taking classes. I said 'Fine, sign me up.' It got me hooked. And through the job. I loved working with the group I worked with. I walked into a classroom, and people pay you to do this? This is so cool.

Candy's mother, Ann, was smiling and proud as she explained her visit to her daughter's classroom:

I went to her classroom. She does wonderful. She's wonderful at Head Start in her classroom, even before she went to college. She's good. She was trying to tell em to take a nap. They wouldn't take a nap and she said, 'now I told you what we would do if you laid down there and just shut your eyes, we'll do other stuff later.' They did. She talked to em' real kind.

Family Attitude Toward Major

When students and their mothers were asked if their families approved of their choice of major, students felt that their families did not fully understand their majors, and some perceived that they influenced their own mothers or children. For mothers, the idea

that their daughters were happy and a good fit for the job seemed to suffice. Tracy exclaimed,

To this day, I don't really know if they understand. It started out....teaching (public school). That was what I was going to do. I don't even know if they understand that I've changed my major when I tell them child development. I don't see them getting that. My sister and my husband understand. Like the other day his mom said, 'You're not teaching anymore?' I was like, 'no I told you that about three years ago.' My parents are just happy that I'm doing something I guess.

Her mother did seem to understand some of what she was told as Darla revealed,

[It] was kind of funny when I talked to her. She mentioned that she was first interested in the communications field and how she started out there. It was strange how she worded it. It was like early childhood education kind of kept pulling her back in. She kept trying to sometimes get away from it but it always kind of kept coming back to her.

Cindy's mother began working as a teaching assistant after seeing her daughter in a teaching position with Head Start. Cindy explained,

I guess I influenced her because I had that position before. Before she did. I guess she seen how much I enjoyed it. Actually, I forget what year she started, but I had been there for a while.

When Cindy's mother, Virginia, started thinking about her daughter being a good fit for the occupation, she added information regarding the security and benefits of the job. Her comment is an example of the encouragement she provided her daughter. Virginia noted,

She's right where she needs to be. She's very good at it. She had friends that helped her get on at school. I seen in just a little while that's where she needed to be. She is perfect for it. She is not a person that loses her temper. She's very gentle and kind. I knowed right off when she worked, she was going to be fine. She knew that's where she wanted to be, and I've never heard anybody say bad things about her. Her kids love her. Her parents love her. She's where the Lord put her to be. We're very trusting in the Lord, both of us in our faith.....

Brittany sees approval for her choice of major in her parents telling her that they are proud by saying,

Definitely [family approves]. My father, he really tells me that he's proud of me on a monthly basis. He's come a long way around from where we were. I know my mom is. She does, she tells me.

and her mother describes how being around children is all Brittany has ever done,

...because after she had the baby, that's what she decided she wanted to do, and that's all she ever did actually. She's great at it. I've watched her do it, and she just has a way with children. It amazes me.

Jessica describes a common ground with children as she happily reports,

She's happy. [Mother is proud of Jessica] Accomplishing a goal that she knows I want to set. She knows I've been around kids all my life so it's kind of a common ground.

Jessica's mother, Ginger, sees a common ground in working hard to get where they are as she states,

You know, as far as she's got ...and I'm proud of her. I've worked hard to do it, and she has too. She's worked hard.

Candy thought about her own children and described wanting her children to enjoy the occupations that they choose when explaining,

Yes, she's a cheerleader (speaking of her mother). The people who push you more think college will open the door to everything. I don't think it will in this culture anymore. I begin to see it's not. For my own kids, we live if you want to give it a shot, but if you go into a job, make sure it's one you really like. Make sure you can get some training on it so you can branch out. Never shut your mind, continually grow.

Changes in Attitude Toward Family and College

As students and their mothers were asked about the changes that they had observed towards family and college, it was revealed through the interviews that changes

in the chronosystem, the overarching changes in the attitudes and ideas of the society, had been observed. Both students and their mothers described changes in these attitudes and ideas during their lifetime. Student, Tracy, reflected:

Until the whole world kind of became different, people had to work that had never worked before and things like that. When mom had to step away and start working even when they were together, I think that kind of changed things a little bit. It put a lot more responsibility on me. Not necessarily that I really noticed. When I got a little older, I could tell in the relationship with me and my sister. I could tell she felt more like I was her mother or that I was acting like her mother. She said, 'I can't be your sister if you're acting like my mother.' We're past that, she's older now....Society's views of family are all over the place. Like I told you, I grew up appreciating the nuclear family, and I guess that's not for everybody. You can't do that anymore. Family has expanded so much to include so many different things. Sometimes people get confused and can't really keep up. Who is whose family or whatever. I can't explain it. I'm glad that they've included different aspects of families. Just like you can be adopted and live with such and such and that's a family. Or live with grandma and have uncle you know...just random combinations. Because some families had to do that. It was never recognized before, and you can help a lot more people if you recognize where they're coming from. I think that's a good thing. As far as college, it's pushed a lot more. There's really no other way. It used to be you had to make sure you get your high school diploma at least. Now it's like you have to get your college degree. You have to. It's pushing now that you even need to go further. A lot more pressure.

Tracy's mother added during her interview:

Oh boy. When I was growing up college was hardly ever mentioned. It was push you through high school and you do what you want to then. When I say push, I mean they literally push you through it when I went to school. Which I didn't graduate and that was stupid on my part. Some families are growing apart. You hardly ever see the actual whole family out doing things. It's like we said during the festivals and all that, now days it's like it's nothing. Before, everybody was getting together and old friends meeting there and talk and laugh, but it's not like that anymore. I see less families doing things together now.

Cindy discussed how parents want better for their children and how rural

Appalachian communities have accepted more diversity as she related,

I think families see that it's more important if you're going to be successful. I hear people say, 'You've got to go to college.' 'You've got to go to college to make a difference in your life to better yourself.' When I was younger, it was

like high school. You've got to graduate high school. You've got to graduate high school and it's ok if you work in a factory. I think as our parents have worked in factories....I know my brother- in- law and sister- in- law have a son that's in high school right now and they're like, 'I don't want him to have to work as hard as I have.' 'We've both worked in factories and I want his life to be better than what we had.' I think people see the importance.....I see more diverse families. I see more interracial marriages and things like that than before. When I was young I didn't see a lot of that. As far as other changes, not so much. Just that. When I was a child, if we seen two different families. Maybe an African American and a white, it was like..... Now it's more embraced and accepted and those kinds of things.

Cindy's mother, Virginia, discussed the necessity of college today and the greater awareness of the options available for occupations as she relayed,

It's changed a lot. Like I said, when I was little and growing up, college wasn't spoke in your house. You didn't hear of college. It wasn't expected of you. It wasn't even brought up usually. It was something you heard talked about on the news or at school. Not much at school even. Now, more or less, college is your next step. You don't stop at high school and it's talked. It's just brought out a whole lot more. People is more aware of what they can about do and can't do.

Student, Brittany, stated the same message as she said:

College definitely changed because no one in my family had ever went. Now I think everybody needs to do something. Whatever they want to do. Family-like I said, I had an odd childhood. I still think of my family. I see a lot of em', and I love em'. Our family that I have at home is just different. I think we're closer. I think I've tried to change from the way it was. Because at home there was never a time when we all sat down and ate a meal. You know when we all did the same thing and the same routine. That's something I tried to do for Allyson was to have a set routine. That way she knew what was coming, and I just felt that was important. And a stable home instead of moving constantly.

Candy and her mother describe the changes occurring in the larger society as more people learn about programs that are available to begin college and as family involvement in education becomes an important topic. Candy can envision how to encourage others to take small steps towards their education and her mother describes noticing a difference in the involvement of both parents. Candy describes,

Now, I see where almost anyone can go to college. With KEES¹ and so forth. At least community college to begin. I think I would encourage a lot of them to go to college.

Candy's mother, Ann, explains:

I think the mother and father takes more interest in going than they used to. My mother and dad never did go to a PTA meeting. I never did go to one. They had em. Now the mother and father both get involved. I think it's nice they get involved in the education more than they used to.

Role of Women

In considering the questions that needed to be asked of the students, it was important to discover how both mothers and daughters perceived their roles and the roles of women in general in the larger society. The findings demonstrate that although it is recognized that women have many opportunities available to them and can choose whatever they want to do, in rural Appalachian communities, traditional roles expected of women are sometimes difficult to overcome. With regard to women in the larger society, Tracy explained,

Whatever they want I guess. I actually think about that sometimes. I appreciate back then how it was. You know, the dad went to work and the mom stayed home. I appreciate that, but I also appreciate the fact that they went out a little bit and let women do this and that. I'm glad that women have a voice today.

Tracy's mother expressed happiness in women having more opportunities by saying:

I think women can do anything they want if they set their mind to it. Ok, that's another thing that I was taught at home now that you brought that up. Don't ever say you can't do nothing until you've tried. Today's time, it's not just about men taking care of women. I believe now that some men really want their wife to stay at home and cook and clean, but it's not like that today. I think women today can do whatever they want to do if they try. I'm not going to let a man stand and put me down to the point he's going to have me saying I can't do it, or I'm going to show him otherwise. You know women need to start standing up on their own two feet. Back in the old days.....and I saw this from my mom. It not just a

¹ KEES offers scholarships to high school and GED students with a 2.5 GPA each year they attend a certified Kentucky high school. The better they do, the more money they earn toward college.

woman's place to go home and cook, clean, wash clothes, do this, do that. I think women should have equal opportunity as a man.

When interviewing Cindy and her mother, ideas about traditional roles emerged as Cindy described:

I'm old fashioned. I think we can do anything. We can hold positions like principals and educators and all those kinds of things, but there's a time and place. In the home I still believe that the man is the head of the house. I wouldn't do anything major without consulting my husband, but he's the same way. He gives me that same respect. I think if we give them that respect, they'll give it back to us. I think sometimes people look at men and show them more respect. You know what I'm saying? I think as far as a career, there's a lot of jobs we can do just as well as a man. But I still have that respect in the home setting-of my husband.

Virginia, Cindy's mother, understands the necessity of both parents working now and the opportunity available to share household responsibilities. However, she alludes to the idea that only some women will be interested in doing what a man would be interested in doing. Virginia stated,

I think in this generation it takes both parents working most of the time cause everything is so expensive. I think if both parents is working, they should share their duties as a parent or financially or just helping each other. Used to if the man worked, the woman took care of the house; she took care of the children. Now if they're both working, I think you ought to try to share and work things out with all the aspects of it... I'm not one of these who pushes for a woman to outdo a man, but if a woman is capable and she wants to—go for it. Some women want that and that's fine.

Jessica and her mother seem to relate to the idea that an occupation can take a woman away from the family and may cause them to miss out on important moments in their children's lives. They describe the need for balance in an occupation between family and the necessity of caring for a family. Jessica said,

I think that I'm kind of on the fence I guess you could say. Cause I think that as a mother, there's a certain thing that a mother holds the house together. I think sometimes the mothers kind of overlook that and want to go out and branch out

and do their own thing which they're very very capable of. So I think there needs to be a good balance there.... not just forget about the family and the kids at home and let a nanny take care of em. They're called a mother for a reason.

Jessica's mother, Ginger, eludes to a connection between divorce and working outside of the home as she explained,

Well honey, that's a big question. The way things are right now it takes husband and wife to work to keep the bills up and keep the kids in school. You hear of a lot more divorces and stuff now than you did when I was growing up because the mother stayed home and took care of the home then. We didn't have all these bills coming in....It's hard to be away from the family. You miss a lot of the kids growing up. But still yet you need to try to provide a life for them and for yourself. Then when you get older maybe you can get your home paid for and you won't have to worry about that and you can enjoy more time with them.

Candy and her mother both acknowledge how women have had to stand up and show what they can accomplish. Interestingly, Candy described herself as a traditionalist when she said,

I think they take for granted what we had to fight for coming from that kind of background. I think females now take for granted a lot. I still have a sister who brings her husband food on a tray. When my brothers come to my house, I fix it but I say get in there and get it. I really had to stand up. In society, when you think preschool classroom, you still think female... I'm a traditionalist, I'm not a libber.

Ann, Candy's mother, seems amazed by the skills that women are able to demonstrate in today's society as she exclaimed,

Oh man. They just show how smart they are. Back then women kept quiet and everything, but now they show that they are just as smart and they are just as good as a man. Don't you think? I do.

Benefits and Barriers to a Major in Child Development and Early Childhood Education

When choosing a major in early childhood education, it is important to know what contributes to that decision. The findings of the study reveal that first generation rural

Appalachian female students understand the financial drawbacks, but also feel that making a difference and enjoying a career can be a motivating reason to continue in the field. Tracy noted:

I'm kind of just going with the flow in deciding what it is I want to do. I want to come back and get my master's in something. That would be a plus if that happened. If I got a job. I'm not doing it for the benefits as far as money or anything like that..... I think she (a friend) said something like, 'If you're in this field for the money, you might as well just get back out.' That's when I was like, 'Hey let me think about this for a minute...nope, not in it for the money.'

Cindy had similar thoughts about the pay but added why she has remained in the field for several years as she said,

If I'm going to be honest with you, this is going to be my 22nd year, and I make twenty six thousand dollars a year. So you have to love what you do. You have to be passionate about it. You're not doing it because you get a big paycheck. My husband worked in a factory and he made forty five thousand dollars a year probably, without a college education. So you know what, you have to love it. I'm going to say the main barrier is the income.

Both Brittany and Jessica describe their opportunities in Child Development and Early Childhood Education by thinking about their local communities. It was evident that they both considered how their major related to what was available to them where they lived. Brittany described finding satisfaction with her current Early Head Start position as she stated,

There's only like so many jobs you can get. It doesn't have a wide variety. You can work at even Head Start or Early Head Start or preschool and I think kindergarten if it's a Head Start. There's not many other. I love my job. I love working with the families. I really do like the part where I'm with the Early Head Start Program, where I was a teenage mom. I'm in the infant room, so we deal with teenage mothers. I kind of like that aspect of it because I kinda can relate to em. I know where they're from. And I like working with the families a lot.

Jessica understands the importance of working with children in their early years but is hopeful for a position where she will not have a long commute. She described finding a position this way,

Understanding the importance of the early years [benefit]. As far as if you look at preschool, there's not a lot of job opportunities. Well, I'm a little concerned I'll tell you with a degree. I've come this far so I'm just trusting something will work out. Just to be around with this area. I look on-line to try to see what jobs are available. They are out there but like I said I don't want to have to drive for two or three hours.

Ginger, Jessica's mother, brought out the opportunity to find balance between school and home while being able to stay in the home community. Ginger explained,

What she's doing now, she gets to be home three months during the year with the kids if she gets a job with the school system. That means a lot to be with the kids. They enjoy it. I think what she's doing if she can find a job she will enjoy it. That's three months out of school she can spend time with the kids and they can do stuff. That will be great if she can find something with the school system. I think one of her friends went for something on the same order and she never did find a job in that field. She had to pick something else after she got out of school cause there wasn't anything available right around her anyway. Right now, she's got their house and stuff and would hate to move to another county to find a job.

Candy identifies with the idea that completing her Child Development and Early Childhood Education degree will provide security, a sense of making a difference, and calling to do this work. Candy describes,

I figure in the long run it will be worth it and will be more security for us. I like to finish what I start. I keep telling myself there will be benefits. I think pay is pretty decent for one thing. We have compensation like the educational compensation. That's worth thousands. We do have good benefits. I know I could go elsewhere and make more money, but to do what I'm called to do-this is what I'm put on earth to do. You can't put a price on that. Actually seeing families changed-for instance I had a little small room with 10 or 20 and within that year, two parents got cosmetology degrees and finished and one parent got a GED, one parent got a job. You can't put money on that. One woman left her husband, not because I told her to, but she got out of a violent situation and actually got a job. Think about the monetary and personal implications of that. We're changing family and I like it.

Role Models and Influences

The research from DeSantis (2006) showed a relationship between role model influence and a variety of career-related outcomes, including career aspirations, attitudes toward nontraditional careers, and career choice. In reviewing the codes and findings of the study, most mentioned family members as important influences, but teachers and friends also seemed to be important. Only one student, the youngest interviewed, mentioned a school counselor as having an impact. One mother mentioned that since her mother never worked outside of the home, she was self-motivated. Parents and family that encouraged the students gave the students more self-belief. As Tracy noted,

They [parents] both have equally in different ways, I guess. They've always pushed me. They made me feel like they saw something in me that maybe I didn't. So I pushed myself a little bit harder. My counselor in high school is the one that really focused me as far as what I needed to do. Anytime I had a question, I just went to him and said, "Ok, what about this?" He made me feel very confident in getting everything together and getting it finished. My counselor was a very big impact on my college.

Tracy's mother, Darla, also mentioned her mother as an influence, but the ability to be self-supporting and to not have to work as hard as her mother did seem to be the reason for the encouragement. Darla responded,

My mom. She said that I need to listen and learn when I go to school. I needed education because one day I was going to be out on my own and I would need to know all this in order to get a job and support myself. She has said this to me a lot of times...that she didn't want me to have it as hard as she did.

Cindy recalled always wanting to be a teacher, but it was the urging of a friend and her mother that assisted Cindy in obtaining her first teaching assistant position. Cindy said,

I would probably have to give credit to both of my parents because I always wanted to be a teacher. I remember they bought me a large chalkboard and mounted it on the wall. I would pretend that I was teaching. I'd have all my dolls set up and those kinds of things. It's always been in my heart I guess to be a teacher. I guess my mom and my dad. I don't know really. When I got out of

high school, I had a friend and her mother worked in the school system. They needed an assistant because the classroom was over cap size. The principal of the school had been my teacher in high school. So it all worked out that I was able to get the position. I guess pretty much ever since then, I've been in the school system. I was an assistant for 10 years and I've been a classroom teacher for about the past 12 years. So this is my 22nd year.

Virginia, Cindy's mother had to discover for herself what she wanted to do without an influence in her life. Virginia relayed,

I really didn't let people influence me that much. I really was more self motivated and figured out what I wanted myself. My mother wouldn't have done it because my mother never worked out. My mother always supported me in most of the things I done, but more or less I was a self-motivator.

Brittany had a co-worker that told her about being a substitute for Early Head Start, where she received her first opportunity into the field. It was later that she was encouraged to continue her education. Brittany noted,

I graduated in 2000. I was working at Kentucky Depot Restaurant and this girl was telling me about subbing positions where my daughter had went. It was Even Start then, but now it's Early Head Start. I subbed and I volunteered when she was little what time I could in her classroom. I really liked it. Then I got to sub, and then I got hired on as an assistant and then they gave me the opportunity to go back school. They didn't make me go, but at the same time, they encouraged it and they were like, 'take that class this semester.'

Jessica mentioned two teachers that influenced her to be a teacher and to enroll in the teacher education program at Eastern Kentucky University. Jessica's husband was the ongoing encouragement for her to not give up. Jessica explained,

I had a teacher. She wasn't my teacher but she was one that my mother babysat for. She was determined that I was going to Eastern cause that's where she graduated from. She helped me quite a bit so I'm trying to fulfill that too with her. I don't know if it influenced what I wanted to do as much cause I had a teacher in the fourth grade that kind of directed that path of what I wanted to do (liked her as a teacher). There's been times I've said I was going to quit because we (family) can't afford this. He's (husband) like, 'no you're not.' 'You're this close, you're going'.

Candy also mentions the continual support from her husband, while she and her mother both mention an influential teacher. Candy appreciated a teacher that saw her underlying need to be addressed and views this as important in her own teaching as she mentioned,

Probably my husband. We married pretty young-or I was pretty young and I always said that if I was running for President tomorrow, he would be out campaigning today. He was very open minded and is. We were very traditional in a lot of ways but he's always been really encouraging. My first grade teacher....It's nothing that she done extraordinary, but I remember sleeping one day in class and she getting after a boy for laying his head down and he said, 'what about her?'. She [teacher] said, 'she does her work' and went on. I needed the sleep at that time. She tuned in. But that YES-you see the need behind the kid.

Ann, Candy's mother, seemed amazed by the knowledge of her teacher but put aside these thoughts as she prepared to become a homemaker. Ann described,

We had a Home Ec. teacher one time; she took us to the furniture store to show about the fabric and stuff. The Home Ec. teacher did and I just fell in love with that. I thought boy I wish I could do this one day. I wished that I could work in a furniture store and sell furniture and things like that. I had that in my mind for 2or 3 years. I never did tell anyone about. Then I let it go. I got married and let it go, but that was ok. I always wanted to just be a housewife.

Attitudes Toward School

Attitudes and experiences at school can impact the aspirations and motivations of young students. The attitudes that parents receive from their educational experiences influence the ways in which they socialize their children about what the children can expect from their educational attainment (Wilson, Peterson & Wilson, 1993). For mother, Darla, although she liked some subjects at school, a negative experience with a teacher stifled her desire to learn. She said,

I loved history. I loved all that. I liked math and I did ok in math. Like I said, I'm not downing teachers or nothing like that but it was just the teacher I had. He would yell and scream, and I just got to the point where I didn't want to learn.

Student, Cindy, explained how a teacher changed her level of self-efficacy.

I struggled. I struggled because I didn't have the confidence I think. And I had a teacher I wouldn't want any child to have. When I think about him, he was always downing me because I didn't perform. Because he'd had my mother, and she was a better student and it was always, 'your mom did this' or 'your mom did that.' So I kind of shut down and thought 'well, if you think I can't do it, I probably can't.' They (grades) wasn't good. They weren't good. I wasn't a strong student and I'm not sure why because in high school I graduated with honors or whatever. I did really well. I had more self esteem you know.

In Brittany's experience, being able to begin to see how small successes can lead to larger successes pushes her along.

I thought it would be my CDA [that would be completed]. I didn't know that I would do anything more. Then there was just a lot more opportunities the more I looked into it. You know, to get your associates and bachelors and just move on. ... I've got my Associates. Another few hours till I get my Bachelors.

Phyllis explained how being from a poor family affected her school experiences. She said,

I was really quiet. I was average in grades. Did not like to speak out much in class. I was extremely quiet. I guess because I was poor, and I was unsure of myself.

Candy explained how she had difficulty understanding the language of school. Candy explained,

Did not do well in school. I was a C student at the best. I was pretty average. Below average in some things. Did not like school. Did not fit in. I couldn't get organized. Everyone was speaking a special language and I didn't get it. I couldn't get organized. I just could not wait to get out. To me everything was a waste of time, and it was like everyone is speaking this language that I don't get.

Ann, Candy's mother, had a speech issue that influenced her school years. Ann replied,

Candy's Mom Ann (Powell County/Fayette Co.): I liked all my teachers. I was quiet. I couldn't read good. I wasn't good in spelling so I couldn't read good. I was real quiet and shy and I stuttered. That probably made me quiet.

Parental Message about Education

Throughout the interviews, it seemed that parents wanted their daughters to decide their own careers, but did state that finishing high school was important. For some parents, having a better life or avoiding manual labor were reasons for pursuing education and listening at school. Mothers admittedly knew little about college or grants available. For a few students, their employment was the driving force behind their continuing education. A couple of the mothers mentioned that their daughters had accomplished more than they had done. Tracy said of her parents,

Finish school. Finish college. Because they didn't. To get ahead in life, to do anything in life, you need to finish school. You need to do this, you need to do that. They said it so much, I'm like, 'yeah, I know I'm doing that'. I'm going, I'm doing it.

Tracy's mother mentioned also that she encouraged her daughter to continue her education:

I let Trish make her own mind up when she told me she wanted to go back. I encouraged her. That I would help do anything I could. I would stand by her. If she ever run into a hard place money wise, I would try my best to be there. ... That was my number one priority for my kids. Get an education. Go to college. I'll help any way I can. If I can't, maybe I can find somebody that will help.

Cindy explained how her employment with Head Start drove her to consider going to college and gave her confidence that she could do the work. She said,

College was not really pushed a whole lot. But High school ...at the time it was 'you're going to graduate from high school no matter what.' They really didn't think a whole lot about college until I got this position. Then, when you're in Head Start, the preschool Head Start program, I had to go back to school. You know, to keep my position. Once I started going, it was like, 'well, I can do this.' I just continue and I'm trying to get my Bachelor's right now. I'm doing really well.

Virginia explained that her parents thought it was important for her to not miss school and expressed the expectation for self-reliance in her family. She also mentions that when she was growing up, college was only for those who could afford it.

They wanted me to graduate high school, but in that time, more of the people that had more money was the ones that went to college. They never talked college. I never talked college. I know, probably back then we never knowed nothing about grants. Nothing of no help, which mama and dad couldn't have sent me to college. There was no way. But it was a high school education. You go to school every day, and I did. You didn't miss unless you were sick-sick. I was taught responsibility to be on time and to be there. That followed throughout my work. So they did teach me good values as well as they knew to take it.... they knew that I would see that I was able to take care of myself.

Brittany explained seeing struggles with her family regarding finances. For her family, graduating from high school or continuing with her education meant a better life. She said,

[Family said to her] If you don't want to be tired like me, then get an education. It was basically; if you don't want to physical labor, then do something. Get educated. I didn't have much of a choice to graduate from high school. I mean I was going to regardless. They made sure that was something I was going to do before I could even move out. They said in order for me to move in with my child's father, 'you have to finish school.' That was not an option with either parent. I didn't want to quit. I didn't want to fall behind because my mom didn't finish school and my dad didn't. I seen struggles you know. Having a hard time making ends meet.

Phyllis' voice burst with pride as she thought about what her daughter has accomplished since becoming pregnant at age 14.

I stand behind her in anything that she chooses to do. I'm so proud of her. She's accomplished so much more than I thought I could ever accomplish.

Jessica explained that even though her single mother was poor, being able to finish high school was very important since her mother only completed eighth grade. She explained,

Well coming from like I said almost poverty level so any resources that was given to us was very vital. Very important, but my mom always instilled education. That

was never put on the back burner. I had teachers that helped. You know, a small town. They knew so they would help. I think she just knew the importance of it. Where she had come from, she was only able to go to the eighth grade. Understanding to be able to get a job and for the future As far as money wise, she wouldn't be able to help. I think she wanted me to succeed as far as I could. At least high school.

Jessica's mother, Ginger, knew that her parents wanted her to do the best that she could. With little personal school experience or knowledge, she learned about life through her personal experiences in her community. While in school, obeying authority figures and doing as told were expectations given to her. Ginger relayed,

Do the best we could. Daddy always told us if we got a whipping at school, we got another one at home. I never got a whipping in school cause I knew daddy meant it. He said, 'I'm sending you up there to learn not to goof off.' 'Go up there and learn and do what they tell you to do.'

Ann shared a similar experience, saying:

Nothing. They just sent us to school and we was supposed to learn it. If we didn't, well that was all probably. They did what they was supposed to, and they wanted us to do what we was supposed to. You knew you better not play hooky.

Candy, Ann's daughter, realizes that her mother wishes that she had been able to finish school as she reflected,

My mom's goal for six of her kids was that they make it through high school. That was a big goal for her. She quit with one credit or one semester left to go.

Information about College

First generation rural Appalachian female students reveal that college was not discussed much at home or at school. Basic knowledge about local colleges and knowledge about two and four year colleges were sometimes discussed at school, but rarely. Some of the mothers discussed how college seemed to only be available for students that could afford it. For two of the mothers, their knowledge about college came

from their daughters. For the students, their information came from friends, employers and supervisors. Parents of the students understand that college offers a career rather than a job and for that reason, it is discussed. Students have a level of self-efficacy to achieve that pushes them to find out what they can about college and to go back to college for their current employment. Mothers are proud of their daughters and want to help their daughters, but have limited resources, knowledge, and experience. Tracy discussed an early experience when she realized that she wanted to go to college. She said,

I had an uncle that graduated from college. It's my dad's brother. We were going through some of his old papers, me and my grandma were. I was like, 'did he finish college?' She was like, 'yeah, he did'. I was like, 'well, I'm going to be the next Smith to finish college'. That's when it hit me I think. I was probably eight.

Her mother bursts with pride as she exclaimed:

I'm proud of her just the way she is. She went a lot farther than I did. Not that I didn't want to. I am so proud of her just for trying. If she hadn't of even succeeded, I would have been proud of her trying. I knew she'd go far. Whatever she chooses to do in life, I'll be proud of her no matter what.

Cindy struggled in her early school years, but found a position in Head Start after graduation with the help of a friend. She started college to be able to continue working in that position and found small successes. Cindy noted,

Just from here (work) mainly, because I started at Morehead with my CDA(Child Development Associate) and it was 9 hours. So I got my CDA and then whatever changed and it was like ok I'd gotten this far. Teacher's job and it was like you have to go get your teachers degree. So I was like, 'Ok I've got to do this.' I went and took my ACT and just got started.

Virginia, Cindy's mother, almost seems relieved as she discusses Cindy finding a workplace where she doing well. Virginia said,

I remember em talking (guidance counselors), but I don't really know what they did. I went to ECU and took a few classes over at Richmond, and then I've took some here [ECU Danville Campus]. Made me more aware of what you could do. She [Cindy] had friends that helped her get on at school.

Brittany admittedly did not know any information about college as she revealed,

I didn't know anything about it. I left school and the only way I knew was there was another co-worker there that has her bachelors or her certificate I think in early childhood and she helped me. She helped me get everything started with my application and all my information. I think I remember them one time talking about the ACT [high school]. That's about it. I took it when I was 20 or 21 I think.

Her mother reveals that she discovered information about college through her daughter:

Actually from Brittany [received information about college]. You know, I seen her doing it. She worked, she took care of her child, and she had a home. I watched her do it and I thought if she can do it surely I can.

Jessica explains what she learned about college during her high school years:

High school did some guidance things. Talked about the different schools. Which was a two year degree and which was four year. Things like that, but nothing extravagant.

Her mother voices the sentiment of wanting to help her daughter and support her, but realizing her limitations to do so;

Oh yeah, I encouraged her to go. I didn't know nothing about that stuff she's got. I just wanted her to ... When she wanted to work, I just told her I wanted her to get an education. I didn't get to, and I didn't want her working if it brought her grades down. I want the best for her because she's the only one I've got. It don't matter if I'd had a half a dozen, I'd have still wanted em to get an education. If there was anything I could do I would, but money wise there wasn't nothing I could do to help her. Cause out here now, you can't get a decent job unless you've got an education. Like I say, I never worked at a real paying job. Just a restaurant at minimum wage and you don't pay in that much. So there's nothing money wise that I could do to help her. Maybe give her a little gas money or something like that.

Candy describes being pushed into college classes by her supervisor,

I started work at Head Start as a teacher's aide. I pretty much walked in cold and said here I am. I loved it. My Director came in after a year and said 'How do you like what I did to you?' I'm thinking, what did you do to me? She said, 'I signed you up for CDA (Child Development Associate) classes.' I said, 'What in the world is CDA classes?' I thought it was some kind of anger management. It was extremely hard. A classroom opened up and my director said, 'we want you to take this classroom but you will need to start taking classes'. I said 'Fine, sign me up.' They did finance it to a certain degree. Some was out of pocket. That got me started.

while her mother explains that she expected her children to graduate from high school, but did not provide them with any information regarding schooling or college. She said,

I was like my mother I guess. I just didn't tell em. They studied. They all graduated except the younger one, and he went in the army so they made him do his GED (graduate high school equivalency diploma) while he was in there. So they all got their high school education.

Alternative Majors and Attitudes of Subjects

Many students come to the Child Development and Early Childhood Education major after switching from another major. Interestingly, Brittany and Jessica had interests in business. Brittany said,

When I was a teenager and was working, I really enjoyed working with the public, and I was good with money. I was always good with finances and stuff. I looked into a little bit of business and management...

Furthermore, Jessica noted:

There was three [occupations considered]. I had my eighth grade paper that I can still remember was a lawyer, a teacher, and a beautician. I changed at Eastern. I was a Business Office Systems of something. I love business. I loved accounting and things like that but so much right now you can't really....unless you have a four year degree with business.

Later in the interview when asking about barriers to majors, Jessica commented,

As far as a business major, this is just a personal thing. If I want to be successful, I don't think a small town would have been for a business major to be able to expand.

This comment reveals that although Jessica has interests in other occupations, she began to consider which career paths would have the most potential for her in her small community where she planned to stay. Candy interpreted the question differently as she responded,

Social work if I got a Master's. I may do it in Social Work. Psychology I love. I love what makes people tick. Anything in families especially. What makes families tick.

She is interested in learning what causes families and individuals to do what they do, which is at the center of the Ecological Systems Theory. On another level, it seems that her chosen occupation and field of study helps her to understand her own childhood and drives her to assist others. Tracy explains how her dreams changed after coming to college out of high school:

When I first came to college in 2003 right out of high school, I thought I want to do journalism and broadcasting and just those big dreams. Maybe be a movie director someday. After I had my little dream, I decided -no this isn't for me anymore. I'm older and I was actually into the cutting, taping and splicing. Everything went digital and I'm like, 'forget it.' Then I just quit. It's just like I left. I had my own kids and I thought, 'I'm pretty good at this.' I know that sounds conceited, but I thought I did a really good job with my first one except for a few things that I learned later on and felt horribly guilty about. I helped out with Head Start when she started, and I guess that's really were it hit me. I thought, 'I really like this.' 'I really enjoy this.' It wasn't like, 'oh it's just an easy job.' It was like, 'these kids really need help.' 'They need someone to focus on what they're doing and how they're feeling.' I saw a lot of people who did do that. They were just like-it was just like a job. It was just get done with the day. I would see those kids, and I would just go over to the ones you could tell needed an extra hug or needed something and talk to em. It made the whole difference in my career choice.

Later in the conversation, Tracy added;

Honestly it was kind of like...well English teacher. I did think about that for a little while. I still have that in my mind because I really enjoy English. I really enjoy literature and writing. I know if anyone reads my papers now its like, 'you don't seem like you really enjoy English.' I'm like, 'it's because I've got two kids pulling at me, and I've got to write something down.' I really did, I always

enjoyed English. Also I'm thinking about jobs where I live too, because I don't plan on moving anytime soon.

Both of these comments reveal that Tracy used her personal experience with her children, her desire to make a difference with children, and the idea that she could remain in her home community with a position in Child Development to finally choose that career path. Cindy revealed how she relates school, teaching, and counseling to being able to help others and give to others. She said,

Maybe a counselor. A school counselor or something, but it's always related back to school. I have a friend who's a school counselor and you know I just like helping other people. My husband is a minister and we teach a Sunday school class. I just like the feeling that it gives you inside to be able to give to others.

Community, State, and Federal Government and Early Childhood Education

In the Ecological Systems Model by Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979, 1986, 1989), the larger society impacts the child, and the child also has the ability to impact those larger systems over time. Understanding how the local community, state, and federal initiatives for college and early childhood education impact students is important. It can impact what they know about college grants, federal programs such as Head Start, and state initiatives such as Upward Bound. Darla explains that it can be difficult to learn about financial aid availability and how to fill out financial aid forms. She said,

A lot of kids don't understand that [filling out forms for financial aid]. They should go back and make sure a lot of these kids understand that. I think there should be simpler steps. I don't know how you word it. I know Trish understood what they were telling her, but there's some kids that really don't. They need to make it a little bit easier.

Cindy views her community as being supportive of federal programs such as Head Start, which assists disadvantaged children to not fall behind before they enter public school.

She also sees her important role in assisting early brain development and holistic development. Cindy explains,

I think it's a very high priority [in the community]. We have a lot of support systems from the community. Yea, it's a wonderful program [Head Start]. Our goal here in the county is for every child, every day to be taught and be college ready. That is something that educators from preschool to high school have to get on board. You know, because it starts with me. Some people maybe do not see that. One of the educators at the high school, she's a teacher on their educational team and she's like, 'you're an educator.' She knows it starts here. I think we all have to be on board. It's like every child, every day, every hour to me. I think we have to look at every moment as an opportunity to teach. I think our community is on board with that.

Cindy's mother explains how the local community needs to emphasize the importance of continuing higher education,

I know when I went to school or even when my kids went to school, I'm not sure they were made aware of a lot of grants and stuff that would have helped them to go on to college. I would have been valedictorian if I hadn't graduated at the half. Nobody come in and told you 'this is the avenue you can go.' Back then college just wasn't a thing that people even thought of. I don't know that they done that much when my children went to school to make it known. I didn't know when they went that there was grants out there or nothing to push em. I think it's important. I think they (community) should view it (early childhood experiences) as important. My little community is more of aI wouldn't want my community to hear this. A lot of em is not as well educated and they don't understand and a lot of em don't care about the education part of it.

Brittany felt the need to justify that her work with young children is truly education by stating,

A lot of people think we're babysitters. That's the biggest problem. I have to claim that now we actually have lesson plans. We have a curriculum that we follow. It's not just coming in and eat and sleep and change diapers....I think we're pretty supported (by community leaders). Overall I think so.

and her mother seems to explain that the community often does not understand the importance of early childhood education. She said,

Yes really I do [hear early childhood education being discussed]. Some people don't understand it and some people have really high remarks about it. Most of the people that don't understand it don't have young children.

Jessica echoed the same idea by stating:

Because of a small town, if your child is slow to speak, 'oh they'll outgrow it.' It's just something they're accustomed to. They don't really understand (I feel) the importance. It's just, 'oh well his little brother did it.' 'He'll grow out of it, he'll be fine.' But little Johnny may not grow out of it. He may need help.

Candy and her mother, Ann, are beginning to see a cultural shift in their community and in the thinking about college. Candy has observed more community outreach for young people and noted,

We're beginning to. This summer we went up into town and recruited a little bit, and we're actually reaching that area. They opened a Head Start class in the elementary school a couple of years ago actually. It's beginning to happen. I see grandparents raising kids a lot. Sometimes I think they can and sometimes I think they need to back off and let the children learn to raise them. I know we reach out and do community work. Extension centers and health agencies work with us, and it's getting there. I see a lot of tourism and commerce being promoted, but I don't see a lot of early childhood. I don't think that's put to the importance it should be. Send people like me (not that I want to go or that I'm volunteering). We still have young people out there, and that's in the back of my mind too that I'm working on. We have a gap of 16-17-18 year olds who don't have clue what they want to do after school. They are supposed to leave one building in education and the next day they're supposed to be grown up knowing what they want to do. Many of them around my community don't know about the options. They don't even know how to fill out a FASFA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Even though people work with them and they're still confused. I do work with that because I just sat down with my own kids and figure out how to do it. Now I do other people. Just say hey here's what we do, here's where I was, here's the options. Have job fairs. We have job fairs in the school. Sometimes we have classes geared toward that. We're beginning to, I like that.

Her mother has observed the importance of early exposure to college and early experience in teaching others. Ann reported,

That ought to be the top list. Oh yea, that's the main thing to get an education. My husband always was for that too. He was always wanting the kids to get an education. That's why it was so important for them to go to school instead of playing hooky. They might do this now, I don't know if they do or not. Now,

when Cindy's kids were going to high school, they belonged to Upward Bound. They got to go to college in the summer time and it counted as a college credit. I think that influenced em I think the Upward Bound program is the best the government could have to influence kids to go on. And tutor classes. Like her youngest son tutored people when he was in high school. Like he was in the 9th grade and he tutored someone in the 12th grade for math. It just happened he was good at it and he knew it. He got paid a little bit. That influenced him and of course when you're teaching someone, well you learn too. So I think it's it's a great influence-that Upward Bound. That is the best thing they ever had. It was for poor and rich kids. It wasn't just for certain ones. I think a lot more kids would go and get an education and do better in eastern Kentucky if they did have more programs like that. I honestly do.

Child Care Programs vs. Keeping Children at Home

Framing the interview questions within the context of the Ecological Systems theory allowed for probing inquiry outside of the mothers' and students' immediate community. By asking why they think the United States sends young children to Child Development programs rather than keeping them at home as other cultures do, it was possible to explore how they think the society has changed over time. Both mothers and the students realize that in the current society, both parents need to work. In addition, they explain a shift in the importance placed on Early Childhood Education. For some of the interviewees, they explain a change in the way parents view their own abilities to teach their children. Tracy said,

A lot of people would like their children to socialize with other children. Kind of get that aspect of development. Some people, just because they don't really want em at home unfortunately. Some people, because they have to work and have no other choice. In the economy, they just kind of have to deal with it.

And Tracy's mother also stated:

Cause women's working now. There's more opportunities for women now... but in some cases these younger girls has the babies, and they just don't want to deal with em through the day. There's several different reasons. One is like the working mom and the working dad, they want em' to learn.

Cindy emphasizes the importance of early education by noting,

I think that people see the importance. I think that they know that they're going to get a good quality education when they're with us. We have a really strong program. We have really good liaisons. We have people that see it. They see the need. I think it's partially because of something that we've done. That we've shown them that we are a safe place. They are going to get a good education. Even with kindergarten, they can see and tell who has not been to preschool and who has been to preschool.

And Cindy's mother mirrors that response by explaining;

They don't want their children to be behind. Most of the ones, they want their children to get in there and get their education. Like I said, there are these that just push em' off for babysitting.

Brittany focused on the change in the stress level of parents and the busy lives they lead.

Brittany said,

Most people have to have two parents working. Then sometimes, I hate to say it but they love their children but it's a relief not to have em. I hate to say that but sometimes they get frustrated when you have to say they can't come. Because they just really want a break from em. Not all the time, but you do have that family that just is like 'I wish you were open longer.'

While Brittany's mother focuses on the cultural change in economics;

Because they actually have to work. They can't afford to sit home and do it on their own, so they need that. It's hard to find good people.

Jessica explains that in order for families to survive, they need to send their children to programs for Early Childhood Education. She relayed,

Busy. I think it's kind of both people have to survive. They have to work. They have to send their kids off. That's one way, but I've also heard it's a babysitter too. It's not kind of the tradition that it used to be (staying home). I think the majority of it too has to do with work for our area.

Candy and her mother express the belief that parenting skills are being lost and that parents are looking for the assistance of others. Candy states:

They don't feel like they can do it. I'm surprised- they're overwhelmed. You have a baby and you don't get a manual with it. We've lost these skills cause you

don't have mom and grandparents there. We've lost them a couple of generations ago when my mom went out into the work force.

Candy's mother added similar thoughts;

Cause they don't want to fool with em. They don't want to take time with em . They'd rather get somebody else to do it. They rather get somebody that knows how to do it.

Eastern Kentucky University

While interviewing the first generation rural Appalachian female students, some specific information emerged about the reasons why the students chose Eastern Kentucky University. Tracy explained that familiarity with the campus was important in her college decision as well as the decision to stay in her home community. She said,

Before anything, I got into the Upward Bound program. Being here on this campus, it kind of became like a home. So I thought, 'I'm not going anywhere but EKU because I like it...I know this place, I know what it's like doing everything in Upward Bound² and I wonder what it's like doing it for real.' There never was really any other choices.I love that program. I got so many opportunities that I never thought I would get. It made me see the world in a completely different way. That's kind of where I knew I had a choice. I could live this way or I could live that way. It made me decide to stay [in the community].

Brittany had friends attending Eastern Kentucky University and began taking classes through extended campus programs. It allowed her to maintain a connection with her home community in order to meet family obligations. Brittany stated,

Other people were going here, and I liked that I could take a lot of my classes in Danville and that helped with the commute. With Amy, she was in kindergarten or first grade when I started, so it helped a lot while she was little. I didn't want to be away from her a whole lot. I think it helped a whole lot (extended campuses) because some just don't want to move away and that's really close and that's available to em. They're really nice over there.

Jessica explained the influence of a teacher that was an alum;

² Funded by the US Department of Education. At EKU, the program assists 9th-12th graders wanting to attend and afford college.

They offered off campus classes. She [teacher] was determined that I was going to Eastern cause that's where she graduated from.

Future Plans

By asking about the students' future plans, emerging ideas about their professionalism, their desire to take education to the next level, and their level of motivation were explored. Tracy explained her desire to give back to her community and to stay in her community. Tracy explained,

I would love to be able at first to maybe get a job with Head Start if one is available. Just to test the waters you know. Kind of see where that leads me. If not, I'm going to apply for a job with the Health Department. The HANDS (Health Access Nurturing Development Services) program and things like that. Things that have been influential in my life and things I would like to be a part of. Kind of give back I guess... I kind of left the window open for me so I can find a job in my community. One that's available and one that will fit me. What I would really like to do is evaluate daycares.

Cindy's mother explains how she encouraged her to stay in her Head Start position in order to receive the retirement. Virginia also realizes that her daughter needs to complete her degree even if she does retire. Virginia can envision other possibilities in education with the four year degree. She said,

Well, I want her to get her four year degree. She's got her two year degree, and I think she's pretty close to her four year. I can't really see her totally retiring at her age. I think maybe she'll take a little bit less time in it, but I don't see her doing away with it. She may go to subbing if she gets her four year degree, which she can do that in any of the classes. Yea, I want to see her get her four year degree. I mean she's close to it. I don't want her not to. I've even encouraged her to even if she had to pay for some of the classes to try to get it sooner. It would pay her in the long run. She never was one to cry on your shoulder much. You never really know any problems with her or anything. If she ever mentioned anything, I would say, 'Now, Cindy you've got this many years in and your school is a good job. And it's a good retirement and you can't afford to lose that.' Yeah, I encouraged her to stay with the school. That's where she needs to be. She's done got almost her retirement in and that's something.

Brittany expressed a desire to go further with her education, but she felt financially unable to do so currently.

I want to get it done. I'm tired of dragging it on. I would like to be able to stop and just finish it all up but financially I can't. Because like I said before, my husband's income kinda varies from week to week. So that would kind of be an issue. After my bachelors, I don't see myself stopping, but I would at least like to have my bachelors. I don't know if I want a teaching certificate or the masters or I don't know after that. I probably don't see myself quitting. You think, well I'm there so I can go ahead and go a little farther. Just see how much farther I can go.

Jessica and her mother voiced apprehension but hope that she could find a position in Child Development. Jessica said,

I hope to be using my degree. I would like to keep advancing. That's always been...from my past history I've never been satisfied to stay I'll say low totem pole. I've always tried to excel and continue.

Similarly, her mother contributed,

I hope she finds a job. I told her I wanted her to go on the school and get an education cause I didn't get a chance to and if she had a chance to, go for it.

Candy was interested in completing a Master's degree and is beginning to realize that maintaining her teaching certificate involves continuing her classwork at college;

I'm not sure. I'll have to think about it and pray about it and I like that. I'll probably have to work toward my Master's just to keep my teaching certification, which would be fine. I'd like to work there a couple of more years. I'll have to think about it.

Staying in Home Community

Many rural Appalachian students desire to stay in their home community or to return to their home community. A sense of security and the close proximity of family relate to this decision. It also allows the students to meet family obligations while pursuing a career. Tracy is willing to travel to surrounding counties but made it clear that she would like to stay in her home county. She explained,

Student Tracy (Lee Co.): I'm willing to travel. I just don't know about traveling this far. A lot of people have jobs like in the HANDS program where they travel to surrounding counties. I'd be more than willing to do things like that. I'll travel to a certain extent. ... I don't think we're going to move because he's very secure in his job right now. Just together thinking about it, it would be kind of a dumb move on our part. Just on a whim that I find a better job. Right now we're secure, so first off we'll just try staying in Lee County.

Virginia explains that Lincoln County is what she knows and considers it home;

I live right behind where I grew up. My mom still lives right in front of me. I didn't always, but after my husband died, I bought a trailer and put it behind my mom. I wished I never done it, but I did. Not for her, but I'm remarried, and she was not too happy about me remarrying. She thought I ought to die all by myself at 46. Home is where my parents was and my brothers [never thought about moving to another state].

Brittany and her mother both explain how their home community offers privacy and familiarity. They said,

I lived in Atlanta, Georgia when we were little. I don't remember a whole lot of it, but no [never thought of living in another state]. It's private [Lincoln County]. There's frustrating things about it. The education system is probably the most frustrating thing, but my family is there.

I was never one that wanted to leave home. Actually, I have lived out of state. I lived out of state about 4 years. Georgia. got home sick. I lived there before Brittany started school, and I wanted her to have a school that I knew the teachers and the teachers would know each student instead of being a really big place.

Jessica and her mother express that family roots and structure are important in the decision to stay in the home county. Jessica stated,

I would like to [stay in Casey Co.]. I'll do what I have to take care of my family, but I don't want to have to drive two hours each way back and forth to work. It would kind of defeat the purpose of the family structure and seeing them at home.

Furthermore, her mother added;

Right now, she's got their house and stuff and would hate to move to another county to find a job. If she can get through this, I think she can find something. If she has to drive to another county Stanford or Danville. It's not like moving to Lexington or Georgetown.

Generational Changes

During the interviews, a cultural shift was noted. Over time, plans for marriage are being delayed until later in life or eliminated. For the mothers of the students, early marriage and family plans were still common. Brittany and her mother both became mothers as teenagers. However, Brittany was able to complete high school by taking her daughter to the school with her. Regarding why her mother quit school, Brittany relayed;

Because I came along. My mom got her GED when she was-goodness... I don't know, she was maybe thirties or something. Late twenties or early thirties. My dad received his while he was in jail. So he used his time wisely there. When my mom lost her job at the cafeteria, she did go back and get a two year degree in business and management. It's just there's not a whole lot available.

Candy noted that her mother quit school,

To get married. I said, 'couldn't you have hung on?' That was very much the standard of the day. It wasn't a put down. She was very street smart, and my father was highly intelligent.She's not really even a reader. She loves people and she's street smart, but book smart is not her thing.

Darla, Tracy's mother, explained,

Tracy's Mom Darla (Lee Co.): It was push you through high school, and you do what you want to then....I was 16 when I quit school. The biggest mistake I ever made. I went back 15 years later and tried and failed it (Graduate Equivalency Diploma) by 6 points and never went back.

Cindy's mother, Virginia, discussed finishing high school early to get married and then quickly finding work:

I got married in August before my senior year and I graduated at the half. I had enough credits to graduate to the half. Well, I graduated with my class but in December I was finished with school so I went to work in the factory as quick as I got done.

Life Satisfaction

As for what makes life satisfying, both students and their mothers expressed the importance of family life. Finding contentment with everyday life also emerged during

the interviews. Being useful in life and learning from each generation also emerged.

Trish said,

My family. My husband and my kids. We're pretty balanced. We've learned from our parents mistakes I guess you could say. We focus a lot on our kids. Every decision we make surrounds them.

Cindy describes her role as a pastor's wife by explaining;

The most satisfying thing is my relationship with Jesus Christ. He's the most important thing to me. I feel that everything falls into place because I put him first. Our church is in Green River. A Pentecostal church. It's about a minute from our home. I've went there thirty some years of my life. We were youth pastors for a short time at a couple of different churches, but there's something about your home church. I've got a lot of anxiety about things that could happen in the near future. It's almost like everybody goes there and nobody leaves. If you do leave, its like, 'What are you leaving for?' Actually my great grandmother was a charter member of the church so it's from generation to generation.

Virginia displayed a zest for life and a desire to never stop finding ways to contribute to the world. She teared up as she discussed the loss of her husband and Cindy's father.

After re-marrying, she is once again re-defining her life and struggling to find who she is as a woman and how she can break the role of stay at home wife. Virginia explained,

Right now my life is really different. I'm trying to get to the point where I am satisfied. I'm not satisfied with what I'm doing. I like to be active. I like to be busy.... It's in a change (her life). After 40 years of working. Getting up and going to work and coming home. That's just a pattern you get into. Right now my most dissatisfying thing is having to keep food on the table cooked and dishes washed. I don't like that. I'm not used to that. I'm looking into some stuff that I will enjoy doing. I'm thinking about volunteering at the hospital maybe. I'm really thinking seriously...I've got to check into it to make sure I'm not doing anything.....but I'd like to go back to subbing. Do it maybe a couple or three days a week. Now you have to take a test and pass the test. I'm scared I won't be able to pass the test but you never know till you try. I'll probably get around to doing it.

Phyllis expresses pride and concern that her granddaughter is considering leaving the community for college;

It would have to be Brittany's daughter. I am so proud of her. She's very intelligent. I mean, her and her mom are so much alike....I feel sorry for Brittany when she goes to college because she's the type that wants to go to an out of state college. Brittany is going to be lost.

Furthermore, Jessica and her mother are pleased that the children are content and happy;

Seeing my children happy and content because before I started with my classes and things [it gets a little hectic] they were never on a schedule. Zach, he did have problems with attachment issues. I can see why now. We're on a schedule, and they're happy. They're content. Good to go.

Ginger also explains that being able to provide for her grandchildren is satisfying by saying,

Just being able to do what I need to do and see my grandkids and my daughter as often as I can. I don't see her that much because when she gets out of school out there, Zack runs cross country track and she goes with him to track meetings. By that time, it's time to get home to get a bath and get something to eat and go to bed. So I don't see them that much. They're my life really. I put them I guess you'd say first because there's stuff I like to make certain they have.

Ann describes how accumulating physical objects does not create contentment. Ann relayed,

Watching my grandkids and great grandkids grow up. I now I'll never see my great grandkids grow up. I'm 73 and I'll never see them grow up. Who knows-I know people who live to be a 100. I told em, 'I want to enjoy the moment-I want to enjoy them while they're here.' I just enjoy my life now. I don't want to get married. I don't want to do none of that stuff. I'm happy the way I am. I'm contented.

Eco-Map

The eco-map concept emerged from the field of social work as a method to describe a family's strengths and resources. As McCormick et. al (2008) describes, the eco-map is a graphic representation of a person's linkages to the supports in the larger social system. It utilizes Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory model to demonstrate the interconnections within a social system and identify strengths of relationships. Thicker lines represent stronger or more powerful relationships, and a

dashed line represents a tenuous or weaker relationship. Arrows are drawn to show the direction of supports and resources, which can be one way or go both directions. After reviewing the findings, the eco-map representing first generation rural Appalachian female students is represented in Figure 4.1:

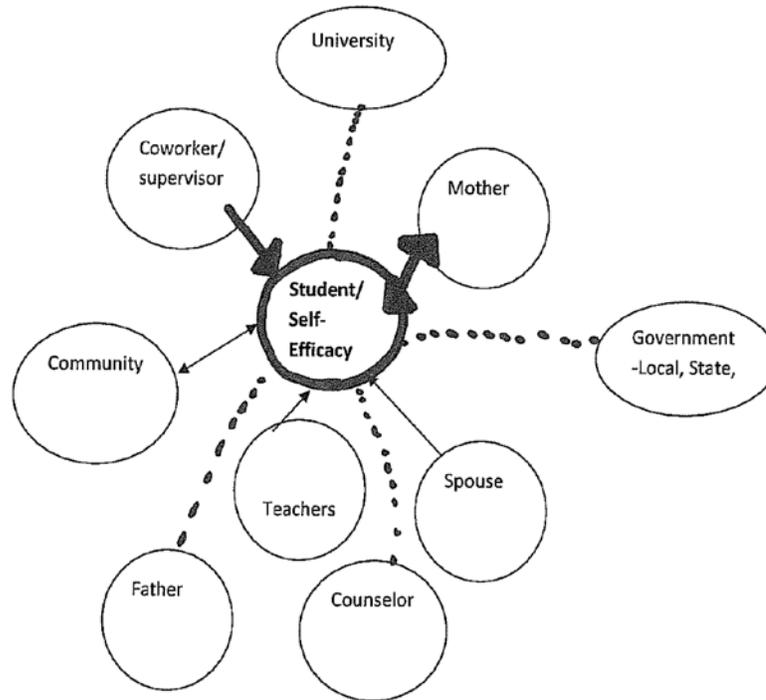


Figure 4.1: Eco-Map of Findings

In the model, mothers and first generation rural Appalachian females have the strongest relationship, and each strongly influences the other. The students themselves have a strong self-efficacy to complete what they have started once they have been able to have small successes. Co-workers and supervisors provided the students with support, encouragement and information regarding college and positions in Child Development and Early Childhood Education. Teachers’ influenced the first generation rural Appalachian female students and their mothers positively and negatively. They provided

a professional model, offered the opportunity for small successes, and provided encouragement. Students and their mothers also had negative experiences with teachers early in life that changed their self-efficacy and attitudes about going to school. Counselors and government programs generally were weak relationships, but were stronger supports for the youngest student interviewed and for the children of the students. This could possibly represent a larger social change as more research and attention is given to the importance of early support for college success and knowing the resources available to pay for college. Fathers provided little or insignificant encouragement for their daughters, but provided little or no information regarding college. Spouses provided encouragement to persevere with their college major and future goals when the students had moments of doubt. Alumni of Eastern Kentucky University and the Upward Bound program encourage a path towards college for high school students and provided students with familiarity of the environment and information about what to expect at college. Community ties influenced students to want to remain in the environment, which influenced the choice of college major.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Once all participants had been contacted and interview appointments were arranged, it was discovered that the first generation rural Appalachian females majoring in early childhood education were non-traditional students. In addition, all of the student participants had children of their own. As it became apparent that many participants were working during the day and were located off campus, flexibility with interview location was necessary. All of the mothers and daughters live in the same counties even though they have their own families, with the exception of Ann and Candy. Ann moved from the county when her husband died, and she was looking for new opportunities. Students were more open and forthcoming regarding family issues and dynamics than their mothers. Prior relationships with students may have contributed to this observation, in that the students were more comfortable speaking about personal issues. It often seemed that mothers remembered early family events in a much more positive light.

Daughters Influence on Mothers

All student participants were considered first generation at the time they began their college coursework. For two of the participants, their mothers were influenced by the successes of their daughters. Phyllis [Brittany's mother] stated:

She's more of a role model to me than I am to her.....You know, I seen her [Brittany] doing it. She worked, she took care of her child, and she had a home. I watched her do it and I thought if she can do it, surely I can.

After completing her GED in 1992, Phyllis began taking college classes over a decade later as she began to see her daughter's success. In the last year, she completed an Associate of Business and Management degree from a private business college. Phyllis's

daughter-in-law went to the same business college and Phyllis was able to obtain information about the classes and enrollment from her daughter-in-law. Brittany said of her mother's return to college, "She was kinda second guessing herself and I said you just got to stay focused." For Virginia [Cindy's mother], she obtained a teacher aide position in the school system after her daughter was already teaching and taking classes. When she worked at a factory, she took a couple of computer classes, but became interested in taking classes for her Child Development Associate degree. Virginia noted:

I had heard her [Cindy] and knowed what it was all about. I guess she influenced me to the point I seen how she done and how she liked it. Me and her took our CDA credentials together, and I think I outscored her. I enjoyed that.

Increasing the standards for employment with Head Start and the increasing state and federal standards in Early Childhood Education was one of the driving forces that motivated these women to begin college. Students may have registered for classes in order to keep their current positions at work and to meet requirements, but they continue beyond the requirements to meet their motivations and due to their self-efficacy. From the literature review, it was expected that mothers influence their daughter's career choice. However, in this study influence also went from the daughters to the mothers. The Eco-Map of the findings represented a two way arrow of influence from mothers to daughters and daughters to mothers to represent this. It is possible that first generation rural Appalachian female students' mothers cannot help their daughters with a choice of major or offer information about college since they have not had the college experience. The source of knowledge for the mothers comes from the experiences of their daughters and their educational experiences.

Influence of Employer and Co-Workers

For three of the students interviewed, being employed by Head Start played a large role in their decision to major in Child Development and continue their college studies. Once employed by Head Start, requirements of the program regarding teacher qualifications changed to improve quality of programs and teachers which prompted enrollment in a Child Development Associate credential program. The requirement to take classes was the impetus to enroll in college for all three of the students. After receiving success with the Child Development Associate credential, all three students enrolled in the two year Associate program and completed it. One completed the four year degree shortly after the interview, and two are still in the process. Head Start pays for one class each semester, and the three students attend classes around their full-time work, which can extend the time to complete college work. Based on the interviews, all three students seem to have developed a level of self-belief and self-efficacy from small successes that led them to seek other successes. Cindy was encouraged by a friend that worked for Head Start, Candy was encouraged by her supervisor at Head Start, and Brittany discovered the program when her daughter was a participant. Candy stated, "I could go somewhere else and work, but I love Head Start and it fits my calling in life." As Candy explained how she began taking classes, she added, "They came to me two years ago and said if you finish your degree we will pay for it...I figure in the long run it will be worth it and will be more security for us. I like to finish what I start."

It is significant that three of the five students interviewed were driven to higher education by requirements and increasing standards for Head Start and in the profession. For Early Childhood Education and other occupations, it may be important to ask what

can be done in other programs to work with others and motivate them to begin training and move beyond their comfort zones. In this time of a significant federal debt and the sequestration of services, it is important to consider how the choice of a Child Development or Early Childhood Education major may be affected. If funding to programs such as Head Start gets cut, this could affect motivation to attend college and the economic incentives to do so. Over time, it can affect the quality of early childhood programs and providers.

Future Plans of Students' Children

As all of the students interviewed were non-traditional and had children of their own, they described their concerns for and thoughts about their children's futures.

Brittany said of her daughter,

She has to [go to college]. My husband, her dad, does drywall which is very physical. He's 34 and he's wore out all the time. He's like, 'if you don't want to look like your dad go to college.' He's just exhausted. It's hard work.... She's a junior, so the only path I want her to stay on is not leave Kentucky. That's the only thing I want and I don't think I'm going to get it. I want her to get an education. I can handle in Kentucky, but she wants to go to Chicago and we're from a small town, a small neighborhood. I just think it would be a culture shock. Not a culture shock, it's just so much different than here. I don't know. I want her to get her basic stuff here and then maybe transfer. We'll see.

Brittany gave birth at 14 and is very close to her daughter. Through her statement, Brittany was clear that she did not want her daughter to be far away. The fact that she mentions a culture shock is significant to understanding her thoughts. Candy's daughter made a career change from working for a local television station to teaching. Candy described her daughter's career change to teaching as Candy was completing her own teaching degree,

The daughter that went to Asbury and got a media degree and worked a short time and then she came back here and got a teaching degree. She teaches second grade

now in Indianapolis. They moved about six months ago. She was in Richmond teaching.

When asking Tracy what she tells her children about education, she replied:

I wish my little girl was here to answer that for you. I'm constantly saying, 'Mommy went back to school and I don't want you to have to wait.' 'I want you to go through.' 'I want you to get it done because it does make it more difficult.' 'Not that it's impossible.' This is a big example that I wanted to set for my kids. No matter what decisions you make, it's not impossible to go back and finish school. I was like, 'It's a lot easier if you just go straight through.' My little girl, there's no doubt in her mind right now that she's going to college. I talk to her like, 'when you have kids.' And say things like that. She's like, 'I'm not having kids ever.' I was like, 'we'll talk about that later.' I was like, 'I'm glad you're focused on getting through school.' She's eight. I don't push her. I hope I don't push her. She might give you a different story. I just try to let both of them know that they're extremely smart. They're extremely intelligent. They are a lot smarter than me. And that they can do anything. We call our little boy our little scientist, which is totally not my area. Our little girl is our little artist. They picked it. It's like they just started doing stuff, and we kind of helped them along. Nurtured that along. Getting drawing pads for my little girl. Paint and whatever. A microscope for my little boy. He can tell you any fact about bugs, and he's five. He surprises me. Me and Tommy will look at each other and go, 'how does he know that?'

Tracy is also sending the message to her children that finishing school is important; however, she considers that to be completing college. She and her husband are focused on encouraging their interests without trying to push them in a certain direction. Cindy's daughter is following in her mother's footsteps in teaching Early Childhood Education and is following what has been modeled for her:

Actually, my daughter is getting her CDA right now. She's working up at the Board Office right now in the office part. She's 20. Getting ready to be 20. It's her goal to work in preschool. She loves it. Of course, right now she just has to do whatever is available for her to do. But she's doing office work up at the Board right now. They needed some extra help so she's filling in for there. She's applied for a position in Highland as an assistant. She definitely wants to follow in this footsteps. She's been subbing and loves it. The children love her and that's definitely what she wants to do... Sometimes even if she doesn't get a job subbing, she will come and volunteer in my classroom. She'll help out.

When asked if Cindy thought that she influenced her daughter's decision, she answered:

Even though I've not got rich, I've had a good life. And to be able to retire at my age in a few years, it has its benefits in those ways. You get a job. You put your 27 years in. She'd probably say, 'I'd like to move out.' But when it came right down to it....

Cindy views her years of working in Child Development as finding contentment. She has earned a living, she has been able to make a difference for children and her community, and she has been able to stay in her home community and meet her family obligations.

For the non-traditional students interviewed, it seems that they have high expectations for their children. These expectations are perhaps higher than the ones for themselves. In the same way that daughters influenced their mothers regarding education, two of the students interviewed have their own children following in their path of teaching. As the societal expectations regarding education have changed, the first generation rural Appalachian female students realize that college is the new high school. All of the students expected that their own children would attend college. Two of the students also feel the tension in realizing that their children have more options for education, but have the desire to keep them close in the home community. It is also clear that the students have more experiences and information regarding college to share with their own children. More information seems to be shared and discussed within their families.

Reasons for Selecting an Early Childhood Education Major

For first generation rural Appalachian female students majoring in Child Development and Early Childhood Education, they have been able to have some small successes in the field and in their education, which has encouraged them to take larger steps. Whether encouraged by co-workers or their employers, having someone to provide them some information about occupations and gently nudging them to take advantage of

opportunities seemed to influence their decisions. Experiences seemed to be the source of information for the students and the motivation to register for college. The students who viewed themselves as self-motivated and independent were more willing to step outside of traditional community and family norms. They also found comfort in the role of an early childhood educator, as it is a continuation of the student's experiences. It is a role that is familiar and the students have knowledge that they could be effective in that role.

From their mothers, the students observed self-reliance, self-efficacy, and hard work. They saw their mothers in positions which allowed them to work and still take care of their families. Many times, the students were present as their mothers were babysitting, working in a restaurant, or working in a factory. Students rarely if ever observed their fathers at work or in household domestic tasks. The message sent by their families regarding education was to go to college in order to have a better life than the parents did, to avoid physical labor, and that college would provide a career rather than a job. However, without career and guidance counseling or family discussions and information, first generation rural Appalachian female students have little to rely on other than observations and personal life experience. The lack of information provided within families to children was used as a source of control over them. Mothers developed as a source of support for the female students and as a model due to the absence of a father role model.

The students also express a desire to stay in their home community for the privacy and security, family support, and community relationships that are available to them. These students also have a motivation to succeed and choose to major in Child

Development and Early Childhood Education to fulfill a desire to make a difference and to give back to their communities. First generation rural Appalachian female students at Eastern Kentucky University develop an appreciation for the development of children that occurs in the first year of life and view themselves as an important part of shaping that future for the children in their communities. The appreciation and motivation to make a difference fills a need for personal growth in their lives.

The Influence of Mothers on Education Choices

Mothers of students majoring in Child Development and Early Childhood Education provide encouragement and support of their daughters' career choices by urging them to work hard and complete their education as well as to do what makes them happy. Mothers of the students received very little information regarding education and career choices beyond high school. They also received little information from their families in general. The mothers described how they were to obey their parents and not question them. They did observe the sex-role differences and division of labor in their families. The grandparents and parents of the students were traditional in keeping information and discussion between adults. However, mothers understood the importance of an education and described positive feelings regarding school and particular subjects. None of the mothers mentioned that they thought their daughters should be pursuing a different major at college, but did say that they wanted their daughters to stay nearby. From the findings, it was evident that the mothers of the students were influenced by their mothers as well.

Surprisingly, all of the mothers worked outside of the home at some point in the students' childhood. However, their positions were in predominantly female and low

paying positions such as school settings, restaurants, babysitting, cleaning, and factory work. Also, whether divorced, never married, or widowed, all but one of the mothers was single at the time of the interviews. The mothers of students revealed a strong work ethic and self-reliance. They understood the limitations of their rural Appalachian communities, but were also drawn to those communities by the close ties and friendships or the belief that their local communities were better places to raise children and learn practical skills. They used the skills that they had, described by one student as street smart rather than book smart, and took advantage of opportunities that became available to them where they were and based on what they were able to do with children. Self-reliance was also not viewed in terms of economics.

Mothers were aware of the larger shift in the values and ideas of the society over time in how they responded to women's roles and changes to families and college. Although they did not have many opportunities as women growing up or any substantial role models, from their observations of the society, they believe that women can achieve whatever they want to do. However, the mothers and the students use language that would seem traditionalist. Mothers and the students interviewed believe that it's alright for other women to hold the same positions as males, but view themselves as different. Having respect for the male figure in the household is a deeply entrenched community norm that causes tension with their need to be self-reliant and achieve. The mothers also realize that economics has forced a shift in both parents needing to work outside of the home. Although they recognize changes in the family structure and community, there is again a tension with their deeply entrenched desires for the Appalachian view of family and community to remain.

The College Major Decision–Making Process

Satisficing and Bounded Rationality

By choosing to major in Child Development and Early Childhood Education, the first generation rural Appalachian female students engage satisficing. According to Herbert Simon, satisficing is where people settle with a solution to a problem that is good enough for their purposes but could be optimized (Simon, 1957). Byron (2005) emphasizes that when making a choice and all of the alternatives are not available, the alternatives must be searched out. Searching the alternatives costs a person his resources, and a way is needed to end the search. To end the search, “Identify a threshold of expected utility that would be satisfactory, and choose the first alternative whose expected utility exceeds the threshold” (Byron, 2005, p. 312). First generation rural Appalachian female students are often unable to search out alternatives to what has been modeled for them, so the choice of a major in Child Development and Early Childhood Education satisfies their need to stay in their communities, use the experience and knowledge they have, and continue to meet the needs of their families. In some cases, they gave up their “dreams”. One additional need that is met is the need to make a difference. As Perun and Bielby (1981) found, women are faced with asynchronous cycles in that major events in the biological cycle, or childbearing, and the family cycle, marriage and childbearing that occur with important events in the work cycle. Satisficing by choosing a major in Child Development and Early Childhood Education can provide more options in meeting the obligations of all of these roles.

Bounded Rationality, a term also coined by Herbert Simon (1957), is the idea that when making decisions, the rationality of individuals is limited by their information, their

cognitive limitations, and the time given to make a decision. As Barros (2010) states, “The distance between rationality and behavior is bridged by the concept of decision”. The students make the decision of a choice of major with certain givens and economic factors in mind. These first generation rural Appalachian females do not want to leave their home community and rationally this major can provide them the opportunity to stay close to family. With economic support through state programs and federal initiatives for early childhood education, the students can receive scholarships and free tuition. After personal experiences at home and in the workplace with children, the students interviewed realized that they are good at working with them and want to continue their education in that direction. As part of this bounded rationality decision, students also have a need to make a difference and be good at something and feel that this need can be met through an early childhood education major.

Need Theory

Alderfer (1969) presented his ERG Theory of Motivation in the late sixties and attempted to improve on Maslow’s (1943) Hierarchy of Needs. Within the three levels of his theory: existence needs; relatedness needs; and growth needs, the different needs of individuals can be pursued simultaneously. Growth needs relate to internal self-esteem and the desire to be productive and make a difference. A theme throughout the interviews of students was a desire to make a difference. For the first generation rural Appalachian females interviewed, some voiced a desire to work in programs that they were once served and view that as a way to assist others. Two students expressed a desire to do better for the next generation as a result of their upbringing and the lessons learned from observing their parents. The students also have a need to feel that they are

good at what they do and want the respect of the families that they work with, their own families, and the community. There is also a motivation to not have to work as hard as their parents and to endure the same hardships.

Social Cognitive Learning Theory

Social Cognitive Learning Theory relates to why first generation rural Appalachian female students choose to major in Child Development and Early Childhood Education. Children imitate same sex models more often than opposite-sex models and see a division of labor (Albert & Porter, 1988; Basow & Howe, 1980; Perry, White, & Perry, 1984). Astin (1984) cites an article by Hackett and Betz (1981) that describes how women may lack strong expectations of their self-efficacy related to their career-related behaviors due to the socialization they received. Students who were interviewed described strong personal self-efficacy in persevering and completing tasks. Having a child themselves increased the self-efficacy that they could work successfully with other children, especially those with many needs. However, regarding their career expectations, their long term goals and visions were not clear or definitive. This could keep them from fully realizing their capabilities and talents in career pursuits. Huston (1983) states, “Parents treat boys and girls differently in ways that appear to have long-term implications for interests, skills, independence, achievement and interpersonal relationships in their children” (p.438). First generation rural Appalachian female students have experienced the reinforcement of role expectations and the types of work activities open to them. As they observe and formulate gender-differentiated expectations, they choose gender-differentiated career choices. For these students, this may have been exacerbated by the absence of a real father role model. The students major

in Child Development and Early Childhood Education since that is familiar to them and they are comfortable with their skills and abilities in this area.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and the Eco-Mapping process explain the relationships between a person or family and the larger society. Understanding the interrelationships reflects the dynamic nature of the family, community, and societal relationships (Garbarino, 1992; Swick & Williams, 2006). It can also be empowering to know one's supports, relationships, and strengths. The semi-structured interview questions were based on the Ecological Systems Theory in order to understand the first generation rural Appalachian students' and their mother's influences and supports during their childhoods as well as in the present. The findings reveal that these students need information about college and careers, which comes from outside their immediate family. This places a premium on programs such as Upward Bound and KEES that have the mission of providing support and assistance for success in college. However, encouragement from family and support is important, even though family members often have a limited knowledge of the major or what they are qualified to do. Since almost all of the students and mothers still live in the same county and the students will seek employment in that county, family and community ties are very important.

Implications for Policy and Future Research

The increasing emphasis on Child Development and Early Childhood Education in society is raising the standards for quality care among the youngest children. Programs, such as Head Start, are challenging their workforce to complete higher levels of education. This is raising awareness of early development and quality in order to meet he

rising demand for childcare. This has had a positive effect on first generation rural Appalachian female students at Eastern Kentucky University. Three of the students interviewed were impacted by the changes from the federal Head Start program, which encouraged these students to continue their educations and provided financial incentives for them. Universal preschool in Kentucky would create the need for additional qualified professionals, and continuing to raise incentives to complete a degree in the field and raising the level of professionalism for Child Development could push more of these students to choose the major. As students rationalize the decision to choose a major in Child Development and Early Childhood Education and want to return to positions in their home county, it would be important to understand what they may do when the job market in their community becomes saturated with qualified professionals and the positions are not available to them.

The first generation rural Appalachian female students were provided information about college from outside of their families. Support and information from supervisors, employers, and friends can be very important. It seems that guidance counseling and high school programs are beginning to focus more on how to prepare students for college, although it seems that more information is needed, particularly for financial aid. Students need more career counseling upon enrollment at college to assist them in realizing their skills and abilities. Introductory college preparatory programs, such as Upward Bound, can provide students that know very little about college majors with some knowledge and encouragement to be successful. It can be important to find out what other kinds of programs can be helpful in choosing a college or college major. More research needs to be done to discover how college professors can provide specific encouragement to first

generation rural Appalachian female students in order to provide them with small successes so that they feel self-efficacy and desire to achieve more. For the mothers that tried to go back to school and complete or continue their education and failed, it could be important to understand what programs and supports were needed and were not received.

Extended campus programs seem to be an important bridge in allowing the first generation rural Appalachian female students to meet their family obligations and to stay close to their home communities, while experiencing higher education. In this new era of online education, it could be beneficial to know how many of these students would take advantage of such programs if available. Some of these students had experiences with extended campus programs that gave them a sense of community with EKU. These programs have been cut or scaled back to balance the budget. It will be critical to assess whether this same sense of community can be generated via on-line courses. Students needing encouragement, experiences in the field of Child Development, and modeling may not be able to meet these needs through an online only education and may not stay with such a program. However, the online abilities to take them outside of their communities and to show them the worldwide availability of Child Development and Early Childhood Education occupations could create further reaching societal changes over time. These tradeoffs clearly need future research. Other future research should include quantitative studies with larger samples that may provide generalizations, as well as following women majoring in Child Development and Early Childhood Education over time, including throughout their careers. Finally, this sample is a selective one in that these Appalachian women have all accessed higher education. Studies could focus

on women with similar or lesser aspirations that have not experienced such educational success.

Concluding Thoughts

Early childhood education is what the students know well experientially. They were cared for by their mothers and now care for children of their own. Caring is what they know best and influences their choice of major. Early childhood education is also a rational choice for the students in the study and is something that they know about already. As a future hypothesis for study, it would be helpful to know how and why affluent girls from urban cities and students whose parents are professionals would choose early childhood education as a major. They do choose the major, but influences and motivations would seemingly be different. In addition, the ways in which encouragement and modeling are provided may also be different. Over time, it would be interesting to know if rural Appalachian first generation female students majoring in Early Childhood Education and their mothers will cling to conservatism or embrace the changes of the larger society.

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APPENDIX A
Research Questions

Demographic Questions

1. Tell me about your home community.
2. Describe what it was like growing up at your home.
3. Tell me about what comes to mind when you think about “family”.

Questions for first generation rural women

1. How would you describe the importance of children in your household growing up?
2. If you stayed at home as a child or if you participated in a childcare or preschool as a child, what do you remember about those experiences today?
3. How were your siblings’ experiences similar or different?
4. What type of work did your mother do when you were growing up?
5. If she participated in the labor market, how often did she take you along to her job?
6. Can you describe any memories you have of your parents discussing how to provide your daily care and how to also meet their work obligations?
7. Who has been an important influence in your life with regard to schooling and future plans?
8. Tell me about your educational experiences.
9. What did your family tell you about education?
10. What kind of a student are you?
11. Where did you gain information about college?
12. What made you decide to major in Child Development?
13. Did you consider alternative majors? If so, which ones?

14. Where did you get the information about those majors and careers?
15. What are the benefits to a Child Development major?
16. What are your career plans after graduation?
17. What barriers do you expect when pursuing an early childhood position or major?
18. What barriers did you perceive to other majors that you considered?
19. Does your family approve of your choice of major? If so, why? If not, why?
20. Describe your current relationship with your parents.
21. What are your beliefs about the role of women in society?
22. Do you think that local communities should view providing early education experiences as important?
23. What are important family traditions in your community?
24. How can state government and the federal government best assist students in making decisions about college and career?
25. All around the world, pre-school age children are cared for exclusively by their mothers and family members. Why do you think so many U.S. families in particular elect to turn their young children over to professionals instead of just raising them at home?
26. How do you think societal views regarding family and college have changed since you were a child?

Questions for Mothers

1. How would you describe the importance of children in your household growing up?

2. If you stayed at home as a child or if you participated in a childcare or preschool as a child, what do you remember about those experiences today?
3. How were your siblings' experiences similar or different?
4. What type of work did your mother do when you were growing up?
5. If she participated in the labor market, how often did she take you along to her job?
6. Can you describe any memories you have of your parents discussing how to provide your daily care and how to also meet their work obligations?
7. Who has been an important influence in your life with regard to schooling and future plans?
8. Tell me about your educational experiences.
9. What did your family tell you about education?
10. What kind of a student were you?
11. Where did you gain information about careers and college in order to assist your daughter in making decisions?
12. Describe your relationship with your parents.
13. What is your current job role?
14. What would you like your daughter to accomplish?
15. What did you tell your daughter about selecting a college and major?
16. Do you approve of her selected major?
17. What are your beliefs about the role of women in society?
18. Do you think that local communities should view providing early education experiences as important?

19. What are important family traditions in your community?
20. How can state government and the federal government best assist students in making decisions about college and career?
21. All around the world, pre-school age children are cared for exclusively by their mothers and family members. Why do you think so many U.S. families in particular elect to turn their young children over to professionals instead of just raising them at home?
22. How do you think societal views regarding family and college have changed since you were a child?

Follow-up Questions

1. Describe a typical day for you.
2. What do you find most satisfying about your life currently?
3. What obstacles do you foresee in meeting your current goals?
4. What do you see yourself doing in 5 or 10 years?

APPENDIX B
Research Consent

Consent to Participate in a Research Study Instructor Form
Reasons for Choosing Early Childhood Education as a Major

Why am I being asked to participate in this research?

You are being invited to take part in a research study about Choosing Early Childhood Education as a major. You are being invited to participate in this interview because you major in the field.

Who is doing the study?

The person in charge of this study is Lisa Gannoe, Assistant Professor and doctoral student at Eastern Kentucky University

What is the purpose of the study?

This is a study of first generation women's choice of an early childhood major at a rural Appalachian University. The purpose of this case study will be to discover and theorize from the data reasons why a small group of females in the Child and Family Studies program at a university serving rural Appalachian populations choose to major in early childhood education. Previous research shows that females historically have chosen to major in predominantly female fields (Austin, 1988). This study will seek an emerging theory about the reasons for these choices.

Where is the study going to take place and how long will it last?

You will be asked to participate in an interview between August 15th, 2012 and July 15th, 2013.

What will you be asked to do?

The researcher, Lisa Gannoe, will ask you questions regarding personal characteristics and your motivations pertaining to choosing a major in early childhood education.

Are there reasons why I should not take part in this study?

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may terminate your involvement at any time. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study. Additionally, personally identifiable information will be deleted from the field notes. Pseudonyms will be used for any reports resulting from this research.

What are the possible risks and discomforts?

The interview you will be participating in does not pose more than the minimal risks of everyday life.

Will I benefit from taking part in the study?

There is no guarantee that you will get any benefit from taking part in this study. Some students may have positive feelings about discussing their background and reasons for why they selected an early childhood education major.

Do I have to take part in this study?

If you decide to take part in the pilot study, you are volunteering to share your responses. You can stop at any time without negative consequences.

What will it cost to participate?

There are no costs involved with this study for participants.

Will I receive payment for participating?

There is no payment for taking part in this study.

Who will see the information?

Your information is part of a study about exploring the reasons and motivations of selecting a major. All results will be reported using pseudonyms for participants' names and at levels in which no individuals can be identified. All records will be maintained on a password protected computer and paper documents will be maintained in a locking file cabinet. Only the Principal Investigator, Faculty Advisor, and Dissertation Committee will have access to the data.

Can my taking part in the study end early?

You have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to participate. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop participating.

What if I have questions?

You may ask questions about the study now or later on as questions come to mind. You can contact Lisa Gannoe at 859-622-1168 or at lisa.gannoe@eku.edu.

What else do I need to know?

You will be told if any new information is discovered that may influence your willingness to continue with the study.

I have thoroughly read this document, understand its contents, have been given an opportunity to have my questions answered, and agree to participate in this research project.

Signature of person agreeing to participate in research study

Date

Printed name of study participant

Name of person providing information to subject

APPENDIX C

IRB Approval

NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL

Protocol Number: 13-004

Institutional Review Board IRB00002836, DHHS FWA00003332

Review Type: Full Expedited

Approval Type: New Extension of Time Revision Continuing Review

Principal Investigator: **Lisa Gannoe** Faculty Advisor: **Dr. Charles Hausman**

Project Title: Reason for Choosing an Early Childhood Education Major: An Exploration
of Women at a University

Serving Rural Appalachian Populations

Approval Date: **08-02-12** Expiration Date: **July 19, 2013**

Approved by: **Dr. Michael Ballard, IRB Member**

This document confirms that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved the above referenced research project as outlined in the application submitted for IRB review with an immediate effective date.

Principal Investigator Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to ensure that all investigators and staff associated with this study meet the training requirements for conducting research involving human subjects, follow the approved protocol, use only the approved forms, keep appropriate research records, and comply with applicable University policies and state and federal regulations.

Consent Forms: All subjects must receive a copy of the consent form as approved with the ECU IRB approval stamp. Copies of the signed consent forms must be kept on file unless a waiver has been granted by the IRB.

Adverse Events: Any adverse or unexpected events that occur in conjunction with this study must be reported to the IRB within ten calendar days of the occurrence.

Research Records: Accurate and detailed research records must be maintained for a minimum of three years following the completion of the research and are subject to audit.

Changes to Approved Research Protocol: If changes to the approved research protocol become necessary, a description of those changes must be submitted for IRB review and approval prior to implementation. Some changes may be approved by expedited review while others may require full IRB review. Changes include, but are not limited to, those involving study personnel, consent forms, subjects, and procedures.

Annual IRB Continuing Review: This approval is valid through the expiration date noted above and is subject to continuing IRB review on an annual basis for as long as the study is active. It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to submit the annual continuing review request and receive approval prior to the anniversary date of the approval. Continuing reviews may be used to continue a project for up to three years from the original approval date, after which time a new application must be filed for IRB review and approval.

Final Report: Within 30 days from the expiration of the project, a final report must be filed with the IRB. A copy of the research results or an abstract from a resulting publication or presentation must be attached. If copies of significant new findings are provided to the research subjects, a copy must be also be provided to the IRB with the final report.

Other Provisions of Approval, if applicable: None

Please contact Sponsored Programs at 859-622-3636 or send email to tiffany.hamblin@eku.edu or lisa.royalty@eku.edu with questions about this approval or reporting requirements.

APPENDIX D

Consent for Transcription

**Confidentiality Agreement
Transcription Services**

I, _____, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentation received from Lisa Gannoe related to her doctoral study: *Reasons for Choosing An Early Childhood Education Major: An Exploration of Women at a University Serving Rural Appalachian Populations*.
Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, or in any associated documents;
2. To not make copies of any audiotapes or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Lisa Gannoe;
3. To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession;
4. To return all audiotapes and study-related documents to Lisa Gannoe in a complete and timely manner.
5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed) _____

Transcriber's signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX E
Recruitment Script

OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A DOCTORAL THESIS STUDY

Reasons for Choosing An Early Childhood Education Major: An Exploration of Women at a University Serving Rural Appalachian Populations

This is a study of first generation women's choice of a Child Development major at a University serving rural Appalachian populations. The purpose of this case study will be to discover and theorize from the data reasons why a small group of women in the Child and Family Studies program at a university serving rural Appalachian populations choose to major in early childhood education. Previous research shows that females historically have chosen to major in predominantly female fields (Austin, 1988). This study will seek an emerging theory about the reasons for these choices.

You and your mother will be asked to participate in an interview between August 15th, 2012 and July 15, 2013. Interviews will last approximately one hour. The researcher, Lisa Gannoe, will ask you questions regarding personal characteristics and your motivations pertaining to choosing a major in early childhood education. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may terminate your involvement at any time. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study. Additionally, personally identifiable information will be deleted from the field notes.

VITA

LISA NEWTON GANNOE
Eastern Kentucky University
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EDUCATION

Eastern Kentucky University Graduate School
Ed. D. Program for Educational Leadership, completed 2013
M.A. Ed. Special Education Program, completed 2002
Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education Teacher Certificate Program, completed May 2001

University of Kentucky
B.S. in Family Studies, Minor in Anthropology, May 1992

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

Eastern Kentucky University, Assistant Professor of Child and Family Studies

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

Co-Presenter at March 2013 National Coalition for Campus Child Care Centers Conference in Williamsburg, VA: **Get Real! : How One Early Childhood Program Incorporates Real Life Experiences for the Pre-Service Educator**

Co-Presenter at March 2012 National Coalition of Campus Child Care Centers Conference in Austin, TX and Co-presenter at November 2011 National Association for the Education of Young Children Conference in Orlando, FL: **Higher Order Thinking (HOT): Taking Children to the Top!**

Participant at January 2012 Southern Early Childhood Association Conference in San Antonio, TX: **Leadership Summit**

Co-presenter at 2011 Kentucky Head Start Association conference in Louisville, KY: **Curriculum Development: Is It For Infants and Toddlers?**

Co-presenter at 2009 KAECE conference in Hopkinsville, KY and 2010 KAECE conference in Richmond, KY and National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers accepted for April 2010 in Orlando, FL: **Nature and Nurture: Teaching Children to Care for the Earth**

Co-presenter for Madison County Child Care Council, February 2011
HOT: Teaching Children Higher Order Thinking Skills

CREDENTIALS

Kentucky IECE teaching certificate Rank I, expires 2016
Kentucky Trainers Credential Level 5 Trainer, since October 2011
Kentucky Director's Credential, since January 2013