

**Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent:  
A Case Study Exploring Female Experience in a Vocational Education Training  
(VET) Initiative in Northern England**

**Sandra Parris**

Thesis submitted to the  
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education

Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

**Table of Contents**

ABSTRACT .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vii
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
Why this study... Why England.....	7
Research Rationale .....	9
Overview of the study .....	13
Unpacking Meaning: Vocational Education and ‘Bodily’ Experience.....	16
Research Questions .....	19
Organization of the thesis .....	20
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	23
Macro level: History and foundations of VET in England.....	24
Macro level: Policy trends in VET.....	34
Micro level: Gender and vocational education.....	41
Reflecting on the research literature .....	51
VET history, foundations and policy trends .....	51
The evolution (or is it descent?) of VET in England .....	54
Gender and VET .....	57
The gendered body: Intersecting feminist theory and research.....	59
The researcher’s perspective .....	61
Summary .....	63
CHAPTER 3 A FEMINIST GENEALOGY OF GENDERED BODILY EXPERIENCE: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .....	65
Defining and discussing gender .....	66
Foundational concepts .....	74
Genealogy .....	75
Gender .....	77
Body (and biopower) .....	78
Experience .....	79
Concepts at work: Macro and micro level issues and interrelationships .....	81
Summary .....	86
CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY: A CASE STUDY.....	87
Case study as methodology .....	88
Case study as method .....	91
Setting the stage – The phenomena in context .....	92

Setting the stage: A brief word about research relationships and the role they can play .....	94
Setting the stage: Location .....	95
Data collection .....	97
Data collection methods: Site and participant selection .....	97
Procedure .....	99
Procedure: Document Review .....	100
Procedure: The girls .....	102
Procedure: Instructors/administrators and skilled trade professionals .....	103
Procedure: Who did I speak with and when? .....	104
Procedure: Sorting through the data .....	110
Procedure: Reflecting on the researcher experience .....	113
Addressing potential concerns .....	114
Ethics .....	118
Summary.....	119
CHAPTER 5 DATA ANALYSIS – TAKE I: CURRICULUM-AS-PLAN.....	121
Shaping a system .....	123
Curriculum-as-plan: Review of a selection of England’s vocational education-related curriculum policy documents, 2002-2011 .....	125
About the documents: a summary .....	126
About the documents: a closer look .....	133
Looking back: Things said – things left unsaid .....	140
Curriculum-as-plan/-lived and the rhetoric of ‘change’ .....	151
Gender talk .....	154
The gendered body in policy .....	160
Summary.....	166
CHAPTER 6 DATA ANALYSIS – TAKE II: CURRICULUM-AS-LIVED .....	168
Taster days: The setting, the sessions, the students .....	171
Individual and group narratives .....	179
Former students: ‘The opportunity drew me’ .....	183
On gender .....	184
On the trades .....	188
On making choices (educational and professional) .....	190
Conflicting message .....	193
Current students: Two buses, two skilled trade sessions and 28 girls .....	194
Year 9 Options: making ‘informed’ decisions .....	198
On the session .....	200
Where the boys’ aren’t (or are) .....	205
What they learned about non-traditional trades .....	207
Impact on their choices (educational and occupational) .....	209
Moment of displeasure and uneasiness .....	210
Former students: Tradeswomen in the making? .....	213
The importance of support .....	215
Stereotypes, overt and subtle discrimination .....	221

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Program/employer support .....	226
Academic vs. practical .....	232
Boys' jobs and girls' jobs .....	235
Words of encouragement and caution .....	236
The story that lies within: policy-related documents, interviews and the research questions .....	238
Summary.....	246
<b>CHAPTER 7 (IN)FORMING AND PERFORMING GENDER (AND NOT): A CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>248</b>
Summary of the study .....	248
Data analysis overview: Main points/themes .....	252
Session content and process .....	252
Gender(ed) talk and non-traditional vocational education and occupations.....	254
Feminist informed gaze: gender, biopower and gendered bodily performance.....	257
(In)forming the performance of gender.....	261
Performing gender (and not).....	266
This is not a conclusion: Final reflections.....	272
Policy, practice and research .....	272
Implications for research.....	277
REFERENCES .....	280
APPENDICES .....	296
Appendix I: Request for Research Participants (School Administration; College Administration; Students) .....	296
Appendix II: Request for Research Participants (College/Training Facility) .....	298
Appendix III: Request for Research Participants (Students) .....	300
Appendix IV: Request for Research Participants (Administrators/Instructors) .....	302
Appendix V: Request for Research Participants (Skilled Trade Professionals) .....	304
Appendix VI: Letter of Consent .....	306
Appendix VII: Interview Questions (Students) .....	308
Appendix VIII: Interview Questions (Administrators) .....	311
Appendix IX: Interview Questions (Instructors) .....	314
Appendix X: Interview Questions (Professionals) .....	317
Appendix XI: Overview of United Kingdom government produced documents on vocational education (2002-2011) .....	319

## ABSTRACT

This case study examined how a group of young girls at a secondary school in northern England made sense of their participation in a gender specific vocational education initiative designed to encourage female interest in skilled trade education and professions. The investigation consists of a qualitative case study that included ‘practical’ and historical components. On the practical side, the study looked at a gender specific initiative (girls only) aimed at Year 9 students (12-14 years old) at *Garden Road Community and Technology School*. The one-day sessions were held at local area colleges or vocational education and training (VET) training facilities and covered skilled trade fields that are traditionally male-dominated (e.g. automotive, construction and engineering). My methodology for the study consisted of two data sources, interviews and a review of public VET policy-related documents. The data was gathered using two methods, with individual and group interviews as the primary one, and public VET policy-related document analysis as the secondary one. In total, 13 current, 2 former and an additional 2 formerly registered (now graduates who decided to pursue non-traditional vocational education and professions) students at the school were interviewed. Beside former and current students, interviews were conducted with 2 instructors and 1 senior administrator at the school. The selection of government policy-related documents covered 2002 to 2011.

The study is framed by a feminist informed genealogy that invokes Foucault’s (1990) notion of ‘biopower’ and Pillow’s (2003) notion of the ‘gendered body.’ Meanwhile, Ted Aoki’s (2003) concepts of curriculum-as-plan and curricula-as-lived are used to analyze and discuss the review of UK government policy-related documents and participant narratives. The theme-based presentation of student narratives centred on the girls’ understanding and experience of: the session process and content; gender; non-traditional VET as educational and occupational options; and the impact of the sessions on their educational and professional choices.

The student narratives suggest several things that relate to their understanding of gender and non-traditional VET. First, the sessions proved to be both interesting and informative and students expressed an interest in taking part in more (and) varied gender-specific sessions. Second, traditional constructions of gender and gendered behavior are commonly used in job-related discourse as evidenced by the use of the terms ‘boys jobs’ and ‘girls jobs’ among the students. In addition, students had limited opportunities for exposure to non-traditional VET education and professions; and what knowledge they do have is generally dependent upon family knowledge and experience in the area. From a document review standpoint, the findings show that government commitment in terms of interest and financial backing for VET has been inconsistent. Resultantly, schools are left to identify and maintain a range of community-based partnerships that may not always see gender segregation in VET as a major concern.

The significance of this study rests in the presentation of the girls’ ‘lived curriculum’ and ‘gendered’ experiences as points that can offer insight into what transpires within vocational education initiatives and settings. Furthermore, from a feminist perspective the research also highlights the continued need to work with schools on how gender is

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

presented, discussed and understood among students. Failure to consider the gendered nature of discourse about education and professional options that takes place within school and class settings limits students' perspectives about what is available and possible.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing a doctoral dissertation requires perseverance, patience and a great deal of support from a number of people along the way. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to those individuals who have been guides, mentors and friends. Completion of my dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance of my supervisor Dr. Awad Ibrahim. Over the years he has on numerous occasions provided comments and suggestions that helped direct and focus my research. Particularly noteworthy, was his suggestion that I incorporate Canadian curriculum theorist Ted Aoki's work on curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived as an organizing principle for the study.

I would also like to thank the other member of my thesis committee, Drs. Timothy Stanley, Nicholas Ng-A-Fook and Rebecca Lloyd. Dr. Stanley brought his knowledge of history, document analysis and England's education system and asked that I delve further into what the documents said and left unsaid. Dr. Ng-A-Fook asked me to consider how Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality is played out in both policy and student experience. Meanwhile, Dr. Lloyd asked that I develop and articulate a more rigorous understanding of the method/methodology aspects of the study. I am also grateful to Dr. Kari Dehli, the external examiner, who provided her insights and suggestions about gender and education. As a group, their questions and critiques at various phases of the process were instrumental in helping me craft what I hope is an interesting and useful document. Special thanks must also be extended to Dr. Martin Barlosky who prompted me to pursue doctoral work and steered me through the early phase of my PhD studies.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Many thanks to all those who participated in the study, in particular the students (both current and former), administrators and teachers of Garden Road Community and Technology School who were welcoming and forthcoming with their comments to a degree which I did not expect. I must also express my gratitude to the Program Administrator at VETrain for allowing me to attend the ‘taster day session’ and for her frank and insightful comments during our interview.

To my PhD cohorts, in particular Alison Molina, Jill Chouinard and Rumaisa Shaukat, your friendship throughout this equal parts terrifying and maddening process were invaluable. A very special thank you must go to my dear friend and PhD colleague Monica Waterhouse who over the years has been my running buddy and my sounding board. Her friendship, knowledge and words of wisdom are treasured.

This doctoral journey would not have been possible without the unwavering love support of my husband Malcolm McEwen. He believed in me when I doubted my abilities, he listened (and read drafts) when I asked him to, and he assumed the role of stern task master when needed. I am truly blessed to have him in my life. Thanks as well to my parents for their love and encouragement through the years. Finally, to my girls - when Mummy began this journey you had yet to arrive but your presence in my life made it all the more important to engage in research that reflects the female reality. To both of you and other young girls and women out there, I would say remember that opportunities abound and ‘gender’ should *not* limit your interests and pursuits.

Sandra Parris  
Ottawa, Ontario  
October 2013

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1	Feminist Epistemologies – Key Events .....	67
Table 2	Five modes of thought on Feminist theory .....	68
Table 3	Interviews conducted by categories .....	99
Table 4	Listing of United Kingdom documents on vocational education .....	101
Table 5	At-a-glance: Interview schedule .....	106
Table 6	New GCSE vocational subjects as of 2002 .....	134
Table 7	Participant List .....	173

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1	VET policy programmes and associated government - government department changes in England 1970 – Present .....	54
Figure 2	Interplay of macro and micro level factors on student (gendered) experience .....	85

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

VET	Vocational education and training
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
A level	Advanced level
MA	Modern Apprenticeship
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
FE	Further Education
FMA	Foundation Modern Apprenticeship
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
GST	Government-supported training (includes work-based training programs for youth such as Modern Apprenticeships and Youth Training Scheme)
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
YCS	Youth Cohort Study
LSC	Learning Skills Council
NLSC	National Learning Skills Council

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Late autumn in the North of England and the weather is what you might expect – cold, damp and grey. This is not the England of *Downton Abbey*<sup>1</sup>, nor is it that of *Wuthering Heights*<sup>2</sup>, there is at times a clash of styles and cultures that speaks to the history of the place. The Industrial Revolution has left its mark on the countryside with dark stone mills, railway cuttings hacked through the solid rock of the Pennines, and rows of terraced houses that would not look out of place on a *Coronation Street*<sup>3</sup> set. This picture of Northern England is slowly being supplanted by the strident red of newly-built brick housing estates, retail parks with their multi-story parking garages and “everything-under-one-roof” approach, advertising hoardings everywhere and selling the newest must-haves from abroad. There is still much green – it really is surprising given the size of the country and a population twice that of Canada – but under a grey and forbidding sky, with rain seemingly always in the air there is a melancholy about the area, enhanced by the numerous “For Sale” signs, boarded-shops and abandoned factories, mills and mines that were once the main employers in the region. The old edifices have either been

---

<sup>1</sup> This television drama is set on grand English estate at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The story follows the lives of the Crawley family and their servants during the years that led up to World War 1. The show often highlights the class-based system and social and political events and changes that were common to that time. Retrieved from <http://www.itv.com/downtonabbey/about-the-show/>

<sup>2</sup> First published in 1847, this Emily Bronte novel set on a farmhouse in the Yorkshire moors tells the story of Catherine and Heathcliff. It is a story about love, anger, jealousy and revenge that places the English class-based system as a central driver for some of the destructive behaviour that is exhibited by the main characters. Bronte, E. (2011). *Wuthering Heights*. New York: Signet Classics. Retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/768/768-h/768-h.htm>

<sup>3</sup> This long-running soap opera began in 1960 and is set in a fictional area of Manchester. The show chronicles the lives of working class people who live in this community of lower to middle-class terraces homes, flats and single family dwellings. The show was also one of the first to feature the language and dialects that can be heard in Northern England. Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronation\\_Street](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronation_Street)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

gentrified and turned into condos and multi-unit commercial space or fallen into disrepair.

Against this backdrop, women (mostly) walk along the pavement with young children in tow, people run their errands or head to work and students of different ages dressed in school uniforms make their way to schools. Despite the “For Sale” signs and closed shops, there is a constant flow of traffic through the narrow town and city streets, the area teems with activity.

My destination that day was a 40 minute drive to Garden Road Community and Technology School (GRC)<sup>4</sup>. I was on my way to attend a ‘taster day’ session that had been offered to Year 9 students at the school. Taster day is the term that is used by the school administration, teachers and students alike to describe one-day offsite careers information and work experience sessions that are held at local area colleges and training institutions at various times during the school year. This particular session was different from most because, it was offered only to girls registered in Year 9 and was part of a curricula initiative intended to inform and possibly generate interest among these girls in traditionally male-dominated skilled trade education and professions like construction, engineering and aerospace technology. On this day two sessions, on construction and engineering technology were held at a local training facility (VETrain).

The drive to GRC begins along the winding roads of the countryside that is flanked on both sides by the rolling hills of the region. Along the way are farmhouses made of the dark stone found in the regions quarries and more recently built family homes. The surrounding terrain is dotted with sheep and the occasional horse grazing in the fields. The scenery quickly changes to larger villages, towns and cities each with

---

<sup>4</sup> All names used are pseudonyms.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

their combination of older homes and newer builds. The older attached homes (terraces), flats (apartments), pubs and businesses all seem to run the length of each street. These traditional structures intermittently give way to the more modern estates with their large single-family dwellings, each with their one or two car garage. The more urban landscape have the occasional high-rise apartment and huge one-stop shopping establishments like Tesco's, and Sainsbury's, both of which offer their clientele the chance to purchase groceries, clothing, appliances and more at the same location.

The final approach to GRC took me through the town centre, with its mix of single and low-rise office and retail buildings, and historical points of interest that include the town museum, and old steam railway station that is now managed by local volunteers. The school is a two story brick building located at the end of a winding quiet residential road. Students (boys and girls) dressed in their school uniform of pants, dress shirt, tie and blazer, can be seen slowly making their way to the school's main entrance. Most of the girls wear slacks but a few are dressed in pleated skirts. Most of the faces are Caucasian but a few students of colour (of East Asian backgrounds) can also be seen among those entering the building.

The main entrance has a key pad, buzzer and a notice that asks that all guests sign in at the front desk during and after school hours. The front door opens into the administration desk and waiting area. Display cases hold some of the students work from various classes. A large flat-screen television mounted on the wall provides information about the day and upcoming events at the school. I sign in and am asked to wait for the teachers and students taking part in the taster day. The two mini-buses hired for the day are scheduled to depart at 9:00 am.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

It is not long before a young girl with jet black hair, heavy eyeliner and a broad Northern accent common to this area enters with a teacher. The girl (Rachel) says that she doesn't want to go because 'certain people are going'. She wants to be on the same bus as her friend. In response, the teacher tells her she can switch to the Engineering group, which seemed to her calm her ire. More students begin to arrive individually and in groups, some talk in hushed tones while others speak loudly as if to a theatre audience. They are of different heights and shape, most have medium (shoulder) length to long brown, dark brown or blonde hair, and all appear to be Caucasian.

In total, twenty-four students took part in the sessions (twelve in each session) and they were accompanied by one teacher and two teaching assistants. Upon the arrival of the two buses arrived and the lead teacher (Ms. Sarah) divided the students based on their taster day session. I was seated on the Construction bus and during the 30 minute journey students could be seen listening to iPods, talking in small groups or staring out the window. It was hard to hear particular conversations but three girls could be heard talking about whether they will get to wear overalls, it seems that one of them 'was kind of looking forward to it'.

Upon arriving at VETrain, the groups are met by the Program Administrator (Ms. Nancy) and the instructors (two men and two women) who will lead the sessions. The VETrain facility, is a sprawling complex of offices, workspaces, machinery and classrooms, it is the kind of place that can look empty even when it is full of people and activity. By the end of the day, I had met a number of individuals - mainly students (girls 12-14 years old) but also teachers and administrators involved in these and other taster day sessions – some of whom would play a part in making this multifaceted research

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

study about gender, and gendered 'bodily' experience within the context of vocational education and training (VET) possible.

Among the group of students was Fran, a 13 year old Year 9 student who during our conversation said that these kinds of initiatives are needed because "...it should open girls' eyes to see that they don't have to be restricted, that they can do whatever they want". There was also Katie - a friendly and talkative, blonde girl who comes across as determined and self-assured - who during our first conversation expressed an interest in becoming a property developer but by our subsequent discussion had decided to pursue automotive studies. Meanwhile, their classmate and fellow participant, Iris, a slender, dark-haired girl who with an infectious laugh spoke of her plans to attend a local 6<sup>th</sup> Form college and then university but remained unclear about her area of study. During our first interview, Iris revealed that during the journey to the taster day event, she thought "this is not for me, going on a construction day, a girl" but she walked away from the session thinking "...Oh, I could do that."

Then there are the additional narratives of two recent graduates of the school, Danielle and Tracey who had attended an earlier taster day. These two young women are now registered at a local 6<sup>th</sup> Form college but they came in to speak about their experience on a taster day held approximately two years earlier. Tall, athletic and well-spoken, these friends took part in the gender-specific aerospace technology taster day that was aimed at what they called the "Set 1 students" or high academic achievers. As Danielle, said during our conversation "...in assembly, you don't really talk about apprenticeship. Like the cleverer you are the more you're expected to do you're A levels, do a degree and go on."

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Also included in this story are the narratives of two former students, Emma and Fiona, who decided to pursue VET in the automotive and construction fields respectively. Physically, they are opposites - one has long dark hair with highlights and is what might be described as the classically attractive female (Emma), while the other (Fiona) is short and has a close-cropped haircut and facial piercing. Temperamentally they both come across as strong, young women who possess a passion for their respective trade but they both spoke about boys' jobs and girls' jobs. Moreover, while Emma felt welcomed and supported in her work environment, Fiona has had to endure harassment from peers and co-workers.

The individual and group narratives of these young girls play a central role in this a complex and layered study about gender and gendered experience in a specific setting but this is also study about England's policy-related documents on VET. The document review portion of the study focuses on the expectations written of in a combination of policy and discussion documents, how gender is discussed in the documents and the extent to which it has shaped (and not) secondary school VET policy and student experience. Specifically, the narratives shared by the young girls in this study offers a means to examine and theorize their experiences with the taster day sessions in a way that acknowledges the multiplicity and at times contradictory and conflicted ways in which gender is understood, experienced and performed by girls and women. Their narratives also provide a point from which to think and talk about the curriculum as a bi-fold yet intersecting process of "curriculum-as-plan" and "curriculum-as-lived" (Aoki, 2005a, 1993). In other words, it offers a context in which to consider how curriculum policy that is envisioned, 'the plan', acts as a discursive regime through the presentation and

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

problematization (and not) of gender, and how the plan is then understood and experienced or 'lived' in relation to the body and gender of the intended recipients (Foucault, 1989).

Thus far I have presented background information about the setting and some of the study participants but next I will provide a brief account of the how this study came to be and why England was chosen as the setting. This account is followed by sections that discuss the research rationale, provide an overview of the study as well as define two terms, *vocational education* and *bodily experience*, that are central to the conceptualization, analysis and discussion aspects of this case study. The chapter concludes with a section that outlines how this thesis has been organized.

*Why this study...why England?*

This is a study that is borne of my interest in the areas of education, gender and employment and the ways in which they intersect and are ultimately performed (and not) by girls and women. The decision to pursue doctoral studies in this area is based on my belief that education plays an integral role in shaping how we view ourselves but it is also needed to succeed personally and professionally (Ogbu & Simmons, 1998). As young people make use of their talents, abilities and interests, they should also augment their knowledge and skill set in ways that increase their ability to gain personally and professionally rewarding and satisfying employment.

Furthermore, as someone who worked for several years in human resources and recruitment, I can attest to some of the disparities that exist in private and public sector employment recruitment, selection and compensation. Thus, this study also stems from my awareness and dismay that gender-based bias and segregation continue in certain

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

education and professional environments despite the introduction of education and legislation that are intended to change perceptions and practices.

While in the process of selecting a doctoral studies topic, I had the opportunity to do some research on gender inequity in certain professions and I was struck by the extent to which vocational education and training remained a highly gendered area of study and work. It was also during that time that I became increasingly aware of the concerns expressed by government and the labour market about anticipated skills shortages in trade professions. I found it intriguing that while skill-trade shortages were anticipated the numbers of girls and women who chose to enter these fields remained low despite the potential for above average compensation. This research study on gender in vocational education is in part intended to explore why gender-based disparities persist and to highlight the interest in and need for vocational education programs that are as valued as their 'academic' counterparts. The study is also intended to show students, particularly young girls and women that gender and societal expectations and assumptions regarding gender does and should not limit their educational and professional options. This conceptualization, is not separate from the research questions I will ask later. After all, as Donna Haraway (2000) has argued, the heart has its own desire and we should not separate the research questions we ask from our lives.

As a researcher, my role is to envision and craft a study that is both practical and personal. The study that is crafted should provide information and insight that can translate into action at a policy, school or classroom level. As such the research questions that underpin the study should reflect this emphasis on the practical and personal. The research questions used in this study are intended to gather information

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

about content and process but the questions also seek to identify and give voice to participant experience. As noted above, my role as researcher is also personal because the study that has been crafted is born of personal interest and experience. Therefore, an account of the research experience and findings should also be reflective. The inclusion of reflective pieces is intended to provide additional insight into how I have conceptualized, engaged with and understood various aspects of the research process and experience.

The site selected for this study is a town located on the outskirts of a major city in the North of England. The decision to select England as the study site is a result of an encounter while on a family vacation to England. During the trip I met with and spoke with a senior secondary school administrator about my research interests and we talked about the girls-only taster day sessions that were being offered at the school. During the conversation, he expressed his willingness to have the school serve as my research site. Essentially, the site for this study was fortuitous. I was presented with the opportunity to conduct a study that reflected my research interests and needs. Moreover, having a school in the North of England serve as the study site represented an opportunity to conduct novel and challenging research on gender, gendered experience and VET in a country with a complex and long VET history. The next section presents some of the background information about this research undertaking that takes place in England

### *Research rationale*

England has a long history of vocational education and training, particularly if one considers the use of apprenticeship systems as a means to prepare young men to enter various skilled trade and craft professions like construction and carpentry. In fact, as Sommerville (1982) had shown, the idea of

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

providing more formalized vocational instruction in England dates back to the 1600s. But, it was not until the advent of industrialization in the late 1800s that vocational education began to be considered a viable educational option (Sommerville, 1982). An increased need for skilled labour for the burgeoning industrial sector resulted in organizations calling for greater funding and formalized vocational education. However, due to changing United Kingdom (UK) government education policy, interest in the need for, and the importance of, vocational education as a viable educational option has fluctuated. In turn it has been argued that any shifts in government vocational education policy have been due in part to labour market forces (i.e. changing industry focus on workforce skill requirements), as well as public and student perceptions (Richardson, 2007; Fuller, Beck & Unwin, 2005; Unwin, 2004; Whittock, 2002). It is also important to note that shifts in VET strategy over the years have also taken place within the context of changes to the overall structure and vision of the national education system. That being the case, some authors have argued that as a whole, England's education system has been built on and reinforces ideas that are class-based and favours the needs and interests of England's middle class and more affluent members of society (Crook, 2002; Robinson, 2002). In fact, to varying degree each author has identified the Education Acts from 1870, 1902, 1914 and 1944 Education Act as legislation that has formed the basis for all subsequent education legislation, strategy and format in England. For example, the 1870 Education Act, also referred to as the Forster Act, introduced compulsory education for children ages 5 to 13. Meanwhile, the 1902 Education

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Act resulted in the introduction of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to oversee the management of primary and secondary schooling across England. Later still, the 1944 Education Act failed to introduce a common national education system but it did formally organize the three-level system of primary, secondary and further education (FE). These acts and their importance to VET policy and provision in England will be discussed in later in the thesis.

In the case of vocational education training (VET) programs and practices, there has been a recent upswing of interest. This resurgence of interest appears to be driven in part by labour market requirements and a desire by the UK government's Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to remove barriers to student achievement, ensure education for all, and meet labour market needs (DfES, 2005). However, Lorna Unwin (2004) argues, DfES and the Learning and Skills Councils (LSC)<sup>5</sup> fail to highlight the potential appeal, aesthetic aspects and the varied knowledge that is required in vocational or skills training. In Unwin's (2004) analysis, for example, the UK continues to struggle to attract young men and more so young women to consider skilled trades as viable educational and professional opportunities, which leads to the rationale of this study.

Vocational education, in the UK and elsewhere, has for the most part been and remains gender specific (Fuller et al., 2005; Miller, 2005; Watt-Malcolm & Young, 2003; Whittock, 2002; Taylor, Evans & Behrens, 2000). Males selected vocational education options like auto mechanics, electrician, carpenter, construction and plumbing, while

---

<sup>5</sup> Learning and Skills Council is a non-departmental agency that is responsible for planning and funding education and training in England (universities excepted). In 2001 the LSC assumed the responsibilities formerly held by the Further Education Funding Council and Training and Enterprise. They have a national office and nine regional offices with a budget of approximately £11 billion. One of their primary responsibilities is to increase national skills levels. (Learning and Skills Council, Retrieved September 20, 2009 from <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/aboutus/>).

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

females participated in hairdressing, the caring professions or possibly graphic design (Fuller et al., 2005; Miller, 2005; Whittock, 2002; Taylor, Evans & Behrens, 2000).

More recent initiatives have attempted to address the gender disparity that exists in various skilled trades. In England, for example, the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) scheme was launched in 1993 and it is considered to be the first time that the UK Government was to play a formal role in the funding, promoting, and training of individuals in a range of vocational and skills based occupations (Fuller et al., 2005). According to these authors, the programme was the government's attempt to expand the range of apprenticeships that is available to students and to "...arrest and begin to reverse the decline and make a significant contribution to the UK's stock of intermediate (technical) skills (level 3)" (p. 298). A main feature of the program was to address the issue of gender disparity by increasing male and female participation in non-traditional occupations (Fuller et al., 2005; Unwin, 2004). However, a review conducted in 2003 by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) showed no significant increase in gender-based participation rates in non-traditional programs (Fuller et al., 2005). Consequently, one could argue that gender-based assumptions and stereotypes regarding VET, and employment in the skilled trade sector persists.

An initial review of VET research showed that while large scale analysis of cross-country and/or international data on issues such as participant gender and racial differences (van der Meulen Rodgers & Boyer, 2006; Stone & Aliaga, 2005); examination of what it means to be skilled in different vocations and settings (Colley, James & Tedder, 2002; Taylor et al., 2000), and the issue of occupational gender segregation (Fuller et al., 2005; Miller, 2005), there is a gap in the research that looks at

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

specific gender focused vocational initiatives. As someone who has worked in human resources management research, and as a doctoral student who is interested in how gender is played out in educational and workplace settings, my aim is to better understand what kind of gender-based curricula initiatives are being made available to students and to examine how these students make sense of their experience in those initiatives.

### *Overview of the study*

Overall, this research has been structured to address a gap in the research literature on the place of gender in vocational education, with particular emphasis placed on young female understanding and experience of non-traditional vocational education and training (i.e. skilled trades like carpentry and automotive mechanics). In part, the aim of this doctoral study is to grapple with how these students' *bodily experience* as females in non-traditional learning environments may or may not inform their subsequent educational and professional choices.

Since the delivery of this initiative required cooperation and coordination between the students' northern English school and the local college or vocational education training facility, interviews were conducted with administrator(s) and/or coordinators as well as teachers. In addition, interviews were conducted with young women who had attended GRC and chose to pursue non-traditional VET programs and professions. On a broader scale, this *case study* (which I will explore in the methodology chapter) examines how vocational education, particularly for the skilled trade sector has served, and continues to serve, as a site for the sociocultural construction of gendered identities and vocational possibilities. As such the study also includes a historical analysis of gender in

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

England's VET policy. More specifically, the study explores how a curricula initiative in England designed to encourage young girls to consider education and employment in non-traditional skilled trades was presented to, and received by participants. The research questions posed in the study pertain to the manner in which the initiative is made available; the place of gender within VET policy and practice in England; the gendered experience of the taster day session participants and its subsequent impact on educational and occupational choice (a detailed listing of the research questions can be found at the end of this Chapter).

As noted earlier, the school, *Garden Road Community and Technology* offered Year 9 students (12-14 years old) the opportunity to participate in gender specific 'taster day' sessions that were intended to inform and possibly generate interest about non-traditional skilled trades like plumbing, auto mechanics, carpentry and aerospace technology. The varied one-day sessions were held offsite at local area colleges and vocational education and training facilities during the course of the school year. Students registered to participate were transported by bus to the session where onsite instructors provided information about a specific area of VET. In the case of this research students attended sessions on aerospace technology, construction and engineering, all of which represented areas that are traditionally male-dominated. In total, 21 individuals were interviewed for this case study, of which 13 were currently registered at the school while 2 were former students at Garden Road Community and Technology School. In addition, interviews were conducted with: 2 former students who had decided to pursue VET studies; 2 instructors and 1 administrator from Garden Road Community and Technology School (GRC); and 1 administrator from the vocational education training facility

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

(*VETrain*). Interviews were held over the course of approximately two weeks and any follow up interviews were held several months later. In the case of the students that were currently registered at the school, all interviews took place over the course of several days after their taster day sessions on construction and engineering. All interviews with students, teachers and the Garden Road school administrator took place on school property. In the case of current and formerly registered students, interviews were held in either a classroom located on the second floor or an office situated on the main floor of the school. Interviews with the teachers and the school administrator were held in their offices. In addition, the interview with the *VETrain* administrator took place in one of the training facility meeting rooms.

All individual as well as the two focus-group interviews lasted approximately 50 minutes and all participants were asked a series of open-ended questions that sought to identify their understanding of the session purpose and content, their understanding of gender and gendered experience of the session, and the overall impact of the sessions on educational and occupational choice. Interviews were audio recorded and the material was transcribed. The transcriptions were then analyzed individually and collectively in order to identify common themes in and across the participant narratives. Analysis of the transcriptions involved a full read-through of each interview and the identification of passages or statements that specifically touched upon topics like the session process and content, gender, participant views non-traditional vocational education and training, experience of the sessions and impact of future educational and professional choice. An Excel spreadsheet was also created of each person's experience and the passages and statements for all research participants were then placed in the spreadsheet for further

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

sorting and identification of themes. These broader headings were used to create a narrative that reflected the individual or group experience of the gender specific sessions. This narrative document along with the passages and statements that were initially selected were reviewed and more specific themes were then identified. Further details regarding the analysis of study participant narratives can be found in Chapter 4, Methodology. The study participants' narratives were then used to discuss several issues that form the basis for the Conceptual Framework used in this study. The issues include: gender and the gendered nature of experience; experience as the intersection between curriculum- as-plan and curricula-as-lived; and the gendered (female) body, biopower and how curriculum policy works discursively to shape different bodies (see Chapter 3, Conceptual Framework for details).

The next section provides a preliminary discussion of two terms that underpin this study: vocational education and bodily experience. This discussion is included at this point in order to clarify what the terms mean within the context of this research study.

### *Unpacking Meaning: Vocational Education and Bodily Experience*

In simplest terms, vocational education is designed to provide participants with the knowledge and skills needed for employment in a particular occupation (Learning and Skills Council, 2006; Smaller, 2003; HarperCollins, 2000). Vocational education training can be found in secondary and post-secondary institutions such as colleges and universities, as well as through workplace training. For the purpose of this study, vocational education will refer to secondary and/or college-based programs that combine the study of theory and skills of an occupational field.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

By ‘bodily experience,’ on the other hand, I am talking about the centrality and the saliency of the body as a site and a center “of struggles between different power formations” (Pillow, 2003, p. 148). For Pillow, bodies “bear the marks of these struggles and are also marked differently – processes and constructs of gender, race and class impact which bodies are marked and how they are marked” (p. 148). In addition to being ‘marked,’ Pillow (2003, p. 148) adds, “...bodies represent and are represented. Whether rendered invisible, portrayed romantically, described with statistics...policies are about and for bodies.” Pillow’s notion of “bodies” is aptly situated, articulated and hence lends itself well to discussions about how the female body has been constructed and ‘marked’ historically through vocational education policy and practice. In such a discussion, ‘marked’ may be discussed in terms of female physicality, sexuality and the discourse of curriculum policy. Additionally, the term ‘marked’ also relates to questions of power and resistance and the young girls/woman’s experience in the non-traditional vocational education setting. As Pillow notes, these questions of power pertain to who gets marked and who gets to do the marking. From a vocational education and training perspective, her conceptualization of the terms bodies and ‘mark’ offers a means to ponder and question which bodies have been deemed appropriate for certain vocational settings and why. Certain spheres of vocational education have and remain male-dominated (e.g. construction and automotive) but why does that kind of gender segregation within those occupational areas persist? Moreover, how are existing policies implicated in the reification of which bodies are marked as appropriate while simultaneously resisting and making it difficult and possibly dangerous, whether physically or emotionally for ‘other’ (girls/women’s) bodies to enter these vocational domains?

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Pillow's notion of 'bodies' is well-suited to the examination and discussion of the historically constructed nature of the female body in vocational education and practice, but there is a related aspect that requires conceptualization – that of experience. For the purpose of this study, experience refers to the point when curriculum policy is introduced and put into practice and the interactions, understanding and knowledge that the intended audience takes away from those curricula events and moments. Ted Aoki's (2005b) conceptualization of curriculum-as-plan and curricula-as-lived are used to better articulate this definition of experience. Aoki's view on curriculum is one that acknowledges the work of those who are involved in developing the 'plan' but he asks that we also consider the individual and context-dependent nature of the curriculum process. In essence, Aoki's concepts of curriculum-as-plan and curricula-as-lived provide an ideal format for presenting research that examines and analyzes policy documents and their stated goals, as well as the experience and narratives of members of the target audience (i.e. the young girls (see Chapter 3, Conceptual Framework for more on 'curriculum-as-plan' and 'curricula-as-lived')). A related point to consider is the intersection between curriculum-as-plan and curricula-as-lived and how in both cases curriculum functions as a discursive regime of 'truth' (Rabinow & Rose, 2003). As Foucault (1979) notes 'regimes of truth' refer to the sociohistorical set of mechanisms that produce certain discourse which in turn function as appropriate and true in particular contexts.

As a whole, by paying attention to how the female body is marked through vocational education practice, policy and training experience and in doing so the study takes an approach to research on vocational education that emphasizes individual

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

narrative and experience. Interview commentary is used to provide portraits of student experience and it is also used to identify common themes across participant experiences. Additionally, interview commentary is used to analyze and discuss how this kind of vocational education initiative is perceived and valued by participants, as well as administrators, designers, implementers and female skilled trade professionals (see Chapter 4, Methodology for further details on the population, the location and the choosing of Garden Road Community and Technology School. The research questions used to guide this doctoral study are listed in the next section.

### *Research Questions*

The overarching research question for this study is: Situated in England, how has gender been addressed in England's VET policy and in turn how does it inform female students' experiences in a 'non-traditional' VET learning environment and their subsequent educational and occupational choices? This study is not only concerned with individual experience, it also aims to consider whether there are common spaces of experience across participants that might help inform how this and similar vocational education initiatives may be developed and/or improved. The subsequent questions that guide this study include the following:

### *Micro-Level Questions*

- What are the gendered bodily experiences of young female participants in a vocational education initiative that seeks to increase female participation in 'non-traditional' skilled trades?
- What occurs within the learning setting? That is, what does (or did) that experience

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

mean for individual educational and/or occupational choices?

### *Macro-Level Questions*

- How has gender been addressed in England's VET policy?
- What (if any) commonalities exist across participant experience that could inform how this or similar VET initiatives are developed and presented to a specific audience?
  - In general, what does that experience mean for how VET initiatives are developed and administered?
- Finally, pedagogically, what can Canada, Ontario in particular, learn from this experience/research?

### *Organization of the thesis*

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters that are based primarily upon the different components that made up the research process. Chapter 1 includes an introduction to the setting, some of the study participants. The chapter also contains an account of what prompted the idea for this study, the accompanying research rationale and significance and contribution of the study. It also includes a discussion of the how the terms vocational education and bodily experience have been defined for the purpose of this study.

In Chapter 2, I review the literature in order to examine the concepts and debates that surround what I describe as macro and micro levels issues that pertain to vocational education and training policy and practice. At the macro level the discussion focuses on

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

the broader sociohistorical issues and policy trends that have helped to shape vocational education provision in England. Meanwhile, the discussion of micro level issues examines the term gender and how it has been defined and understood within feminist thought, followed by an examination of the extent to which gender has been considered within vocational research. The chapter concludes with sections that offer my reflections on the research literature reviewed and a section that links the literature, feminist theory researcher reflections. This latter section is intended to function as a bridge between the literature review process and the subsequent development of Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology for this study.

Chapter 3 presents the Conceptual Framework that guides this study. The chapter includes definitions of the four key concepts that serve as the foundation of the study (genealogy, gender, body and biopower, and experience). Also included is a discussion of how the main research variables and what is thought to be their interrelationships. The chapter concludes with a listing of the research questions that guide this case study.

Chapter 4 details the case study research methodology and begins with a discussion of the idea of ‘case study’ as both a methodology and a method. This introduction on the dual purpose of case study is followed by an outline of the site and participant selection, data collection methods, and procedures used during the course of this research. Also included are sections on potential concerns associated with the research design and ethics.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 represent the Data Analysis portion of the study. The section on data analysis has been divided into two sections in order to highlight the macro and micro levels of the study that are discussed earlier. In Chapter 5 particular attention

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

is paid to the notion of planned curriculum in VET as exemplified in vocational education policy-related documents. As such a review of a selection of England's VET policy-related documents (2002-2011) is included, followed by an examination of how gender has been addressed in those documents. Chapter 6 then shifts to the micro level issue of student experience and as such emphasize the lived nature of curriculum. The chapter includes a presentation of the students' thoughts regarding their experience of the taster day sessions, gender, non-traditional vocational education and the impact of the session on their educational and occupational futures. The students' perspectives have been divided based on their status as current or former students who attended Garden Road Community and Technology School and the main themes that emerged within each grouping. To conclude, I examine the student narratives and policy-related document review in light of the research study questions.

Chapter 7 offers a more detailed discussion of the student narratives and the policy-related document review that highlights the key concepts discussed in Chapter 3, the Conceptual Framework. As such, I explore what the student narratives and policy-related documents have to say about the relational nature of gender and biopower; the degree to which gender and gendered experience is informed by VET policy; and in general, the performative nature of gender. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations and implications of this exploratory case study on policy practice and research, with additional attention paid to the implications for Canadian vocational education and training endeavours.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The present literature review is intended to inform and hopefully inspire. In the process of writing the literature review, this researcher is educated about the past and current state of research associated with a particular topic or field. In turn, the literature review can generate ideas about, and inform the study's rationale, the research questions and overall design of the research study. From the reader's perspective, I hope, the literature review can be a source of ideas for their own areas of research and/or practice.

My literature review was guided by several assumptions regarding vocational education and gender within vocational education training (VET) contexts. It is assumed that vocational education seeks to have students develop knowledge and skills for a particular occupation. As such, one could also assume that participant knowledge and skill development, and overall educational experience are informed by what takes place within their immediate environment (participants, the classroom and the school). It is also assumed that vocational education is intended to prepare students for an occupation; therefore it is equally important to consider how what transpires in the occupation and in the world of work at large might inform what occurs in the student's immediate environment. In other words there are two levels in which to examine and discuss vocational education and student experience. One level, the *micro level*, considers the immediate environment such as classroom practice, intended outcomes, student experience in general and the way gender may (or may not) shape how students understand and make sense of their experience in a VET environment. Meanwhile, *macro level* research refers to the role that politics/ideologies, economics, labour market

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

requirements and institutions (i.e. government and industry) have played in shaping vocational education policy and practice.

The literature review is organized thus to walk and work through these assumptions. The review begins at the macro level, with sections on (a) the history and foundations of VET in England; and (b) policy trends in VET. A micro level review follows which examines the issues of gender in VET policy and practice. The first section chronicles key moments in the evolution of VET in England. Also highlighted in this section is research on the kinds of VET policy that have been created and enacted, and the role of national economic structures and labour market requirements on policy development and enactment. The final section presents a review of literature on the question of gender and its place within VET. In particular, the section highlights research that looks at how female participation in VET has been addressed in national and more local level policies. Moreover, the section reviews research that deals specifically with female participation in non-traditional VET fields of study and practice.

Finally, significant to note, the literature review also contains my reflections regarding some of the points and issues raised in the research literature. The reflective portion is intended to share with the reader some of the ideas and issues that were of particular interest as I conceptualized the methodological aspects of this case study.

### *Macro level: History and foundations of VET in England*

Current knowledges and practices are often informed by past knowledges and practices (Foucault, 1990). So, what then is some of the past knowledge and practice that has helped to shape current conceptions of VET in England? What philosophical

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

perspectives underpin VET in England? This section of the literature review addresses these questions. By engaging with literature that examines the history and foundation, one develops a sense of the historical antecedents that have helped to shape recent attempts at policy development, reform and enactment.

In general, researchers have written about the importance of several historical periods on the development, practice and value of VET in England. These periods - Elizabethan England (Winch & Hyland, 2007; Foreman-Peck, 2004; Snell, 1996), the advent of industrialization (Clarke, 2007; Winch, 1998), pre and/or post WWII (Brockmann, Clarke & Winch, 2010; Hager, 2007; Richardson, 2007; Unwin, 2004), and post 1970s (Fuller & Unwin, 2011; Clarke & Winch, 2007; Keep, 2007; Pring, 2007; Equal Opportunities Commission (1999); Howieson, Raffe, Spours & Young, 1997) - appear to be the most common organizing elements of literature about VET in England.

In their review of the history of vocational education in England, Winch and Hyland (2007) state that the idea of public schools has been in place since medieval times and that these schools were firmly rooted in the classicist mode<sup>6</sup>. According to Winch and Hyland (2007) classicist ideals emphasized the distinctions between what constitutes 'genuine' knowledge and more 'practical' knowledge. Moreover, they claim that hierarchical divisions that ascribe greater status to 'genuine knowledge' over practical knowledge are linked to social class stratification. The authors refer to Plato's *Republic* and its discussion about the 'forms of knowledge' and education that are provided to different members of society (i.e. Gold for rulers, elite; Silver for auxiliaries; Iron/Bronze

---

<sup>6</sup> At the time public schools catered primarily to the sons of the titled and wealthy but poor students were also accepted and charged very small fees. In keeping with classicist thinking the ultimate aim of education was to prepare students for world citizenship (Winch & Hyland, 2007).

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

for farmers; and the rest) as an example of the link between type of knowledge and social class.

In England, distinctions between ‘forms of knowledge’ can be traced back to the 1500s when the idea for separate and distinct schools, one for rulers and one for commoners emerged, but, ideas about the provision of education is said to have become entrenched in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The linking of such ideals to classical studies and the public school/university elite in nineteenth-century England (which produced the politically influential who were to define the nature of mass compulsory schooling after 1870) served to establish a class-dominated, bifurcated system in which vocational studies were always subordinate to academic pursuits. (Winch & Hyland, 2007, p. 7)

Entrenchment of the genuine (pure) over practical (applied) knowledge is said to have implications for which strategies are employed to reconcile the divisions. It also has implications for who is to be found participating in particular educational settings. As they note, “...schools are influential in determining the trajectory of their pupils and there is relatively strong encouragement to go on to higher education and relatively weak encouragement to go on to vocational courses or embark upon apprenticeships” (Winch & Hyland, 2007, p. 62). The authors assert that the creation of class-based distinctions about ‘genuine’ and ‘practical’ knowledge in the education system have hampered attempts that might re-position and augment the value afforded VET. In fact they state that they “...have stood in the way of the development of a national, unified system of education in England in which vocational studies and the preparation for working life have their proper place” (Winch & Hyland, 2007, p. 7). However, the authors do talk about reconciling the divisions between the

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

academic-vocational divide, pointing out that there are common features that exist within both approaches to education. Learning that is vocationally useful does not disqualify it from also being a source of satisfaction and enrichment (Winch & Hyland, 2007).

Keith Snell (1996) explores what he calls the last two phases of Britain's apprenticeship system and also considers the historical changes that have affected these phases. He identifies the two phases as, the pre-industrial, state regulated system that began its decline around 1750, and the re-shaping of the system in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Snell's stated intention is to examine how issues related to transferable skills and training costs were previously handled because in his estimation the "economic features of the apprenticeship system in its traditional and modern forms deserve careful analysis" (p. 303). His examination commences with a review of Elizabethan era statutes and legislation and notes that the *Statute of Artificiers* which was enacted in 1563 regulated the production of artisan products for nearly 200 years. At the time these and similar legislation related to production "... operated as socially selective regulation of the life cycle, and indirectly of marriage and fertility, as a lesson in patriarchal authority within productive family economy akin to the experience of servanthood. The terms 'servant' and apprentice were often used interchangeably. Apprenticeship was also a means of control over family lineage, wealth and power" (p. 305).

The author stresses that the "...history of apprenticeship in Britain has been one of constriction..." (p. 306), that has seen the various socio-cultural functions that were part of legislation and practice diminish while attention narrowed to focus on 'training.' To illustrate this shift in focus, Snell (1997) refers to the 'settlement laws' which played

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

an important role in structuring employment (7 year apprenticeship terms), housing, marriage, charitable establishments, among other things. He argues that the 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of vociferous critics (e.g. Adam Smith) of the settlement laws and the apprenticeship system that eventually led to decline of the traditional service system.

Snell argues that the terms ‘apprentice’ and ‘apprenticeship’ have become so diluted and broad, that few people know what they mean. Although he does contend that the terms may have always held rival meanings for trade unionists and employers – differing assumptions are commonplace and may vary based on region and political perspectives and aims. More recent conceptions of apprenticeship (post-1979) have moved from being more holistic to one that is driven by market-dominated concerns. The author concludes that this shift is unlikely to swing back towards one that is more holistic in nature.

The idea that ‘genuine’ and ‘practical’ knowledge need not be mutually exclusive was explored in an earlier paper by Winch (1998). In it, he examined the rival views of Adam Smith and Freidrich List. He argued that Adam Smith’s classical political economic model (which is currently in place in the England and the US<sup>7</sup>) has been instrumental in shaping the development of, and changes within England’s VET system. He contrasts the Smithian approach that emphasizes self-interest, with the social capitalist model that has shaped the German VET system.

The German VET model, Winch explains, is positioned as more holistic and

---

<sup>7</sup> Hyslop-Margison (2001) reviewed vocational education training history within the U.S. context and identified two distinct visions regarding the purpose of vocational education training as espoused by social efficiency advocate, David Snedden and constructivist educator/philosopher John Dewey. While the context is the U.S., it does highlight a debate that continues to trouble vocational policy making process and practice in US and non-US settings. The debate centres on the question of: Is the purpose of secondary vocational education to provide ‘human capital’ to industry or is it part of the overall purpose of schooling which is to educate citizens for democracy?

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

dependent upon the involvement of state and institutions of civil society.

According to Winch (1998), in the Smithian model, self-interest drives production, exchange and consumption and this applies to training and professional formation. That is, the State assumes a hands-off approach. In fact, he notes, "...Smith is especially hostile to the guilds and their associated apprenticeship systems of vocational education. He sees apprenticeship as promoting idleness, [and] economic conservatism..." (p. 372). Alternatively, he claims that while List did not write specifically about education, he believes that it is possible to envision what he might have said about education. Winch (1998) presents a Listian-based model of VET that is concerned with continued development of competitive advantage and rejects a rigid distinction between productive and non-productive labour.

While Winch proposes the need for a more holistic approach to VET provision, the reality was that by the 1920s and 30s, in England, a class based system and interests in education were well-established (Winch & Hyland, 2007). Several authors have written about how government legislation has helped shape the class based system (Shaw, 2011; Crook, 2002; Robinson, 2002). For example, Robinson (2002) writes about the introduction of the 1902 Education Act and its predecessor the 1870 Education Act as pivotal pieces of legislation. She identifies these education Acts as integral to the subsequent development of a national public education system in England and she discusses the class-based system of education that has resulted and been re-inscribed over the years. For example, she notes that the 1870 Education Act which required compulsory

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

elementary education for children ages 5 to 13 was viewed as an ideal means to train the labour force to acquire the basic skills and routines needed for a growing industrial driven society. In addition, elementary schooling was also thought of as a way to deter the possibility of civil unrest (Robinson, 2002).

The article (Robinson, 2002) also discussed the key elements and the impact of the 1902 Education Act which was also known as the Balfour Act. Key features of the Act included the dissolution of School Boards and the creation of Local Education Authorities (LEAs). The previous system based on school boards is said to have played an important role in urban areas but less so in the rural communities. The LEAs had responsibility for the establishment and management of primary and secondary schools in their geographical area or county and they were seen as a way to adequately meet the needs of both urban and rural populations (Robinson, 2002). The author notes that since its introduction the 1902 Education Act has been thought of as a watershed moment in the creation of a state backed national system of Education in England. However, the Act has also been criticized for its approach to the education of working class children because the new LEA managed secondary schools were considered less progressive and democratic. The old Board Schools system is thought to have seen the benefits of post-elementary vocational technical education in the higher grades. Specifically, they saw value in offering a widely accessible broader curriculum based on local need that was scientific, technical, commercial and vocational, the LEA system did not (Robinson, 2002).

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Another critical piece of education legislation was the 1944 Education (Butler) Act which established compulsory education for all children 5-15 years old (Shaw, 2011; Crook, 2002). According to Crook (2002) it was expected that the 1944 Education Act would herald the era that provided a national comprehensive common education to all students. However, those who supported church schools and private education resisted the idea of changing to a common system. In the end, the 1944 Education Act formalized a three-tier education system that included primary, secondary and further education that was free for all at the primary and secondary level. In this new system, central government was responsible for national policies and the allocation of resources, while LEAs dealt with local policy and resource allocation for schools. Responsibility for the curriculum rested at the school and local levels with Head Teachers and governors determining class content and process. The Act provided little guidance about curriculum content apart from the requirement that religious education take place in all schools. While this three-tiered system came to be commonly referred to as the Tripartite system, it is interesting to note that the term 'tripartite' does not appear in the Act, nor does the Act refer to the creation of a system of education divided on the basis of grammar, secondary modern and technical schools (Crook, 2002; Gillard, 2011). The 1944 Act is also notable for establishing a system that relied on intelligence-based exams that sought to identify the individual's reasoning, English and Maths skills. Students that were unable to pass the exams attended secondary modern or technical schools, while those who passed were eligible for admittance to grammar schools. In essence the Act did not establish

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

‘parity of esteem’ between grammar and secondary modern or technical schools, instead it further reinforced a system that saw the brightest students encouraged to vie for places at the highly regarded grammar or independent (private) schools. Moreover, efforts to provide vocational and technical education at the secondary level were often met with resistance and the schools that were created tended to last a brief time because of parental and employer resistance.

The Conservative government led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher during the 1980s heralded a number of changes to education policy and provision in England (Exley & Ball, 2011; Jones, 2003). In general, the changes were part of a broader public policy that emphasized “...cost reduction, privatisation and deregulation” (Jones, 2003, p. 107) resulting in curtailed local authority powers and the increased centralization of governmental powers. During this period, government policy heavily favoured further marketization of education, and introduced the prescriptive National Curriculum and national testing at age 7 (Exley & Ball, 2011). According to Exley and Ball (2011), education policy under the Conservative government was steeped in a belief in the free market economy which meant there was “...a push for privatization, the ‘liberation of schools to innovate and diversify, and an enhanced role for parents as consumers in an educational marketplace” (p. 97). However, the authors (Exley & Ball, 2011) add that antipathy for teachers and an insistence on the importance of certain subjects and teaching and disciplinary practices led to their imposition of stringent accountability and evaluation measures, the creation of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the expectation that individuals assume

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

greater responsibility for their success or failure. As described by Tomlinson (2001, p. 6), the Thatcher governments of the 1980 is "...the period when liberal individualism, moral authoritarianism and nostalgic imperialism translated into a partial dismantling of democratically controlled education system and its eventual replacement by schools with centrally controlled funding and curricula".

The notion of a vocational-academic divide is something that is discussed by other authors as well. For example, Pring's (2007) analysis also examines the distinctions generally made between academic and vocational knowledge. The author considers the meanings and general discourse associated with the words academic and vocational and takes issue with the use of simplistic and/or contradictory meanings that are often ascribed to each area. Pring (2007) posits that one need not isolate the academic approach from one that is more practical in nature; instead, he calls for greater integration of the two.

Forman-Peck (2004) provides another perspective on the current state of UK VET. The author charts the links between British VET and government, industry and public/private education systems and he begins by stating that employer-led VET was the norm until the 1960s. The current state of VET in England, for Forman-Peck, is viewed in terms of 'spontaneous order' versus 'spontaneous disorder.' The former implies that market use of information regarding supply and demand is efficient, while the latter assumes that a lack of standards and coordination has resulted in underinvestment in VET and economic decline when compared with countries identified as strong leaders in education and training (e.g. Germany). In his discussion, Forman-Peck contrasts liberal education with VET, whereby liberal education is defined in terms of consumption not

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

necessarily associated with employment outcomes; and VET is defined in terms of investment in capital and preparation for the workforce. Ultimately, the author advocates for employer driven VET but admits concerns regarding the ability and/or willingness of employers to coordinate amongst themselves.

Another comparison of England's VET system against some of its European counterparts was undertaken by Brockmann, Clarke and Winch (2010). These authors begin by identifying two approaches to VET; (1) the 'skill' or task-based model; and (2) the 'occupational' model. The skills-based model can be found in England, while the occupational model can be found in European countries like Germany, France and the Netherlands. The skills model emphasizes that prescribed, generally manual tasks are to be performed to a certain standard without much attention to reflection upon knowledge. This approach is contrasted against the occupational model that is more holistic in the sense that it integrates "...theoretical and contingent knowledge, practical know-how and social and personal capabilities" (p. 113). The literature would suggest that class-divisions either past or present have influenced how VET is conceptualized and practiced. Furthermore, the nature of VET is such that it has been and is heavily skill-and-task-based, while individual or student need within the learning environment has been afforded less attention.

### *Macro level: Policy trends in VET*

Research literature on the history and foundations of VET is helpful in providing a broader picture of the theoretical and historical influences associated with the evolution of VET. While the previous section considered some of the events, legislation and

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

theorists that have shaped VET, there is another aspect to consider - that of VET policy. The earlier comment regarding the role of past knowledge and practice informing current practice remains true, or does it? This section of the literature review pays particular attention to some of the VET policies that have been examined and/or critiqued by recent researchers; and their views on what trends (e.g. political, socio-cultural, economic etc.) may or may not have informed the look and practice of VET.

In an article that reviewed a range of international vocational education systems and the effects of efficiency and equity on these systems, Carnoy (1994) argued that the majority of vocational education is labour market driven, but rapidly changing economic and labour market environment have resulted in situations whereby government vocational education policy and funding are increasingly out of synch with industry needs. Furthermore, he questioned whether vocational education training is “an effective policy mechanism to reduce inequalities” (p. 225). The author concludes that it is possible to measure equity effects of vocational education spending in terms of a variety of vocational education offerings and vocational education benefits.

Researchers who have focused primarily upon England’s VET system have at times presented similar statements and arguments regarding the role of economics and the labour market. For example, a recent report prepared by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) looked at the issue of employer engagement (or lack thereof) in VET policy making and provision in England (Hoeckel, Cully, Field, Halasz & Kis, 2009). While the report commends the UK government on its desire to increase employer engagement, it does raise concerns about several issues that include: lack of clarity and consistency regarding employer engagement and concerns about the

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

current state of the VET system. The report's authors claim that the UK VET system is nowhere near as strong as some of its European counterparts (e.g. Germany and France). Furthermore, the reports states that there is an apparent (and unacknowledged) tension that exists between the UK government's desire to see increased employer-led VET and the need for strong government lead in being able to reach targets identified in the Leitch Report (Hoeckel et al., 2009). The Leitch Report (2004) was commissioned by the UK Government to examine the country's skills needs and identify long-term strategy for skills development in the United Kingdom. As Lord Sandy Leitch wrote in the report he was "to consider what the UK's long-term ambition should be for developing skills in order to maximize economic prosperity, productivity and to improve social justice" (Leitch, 2006, p. 1). The review focused primarily upon adult skills development but also considered the skills needs for those among the 14-19 age range. The reports calls for the UK to become a leader in skills (compared against the OECD list of countries) by 2020 and recommendations include: achieve a 95% functional literacy and numeracy rates; 90% of adults should have achieved a minimum of Level 2 skills; and a minimum of 40% of adults should have achieved a minimum of Level 4 skills. These goals are expected to be achieved through a commitment for employers, government and individuals to share responsibility; skills should be linked to labour market needs and allow for employer and individual mobility; focus on demand instead of centrally-led vocational skills development; the framework must be adaptive and responsive to market needs; simplify, and rationalize and build on existing structures.

Meanwhile, Brockmann, Clarke and Winch's (2010) review of the British government's recently proposed apprenticeship framework highlighted several inherent

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

weaknesses. The review is based on a comparison of England's apprenticeship framework against those of other European countries that are considered by many to have strong apprenticeship systems in place. They argue for the need of "social partnerships and the education of young people into broadly defined occupations" (p. 111). The authors state that the proposed framework does not take into consideration "general and civic educational elements in young people's formation" (p. 111).

In England, the shortcomings of the VET system are increasingly apparent and are only perpetuated in the proposed Apprenticeship Bill, which refers neither to the role of the FE colleges and trade unions nor the importance of education...almost by default, college-based VET routes have developed as an alternative means to obtain training in a particular occupation. Without a work-based element, however, these cannot provide a clear route into the labour market. The suggestion is that a completely new framework needs to be developed, one which embodies employee and educational interests and ensures that trainees acquire a deep and broad-based vocational education to equip them for an ever-more complex and technically demanding labour process and for citizenship. (Brockmann et al., 2010, p. 124)

To be successful the proposed framework must take into account the longer term interests of employees – it must also consider the changing dynamics of the labour market and the potential for employer disengagement.

Keep's (2007) article on the role the British government plays in education and training policy formation suggests that an increase in state involvement is a result of paradoxical policy. A 'laissez-faire' attitude that assumes employers will be responsible, but paradoxically it also means that the state has to take the lead when there is a lack of employer effort. Keep (2007) looked at how this policy approach evolved, the literature on policy analysis and his personal experience as an observer of the policy process was employed in his analysis and he identified several trends: (a) the government's role in policy design, control and implementation has increased since the 1980s; (b) the pace and

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

scale of change has increased since 1987; (c) there has been a shift of the last 15 years that has seen the government go from the least to most centrally controlled education system. This shift is a result of delocalization, centralization and nationalization.

Policy makers are often trapped by their own rhetorical devices. If skills are so important to the national interest, the state cannot afford to be seen to leave delivery to others, particularly when some of these others, such as employers, appear unable or unwilling to deliver what it is alleged is required... (Keep, 2007, p.170)

Currently, the state has legal and administrative power, and determines all aspects (subjects, certification, funding, monitoring and assessment etc.) of education which is symbolized by increasing the power of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Keep (2007) further argues that, the increased political profile of education has seen it become more important to other departments (e.g. Trade and Industry; Treasury), while the role and clout of social partnership bodies (e.g. Manpower Services Commission – MSC) has diminished.

Another element that has been covered in the research on VET centres on ‘academic’ versus ‘vocational’ distinctions. For example, in her examination of what she considers the poor state of VET in England, Unwin (2004) writes at length about language of education. For Unwin (2004), the language of education consists of “...limiting and often highly discursive meanings” (p. 178), where ‘academic’ is always associated with high prestige, while vocational is linked to non-academic, lower-status yet specific occupations. Institutions that consider themselves to be academic or higher education are often reluctant to position themselves as providing opportunities to develop ‘skills.’ According to Unwin (2004) the preferred language games have relegated vocational education to the role of second class citizen or poor relative. The author also

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

points out that government discourse may pose overt or inadvertent challenges to the success of vocational education strategies. Furthermore, government vocational education policies are said to be more concerned about “leaflet law” that presents catchy yet meaningless rhetoric instead of establishing broader regulations of practice and qualifications (Unwin, 2004, p. 186). Unwin further argues that many of today’s vocational education programs have “abandoned young people to the economic marketplace” (p. 176), where VET continues to be discussed in terms of economics and the importance of maintaining and increasing national prosperity and competitiveness in the global marketplace. She adds that the prevailing emphasis on economics is in direct opposition to the esteemed American educator/philosopher John Dewey’s call for a more balanced approach that acknowledges the need for academic and specific (vocational) training.

According to Winch and Hyland (2007), policy makers continue to express a desire to minimize (if not eliminate) the vocational-academic divide. An example of which is the government commissioned *Tomlinson Report* on the reform of the 14-19 curriculum and qualifications structure and the government’s response to the report. Sir Mike Tomlinson led a team that was tasked with a review of the UK education and training system and in large part they were expected to suggest the creation of a unified framework of qualifications. As part of that process they were required to examine the place and role for VET and provide suggestions on how to create ‘parity of esteem’ between vocational and academic education. In general, the report indicates that the response to concerns about VET provision have generally been on an ad hoc ‘crisis management’ basis and this approach is reflective of the second class classification that

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

has been attributed to VET when compared with its academic counterparts. At the end of the two year review period, the report suggested that ‘parity of esteem’ would be achieved by the establishment of a new single diploma (over a 10-year period) that would replace GCSEs, A-levels and vocational qualifications (Tomlinson, 2004). Government response to most aspects of the report proposals was positive, however, they did reject the suggestion to create a diploma that encompasses academic and vocational qualifications. It has been suggested that the government’s change of heart on the issue was a result of political pressure (i.e. a decline in the Prime Minister’s popularity, a potential election on the horizon and the Opposition Conservative Party defence of the ‘gold standard’ A levels).

While the Tomlinson report spoke of the need to deal with ‘parity of esteem’ debates, Atkins (2009) in her study of participants (the study takes place at two further education colleges in the English Midlands ) in lower level General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) programs laments the fact that the research focus has generally been narrow. She states that over the last 30 years, emphasis in VET research has been on A level equivalent credentials such as GNVQ Advanced, the parity of esteem debates and the extent to which vocational qualifications might be said to prepare young people for high education. She takes issue with the fact that there is little published about the needs and experiences of students undertaking vocational programmes at lower levels despite the fact that “vocational education at these levels forms the focus of the 14-19 agenda and that significant numbers of young people undertake lower level vocation programs” (pp. 4-5).

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Concerns about issues like the academic-vocational divide, the need for parity of esteem and employer engagement have resulted in a series of policies since the 1980s, some of which includes, the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), programmes such as GNVQ and, more recently, the specialized Diploma (Atkins, 2009). The succession of policy initiatives, including the recently proposed Apprenticeship Bill, is illustrative of a VET system that remains in flux. As Unwin (2009) stated rather bluntly in an article about the state of VET in England, "...the state of vocational education and training still resembles a patient who is struggling with the debilitating effects of a long-term illness and who is desperate for the right form of medication" (p. 9). Furthermore, it illustrates how successive policy initiatives have failed to address fundamental issues of equity within and across a "divided and divisive system" (Tomlinson, 1997, p. 13) of broadly-based educational offerings for secondary school-age students (14-19 years old).

### *Micro-level: Gender and vocational education*

Before embarking upon a discussion of research conducted on gender issues in vocational education, I would like to consider briefly, the wider picture of research on gender in education in England. To do so highlights some of the issues and historical periods that have received attention thus far. Key historical and ethnographic works completed on the topic of gender and education include Felicity Hunt's research (1987) which chronicles the form and content of formal education provided to girls and women between 1850 and 1950. Her examination of the period covered the formal as well as informal structures that girls and women experienced and the inequalities that were

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

present in the curriculum as well as the teaching profession. Hunt's (1991) later research also focused on gender and education in England but this second study looked specifically at the young girls' experience of education in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1902 – 1944). The study paid particular attention to how ideals regarding femininity and gender were woven into curricula structure and practice.

In addition, there is Brian Simon's (1999) examination of the struggles between progressive and conservative attempts at education reform since the 1944 Education Act until the 1990s which outlines the measures taken by each side to create an education system that reflects their respective ideologies. An additional study worth noting is June Purvis' (1989) look at working class women in 19<sup>th</sup> century England that explored the women's lives in terms of their experience as adult students, employed workers and unpaid familial responsibilities. The study also delves into the education made available to young girls and the resultant impact on their educational opportunities as adults. Finally, there is Paul Willis' (1977) research on working class youth in post-WWII which introduced the general public to the 'lads' subculture of working class boys and men and their contestation of authority and institutional structures of post-industrial England. In addition, the study talks about how the young men are implicated in the maintenance of their unequal socio-economic status. The studies listed above provide a historical timeline of (a) the role and place of girls and women in education; (b) youth culture and experience; and/or (c) the politics of education reform and thus could potentially provide a broader historical backdrop for this present study. However, while these studies pay attention to questions of class, policy and/or gender in education they do not deal specifically with vocational education and gender.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Focusing on gender in England's VET, the research conducted appears to be sparse, with few articles found (Beck, Fuller & Unwin, 2006; Fuller, Beck & Unwin, 2005; House of Commons, 2005; Miller, Pollard, Nethery, Hill & Ritchie, 2005; Miller, Nethery, Pollard, & Hill, 2004). For example, Beck et al.'s (2006), study looked at the intersection of gender and ethnicity on student perception on post-secondary educational and labour opportunities in a government-supported apprenticeships programme. The authors argue that well constructed apprenticeship opportunities can provide a good platform for fueling lifelong learning and career progression. Additionally, students need more information about how to compare full-time education against apprenticeships and other work-based options. As they put it,

We argue that the choices made at an early stage in young people's lives have considerable influence on an individual's career trajectory, often resulting in a reinforcement of labour market segregation. The lack of structured support and clear information channels identified in our research should therefore be addressed as a means to improve personal opportunities and career paths, as well as also helping correct skills shortages (Beck et al., 2006, p. 672).

The authors conclude that the findings matter because they reveal an unexpected level of conservativeness in how young people think about, and select their occupational choice; and it also demonstrates a reluctance to contest stereotypical ideas of educational and occupational choice and options. In a separate review of the Modern Apprenticeship programme, Fuller et al. (2005) found no significant increase in the number of female participants in non-traditional apprenticeships and occupations over the course of the 10 years that the programme had been in place.

Other research has included, Miller's (2005) study of UK apprenticeship programmes in four traditionally male-dominated areas (construction, plumbing,

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

engineering, information technology) and one traditionally female-dominated area (child care). In particular, the study looked at the issues of; barriers to entry in the various programmes, and the steps taken by the Learning and Skills Councils to deal with gender segregation. Interviews were conducted with representatives from the National Learning Skills Council (NLSC), and the Adult Learning Inspectorate. In total 47 Local Learning Skills Councils (LLSC) were surveyed and case studies were done in 5 LLSC regions. The author found that "...social and attitudinal barriers remain a major obstruction to those seeking to challenge gender segregation...traditional attitudes regarding the 'proper' jobs for women and men, social stereotypes and the poor image" (Miller, 2005, p. 294) continue to make it difficult to promote apprenticeship opportunities in these sectors.

Miller, Pollard, Nethery, Hill and Ritchie's (2005) working paper on gender segregation in the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) systems identified the following: (a) similarities between the patterns of gender segregation in MAs to those found in the labour market; (b) LLSCs thought employers, Connexions, sector skills councils and parents are well positioned to influence the patterns of gender segregation; (c) many LLSCs have implemented locally based equality and diversity impact measures however their focus was on increasing male participation and attainment in education and training and did not specifically deal with gender segregation; (d) feeder programmes have been created to encourage female participation in courses and offer a route to MAs and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ); and (e) Connexions<sup>8</sup> practices varied with

---

<sup>8</sup> The Connexions Service was established by the government in 2000 to provide students with guidance and support as they moved from compulsory schooling to diverse post-secondary learning environments. The key aims of the service included: increase students participation and achievement; provide careers advice and guidance to 13-19 year olds, assist students in transitioning from compulsory education to post-

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

some working to challenge gender stereotype while others felt it inappropriate to do that.

Four major barriers to challenging gender segregation include: attitudes to gender appropriate jobs, social stereotypes, lackluster image of some sectors and employer attitude. According to apprentices interviewed for the study, better VET career information is needed, and female apprentices often feel a sense of isolation and are targets for bullying from other apprentices. The authors suggest that small employers should share the cost of apprentices

An earlier working paper by some of the same authors (Miller et al., 2004) discussed the key findings of an EOC backed General Formal Investigation (GFI) on gender segregation and gender and skills gaps in several occupations. The occupations reviewed include: construction, engineering, plumbing, ICT, and childcare. An initial review of research on labour market and training statistics in the above listed occupations was conducted and the findings cover government policies and initiatives, occupational segregation theories, career choice, funding and initiatives to address segregation, and male and female employment in the sectors. The study found that a continued lack of recognition of the role of equal opportunity and gender segregation is worrisome because it can potentially lead to the reinforcement of education and training gender divides. In addition, regionally based agencies and councils varied in the extent to which they addressed the issue. The authors note that theories of individual differences, human capital theory, labour market discrimination, rational bias theories, and inter-group and dual labour theories have been used to account for how occupational gender segregation has been established and maintained. Furthermore, choice of career was found to have

---

secondary learning and work environments, and identify potential barriers to success and identify and provide the specialist support when needed. Retrieved from <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7621/1/DfES-0033-2001.pdf>

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

been influenced by occupational segregation, parental views, teaching styles, and careers advice and guidance. Suggestions included offering government subsidies to employers who take on apprentices, with initial emphasis on the areas that currently have labour shortages; a call for all future education and training policies to take into account gender impact; and the need to increase awareness of career education teachers to the issue of occupational segregation.

Along similar lines, the House of Commons Trade and Industry Committee (2005) report on gender differences in occupations and the associated likelihood of gender-based pay gap in the UK identified four factors that they felt contributes to the disparities. Findings include: (a) inadequate knowledge regarding career options and the resultant lack of knowledge about non-traditional occupations; (b) access to training in non-traditional areas is needed; (c) negative (even hostile) perceptions and practices in the workplace persist; (d) and a lack of part-time and/or flexible working environments in higher paid occupations and senior levels. The authors found that by and large women are heavily concentrated in a limited number of occupations that generally span the caring, cashiering, catering, cleaning and clerical spheres. They reported that 60 percent of UK women are employed in 10 out of 77 recognized occupations. In many cases these jobs are in small non-unionized firms and they are low paying and low status. Interviews conducted with representatives from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) found that students 16 and older were more likely to take into account the views of their peers and family when considering occupational choice. The resultant assumption was that unless they had received encouragement earlier the young women were less likely to consider it now. In fact they felt that "... schools should introduce some of these issues

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

to children even before the age of 14” (House of Commons Trade and Industry Committee, 2005, p. 8). The committee also called for greater involvement on the part of the Sector Skills Councils (SSC) to help increase employer awareness about how to deal with segregation and institute good business practice.

Other examples of qualitative research done on the issue of female participation in non-traditional occupations include O’Donnell’s (2008) study on women’s perspectives on non-traditional training; Smyth and Darmody’s (2009) investigation of secondary school girls views on choice of non-traditional VET in Ireland; Eardley and Mandvell’s (2006) look at the potential role of legislation in addressing under-representation in non-traditional VET programs; Taylor’s (2005) study on gender and work experience in ICT; and Whittock’s (2002) study on the lived experience of non-traditionally employed women in mid-1990s Northern Ireland. While, it does not deal specifically with women in non-traditional occupations, Cho’s (2000) Korean study on the role that socio-historical contexts, educational and work practices play in regulating the female body is also worthy of mention because it highlights the way in which young women’s bodies are identified, marked and expected to conform to men’s ideals and expectations.

O’Donnell’s (2008) study on region-specific (Northumberland located in the North East of England) vocational training for women in construction, engineering and manufacturing sector was funded in part by the Learning Skills Council (LSC) and the European Social Fund. Learning providers in the region were surveyed and interviews were conducted with local and regional policy makers, employers and program participants. Findings include: (a) socio-cultural context of the area factors into understanding the position of women in non-traditional occupations in the area; (b) more

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

effective promotion of the sectors and non-traditional occupations to young people is needed in schools; and (c) more efficient interaction amongst agencies responsible for promoting non-traditional occupations to women is needed.

Smyth and Darmody (2009) have said that while researchers have looked at female participation in traditionally male subjects like science and engineering, they have tended not to look at the low female take-up in craft and technological subjects. As a result their study looked at under-researched area of take-up in subjects like woodwork, metalwork and technical graphics in Ireland among boys and girls. Case studies were conducted in 12 secondary schools and interviews were conducted with girls, school principals, guidance counselors and teachers about subject choice, the school's provision of the courses, and school policy. The authors found that in Ireland course type and availability tends to reflect gender and social class composition. They state that, "gender identities interact with factors such as social class and ethnicity and also shape and are shaped by, the occupation division of labour, with assumptions regarding the gender of job occupants often built into the labour process from the outset" (Smyth & Darmody, 2009, p. 275). In general, subject choice was said to be influenced by: (a) parental views on occupations; (b) male and female student perceptions about what is gender appropriate; (c) and individual willingness to comply or contest existing perceptions about what is appropriate. While some students invoked gender equality discourse, the authors conclude that peers often play a role in policing or regulating gendered behaviour. In addition, the school's approach to the issue can help to confirm or contest existing views.

Eardley and Mandvell's (2006) American-based study suggest the use of legal remedies to redress inequities that stem from gender-based discrimination in US VET.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Career and Technical Education (CTE), a term commonly used in the US more than VET, data from 12 states were used to examine female participation (or lack thereof) in non-traditional subjects. They also consider how gender segregation or exclusion negatively impact the future earning potential of young women. The researchers state that "...students' interests are shaped by teacher, counselor, parent, peer and societal attitudes. Further, interest is linked to exposure, and substantial anecdotal evidence shows that girls' enrollment in nontraditional CTE subjects rises when they are educated about and encouraged to participate in nontraditional classes" (Eardley & Mandvell, 2006, p. 405). The authors provide suggestions on how legislation at the national level (e.g. Title IX) and more local levels of government might be employed to address the problem.

Meanwhile, Taylor's (2005) study uses Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus*, *field*, *social capital*, *cultural capital* and *symbolic capital* to discuss the gendered experiences of students in a Canadian secondary school ICT work experience initiative. A survey was conducted with interns from two years of the work experience, and interviews were done with 3 male and 3 female students who participated in this Alberta based internship initiative. Additional interviews were conducted with 5 employers and the work experience coordinator. Some of her findings include: (a) gender differences among the interns were naturalized whereby it was assumed that gender inequities are a result of student choice; (b) intern positions within the companies reflected heterosexual gender relations, in that girls were deemed to be 'passive' in the relationship and guests in the 'field'; (c) the girls had not accumulated the same level of social and cultural capital as the boys did before entering the 'field'. In relation to the last finding, the author felt that

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

while young women applied for the internships, they weren't necessarily starting at the same point as their male counterparts. She also notes that in contrast to the boys interviewed, two of the three girls interviewed spoke about the possibility of having to negotiate family responsibilities in the future. As a result she suggests "...that young women's visions of future work are influenced by heterosexual social relations that emphasize their responsibility for childcare and domestic labour" (Taylor, 2005, p. 182). One conclusion drawn by the author, which will be significant to pay attention to in my research, is that "given the subordinate position of women in the labour market generally, there needs to be more attention to the factors influencing outcomes of such work experience programs for female students" (Taylor, 2005, p. 184).

The study by Margaret Whittock (2002) looked at the "...lived experience of non-traditionally employed women, conducted in Northern Ireland in the mid-1990s" (p. 449). While this study does not cover England's VET system, it does provide an idea of the kind of experiences women encounter in male-dominated vocational environments. Once again, the author found that barriers to entry do exist, and that perceptions of 'tokenism' exist among their male colleagues. Furthermore, issues of polarization, and the need for assimilation were raised by study participants.

Finally, Cho (2000) spoke with teachers and students at two private vocational schools in South Korea. The students at the schools, who typically came from lower socio-economic backgrounds, were completing programs that prepared them to assume low skill clerical work. The author raises questions about what socio-economic contexts led corporations to require dress codes for low paid female clerical workers. It also looks at the mechanisms by which the female body is marked and regulated during the

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

recruitment process in large corporations. The author summarizes her findings as follows:

The lower-class women's bodies were regulated in such a way that any conceived threat to heterosexual middle-class males was diminished, the males' superiority was confirmed, and their desires of seeing, which are significantly influenced by ideas of feminine beauty in advanced Western countries, were realized. In order to regulate lower-class women's bodies, objectification, normalizing surveillance, and the discursive deployment of supposedly neutral rules of companies (quality customer service or a pleasant and productive work climate) were mobilized (Cho, 2000, p. 161).

While the practice of requiring a particular physical appearance (i.e. young, attractive, weigh less than 50kg and be taller than 160cms) is positioned as an efficient business practice because the aim is to provide quality customer service, the truth is that it is not solely a corporate decision. Male co-workers, recruiters and school representatives were complicit in upholding the new standards. In addition, Western ideas of what constitutes beauty were employed to establish the 'acceptable' standard. Within the corporation and to some extent within the schools the women's bodies were commodities.

### *Reflecting on the research literature: VET history, foundations and policy trends*

This section moves slightly from the act of reviewing and presenting the literature to one of reflecting upon and sharing those reflections *about* the literature. This review of literature has shown that certain macro level issues inform policy and practice. In particular the issue of labour market requirements and economics continue to foreground debate, practice and direction of education in general and vocational education in particular (Clarke & Winch, 2010; Unwin, 2009, 2004; Winch & Hyland, 2007; Ainsworth & Roscigno, 2005; Taylor, 2005). There is an overriding emphasis on attuning

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

educational institutions and their practices more closely to economic needs and demands (Taylor, 2005). As Robinson's (2002) examination of the 1902 Education Act show, even the earliest attempts at structuring a national system of education in England was undertaken with the aim to provide children with the skills and routines needed to participate in the labour force. Resultantly, tensions exist between the idea of providing education that produces trained workers with the skills needed to be efficient producers that can foster capital accumulation, versus education that increases opportunities at advancement, equality, mobility and democratic participation. Close alignment to labour market realities represents a considerable challenge for those tasked with VET policy and curriculum creation and provision.

One could argue that this emphasis on the role of economics and labour market requirements has primarily served to inhibit successful implementation of educational strategies. First, let us assume that if school relationships, structures and strategies closely mirror corporate workplace structures, then it too has been affected by changing workplace strategies like the emergence and entrenchment of the factory system, monopoly capitalism, and to the introduction of scientific management principles that have resulted in greater delineation of work tasks and social division of labour. If educational systems (namely schools) are seen (and positioned) as having a direct link to the workforce, then educational strategies are expected to encompass the needs of that workforce. However, since educational strategies appear to be increasingly tied to labour market requirements and strategies, then education in general is faced with the difficult task of keeping pace with the (perceived) changing labour market requirements. What is striking about this relationship (yet, appears to be lacking in the literature) is the extent to

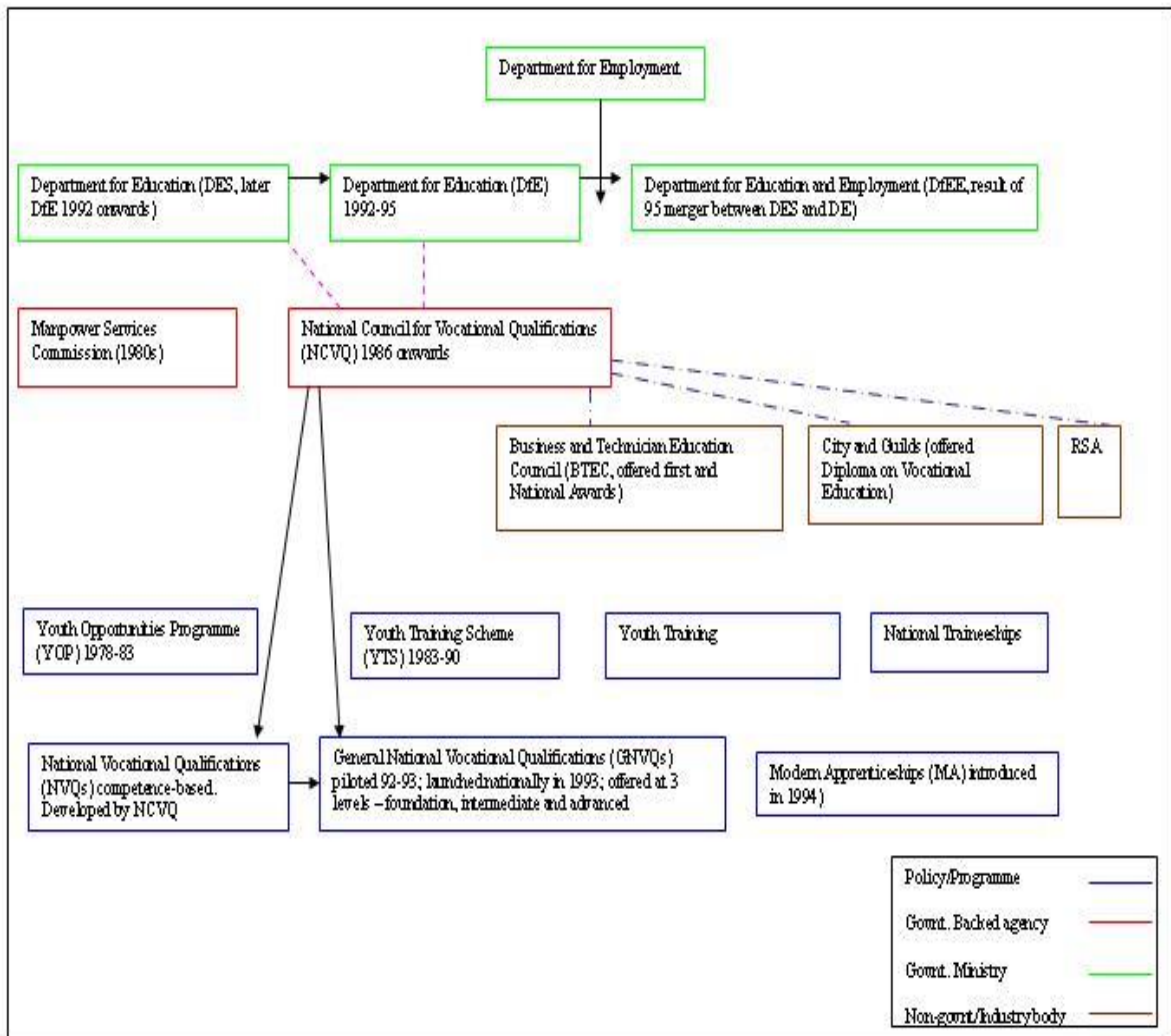
## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

which the links between education and labour market requirements are based on differing operating strategies. Oftentimes educational strategies are unable to keep pace with labour market requirements because of dwindling resources (monetary and non-monetary). Furthermore, educational environments have traditionally worked on significantly different timelines to that of the corporate sector. The corporate sector is expected to function like a 'lean, mean fighting machine,' working on the basis of quarterly or annual profits. Meanwhile, the primary/secondary educational sector is expected to 'output' its 'product' in approximately 12 years. Moreover, the corporate sector may have a sole proprietor or a limited number of shareholders, while the primary/secondary educational sector must report to many bosses and clients at any given time. One is left with the sense that potentially the two timelines are incompatible. For example, what happens when secondary schools are presented with the opportunity to participate in a government-backed or local college-led initiative aimed at encouraging female participation in vocational education and in particular the skilled trade sector? The success and/or failure of that kind of vocational education initiative depends on a number of factors that are far removed from the level of interest exhibited by the intended audience such as: 1) consistent financial and non-financial support from government, the college and the secondary school, and 2) the individuals tasked with administering and coordinating the vocational education initiative. Accordingly, one could argue that the financial and personnel commitment provided for the initiative influence the extent and the manner in which the initiative is presented and marketed to the intended audience. However, it would be shortsighted to assume that success and/or failure of the initiative depends solely or primarily upon external socio-cultural factors. Success and/or failure

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

also depends upon the extent to which the intended audience hears, receives and believes (or not) in the possibilities that the initiative might hold for their personal, academic or professional futures.

*Reflecting on the research literature: The evolution (or is it descent?) of VET in England*



**Figure 1:** VET policy, programmes and associated government and non-government department changes in England, 1970s- Present.

Generally speaking, it seems, while drawing comparisons between labour market timelines, profit and assessment schedules, and the ‘lean, mean’ corporate structure to

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

changes to VET policy and practice may seem humorous, questions regarding rate of change within the VET domain does seem warranted. Summarized in Figure 1, the several studies on the history of England's VET policy show the sheer number of changes that have taken place over the course of approximately 30 years. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of some of those major changes. The diagram has been included in order to highlight the numerous agencies, ministries and various private and public sector organizations that have had influence on not only the development of the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) but also VET system in England. The changes that have taken place in relation to not only VET policy and curriculum structure but also the institutions charged with overseeing VET policy development and administration have been substantial and it is unlikely that each shift in policy, practice and/or departmental structure did *not* impact the provision of vocational education programs and overall student interest *in*, and experience *of* VET.

For example, the development and introduction of GNVQ was not without difficulties. As Williams (1999) points out difficulties arose during the development and introduction phases because of the sheer number of government and non-governmental departments that wished to have input in the development process. Political demands also served to hasten policy development and introduction, possibly to the detriment of establishing a VET system that adequately meets the needs of students as well as other stakeholders. Prior to the GNVQ there were other programs and agencies that appeared then disappeared.

Brockmann, Winch and Clarke (2010) wrote about the evolution and subsequent dissolution of several programmes and agencies that were meant to improve VET. For

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

example, the creation of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) in 1974 was meant to address skilled labour shortages, employer criticism of ITB financial sanctions, inadequate co-ordination of skills training in different occupations and a failure to provide for the needs of young people in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs that date back to government interventions in the 1960s. However, rising rates of youth unemployment during the 1980s also meant that some form of new initiative was imperative. By the 1980s the MSC had to contend with a number of education and training issues that included, high youth unemployment, a low-skilled workforce and demands from employers to provide a VET system that met their needs. Employer involvement and input into what constitutes the VET system began to take on greater importance. So, once again a change to the system by way of new policies, and the introduction of new agencies was undertaken.

The shift that occurred during the 1990s was seen as a way to reconstitute the vocational education framework into something that better reflected contemporary conditions (Brockmann et al., 2010; Hoeckel, Cully, Field, Halasz & Kis, 2009; Winch & Hyland, 2007). The launch of the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) in 1994 combined National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in a specific area, and the Key Skills Certificate that accredits basic literacy, numeracy and communication skills. This 'modern' approach to vocational education provision was introduced to replace its predecessor - the ill received Youth Training Scheme (YTS) (Brockmann et al., 2010 p. 111).

Under the MA system "...employers received a subsidy for employing a young person to cover variable costs, dependent on the expense involved in reaching the

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

required standard” (Brockmann et al., 2010, p. 111). The authors argue that theoretical knowledge was required in the original MA set-up (students needed to obtain the Technical Certificate) but this was eventually made optional in 2006. In the end, the success of the MA is thought to have been hampered by low completion rates and an overall decline in the number of young people interested in taking up MAs (Brockmann et al., 2010; Fuller et al., 2005). Once again, another VET initiative failed to meet its goals, and as a result a newer, re-vamped approach to VET policy and provision was seen to be needed.

In reflecting upon the myriad changes that have taken place within the VET domain over the years, one is left with a sense that moving forward, a more simplified system of delivery and oversight by institutions specifically tasked with dealing with the VET system is an essential component of any VET policy (Hoeckel et al., 2009). As Williams (1999) states, simplification of the policy development and programme provision process can only serve to lessen the degree of confusion and frustration often expressed by employers and the labour market, and possibly the disinterest expressed by students.

#### *Reflecting on the research literature: Gender and VET*

I now turn my thoughts to the literature that pertains to gender and VET. What I have found interesting thus far has been a lack of use of the term gender equity (or even equality) within the discursive regime of the existing research literature. In this case equity refers to notions of fairness while equality refers to equal access for all (HarperCollins, 2001). An equity driven policy may require that accommodations be

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

introduced in order to meet special or individual needs, as such equity does not necessarily result in equal treatment for all. In effect, the equity driven policy is intended to redress sociohistorically derived imbalance. The development and implementation of special legislation or the distribution of additional resources are examples of equity-driven policies. These accommodations are meant to level the playing field. Meanwhile, equality calls for equal access to all irrespective of gender, ethnicity, sexuality etc. Equality is based on the premise that all people deserve the same privileges, status, opportunities and chances.

While issues of gender equity and equality are implied in the research, use of the terms is generally not overt. Perhaps the absence of discussion regarding gender equity is indicative of the difficulty that is often associated with distinguishing between questions of equality and equity in educational settings. It seems to have been difficult enough to provide educational programs that treat boys and girls equally but finding programs that treat them equitably appears to be even more difficult. Alternatively, if some researchers' contentions are to be taken up (see especially Fenwick, 2004; Unwin, 2005), issues of gender equity have been displaced by the agendas of economically (neo)conservative governments that espouse the marketization, privatization and competition of education and training at the expense of creating fair and just learning environments for girls and women.

So, what does it mean to have gender equity in VET? How are the issues of equity vs. equality to be understood within the context of a VET classroom that seeks to engender interest among young girls for non-traditional occupations? These kinds of questions may best be explored and discussed by conducting research that includes

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

accounts of what transpires in the vocational education classroom. It is at this level, the micro level of the vocational education classroom, that one is apt to gain insight into issues like equity and equality. In turn, classroom level examination that results in analysis and discussion of student commentary may provide insight into the “contradictions, the possibilities for change and the resources within vocational education, both ideological and practical, which might be used to contest class and gender based orthodoxies about work and education” (Gaskell, 1993, p. 54).

While vocational education literature might highlight a need to focus on issues like gender segregation in the vocational education classroom, it appears to have paid even less attention to the ways in which the individual’s gendered understanding of themselves might be performed or be contested in the classroom. Moreover, vocational education literature does not appear to have examined how ideas and discourses of gender that are present at a macro-level may inform how the gendered individual plays out their educational and professional lives. Finally, the issues of gendered understanding of self and discourses of gender that are present at the macro level *can*, but appear to have rarely been examined using a feminist theoretical perspective. The need for a process by which a feminist-informed theoretical perspective may be employed to explore societal notions and more specifically gendered experiences in non-traditional vocational education settings will be discussed more fully in the next section.

### *The gendered body: Intersecting feminist theory and research*

Although I placed this section as part of the Literature Review, what follows crosses over between Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework. As Patti Lather

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

(1991) argues, the female body is hard to pin down into a neat category. Feminist qualitative research for instance, Lather (1991) contends, is varied and contested within and across perspectives (see also Schwandt, 2001; Olesen, 2000; Ashcraft, 1998). The range of feminist research varies significantly and some may look at lived experiences while others look at the intersection of gender, race and class. For example, when Patti Lather (1991, p. 71) attempts to answer the question “What is feminist research?”, she responds to it in the following manner; feminist research (a) puts the social construction of gender at the center of one’s inquiry; (b) sees gender as a basic organizing principle which profoundly shapes/mediates the concrete conditions of our lives; (c) argues the centrality of gender in the shaping of our consciousness, skills and institutions as well as in the distribution of power and resources. She adds that the goal of feminist research is to correct the invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women’s unequal social position. Meanwhile, others focus on gender and sexuality (Pillow, 2003), women’s role in the family (Kelm, 2003), or in-class observation and the kind of socialization that takes place in schools (Llewellyn, 2006; Acker, 1999).

While conceptualizations of what constitutes feminist research have undergone change over the years, certain elements are fairly common across these varied perspectives. In general, feminist research problematizes the female (girls, women’s) experience, the gendered nature of institutions, and the socio-historical structures that helped to frame them (Oleson, 2000; Lather, 1991). Women have multiple identities and subjectivities that are informed by experience, institutions, and varied socio-historical contexts and feminist research attempts to foreground that multiplicity. Feminist researchers seek to afford women the opportunity to give voice to their varied

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

experiences because they are often silenced (Moffatt & Norton, 2008). Feminist research can highlight the lives, struggles and possibilities available to women. Moreover, it also asks that we consider the interplay of the structure of gender relations; how masculinity and femininity defined; and economic power (Connell, 1987).

The notion of context is very important in feminist research because there is a sense that there is no universal experience of gender (St. Pierre, 2000; Lather, 1991).

Furthermore, attitudes about gender relations and gender equity are not static or inevitable (Moffatt & Norton, 2008). People's ideas about these issues are informed by the interplay between social and historical events and these ideas are re-presented and reinforced through the actions and interactions of parents, students and teachers.

However, Moffatt and Norton (2008) argue that while parents, teachers and students play a role in the re-production of gender relations, they also have the ability to create and enact alternative ways of thinking about gender relations.

### *This researcher's perspective*

As a woman and a researcher, it is the confluence of this context, individual experience, and socio-historical factors that fascinates me (Figure 2). From a feminist theory perspective, socio-historical factors may be implicated in how individual experience is understood in the vocational education classroom. More importantly, certain aspects of feminist theory, such as Lather's (1991) view that gender is a social construction and an organizing principle of experience present new opportunities for exploring experience in a vocational education initiative. Another example of feminist thought that can assist in conducting research on VET experience is Pillow's (2003) idea of the gendered body as something that is performed. This performance refers to

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

physical attributes, appearance and attire but I contend that it also refers to how young girls and women talk about gender related issues to each other. For example, the language and terms used by girls and women to discuss education and professional possibilities as appropriate and inappropriate or outside the norm reflect a form of gendered talk that reifies arbitrary and unsubstantiated limits as to what education and professions are possible and appropriate. Furthermore, Bordo's (1999) reflections on Foucault's notions regarding power and the politics of the body seem well suited to research on the gendered experience in a non-traditional vocational education setting. In it she states that placing emphasis on the gendered (i.e. female) body solely in binary terms, in other words something that is subject to social conditioning or normalization, underestimates

...the unstable nature of subjectivity and the creative agency of individuals – 'the cultural work' (as one theorist puts it) by which nomadic, fragmented, active subjects confound dominant discourse. In this view the dominant discourses which define femininity are continually allowing for the eruption of 'difference', and even the most subordinated subjects are therefore continually confronted with opportunities for resistance, for making meanings that 'oppose or evade the dominant ideology' (Bordo, 1999, p. 255).

Overall, these researchers' ideas do not assume that gender is experienced or should be discussed in a uniform way. In fact, I would argue that while physical restraint, coercion or the wielding of power represent several means through which gendered (i.e. female) experience is determined or understood, experience may also be determined and understood through the lens of self-surveillance and self-correction to norms (or through resistance). Moreover, there is the potential to present and discuss how gendered experience may contradict, resist, or contest how notions of gender is understood and reproduced in vocational education environment. Finally, student perception regarding a

particular initiative gives voice to their experience but those perceptions also represent information that could inform government and school policy and practice in VET.

## **Summary**

This chapter has reviewed literature that pertains to vocational education in England, gender and the extent to which gender has been discussed within vocational education. The review was based on the assumption that there are both macro and micro level issues that influence vocational education policy and practice, as well as student experience. Thus the chapter has been divided into a section that highlighted literature that deals with the historical foundations and policy trends of vocational education in England. The section entitled *micro level* looked at the place that gender holds in VET policy and practice and how female participation in non-traditional VET. The chapter also included my reflections on points and issues raised in the research literature.

The research literature suggests that over the last 30 years vocational education and training in England has undergone numerous changes from an organizational, administrative and curricula perspective. There have been changes to the government department(s) responsible for overseeing VET, and the curriculum that is offered to students at both the secondary and post-secondary school level. A number of authors have called for the simplification of both VET policy and provision (Brockmann et al., 2010; Hoeckel et al., 2009; Winch & Hyland, 2007; Fuller et al., 2005). Meanwhile, the review of literature on gender and vocational education suggests that limited attention has been given to questions of female experience and participation in VET. The chapter concluded with a section that introduced the concept of the gendered body and the need

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

to create research that considers the contextual nature of individual experience and in particular the varied and at times complex nature of female experience.

### CHAPTER 3

#### A FEMINIST INFORMED GENEALOGY OF GENDERED BODILY

##### EXPERIENCE: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

I remember on the bus on the way there, I was just thinking ‘this is not for me, going on a construction day – a girl...It’s the word construction that comes to mind, it’s building and you think about the physical and muscles. (Katie, participant in the Construction taster day)

Katie’s comments above suggest that when one thinks about a profession, those thoughts are relational in nature. She does not think about the profession alone, but she thinks about herself as “a girl” in relation to that profession. As a whole, her comments speak to the importance of gender, the real or perceived boundaries attributed to one’s gender, and the way in which those ideas can impact how one views their abilities and potential opportunities. Katie’s comments also cast a light on the kinds of discursive regimes that mark and construct which bodies should be in certain VET environments. As much as the words “physical and muscles” are used to express her misgivings about attending a construction taster day, the words also conjures an image. This image evoked is steeped in historical and cultural knowledge that is accessible to all but simultaneously works to mark, train, select and exclude certain bodies (Rabinow & Rose, 2003). In this conceptual framework chapter I engage the works of authors like Butler (2006, 1993), Foucault (1990) and Pillow (2003) to think through some of what Katie addresses in the citation above.

For Miles and Huberman (1994), a conceptual framework is the aspect of one’s study that “...explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, concepts, or variable – and the presumed relationships among them” (p.18). The conceptual framework, in general, is intended to re-present the

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

researcher's conception or model about what is the intended focus of the study, and what the researcher thinks is going on and why. While the conceptual framework provides a visual and/or written documentation of the researcher's thoughts and expectations about the issue at hand, it also functions to inform the research design itself. The conceptual framework relies in part on researcher beliefs that may be a result of personal experience, their interaction with and understanding of the research literature, but it also helps with the refinement of research goals and questions, selection of appropriate methodology and methods, and foreshadowing of topics or areas that are likely to be examined and critiqued in the data analysis and subsequent discussion sections.

What follows represents my conceptual framework for this research study. First, I begin with a discussion of how gender is defined and discussed from a feminist perspective. This discussion serves as a precursor and provides additional context to my subsequent discussion of the foundational concepts that shape this study. The second section identifies and defines the foundational concepts that underpin the research study. These concepts include: (a) genealogy; (b) gender; (c) body; and (d) experience. The first part of this chapter offers a series of definitions of these concepts while the final section provides a visual representation of the various factors that form the study, followed by a written representation of how these factors interrelate.

### *Defining and discussing gender*

The preceding Literature Review (Chapter 2) included a section that looked at the place and role that gender has played in vocational research, I will now follow up on that discussion and examine how gender, with particular emphasis placed on what it means to

be a woman, is defined and discussed. This examination of ‘gender’ as a notion relies primarily upon feminist informed perspectives and it is intended to foreground my presentation of the foundational concepts that underpin this case study.

In feminist theory discourse regarding gender abounds and that discourse is far from uniform (Butler, 2006; Birke, 1999; Bordo, 1999; Marshall, 1999; Wittig, 1981). If one thinks in terms of how feminist theory is often categorized, discussions regarding gender may be separated into three lines of thought that include: feminist empiricism, standpoint theory and postmodern theory (sometimes referred to as post-structural theory or even social constructivism) (Butler, 2006; Schwandt, 2001; Oleson, 2000; Ashcraft, 1998). Table 1 presents some of the basic points associated with each of the three feminist epistemologies, while Table 2 presents five modes of feminist thought<sup>9</sup>.

Table 1. Feminist Epistemologies – Key Points

<b><i>Feminist Empiricism</i></b> (spontaneous vs contextual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Links to positivist methodologies and the aim is to create “feminist science” based on strong objectivity [Some key voices include: Sandra Harding]</li> </ul>
<b><i>Feminist standpoint</i></b> epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Traditional research is steeped in assumptions regarding women, gender, and male superiority.</li> <li>▪ A separate female standpoint exists from the male one that is dominant i.e. women bring a unique perspective to a given situation/experience.</li> <li>▪ Gender, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation, among others, colour our worldview. Knowledge claims are socially located [Some key voices include Carol Gilligan, Donna Haraway, Sandra Harding]</li> </ul>
<b><i>Social constructivism, postmodern, post-structural</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rejects positivism and challenges the notion of objectivity as unbiased observation. Focus on multiplicity of experience and relational over rational frameworks.</li> <li>▪ Understanding and knowledge of the world is contextual, whereby the production of knowledge is a social process. [Some key voices include Chris Weedon, Michelle Lazar, Judith Butler, Patti Lather, Deborah Britzman]</li> </ul>

<sup>9</sup> Tables 1 and 2 are based upon information found in *Women’s work; a survey of scholarship by and about women* (pp. 1-36), by D.M. Ashcraft, 1998, Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press.

Feminist informed theoretical discussions on gender may be further classified into five modes of feminist thought that includes: liberal, radical, cultural, socialist and postmodern feminism (Ashcraft, 1998).

Table 2. Five Modes of thought on Feminist Theory

<b><i>Liberal Feminism</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Differences between males and females are a result of socialization;</li> <li>▪ Call for equal opportunity;</li> <li>▪ Occupational differences are due to gender and social perspectives.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Radical Feminism</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Patriarchal society is the primary cause of oppression;</li> <li>▪ Even some forms of sexuality are patriarchal in nature, for example, heterosexuality</li> </ul>
<b><i>Cultural Feminism</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a culture of women and that there are differences between men and women;</li> <li>▪ Call for the valuing of traits for men and women;</li> <li>▪ Society devalues women (Carol Gilligan)</li> </ul>
<b><i>Socialist Feminism</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Critiquing capitalism;</li> <li>▪ Societal notions of sex and gender result in oppression.</li> <li>▪ Concerned with varied female experiences that depend on group affiliation.</li> <li>▪ Oppression exists as a result of capitalist hierarchy and patriarchy</li> </ul>
<b><i>Postmodern Feminism</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All knowledge is constructed</li> <li>▪ Gender is socially constructed there are societal influences on individual assumptions. Multiple interpretations of experiences do exist;</li> <li>▪ Wariness regarding the use of generalizations.</li> <li>▪ Language is socially constructed and therefore, language constructs our assumptions</li> </ul>

Use of the aforementioned categorizations should not be interpreted as comprehensive because to do so would underestimate the varied and sometimes blurred lines that may exist within and across feminist perspectives.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

This discussion of gender is not intended to provide specific definitions that align with the previously mentioned categories; instead it is intended to serve as a brief overview of some of the feminist-informed perspectives that have influenced the discourse (i.e. how we think and talk about) on gender<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, when possible connections have been made between these perspectives and the manner in which gender is discussed and played out (and not) in vocational education.

Possibly one of the earliest individuals to write about woman's place in society is François Poulain de la Barre, who in 1673 wrote *On the equality of the sexes*, in which he stated that women are as capable of intellectual betterment as their male counterparts and argues that social customs have served to limit women's opportunities and achievements. Discussed in Freedman (1997), De la Barre asserts that social customs have been most influential in limiting how women are defined and perceived by society.

Since there seems not to be any greater difference between the minds of the two sexes, we can say that the difference does not lie there. It is rather the constitution of the body, but particularly education, religious observance, and the effects of our environment which are the natural and perceptible causes of the many differences between people (cited in Freedman, 1997, p. 11).

De la Barre then proceeds to speak of the need "...that we give both sexes their due" (cited in Freedman, 1997, p. 13), pointing out the distinctions that are generally ascribed to men and women:

On the one hand, if we mean to praise a woman who has extraordinary courage, strength, or intelligence, we say that she is manly... Virtue, gentleness, and honesty are so intimately associated with women that if their sex had not been held in such low esteem we would have praised a man who possess these qualities to an extraordinary degree by saying 'he

---

<sup>10</sup> The notion of blurred lines in feminist theorizing goes beyond the basic categorizations listed at the beginning of this section. Feminist theorizing may be further categorized based on issues of class, race and sexuality. So, for some this literature review may be more accurately classified as one that looks at some of the pre-eminent white Eurocentric authors who have influenced the course of feminist theorizing.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

is a woman' if men had been willing to accept that kind of language into their speech. (cited in Freedman, 1997, p. 13)

De la Barre's latter point regarding strength and intelligence versus virtue and gentleness as descriptors of maleness and femaleness in some ways still resonates today. For example, Atkins (2009) conducted a case study of the experiences and aspirations of students attending vocational education programmes at two Further Education (FE) colleges in England. While the study was not specifically about gendered experiences in the programmes, Atkins (2009) does point out that both males and females "...are constrained by local and gendered practices and beliefs which are regarded as natural and normal by the community" (p. 112). Also, while many of the female students in her study rejected the notion of domesticity as an ideal situation for young women, she found that they still held a range of caring responsibilities in their homes and were more likely to be enrolled and/or aspire to vocational programmes and professions that might be categorized as 'gentle and caring' such as (e.g. midwife, nurse, social worker, and nursery teacher). So, while Mary Wollstonecraft may have written about woman's right to receive an education that was not based on the need to serve God, but on the common humanity of men and women (see Freedman, 1997), Atkin's study demonstrates that the kind of educational and professional choices that women may aspire to is still (at least in this case) categorized based on assumptions about what is appropriate for one's gender.

Gender-based distinctions have been analyzed and critiqued in a number of ways but one common critique within feminist discourse can be linked to the idea that gender is biologically determined. There may have been earlier feminist theorists who wrote about links between normative understanding and representation of gender and biology, but Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1989) is often considered one of the most

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

influential texts. *The Second Sex* attempts to break through the rhetoric that supports the idea of female inferiority and biologically based explanations and assumptions about women's secondary status in society by asserting that

[T]he two sexes have never shared the world in equality. And even today woman is heavily handicapped, though her situation is beginning to change. Almost nowhere is her legal status the same as man's, and frequently it is much to her disadvantage. Even when her rights are legally recognized in the abstract, long-standing custom prevents their full expression the mores. In the economic sphere men and women can almost be said to make up two castes; other things being equal the former hold the better jobs, get higher wages, and have more opportunity for success than their new competitors. (p. xxvi)

Other authors like Monique Wittig (1981) have invoked de Beauvoir's notion that biology is not destiny and argue that the category of woman is political not a given (i.e. natural). Wittig's theory emphasizes the material condition that give rise to our understanding of woman, which is directly linked to women's reproduction and their sexual choices. However, in Wittig's case, lesbianism is used to expose the limits of heterosexuality for all women. She sought to undermine the distinctions made between male and female, homosexual and heterosexual by focusing on the socially constructed nature of all these terms/ideas.

Another seminal work that seems to have influenced how feminist authors have written about gender, is Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1* (1990). Foucault's text does not focus strictly on the female body but it does explore notions like power, politics of the body and normalisation that were readily taken up by feminist authors who wished to examine, analyze and/or critique common perceptions about gender, woman, female and sex (Butler, 2006; 1993; Pillow, 2003; Bordo, 1999; Sawicki,

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

1999). For example, when talking about power and the subjugation of the body, Foucault (1990) states the following:

The old power of death that symbolized sovereign power was now carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life. During the classical period, there was a rapid development of various disciplines—universities, secondary schools, barracks, workshops; there was also the emergence, in the field of political practices and economic observation of the problems of birthrate, longevity, public health, housing and migration. Hence there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of “bio-power”. (pp. 139-140)

Sovereign power no longer reigns supreme; instead a more subtle, nuanced version of power emerges. In many ways attempts to pin down who has ‘power’ is illusive in the sense that power is held by all and by none. Foucault (1990) elaborates further on this notion of bio-power by stating that (and he is worth quoting at length):

This bio-power was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes. But this was not all it required, it also needed the growth of both these factors, their reinforcement as well as their availability and docility; it had to have methods of power capable of optimizing forces, aptitudes, and life in general without at the same time making them more difficult to govern. If the development of the great instruments of the state, as *institutions* of power, ensured the maintenance of production relations, the rudiments of anatomo- and bio-politics, created in the eighteenth century as *techniques* of power present at every level of the social body and utilized by very diverse institutions (the family and the army, schools, and the police, individual medicine and the administration of collective bodies), operated in the sphere of economic process, their development and the forces working to sustain them. They also acted as factors of segregation and social hierarchization, exerting their influence on the respective forces of both these movements, guaranteeing relations of domination and effects of hegemony. (p. 141)

‘Power,’ ‘bodies as part of the production machine,’ and ‘establishment of state instruments’ (i.e. institutions like schools) are inextricably linked together. The body is

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

subjugated and controlled by these instruments, but these same bodies are implicated in their own subjugation. Upon reflection, it is possible to identify shades of Foucault's thoughts regarding bio-power and the body as it relates to feminist theorizing about gender in the works of people like Butler (2006), Pillow (2003); Marshall (1999) and Bordo (1999). As an example, Butler (2006) writes

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being. A political genealogy of gender ontologies, if it is successful, will deconstruct the substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender. (p. 45)

Here, we see Butler's definition of gender as something that is not separate from the social, political and historical. In this case gender is given 'substance' through context, it can be discussed as shifting and relative depending upon cultural and historical sets of relations.

In her case study of teen pregnancy, Pillow (2003) uses Foucaultian informed feminist genealogy to examine how the pregnant teen body is marked by school policy and processes in the US. She contends that "...processes and constructs of gender, race and class impact which bodies are marked and how they are marked...bodies represent and are represented. Whether rendered invisible, portrayed romantically, described with statistics... policies are about and for bodies" (p. 148).

Meanwhile, Marshall's (1999) phenomenological approach to writing about the body is premised on the idea that the body

...is as social as it is individual... an embodied self is being continuously created and recreated by and in social interaction that take place within and around corporeal action...when we try to name our bodily experiences, we are always involved in a dialogue. So when

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

researchers try to describe women's experiences in particular situations, we need to ask about who else is there – literally or in imagination. (p. 71)

Once again there is reference to the individual as well as contextual nature of experience but there is also acknowledgement that individual experience is tied to a broader social and political context that is implicated in the creation and re-creation of the body. What is particularly appealing about the preceding conceptualizations of the body is the notion of the individual and social body as intertwined. Individual experience is not 'disembodied' from the social, individual experience is informed by the social. Moreover, the researcher is acknowledged as implicated in the interchange, the researcher is not 'disembodied' from the research process. As such, as a researcher any attempt to re-present women's experience is shaped by the discourse that occurs with participants but also by the dialogue that occurs as we design and progress through the research process.

### *Foundational concepts*

The following presents the foundational concepts that will be used to create a more detailed account of the conceptual framework. Some of the concepts were discussed in the Literature Review, however, these short definitions are intended to highlight how the terms have been understood in order to create the conceptual framework, select the methodology and present, analyze and critique the data gathered and reviewed during the course of this research study. More detailed discussions of the various concepts can be found later in the chapter.

## **Genealogy**

Foucault (1979) argues that concepts have a history, they change over time and since they have a motivation for their use they must themselves be interrogated. Instead of the traditional approach to historical analysis that assumes the stable and contiguous nature of events, genealogy emphasizes the complex, contingent nature of historical events. The genealogical method traces the history of a word or concept in order to discuss the multiple, historically situated and sometimes unrelated contexts of a word or development of a concept.

The term genealogy is concerned with the notion of power, how that power works, and describing the history of the present (Mills, 2003). Power, refers to relations of power, whereby power does not reside in any one individual or institution but exists in human relationships (Foucault, 1990). Power relations are not stable, they can shift and reverse and within that possibility for change lays the possibility for resistance or contestation of power relations. “Power is not simply oppressive or repressive but is also productive...Raising awareness of how power relations are exercised historically and discursively assists in identifying contexts in which resistances may emerge” (Ritenburg, 2010, p. 73). In other words, conducting a genealogical analysis tracing the history of the present allows the researcher to question and examine how a particular discourse came to be dominant, thereby making it difficult to think and act outside of that discourse. Moreover, interrogation of discourse(s) associated with a particular concept can highlight the multi-faceted nature of its origin, and expose the competing discourses that may disrupt what was previously considered unchangeable.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

A feminist informed genealogy assumes that women's (the female) experiences and perspectives are valuable, whereby the woman's perspective serves as a starting point for analysis that acknowledge the gendered, located and situated nature of knowledge (Cranny-Francis, Waring, Stavropoulos & Kirkby, 2003, Pillow, 2003). The subject (individual) is viewed of in relational as opposed to transcendent terms. Knowledge is personal, political and multiple. In contrast to the modernist conception of reality that presumes the existence of neutral observation and disembodied objectivity, a feminist informed genealogy emphasizes the socially and materially constructed nature of reality. It acknowledges the existence of perspectives that may contradict or resist a dominant discourse that has come to be viewed as normal and natural.

Butler's (2006, 1993) notion of gender as performative serves well as an example of a feminist informed genealogy that subverts the dominant binary discourse on gender. Her argument regarding the performative nature of gender asks that we think beyond the male-female binary to something that is more individual, fluid and contextual. So when we think about what it means to be a woman in a given situation in relation to existing discursive regimes, we may encounter contradictions, confusions and messiness. Gender specific assumptions can no longer be easily ascribed to an individual and other factors like context, class, culture and history are assumed to play a role in the performance of gender.

The ideals of a feminist genealogy can also be seen in the work of Simone de Beauvoir. When de Beauvoir (1989, p. 267) states in *The Second Sex* that "one is not born a woman, but rather becomes a woman", she too questions the prevailing male-female binary. Her statement raises the question - if we are not born into our gender then

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

how do we become that gender? Since gender is not based exclusively on biology then what external factors have and continue to inform how we think about, understand and perform gender.

### **Gender**

Gender, is commonly accepted as the concept that divides humans into the two categories of male and female, however in feminist theory and analysis it is generally understood as the cultural or social construction of sex (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003; Butler, 2006, 1993; Paechter, 2003a). In both cases, division along these lines has implications for all aspects of our lives – gender is always present and at work. The term refers to the gender that one is, but it also refers to particular meanings that have been socially and culturally ascribed to human beings. In the essentialist view, the male body elicits male behaviours while the female body produces female behaviours.

Alternatively, from a feminist perspective gender may be described as socially, culturally and contextually defined, which provides an understanding of gender as more nuanced, shifting and complex discursive formations (Paechter, 2003a/b). These constructions of gender is embodied or inscribed on the body through performance of acts of gendering (Butler, 2006, 1993). The acts of gendering may be done to us and by us in different ways and performance includes physical adornment like certain forms of clothing, jewelry and cosmetics. However, performance can also be thought of in terms of how the individual thinks and talks about gender and its role is varied social contexts like education and work. As Butler (2006, 1993) theorizes, the gender binary is often inadequate for understanding daily lived experience because it overlooks the variable and often

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

contradictory discourses that occur around gender, and the way we think and talk about ourselves and others in the world.

### **Body (and bio-power)**

Like gender, knowledge has been categorized and understood in terms of a binary. While gender has traditionally been divided into male/female, knowledge has been discussed along the lines of mind/body, where man is commonly associated with mind and woman is associated with the body (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003; Paechter, 2003a/b). In the case of both gender and knowledge, the terms are often understood as radically separate. From a feminist perspective this kind of categorization is essentialist and overly simplistic. In fact the separation of mind and body is thought to have an impact on how we think and how others think about us, particularly as it relates to the gendered body (Ibid.). The gendering of our physical bodies based on the traditional binary has implications for how we learn, what we learn and where we learn. The gendered body is culturally and socially constructed and as such is subject to institutional control or 'biopower' (Foucault, 1979).

Foucault (1979) defines biopower as the institutional control of the body that takes place in the modern state. Biopower replaces sovereign power as the arbiter of control over 'subjects' that emphasize territory and death. Through biopower, the body is categorized, measured, defined and validated in practices found in all institutionalized areas of life that include education and work among others (e.g. health, law and order). "Power relations have an immediate hold upon [the body]; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs" (Foucault,

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

1979, p. 25). According to Foucault, practices that control the body generate specific kinds of knowledge about the body and in turn produce specific kinds of bodies.

### **Experience**

Experience may be described as the actions, events, or things that make up one's daily life. It refers to the things we do and feel in relation to others and to the events and actions that occur in our daily lives. These relationships and interactions impact us bodily and for women these interactions are also informed by one's gender. What is perceived as personal is also socio-historical in the sense that the individual becomes a subject through their experience of the social world (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003). That is to say, in sum, the inter-relational nature of experience is shaped by and through discourse, everyday experiences and practices. The school curriculum represents one way in which experience is affected and shaped. Specific intentions and outcomes may be associated with a particular curricula initiative, but, the ways in which the curricula is experienced and understood may vary greatly. To think about curriculum and curriculum implementation solely in terms of an instrument that is to be created, enacted and evaluated by schools and teachers negates the contingent and multiple nature of experience of the curriculum. As Ted Aoki (2005b) points out curriculum as a whole includes "...curriculum-as-plan, which we typically know as the mandated school subject, and into curricula-as-live(d)-experiences of teachers and students-a multiplicity of curricula, as many as there are teachers and students (p. 426). Aoki considers the interplay between 'plan' and 'lived' whereby, curriculum-as-plan refers to the documents that are created by and emerge out of government departments responsible for crafting and shaping curricular thought and the accompanying documentation that is created to

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

function as implementation and evaluation guides to school administrators and teachers. While curricula-as-lived refers to what takes place on the ground (i.e. what teachers see and how they interpret and enact ‘the plan’ in their classroom (Aoki, 2005a, 200b, 1993). Furthermore, the planned and lived aspects of curriculum both take place within what Aoki (1993, p. 296) calls a “curriculum topography” that categorizes areas of study and knowledge – privileged curriculum categories exist. Referring to the categorization of university faculties, Aoki notes that “even in our own minds, many of us feel we can readily spot science students or humanities students on campus by the way they comport themselves! We have deeply set images reflecting the way this curricular landscape is inscribed to us” (p. 256).<sup>11</sup>

While Ted Aoki’s discussion dealt primarily with the curricular landscape found in university settings, I would argue that the privileging of certain forms of knowledge and areas of study can also be found at the secondary school level. Academic (math, sciences) knowledge is privileged over vocational knowledge (apprenticeships, trades) (see also, Smith & Darmody, 2009; Beck et al., 2006; Miller et al., 2005). The categorizations are based in part on perceived levels of intelligence, where the bright students pursue academic (i.e. university bound) studies while those who struggle in the math and sciences pursue vocational studies. Categorizations also occur based on gender, whereby girls are more likely to pursue studies that will lead to ‘caring’ professions like

---

<sup>11</sup> In this 1993 article Aoki talks about the existence of a curriculum topography that has resulted in a curriculum landscape that is striated and divided on the basis of Western beliefs regarding knowing and knowledge. Aoki argues that a “curriculum topography” exists and he uses the example of a radio report on the lived experience of science students in their university programs. The report talked about a study that found that a significant number of students in university science programs drop out by their third year and many of these students claim that their decisions are based in part on the disconnect that seems to exist between the way that science is taught within these programs and their assumptions and expectations about what it should be like. “What they experienced as university science was a bit out of touch with their own lives” (p. 256). These findings lead Aoki to consider the researcher’s remark regarding the need to teach science as a humanity.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

nursing, teaching, and early childhood education. Meanwhile, vocational students are expected to be of a certain (lower?) intelligence level (Miller et al., 2005 ); and depending upon the area of study, a certain gender. Consider for example, that the female body has traditionally been found in ‘softer,’ less physically demanding roles that are unlikely to develop an overly muscular (i.e. masculine looking) physique. Curricular possibilities are in part inscribed on and through our bodies (Pillow, 2003). However, if we consider Aoki’s notion of curriculum-as-plan/curriculum-as-lived, then we are more apt to consider the multiplicity of teacher and student experience with curriculum. This alternative conceptualization based on multiplicity acts to disrupt the traditional curriculum landscape that is envisioned in terms of singularity and acknowledges the lived aspect of the curriculum, the teachers who teach it and students who experience it. Aoki’s framework is further discussed in the methodology and analysis chapters.

### *Concepts at Work: macro and micro level issues and interrelationships*

The following section of the conceptual framework uses the aforementioned foundational concepts to think and talk about the female experience in non-traditional vocational education training (VET) settings and how that experience may be impacted by macro (e.g. government policy on VET) and micro (e.g. family, teachers, peers etc.) level socio-historical factors. To begin, a general discussion is provided about the concepts and how they inform this study. This laying out of the concepts at work is then followed by a more detailed account of the main research study variables and their interrelationships.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Feminist theory allows one to examine and discuss gender as relational rather than as a rationale. That is, feminist theory makes it possible to explore “the processes by which children or young people are made into gendered subjects or on the reasons why children/adults might collude in their own subjectification as gendered people” (Moffatt & Norton, 2008, p.104). A relational conceptual framework that is informed by feminist theory, allows one to examine the role of gender in society that does not assume that universal laws exist about what can and should constitute women and men’s experiences. Instead it calls for the use of approaches to research that “...capture how gender is socially constructed and performed as well as how gender inequality is produced, maintained and challenged” (Moffatt & Norton, 2008, p.104). A relational conceptualization of gender reaffirms that as a group, women are not defined by specific characteristics. Instead, a relational perspective is based on the notions that how gender is performed, and what it means to be female are culturally and historically constituted.

Gender is commonly understood in terms of the binary male/female and it is a construct that we tell ourselves and each other is immutable fact that is natural so we never question the established binary. So, while gender matters in our daily lives and our experience of gender is affected by broader and more local societal and cultural perspectives regarding gender matters, gender remains a generally uncontested hegemonic construct. If gender is defined in terms of a binary, then it overlooks the existence of variable and at times contradictory discourses that women express around gender. However, if we take into account variable, competing and contradictory discourses then we may begin to explore the performative nature of gender and the variable nature of experience.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

The notion of gender as performance has been taken up in the works of several researchers including, among others, Moffatt and Norton (2008), Paechter (2003a/b), and Pillow (2002). For example, Pillow (2002) questions why it is so difficult to imagine gender differently. Meanwhile, Paechter (2003a) talks about moving beyond ‘gender’ because she views the binary of male/female as too limiting. Instead she argues for use of the terms ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ which, for her, better illustrates the varied positions that individuals might take or perform given the social context. Significant to note, the works of these authors are influenced by Foucault’s work on genealogy (see also Meadmore, Hatcher & McWilliam, 2000). Foucault’s genealogical examinations of the prison and the hospital foregrounds how systems of knowledge are constitutively related to knowledge, power and the production of subjectivities that are ingrained into modern disciplinary techniques and institutions (Stone, 2005; Rabinow, 1984). Parallels may also be drawn between Foucault’s (1990) notion of “biopower” and Pillow’s idea of “bodies.” Both notions, it is very significant to note, refer to how bodies are regulated, governed and put under surveillance; and ultimately, they refer to how one’s biology is reflected in one’s political existence. Power, Foucault (1990) shows, normalizes and regulates, especially bodies. Florence contends that, “... studying the different modes of objectivation of the subject that appear through these practices [of biopower: i.e., surveillance, regulation and ‘governmentality’], one understands how important it is to analyze power relations” (cited in Rabinow & Rose, 2003, p. 4). Therefore, not only should one analyze power as it relates to its origins and principles but one should also consider institutional context and the methods and techniques used by institutions and the individuals or groups found within those institutional contexts to shape, direct, modify

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

their way of conducting themselves, to impose ends on their inaction or fit into overall strategies (Foucault, 1990; Rabinow & Rose, 2003).

Pillow (1997) echoes some of Foucault's ideas when she states that "...the body, particularly the female body is at best a curious and conflictual site to 'go from' – a site of paradoxical social attention and avoidance" (p. 357). The 'body' speaks about our social surroundings and it is imbued with codes regarding societal norms, laws, ideals and expectations. Therefore, the body can serve as a site from which to theorize, analyze, practice and question how a range of concepts (e.g. knowledge, power, class, culture) are constructed and reconstructed. While "...bodies are not new to feminist theory" (Pillow, 1997, p. 350), the notion of gendered (young female students') bodies as a social construct about which to explore issues of experience, policy and relations of power in non-traditional VET appears to be unexamined. In particular, thinking in terms of gendered bodies provides a means to ponder and talk about how the planned curriculum, in the form of a VET policy-related initiative, intersects with and translates into lived experience.

In sum, this study examines the gendered experiences of young girls who participated in a secondary school initiative that was aimed at increasing female participation in non-traditional VET programs and professions. This study about gendered experience is relational and contextual. It is assumed that the girls' experiences are informed by multiple factors that are socio-historical in nature. Specifically, the girls' experiences are informed by: (a) their 'gender' and their understanding of what that means in 'non-traditional' VET programs and professions; and (b) context - the place(s) in which the initiative occurs – their secondary school and the site where the initiative

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

takes place. In addition, the girls' experiences, and how they make sense of their learning experience are also informed by socio-historical factors that may be thought of and discussed in terms of macro and micro level. The micro-level includes the people or influences that play a role in their daily lives such as school administrators, teachers, and peers. While the macro-level force of note might include government VET policy documents and labour market requirements. The presentation of their lived experiences are couched in terms of Ted Aoki's (2005a, 2005b, 1993) notions curriculum-as-plan and curricula-as-lived. All of which I will address in my thesis and is summarized in Figure 2 below:

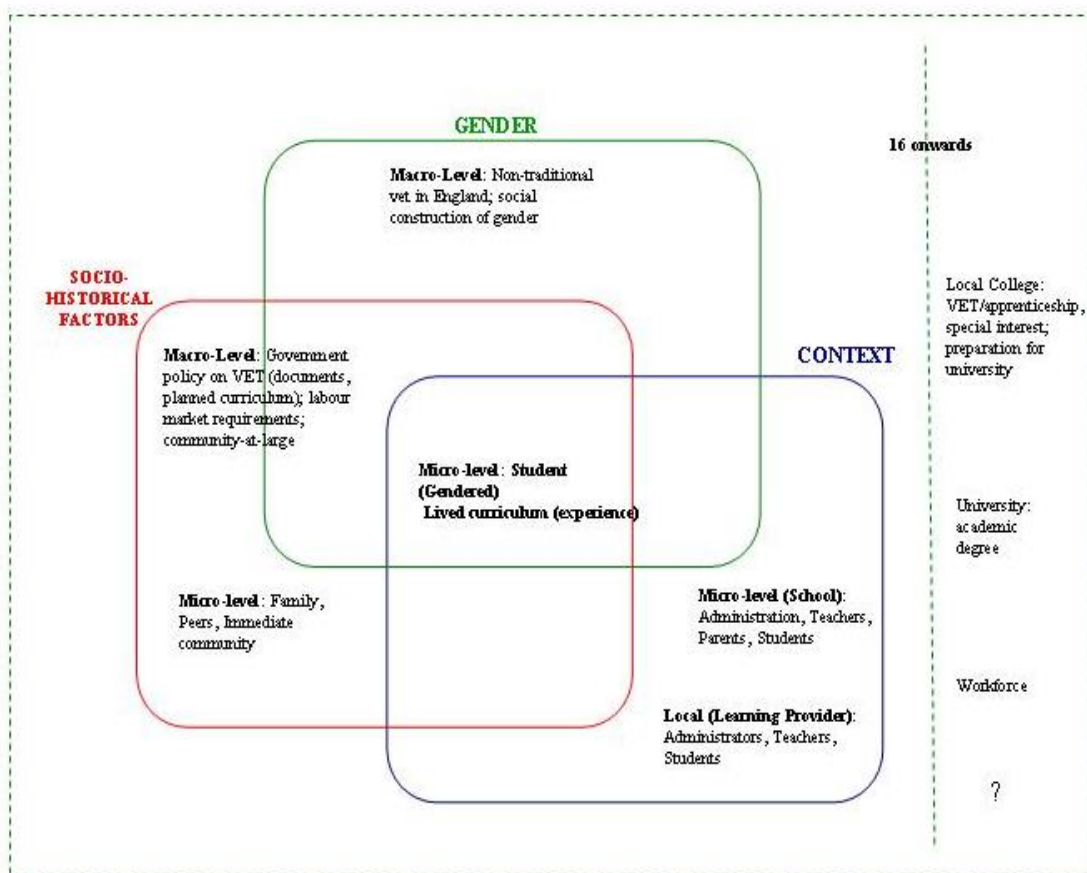


Figure 2 Interplay of macro and micro level factors on student (gendered) experience

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

In it, as we can see, the interrelations and interactions that contribute to the girls' experiences may be examined through a lens that takes into account a feminist and critically informed history of vocational education training that considers the place of gender within the vocational education environment. The historical aspect considers government policy documents and how gender is understood within those documents. Also considered is how the girls may or may not present and re-present gendered (female) bodies discursively. That is to say, the girls' discourse is informed by discourses of family, schools and broader government VET policy, [however, their performance of gender is not expected to be uniform in nature]. Their gendered experiences may exhibit commonalities but they may also contradict and contest the received understanding of gender and VET. Using Foucault's notion of 'biopower' and Pillow's notion of 'body,' here the issue of individual 'gendered' experience is at the centre of this study and as such the questions that guide this research should reflect that. The research questions that were developed to help conceptualize, conduct the study and guide the subsequent analysis and discussions are listed in Chapter 1 (Introduction).

### **Summary**

The chapter presents the theory and concepts that form the basis for this study and as such includes working definitions of gender, the body and biopower, experience and genealogy. As defined, the concepts relied on the works of several authors, including Patti Lather, Michel Foucault and Wanda Pillow. The framework used in the study considers the contextual, sociohistorically and gendered nature of experience among the group of young girls who participated in the gender specific taster day sessions on non-traditional VET.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY: A CASE STUDY

Case study: A method of studying elements of the social through comprehensive description and analysis of a single situation or case, for example a detailed study of an individual, group, episode, event, or any other unit of social life organization. Emphasis is often placed on understanding the unity and wholeness of the particular case (O’Leary, 2007, p. 115).

O’Leary’s definition of case study is as a definition should be – succinct.

However, the succinct nature of this and other definitions of case study fails to shed light on the complexities often involved in conducting an exploration of a “single situation or case.” The definition refers to case study as a *method* but the use of case study as part of a qualitative research endeavour may also be discussed in another equally important way, that of case study as a *methodology*. In such a discussion the term methodology refers to the system of practices and principles applied to case study knowledge, while method refers to the means or manner of procedure that is used to conduct a case study. The first provides a more philosophical and/or theoretical discussion, while the latter emphasizes technique or way of *doing* case study research. This chapter discusses both aspects of the case study approach. The ensuing discussion relies primarily upon the work of three authors, Robert K. Yin , Robert E. Stake and to a lesser extent John W. Creswell, each of whom have played important roles in contributing to the understanding and overall development of case study knowledge and practice in qualitative research.

The first section of the chapter highlights some of the general principles of case study research as defined and discussed by the aforementioned individuals and others who have written about case study research. Meanwhile, the second section of the

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

chapter provides an outline of the techniques used in this case study. Specifically, the section on technique provides details on site and participant selection, data collection methods, procedure, and concludes with a discussion of concerns associated with conducting this case study (limitations).

Although this chapter distinguishes between methodology and method, it is not the intention to present each aspect of case study research as mutually exclusive. In fact, it is hoped that the following discussion will demonstrate how both aspects of case study research are intertwined. In part, this chapter is intended to illustrate how methodology informs method. In this study the identification of principles and/or practices of case study research have helped to provide a framework for *doing* and *writing* about case study technique and procedure.

### *Case Study as Methodology*

There are several practices and/or principles that should be kept in mind when discussing case study as methodology. These practices and/or principles include: (a) a desire to explore or describe a phenomena in context; (b) an interest in capturing and/or re-presenting the participant's voice and perspective, as well as the varied group of actors and the interactions between them; (c) the kind of question(s) that the researcher wishes to examine or explore; (d) an interest or willingness to use a variety of data sources; (e) and a desire to generate sensitivity to the issues at hand (Yin, 2009; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2007, Stake, 1995).

To begin, case studies generally focus on contemporary rather than historical phenomena and events (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2007; O'Leary, 2007). The phenomenon

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

itself could be focused on individuals or organizations, simple through complex interventions, relationships, communities, or program. While certain aspects of a case study may be historical in nature, the allure of the case study method for a researcher rests in the possibility that interviews and/or direct observation of the people involved in the event under examination or exploration can be conducted. In general, case studies are considered an ideal mechanism (methodology) for conducting research that aims to consider the nuanced view of reality and human behaviour and individual as well as group interactions (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2007, Stake, 1995). Moreover, case study methodology can “...give a voice to the powerless and the voiceless” (Tellis, 1997, p. 2).

Determination about the kind of case study that is to be conducted has been categorized in terms of the intent of the case analysis. According to Yin (2009; 1993) case studies may be: explanatory, exploratory or descriptive in nature. Explanatory, refers to the ability to explain complex causal links in real-life interventions; exploratory refers to the ability to explore those situations where the intervention being looked at has no clear outcomes; and descriptive refers to the real-life context in which the intervention has occurred and the intervention itself. Alternatively, Stake (1995) categorizes case studies using different terminology and slightly different emphasis – intrinsic, instrumental and collective. However, both Stake (1995) and Yin’s (2009) categorization of case study types are applicable to either single-case or multiple-case situations.

In a single case study, the researcher focuses on a particular issue or concern and then chooses one bounded case to illustrate the issue (Stake, 1995). As with the instrumental case study, the collective case study focuses on one issue or concern but

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

multiple cases are used to illustrate the issue. Meanwhile, the intrinsic case study focus remains on the case, such as an evaluation, a program, or an individual (Stake, 1995).

In any of these case study formats, an important principle to consider is the role that the research question(s) play in shaping the research strategy. In fact, Yin (2009) states that case study research depends in great part on the types of questions that the investigator wishes to examine or explore. Specifically, the questions that form the basis of a case study often seek to explain or explore current situations or circumstances, or complex phenomena that emphasize *how* and *why* questions (Yin, 2009).

Also related to the issues of intent and the research questions of interest, is the extent to which multiple data sources are employed to illustrate the nuanced nature of individual and/or group interactions. The researcher who opts to conduct a case study is often driven by an interest or desire to study and/or emphasize the participant's viewpoint, and the presentation of said viewpoint relies on the use of multiple data sources. The use of multiple data sources is perceived as a hallmark of case study research, more importantly it is viewed as an effective way to enhance the credibility of case study data (Yin, 2009). Potential data sources may include the following: interviews, documents, archival records, physical artifacts, direct observation and participant-observation. Each of the data sources selected for use in a case study is thought to represent a "...piece of the puzzle, with each piece contributing to the researcher's understanding of the whole phenomenon" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 554).

On the whole, the case study provides researchers with a means to examine how social institutions like schools function but it also allows one to explore a particular case or issue "within a bounded system" (Creswell, 2007, p.74). Boundaries are established in

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

case study research to minimize the risk of attempting to answer a question that is too broad in scope or a topic that have too many objectives for one study. Both Yin (2009) and Stake (1995) also discuss the need for researchers to establish boundaries when conducting case study research. Suggested boundaries for a case include time and place (Creswell, 2007); time and activity (Stake, 1995); and definition and context (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

One longstanding critique of case study methodology has centered on the issue of the extent to which one may be able to make generalizations about a given case study findings. Yin (2009) and Stake (1995) have both argued against this criticism by drawing a distinction between analytic and statistical generalizations. In particular, Yin (2009) states that, "...in analytic generalization, previously developed theory is used as a template against which to compare the empirical results of the case study" (p. 38). When the sample of cases is thought to have been taken from a universal sample what results are inappropriate generalizations. Thus, the incorrect use of the term 'small sample' is a result of assumptions regarding the single-case study. In such cases, a single-case study is inaccurately thought to refer to a single respondent. Meanwhile, Stake (1995) has argued for "naturalistic generalization" which states that case study data often resonates with a wide range of readers, thereby providing a broader illustration of the phenomenon or event under investigation.

The goal of the case study report is to describe the study in as comprehensive a manner as possible in order to enable the reader to feel as if they have been a part of the study, and therefore be able to determine whether the study findings are applicable elsewhere. The context within which the phenomena occur as well as the phenomena

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

itself should be clearly described. There is no required mode for reporting a case study but Yin does suggest six methods that include: linear, comparative, chronological, theory building, suspense and unsequenced. Ultimately, providing sufficient detail is key to enhancing the overall credibility and trustworthiness of the study. Key strategies for achieving this include a clearly written research question(s) and/or propositions that are substantiated; case study design that reflects and links well to the research questions; purposeful sampling strategies appropriate for case study; and systematic data collection and management (Yin, 2009).

### *Case Study as Method*

Keeping in mind the practices and/or principles addressed in the preceding section, we now turn to the issue of case study as method. As mentioned earlier, this discussion of method centres on the *doing* and *writing* of case study research. As such, this section will focus on the technique employed as part of this case study research process. Specifically, this section of the chapter will provide background information on the phenomena and the kind of questions that were explored (Setting the Stage); the participants who took part in the study and the data sources that were used to complete the study (Data collection methods). Also included is a detailed presentation of the historical and practical data sources and how they were obtained and used as part of this study (Procedure). The section and chapter concludes with a discussion of potential concerns that are considered inherent parts of the case study research process and how I have chosen to address those concerns.

### *Setting the Stage – The phenomena in context*

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

This exploratory case study looks at the issue of young girls' gendered bodily experiences within a vocational education initiative that aims to increase female awareness of, and participation in non-traditional VET programs. The study is exploratory in the sense that while the aim is to increase student awareness and interest in vocational education and the skilled trades, there are no assurances that the students who elect to participate in any or all of the one-day workshop sessions will result in their active pursuit of non-traditional VET and/or skilled trades as educational or professional options. This case study may also be categorized as exploratory for several other reasons: (a) the initiative targeted young girls (ages 12-14), which is a group that to the best of my knowledge has not been studied; (b) it was the first time that this kind of gender specific initiative had been introduced to the school; (c) the students were asked to talk about their experiences during the workshop(s) and whether the workshop had or had not led to a change in their level of interest and perspectives about non-traditional VET and skilled trades; (d) The students were asked to share their thoughts about their understanding of gender and the role it may or may not play in their decision to pursue (or not) non-traditional VET and skilled trades . Another noteworthy point is that my decision to structure this research as an exploratory case study afforded me, the researcher, the opportunity to focus my attention on the varied individuals or influencers that comprise a social setting. In fact, I was intrigued by the possibility that as a researcher, I would be able to undertake a portrayal of individual experience and the issue of young girls' awareness of, and participation in non-traditional VET programs. In general, this portrayal was intended to examine the interplay of the individual, the issue of vocational education initiatives for young girls, and macro and micro level variables

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

(e.g. government policy on VET, school administrators, school and college instructors involved in the workshop etc.). It is with these points in mind that the case study method was selected for use in this study that centers on the notions of ‘bodily experience’ and the manner in which the young participants in this vocational education initiative, conform to and/or resist the gendered notions of the ‘body’ and the educational and professional possibilities that they may have access to.

### *Setting the Stage - A brief word about research relationships and the role they can play*

“Gaining access” (Bogdan & Biklin, 2003, pp. 75-80) to the research setting and creating relationships with individuals at the research site is an essential aspect of one’s methods. Relationships established by the researcher and the way in which those relationships are maintained can play a tremendous role in determining the progress of a particular research endeavour (Maxwell, 2005). Specifically, relationships that one creates may be discussed in terms of the extent to which they can “...facilitate or hinder other components of the research design, such as participant selection and data collection” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 83). My relationship with one individual can only be categorized as one that facilitated the progress of this case study.

During a 2007 trip to England with my family, I had the good fortune of being introduced to an individual who would prove invaluable to the development and execution of this case study. The gentleman (*Bob*, all names in this research are pseudonyms) happened to be a senior administrator of a secondary school in a community that is located in the north of England. Our initial conversation resulted in a discussion about my studies and interest in conducting research in the area of female

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

participation in non-traditional programs. When he heard my idea for a research study, he said that if I were interested he might be able to be of assistance. Bob proceeded to tell me about some of the work that they had been doing to provide information to female students about non-traditional vocational and professional options. In fact, a group of girls had recently attended a one-day workshop that was held at the local college that was aimed at generating female interest in considering gas fitting as an occupational choice. To my surprise and delight, Bob asked if I might be interested in speaking with some of the girls who participated in the workshop. Needless to say, I jumped at the chance to do so.

My discussion with the students was not included as part of this study but it did spur on my decision to conduct this case study. Meeting and speaking with Bob, not only proved to be a tremendous help as I began to envision what this study might look like, this relationship also proved to be invaluable as I began the study in earnest. As a result of that initial contact, I have been able to visit the school, conduct interviews with current and former students, as well as instructors and/or administrators involved in the provision of various gender specific workshops. I was also able to attend one of the gender specific workshop days in Spring 2010. Those interviews and on-site observation are two of the data sources used in this case study.

### *Setting the Stage - Location*

All students interviewed for this study are, or were students at *Garden Road Community and Technology School* which is located in a borough in the North of England. The borough is comprised of several small former mill towns and has a

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

population of approximately 70,000 of which approximately 95% identify themselves as white, and approximately 4% South Asian. The borough contains both urban and rural settings and is located approximately 30km outside of one of England's largest cities. Due to its valley location and proximity to rivers and tributaries, the towns in this borough were ideally suited to development of watermills. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, many of the towns saw the establishment of wool, cotton and weaving industries. More recent history saw the towns emerge as centers for the manufacturing of felt and leather goods. The decline of the cotton industries resulted in economic downturn for many of the towns in the area. Given the borough's proximity to a major urban center, the towns in the area now have a sizeable commuter population.

Garden Road Community and Technology School (referred heretofore as GRC) is comprehensive high school with approximately 700 students (11-16 yrs old) and approximately 55 administrative and teaching staff. The school curriculum includes standard 'academic' departments and courses such as Math, English, Geography and History. In addition, the curriculum also includes departments and classes like Drama, Music, Modern Foreign Languages, and Physical Education. GRC does not offer traditional skilled trade classes like automotive, welding, and woodworking but the school curriculum does have Hospitality & Catering, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Design and Technology departments. This study will focus on the vocational education initiative that was part of the Design and Technology department.

The workshop sessions discussed by the participants were held at either a local area college (*Cranfield College*<sup>12</sup>) that offers skilled trades programs or an area

---

<sup>12</sup> Cranfield College is a pseudonym, as are the rest of the names in this thesis. The college is located in the same northern English borough as Garden Road Community and Technology school. The college has sites

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

vocational education and training facility (*VETrain*<sup>13</sup>). Over the course of the academic year (2010-2011), female students had the opportunity to participate in approximately 4 of these one-day sessions.

### *Data collection methods*

Data collection in case study research can include the use of documents, archival records, interviews, observation, participant observation and/or physical artifacts (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2005, Stake, 2005). As mentioned above, the present case study relies primarily upon interview data. However, other data sources include a review of publicly available government documents that pertain to the provision of vocational education to secondary school students, with particular emphasis on how gender is addressed in those documents. In addition, publicly available school level documents such as information flyers, brochures and reports were also examined in an effort to explore how issues of gender in non-traditional vocational environments is presented and discussed. Finally, this case study also includes on-site observation and the resultant personal observational notes.

### *Data collection methods - Site and Participant Selection*

---

in several of the towns in the borough and offers courses that range from providing basic literacy and numeracy training to Honours degrees in subjects that include English and Integrated Technology. The college also offers programs in vocational education areas like construction and building services, catering and hospitality, childcare and hair and beauty. The college caters to recent secondary school graduates (16-19 yrs) as well as adult learners.

<sup>13</sup> VETrain is located in a town close to the same northern English borough as Garden Road Community and Technology School. This non-profit organization has facilities that provide vocational education and training in a range of areas that include construction, engineering, manufacturing and health and social services training. Programs are open to recent secondary school graduates (16-19 yrs) as well as adult learners. The organization has links to companies in a range of industries across Northern England and often uses those links to find students and graduates job placements.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Purposeful selection was used for this case study. As defined by Maxwell (2005, p. 88), purposeful selection refers to a strategy in which "...particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can't be gotten as well from other choices". In the case of this study, site and participant selection was a direct result of the kind of research questions I was interested in and the fortuitous nature of my introduction to Bob and the school in which he worked. My initial discussions with Bob and my informal conversations with the female students that took part in the Fall 2007 one-day workshop indicated that it was feasible to conduct a case study that focused on young girls experiences in non-traditional vocational education environments. Moreover, when I spoke with Bob about the possibility of using the school and the female students who participate in any similar workshops and/or programs as part of my study and he graciously agreed to do so. I now had a site and a potential pool of participants that could provide me with information needed to explore and discuss my research questions.

While I initially intended to structure a research protocol that included individual interviews with the female students, unforeseen circumstances dictated that this approach be changed. The original intention was to conduct 60-minute interviews with 6-10 students who participated in the one-day workshops. As I began to finalize the interview schedule that would be used, discussions with Bob highlighted that it would be difficult to speak with the proposed number of students during the timeframe available. Following the distribution of the request for participant letters, and Bob's mentioning my study during one of the school's daily assemblies; the number of students who expressed an interest in being interviewed exceeded the proposed number. The possibility of having

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

more student interviewees than needed was fantastic, but it also presented a dilemma. How do you select who to speak with? In an effort to speak with as many students as possible, the decision was made to conduct both individual and group interviews with the students during the time available. Modification of the interview structure also meant the inclusion of an additional element to the study. The inclusion of group interviews represented an opportunity to also examine how the young girls discussed the issue of the workshop experience, gender, and non-traditional vocational education and professions amongst themselves. Meanwhile, the 3 instructors/administrators that were interviewed were selected because of their involvement in providing and/or overseeing the one-day workshops.

In total, interviews were conducted with 15 students, 2 professionals and 4 instructors/administrators. Breakdown of the interviews are as follows:

**Table 3:** Interviews conducted by categories

<b>Students</b>	Current = 13	4 individual interviews <sup>14</sup>
		2 group interviews (5 & 7)
	Former = 2	
<b>Professionals</b>	2	1 automotive apprentice
		1 construction apprentice
<b>Instructors/Administrators</b>	4	1 (at workshop site)
		3 (at school)

## *Procedure*

---

<sup>14</sup> Two of the students spoken with on an individual basis originally took part in the group interviews.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

This case study includes varied sources of information that is historical and practical (i.e. interviews and review of documents and reports) in nature (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2007) (see Appendix X). Analysis of the historical sources consider the ways in which education is rooted in the Platonic notion that abstract, contemplative thought is reflective of the highest dimension of knowledge. This particular view of knowledge is the one that is most widely encouraged, valued and validated in Western society and schools. In contrast, vocational education, with its emphasis on practical skills development for specific trades has been for the most part de-valued.

The historical analysis depends primarily upon a review of the literature that pertains to gender and VET policy in England and the place of gender in English VET policy over the last decade. The last decade was selected as a boundary because during that timeframe the UK government had attempted to re-structure and re-vitalize England's education system and a major part of the government policy focused on the provision of vocational education programs.

The practical component focuses on the experiences of females (i.e. young girls) who are, or were participants in the series of one-day skilled trade orientation sessions that are part of a VET training initiative in England, and/or are currently participants in skilled trades training. Interviews were also conducted with instructors and/or administrators involved in providing the workshop sessions, as well as former students at the school who chose to pursue skilled trades training and/or professions.

### *Procedure: Document review*

As noted above, this case study contains a review and analysis of literature that considers how gender has been addressed in England's VET policy and in turn informed

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

our thoughts on what it means to be a skilled ‘trades(wo)man.’ An additional component of the document review portion of the study examines the skilled trade orientation sessions documentation that was created for, and distributed to the young female participants. Specific documents reviewed include a range of government briefs, reports and reviews pertaining to vocational education provision in secondary and further education settings. Sources for these documents include the Department for Children, School and Families (DfCS); Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). The documents include the following:

**Table 4: Listing of UK Government Documents on vocational education**

<b>Document Name</b>	<b>Publication Date</b>
Review of vocational education - The Wolf Report	2011
14-19 qualifications strategy research - Brief	2010
A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Apprenticeships and Other Vocational Qualifications - Brief	2007
Perceptions and Use of NVQs: A Survey of Employers in England - Brief	2006
Vocational Pathways at Age 16-19	2003
Vocational Pathways at Age 16-19: An Analysis of the England and Wales Youth Cohort Study - Brief	2003
GCSEs in Vocational Subjects	2003
GCSES in Vocational Subjects: An Introduction for Students and their Parents/Carers	2003
GCSES in Vocational Subjects - A General Guide and Overview of the Qualifications	2003
GCSEs in Vocational Subjects: An Introduction to Links Between Careers Education and Guidance and the Teaching and Learning of Young People who are Taking GCSES in Vocational subjects	2003
Vocational and Work-related Learning at key Stage 4: Guidance for Managers in Schools and Colleges and their Partners in the Community	2003
What determines the impact of vocational qualifications? A literature review - Brief	2003
Inspecting vocational courses 11-16 with guidance on self-evaluation	2002
New GCSEs in vocational subjects: An introduction to links between careers education and guidance and the teaching and	2002

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

learning of young people who are taking new GCSEs in vocational subjects	
--	--

Each of the documents listed above was read and the main points were summarized and placed in a table. Each document synopsis contained general details about the text, information regarding the presence or absence of a definition of VET and whether gender was discussed in the document.

### *Procedure: The girls*

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in individual or group format with 15 girls who are or have been participants in the one-day orientation sessions (See Appendix VII). Individual interviews with the girls took place in person and lasted approximately 60 minutes. Participants were notified that follow-up interviews may be required to delve more deeply into issues that may emerge during the initial discussion. Additional shorter interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes were conducted with 3 students. In general, participants were asked to discuss their experiences, what they saw, what they learnt, and the impact their participation in the program may or may not have had on their respective decisions to consider 'non-traditional' skilled trades as a future career.

All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The completed transcripts were forwarded to the participants via email for their review. In an effort to offset concerns about the use of email as a means of communication, participants were informed that their transcripts would be password protected. At the time of their interview, each participant provided a password that was used by the researcher when forwarding transcripts. Participants had 10-15 working days to review and return their transcript. In cases where participants did not respond at the end of the allotted time, a

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

follow-up email was sent. The email asked: (a) if they have had an opportunity to review their transcript; and (b) if I could use their comments in the writing of my dissertation as shown in the transcript. This email correspondence was premised on two things: 1) the participant had already consented to being part of the research and 2) the email was meant as a follow-up to ensure that they said what they wanted to say and hence had nothing to add or subtract. Finally, the email indicated, that if no response was received within a reasonable time of one (1) week to two (2) weeks, the transcript notes were to be used as they are in the dissertation writing. Once approved, the transcribed notes were reviewed, analyzed and narratives of the students' stories were prepared.

Analysis of interview comments and documents was inductive, whereby the sources of information gathered as part of the study was used to identify possible themes or patterns (Creswell, 2007). In general, analysis of the girls' stories examines their understandings and the way they negotiate the curriculum that is made available to them during the sessions, as well as the impact of the sessions on their future educational and professional choices. Specifically, participant commentary was used to prepare portraits of the students' experiences in the workshops. These portraits provide information about areas such as purpose, the experience as a whole, knowledge gained, presentation and instruction, and impact on their future educational and occupational choices. Table 8 which can be found in Chapter 6 (Data Analysis – Take II) lists all participants who were interviewed for this case study.

### *Procedure: Instructors/Administrators and skilled trade professionals*

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with 3 instructors/administrators who were or are involved in providing the workshop sessions; as well as 2 female 'non-

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

traditional' skilled trades professionals (See Appendices VIII, IX and X). These interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and participants were notified that shorter follow-up discussion may be required in order to clarify comments obtained during the initial interview. An additional shorter interview which lasted approximately 30 minutes was conducted with 1 instructor. Discussions with the instructors/administrators and women in non-traditional trades provide additional commentary against which to read the female participants comments. The content of these interviews allow me to read the experiential data gained from participants against the narratives of program instructors/administrators in order to see where policy and practice coincide and where they separate. Interviews with women who are skilled trade professionals provide an added dimension to the study. Discussions with female skilled trade professionals offer insight to their understandings about their journey into a non-traditional skilled trade and what, if any, kind of educational program offerings and practices may be needed to address gender disparity in the non-traditional skilled trades sector.

### *Procedure: Who did I speak with and when?*

I contacted Bob in Winter 2009/2010 in order to confirm whether I might be able to use his school as the site for this case study. He approved my request and also mentioned that the school had recently arranged with an external vocational training organization to provide one-day workshops on non-traditional trades to female students registered in Year 9 (12-13 year olds). The organization had started this pilot scheme in 2008 in order to challenge gender-based stereotypes among younger students (Years 6 – 9) about careers in the vocational sector. Bob said that it would be possible to seek out participants from this particular group of students. He said that he had also mentioned

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

the study to the workshop Program Administrator (*Ms. Nancy*) and she expressed her willingness to speak about the work that they do.

In Spring 2010 arrangements were made to fly to England in order to conduct in-person interviews. Prior to my departure for England, arrangements were made with Bob about the timing of my visit to the school and the tentative scheduling of in-person interviews with current and/or past students, as well as instructors/administrators over a two week period. I also communicated with the Program Administrator via email and telephone about attending one of the workshops and possibly speaking with her about the nature and purpose of the gender specific workshops.

On the Friday following my arrival, I visited the school to speak with Bob about distributing the information sheets and consent forms before the upcoming one day workshop on construction and engineering. I also had the opportunity to meet with the instructor (*Ms. Sarah*) responsible for taking the girls to the workshop site. Ms. Sarah said that if I were willing to wait, she would be able to arrange for me to briefly speak with the girls between their classes. Several ‘pupil teachers’ went to the various English classes to get the girls registered for the workshops (24 in total) and bring them to the lunchroom. Once all the students were assembled, introductions were made and they were told about the study, the purpose and my interest in speaking with them about their experience following the workshop. The students were informed that all interviews would be taped and would revolve around what they expected, learned, liked and/or disliked about the sessions, as well as their understanding about women in non-traditional trades and how the experience may have affected (or not) their thinking about their future careers. Each student was then provided with a Request for Participant letter (Appendix

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

III) and Consent Form (Appendix VI) for them and their parents and/or guardian to review. Any students that were interested in participating in the study were asked to sign and have their parents/guardian sign the consent form and return it to me prior to our departure for the off-site workshop.

**Table 5.** At-a-glance: Interview Schedule

<b>Week 1</b>	
Monday Spring 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 am arrive at school</li> <li>• 8:30 am depart from school with the girls</li> <li>• sit in on construction session</li> <li>• 1pm interview with Ms. Nancy (Program Administrator at VETrain)</li> <li>• provide information letters and consent forms for signature</li> </ul>
Tuesday Spring 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Await signed consent forms</li> </ul>
Wednesday Spring 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 individual interviews</li> <li>• 2 groups of 3 interviews</li> </ul>
Thursday Spring 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Barb (instructor/administrator)</li> <li>• Fiona (construction apprentice)</li> <li>• Emma (Automotive apprentice)</li> <li>• (2) Former students</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	
Tuesday Spring 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engineering Group (5 students)</li> <li>• Current student</li> <li>• Current student</li> <li>• Construction Group (7 students)</li> </ul>
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Sarah (instructor)</li> <li>• Bob (instructor/administrator)</li> </ul>

I arrived at the school 8:00 am on Monday to wait for the bus that would take the group of students to the workshop site. Two mini-buses arrived at approximately 8:15am and the girls were grouped based on the workshop they were to attend. I sat with the

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

group of students that had signed up for the Construction workshop. In total there were 23 students, one instructor (Ms. Sarah) and a teaching assistant that departed from the school that morning. The drive to the training center took approximately 40 minutes. Everyone disembarked and we made our way to the main foyer of a building complex where we were greeted by the Program Administrator and the construction and engineering workshop leaders. Each workshop had one person who led the in-class portion of the workshop and two people responsible for the practical portion that would be held after lunch. The two groups of students were asked to follow their respective workshop leader.

The Construction group (of which I attended) proceeded through what appeared to be a maze of training facilities to a small meeting room that would serve as the classroom for the day. Once we were seated for the session, the lead instructor introduced himself and the two individuals (one male and one female during the practical sessions). Instruction for the class consisted of a combination of lecture, exercises, video, and hands-on work. During the introduction, the girls were told that ‘they would get their hands dirty but not too dirty’. Activities covered during the lecture portion included a photo and questionnaire segment where the girls were asked to provide their first impressions about the people and situations they saw. For example, one photo showed a woman wearing a uniform usually found in a medical setting, while another photo showed several young men in baseball caps hanging around while one of the men (black) stares directly into the camera. Another activity intended to focus on stereotypes, assumptions, prejudice and inequality required the students to listen to a story and then had to respond to a series of questions about the story content. Other activities required

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

the students to list jobs they thought were ‘traditionally’ male or female; discussions about salary and long-term earning potential of jobs often held by men vs women; a listing of trade related jobs, their roles and responsibilities and salary range. The students also watched a video about a young woman who arrives at work to begin her apprenticeship as a mechanic and the ensuing interactions with a male manager who is not receptive to her presence. The morning lecture session closed with an activity that required the girls to work in groups to build a bridge out of plastic connecting rods. During the morning session the students were quite animated and willing to participate, ask questions and provide comments. Following the lunch break, I conducted my interview with the Program Administrator (*Ms. Nancy*).

The workshop sessions ended approximately 2:30 pm and the students boarded the bus for the return trip to the school. Upon our return to the school, I spoke briefly about my need for research study participants and emphasized the need for any interested parties to obtain parental/guardian consent. At the time 2 of the students confirmed their interest. As the workshop participants departed for the day, an instructor that I had met during one of my earlier visits to the school (*Ms. Barb*) remained behind and spoke about a former student that was now working part-time at the school. The former student (*Fiona*) was most recently enrolled at a local college in one of the construction programs. As luck would have it the young woman was scheduled to work that afternoon and I was introduced to her upon her arrival. The research study and the need for interviewees was discussed and she was asked if she might be interested. *Fiona* was provided with the Request for Participant letter and the consent form and asked confirm her interest and willingness to participate in the study.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

As of the following morning, 2 girls had returned their forms to Bob, at which time they were informed that interviews would be held the following week in order to give some of the other workshop participants a chance to return their forms. After reminding the girls about the project during morning assembly, it appeared that approximately half of them had lost the forms. He asked them to consider participating in the study and the level of interest seemed to increase. In fact, he felt that approximately 15 girls might be willing to speak with me but he suggested waiting until the following week to conduct the interviews. This proposed delay would give the students time to return their forms. He also noted that he would print of the consent forms and distribute them to the potential participants the review day that was to be held the next day. This meant that interested students could sign the forms right away but more importantly if their parents agree to their participation, they would be able to review and sign the consent form immediately.

Next, I spoke with Ms. Barb, an instructor/administrator at the school about her possible participation in the study at the time of this study. Ms. Barb is currently a lead administrator on a particular vocational initiative but she was also an instructor and acted as an administrator on one of the gender-specific workshops (aerospace technology). During my 2007 visit, Ms. Barb served as lead on the girls in construction workshop. Arrangements were made to speak the following afternoon and she confirmed that 2 former students would be at the school tomorrow and were willing to participate in my study.

Upon arrival at the school the next day, Bob directed me to an empty office where interviews could be held. He also confirmed that one of the former students who was

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

now employed as an automotive apprentice had been contacted and was interested in being interviewed that morning. The student's (Emma) interview was conducted in an upstairs office at her workplace, following a brief tour of the company. Immediately following the interview I returned to the school to begin the other interviews that had been arranged for that day (2 former students; 1 construction apprentice; 1 instructor/administrator). At the end of the day a list of the students who had agreed to participate in the study was provided by Bob.

I arrived early the next morning and met with Bob in the school cafeteria to finalize the interview schedule for the day. In light of the number of students who had responded, it was decided that there would be a combination of individual and group interviews. The interviews were to last approximately 60 minutes in order to ensure that students only missed one class. The students on the list were asked to join us and those present were asked if a few of them would be willing to speak with me on an individual basis – two students agreed. The other students were then divided based upon the workshop session that they had attended. Resultantly, there were 5 students from the engineering group and 7 students from the construction group. The last of the scheduled interviews took place with Ms. Sarah and Bob at the end of the second week.

### *Procedure: Sorting through the data*

As a precursor to the data analysis process, it is important that decisions be made about how to manage the information gathered from various data sources (Maxwell, 2005). Analysis of the data gathered through the review of policy-related documents and the participant interviews was a three-fold process. First, the policy-related documents listed in Table 4 were read and a synopsis of each document was created and put into a

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

table. Each document overview included basic information about the text (e.g. author, publication date and number of pages); the intended audience and the main points or issues covered. In addition, the overview detailed whether a definition of VET was provided and the extent to which gender was discussed in the document (see Table 6). The documents were then analyzed individually and collectively in order to identify common and divergent focus, intention and the main issues covered.

The second portion consisted of interview transcription and analysis. Individual and group interviews with the students (current and former), instructors/administrators and professionals are an essential source of information for this case study. These interviews may be classified more as "...guided conversations than structured queries" (Yin, 2009, p. 106) because while an interview protocol was developed and used (Appendices VII - X), the questions were not necessarily posed in the same way or in the same order. This approach was used in the hope that it would make the interviewee feel as comfortable as possible with both the process and the idea of being audio-taped. In turn, this particular strategy was selected with the hope that it would encourage the participant's willingness to share their thoughts and feelings. Researcher observation and reflection notes were written following each interview and whenever possible the notes included initial discussion of possible themes that were raised by the interviewees. The notes taken at those junctures were seen as a way to tentatively explore ideas about possible themes, categories and relationships, (Maxwell, 2005, p. 96) as well as a means to reflect upon method, theory, purpose and how to potentially conduct the data analysis portion of this case study (Maxwell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Once all the interview data had been collected the audio-taped interviews and observational notes were transcribed by the researcher. An initial step in the data analysis process included reading the transcriptions (Maxwell, 2005). The transcriptions along with any observational notes and publicly available government as well as school and workshop provider documents or reports were printed and read by the researcher and preliminary ideas about themes, categories and relationships were highlighted and noted in the margins. Theme and category selection were also based in part on data sorting categories that were listed in the case study research proposal. Further refining of the themes occurred as a result of the transcript review process. The themes are generally descriptive in nature because they are drawn from the participants own words and concepts as well as researcher observation and description (Maxwell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Subsequently, an Excel spreadsheet was prepared using the preliminary themes and the accompanying interview text was copied to the appropriate theme. The Excel spreadsheet was reviewed further to identify whether themes needed to be modified. This second review resulted in the identification of fewer themes. In addition, the interview transcripts were reviewed and individual narratives (stories) were created using the text of the transcripts. This process allowed me to create narrative structures that were fairly similar across all participants. Creating the similar narrative structures functioned as a means for me to easily identify excerpts of texts that could be used to present the themes.

The third aspect of data analysis involved the review and discussion of the document analysis and student narratives in terms of the broader research questions that guide this case study and the foundational concepts that were discussed in Chapter 3

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

(Conceptual Framework). The document analysis and student narratives have been presented using Ted Aoki's notions of curriculum-as-plan and curricula-as-lived that was discussed in the conceptual framework.

### *Procedure: Reflecting on the researcher's experience*

In this researcher's estimation, it would seem rather disingenuous to conduct a case study that explores the issue of young girls' experiences in a particular vocational education initiative while simultaneously stripping away any discussion of the researcher's experiences as part of the process. It is with this belief in mind that I choose to include in this section on procedure a brief reflective piece on some of my thoughts and experiences during the data collection phase.

It was fascinating to watch this group of young girls during the lecture portion of the construction taster day because it provided an opportunity to observe them as they learned about and discussed educational and job choices in an area that many of them had probably never considered. A particularly interesting and shocking moment occurred as several of the girls acknowledged that they did not know what words like "inequality" and "sexist" meant. As young girls in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and all that entails (e.g. access to education, as well as non-stop technology and media sources – internet, cable television), it was easy to assume and expect them to have an idea of what those terms mean. The lack of knowledge about the terms is an issue, I think, worthy of further investigation and a paper topic worthy of writing. Attendance at the workshop also meant that I was able to conduct my first interview. Following the lecture portion of the workshop, I met and spoke with the workshop administrator (Ms. Nancy) and that proved to be a delight. Her

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

passion and candor during our conversation was a fantastic way to begin the interview phase of this study.

By the end of my second week in England, interviews had been conducted with a number of students (current and former) as well as instructors/administrators and professionals. While, it would have been nice to speak with more instructors/administrators and professionals, time constraints proved to be a limitation. However, the completed interviews did contain interesting and varied information that could be worked with.

### *Addressing potential concerns*

As noted by Lincoln and Guba (2000) qualitative research is contingent, contextual and hence has to be read as such. However, there are several criticisms that are often raised against case study research as a method and/or methodology. This section takes a brief look at two common criticisms, the issues of generalizability and validity as it relates to case study research. As part of this section, I also attempt to demonstrate how I address those issues in this case study.

As noted earlier, both Yin (2009) and Stake (1995) have argued against critiques that question the generalizability of a particular case study. Both authors do so by drawing a distinction between analytic and statistical generalizations. While Yin (2009) writes about analytic generalization, Stake (1995) calls for naturalistic generalization. In both instances, it is assumed that a single case is not synonymous with a single respondent. Moreover, they assume that predictive theories and universals are difficult, if not, impossible to achieve when one seeks to examine human behaviour and

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

interactions. In fact, concrete, context-dependent knowledge generated through case study research is valuable because it illustrates the often complex, and at times messy and capricious nature of individual and/or group behaviour and interactions.

As a case study, one would be hard pressed to say that it is possible to make sweeping generalizations about the issue that is being explored. Predictive theories and universals are not part of this study but that should not be interpreted as a shortcoming as feminism has shown us (Lather, 1991, among so many others). Instead, if gender is contextually performative (Butler, 2006), my study then aims to create greater awareness about the issue of gender and its place in how *these* young girls perceive a particular educational and occupational sphere. The student's perceptions should be viewed as important in and of themselves because the initiative is aimed at them and their peers, but their perceptions should also be viewed as important because it represents feedback that could inform government and school policy and practice regarding vocational education training.

Qualitative researchers are often called upon to demonstrate that their research is credible. In order to do so, several procedures are commonly used to establish research validity. Some of these techniques include "...member checking, triangulation, thick description, disconfirming evidence, researcher reflexivity, prolonged engagement in the field, collaboration, peer reviews and external audits" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 124). Creswell and Miller add that "...the choice of validity procedures is governed by two perspectives: the researcher's lens or viewpoint regarding validity in a study; and the researcher's paradigmatic assumptions" (p. 124). The lens used to establish validity might rely on the length of time that the researchers spends in the field, if data has been

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

saturated to establish good themes or categories and how data analysis evolves into strong narrative. A second lens might rely on the participant's perspectives to establish validity, whereby the researcher will rely on participant perspective to determine how accurately their thoughts, understandings, experience etc. has been captured and re-presented in the final narrative.

What then governs our perspective about narratives is our historical situatedness of inquiry, one that is based on social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender antecedents of the situation(s) that is being explored. Recently, Patti Lather (2006) called for an "...awareness of validity as far more than a technical issue solved via correct procedures" (p. 51). A researcher who assumes a value-based approach to research calls into question the assumptions about the objective and neutral nature of research. As Lather (1986) has stated, claims of scientific neutrality and objectivity "...serve to mystify the inherently ideological nature of research in the human sciences and to legitimate privilege based on class, race, and gender" (1986, p. 64). In value-based research, assumptions regarding validity are interrogated and challenged and in turn the researcher needs to be reflexive, disclosing what they bring to a particular narrative. Resultantly, the researcher who subscribes to this view of validity willingly incorporates self-disclosure and attempts to collaborate with participants in the study. Self-disclosure and collaboration are seen as procedures that help to minimize the inequality that participants may feel but doing so also creates a space where complexity may be layered, problems and possibilities foregrounded and opportunities for different and useful ways of knowing may be shared.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

This study also includes researcher self-disclosure that attempts to share with the readers my personal assumptions, beliefs and biases. The act of self-disclosure clearly uses the lens of the researcher but it also affords the researcher the opportunity to reflect on the social, cultural, and/or historical forces that may shape my interpretation and narrative.

With regards to the issue of participant perspective, it is a central aspect of this exploratory case study and as such every effort has been made to ensure that the participant' voices are accurately re-presented. All participants are given the opportunity to review and revise their transcripts prior to its inclusion in the study. Moreover, any portraits and/or narrative created for this study uses direct quotes in order to allow the participants' voices to be heard as loudly as possible.

Another validity procedure commonly employed in research studies is triangulation. Triangulation involves the search for "...convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study...The narrative account is valid because researchers go through this process and rely on multiple forms of evidence rather than a single incident or data point in the study" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). As mentioned earlier in this chapter this study relies on the use of multiple data sources (i.e. individual and group interviews, documents, and observation), all of which are used to create a narrative that consider commonalities and differences across participant perspectives. In particular, the use of interviews and government documents as data sources help to highlight the socio-cultural (both historical and practical) issues that may serve as influencers on young girls gendered experience and

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

understandings as they relate to non-traditional vocational education and skilled trades professions.

### *Ethics*

Since this study involved speaking with individuals at length, it was imperative that all study participants were clearly informed of their rights as participants in this case study. Therefore, all participants were asked prior to any discussions to provide their written consent by signing a form that outlines their roles and responsibilities and those of the researcher during the study (see Appendix VI). The consent form also outlines how material provided by the study participants would be used during and after the study. For example, all participants were notified that their names would be removed from all data collection forms and pseudonyms provided. Additionally, all data collected from participants has been and will be held in confidence; names have not and will not be used in any publications that describe the research; and participants retained the right to withdraw from the study and/or request that data collected about them not be used either selectively or in whole.

All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The completed transcripts were forwarded to the participants via email for their review. The letter of consent form informed participants that in an effort to offset concerns about the use of email as a means of communication, transcripts would be password protected. At the time of their interview, each participant provided a password that was used by the researcher when forwarding transcripts. The password was recorded on their signed consent form and the consent forms are kept in a locked desk in my supervisor's office.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Participants had 10-15 working days to review and return their transcript. In cases where participants did not respond at the end of the allotted time, a follow-up email was sent. The email asked: (a) if they have had an opportunity to review their transcript; and (b) if I could use their comments in the writing of my dissertation as shown in the transcript. This email correspondence was premised on two things: 1) the participant had already consented to being part of the research and 2) the email was meant as a follow-up to ensure that they said what they wanted to say and hence had nothing to add or subtract. Finally, the email indicated, that if no response was received within a reasonable time of one (1) week to two (2) weeks, the transcript notes were to be used as they are in the dissertation writing. Once approved, the transcribed notes were reviewed, analyzed and narratives of the students' stories were prepared.

## **Summary**

This chapter began with a discussion on the dual aspects of case study research, whereby it is both a method and a methodology. The distinction between the two is based on the idea that case study research can refer to a system of practices and principles (methodology) and the procedural aspects associated with conducting a case study (method). The chapter presents both the methodology and method aspects of this case study on gendered experience of a specific secondary school initiative aimed at creating awareness and possibly interest in non-traditional VET. Included in the chapter are details regarding location, site and participant selection, data sources, and procedure. Purposeful selection of both the site and participants was used in this study. The data sources included a review of a selection of England's VET policy-related documents and

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

interviews with current and former students as well as instructors and an administrator at Garden Road Community and Technology School. Additional interviews were conducted with two recent graduates from Garden Road who decided to pursue non-traditional VET programs and one administrator at a facility that offered the gender specific taster day sessions. Interviews were conducted with the students individually or in group settings at the school. Interviews with the instructors and school administrator were also held at Garden Road, while the interview with the administrator at the VET facility was held at their location. Document and interview data were analyzed through an iterative process that included sorting, categorization of the data into themes and the creation of individual interview portraits (stories). This process of sorting, categorization and portrait development resulted in the identification of the themes used to present and discuss the student narratives.

## CHAPTER 5

### DATA ANALYSIS – TAKE I: CURRICULUM-AS-PLAN

You are at the mercy of who is in government. From one year to the next, you never know if there is going to be security with it or not... (Bob, senior administrator at Garden Road Community and Technology School)

[A]ll empirical research studies, including case studies, have a “story” to tell. The story differs from a fictional account because it embraces your data, but it remains a story because it must have a beginning, end and middle. The needed analytic strategy is your guide to crafting this story. (Yin, 2009, p.130)

This is a complicated, (multi)layered, nuanced and exciting story. It is about curriculum; specifically, it is a story about gender and how it is experienced, understood and performed within the context of a gender specific curricula (vocational education) initiative. Yet, it is also a story about government prepared curriculum policy-related documents on vocational education. Furthermore, this is a story about the expectations written of in those documents and how gender is discussed in those documents. The story begins with a broad (macro level) exploration of how vocational education in England has been defined in government policy and discussion documents over the last 10 years and the extent to which gender has been addressed within those documents. The story then proceeds to explore the context-specific experiences of a group of young girls in a gender specific initiative aimed at increasing female participation in non-traditional vocational education. As a whole, the story is intended to explore how policy content and intent may or may not filter into student experience and their subsequent educational and occupational possibilities.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

School curriculum invokes images of structure, a plan of action as to what *should* occur in the school and classroom setting. Oftentimes we think of the courses that are required for graduation and further studies and the content that should be covered in those courses. Teachers are expected to follow the curriculum as laid out and students are expected to engage with and demonstrate their understanding of the curriculum content that has been presented to them. The curriculum is created, implemented and evaluated. Whether intended or not, curriculum and curriculum implementation is perceived as a linear and fairly straightforward process.

Ted Aoki (2005a, 1993) asks us to think about an alternative conceptualization of curriculum that is attentive to the diverse and at times contradictory nature of experience with curriculum. This particular view assumes that a multiplicity of experience acts to disrupt the traditional curriculum landscape that is envisioned in terms of singularity and acknowledges the lived aspect of the curriculum, the teachers who teach it and students who experience it. “Curriculum developers and curriculum supervisors” Aoki (1993) warns us

...should heed thoughtful practicing teachers who already seem to know that the privileging of the traditional C & I [curriculum & implementation] landscape may no longer hold, but must give way to a more open landscape that offers possibilities by, in part, giving legitimacy to the wisdom held in lived stories of people who dwell within the landscape. (p. 267)

The generally received view of curriculum assumes that decision-making is rational and quantifiable while minimizing the possibility that sociocultural values may play an equally important role. Assumptions regarding curriculum are “...reinforced by positivistic thought, by an intoxication with the technical power of science and technology, and the development of business management techniques” (Aoki, 1983, p. 7).

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Aoki's words about what often drives curricula thought date back to 1983, but, as we shall see here, those drivers continue to inform policy.

### *Shaping a system*

Vocational education and training in England is part of a broader education system that has undergone much change since the early 1900s, therefore it is worthwhile to consider and be aware of some important changes that have taken place thus far. As noted in the Literature Review (Chapter 2) some of those key moments include the introduction of the 1902 Education Act, the 1944 Education Act, and comprehensive secondary schools. This story of curriculum-as-plan begins with a brief account of the key features of those changes that have directly or indirectly helped to shape England's VET system.

When the 1902 (Balfour) Education Act was introduced in 1902 it was intended to help England and Wales create a national public education system to rival those of the United States and Europe (Robinson, 2002). The industrial revolution was well on its way and the government saw a need for and benefit of having a better educated workforce. Key features of the Act included establishing a clear distinction between elementary and secondary schools, and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to manage and maintain schools. LEAs were responsible for the two forms of state-aided secondary schools that were created, one that included the "endowed grammar school...and municipal or county secondary schools" (Gillard, 2011, p. 19). In addition, the act also created a system in which most children would receive elementary education until the school-leaving age (13 years old). By the year 1917, the school leaving age rose to 15

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

years old and junior technical schools were introduced. The technical schools offered boys and girls a two-three year post-elementary program that prepared them for work in industry. The programs followed by the girls were oriented towards domestic work.

The next major piece of legislation was the 1944 Education Act which organized the national system of education into three stages that consisted of primary, secondary and further education (Crook, 2002; Robinson, 2002). Once again the LEAs were tasked with the provision, funding and maintenance of schools in their geographic area. The LEAs had the power to decide if, when and where primary and secondary schools could be established but LEA proposals and plans were to be submitted to the Minister of Education. Essentially, the 1944 Act established a three-tiered system of responsibility and oversight for education that had central government dealing with national policies and resource allocation, LEAs responsible for local policy and resource allocation to schools, and schools (head teachers and governors) setting school policy and resource management (Brighouse, 2002; Crook, 2002; Robinson, 2002). What the 1944 Act did not do was create a common school for all that integrated church schools and private education. Instead, special provisions remained for both church run and private education. For some this was viewed as a major shortcoming since the Act maintained a class-based education system that had the top performing students sit the eleven-plus exams for entry into grammar schools, while the remainder attended secondary modern schools. This view of class-based segregation was reinforced because secondary modern schools were not allowed to run the exam courses and LEAs were not allowed to introduce comprehensive schools. The exams-driven nature of the system continued with the introduction of the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) in 1965 (Brighouse,

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

2002). Students who were deemed unable to meet the rigours of the GCE could sit the new less rigorous CSE exams.

Interestingly, in 1965 The Labour Party campaigned on the idea of dispensing with the eleven-plus exams and introducing comprehensive schools which proved to be popular position (Crook, 2002). However, once in power the government did propose education legislation regarding comprehensive schools but it did not require LEAs to comply. The government's decision to provide choice was viewed as a desire to maintain the status quo of selection based education that relies heavily on examinations (Crook, 2002, Robinson, 2002). This exam-intensive system remains today and some of the students narratives found in Chapter 6 (Data Analysis, Part II), indicate the level of importance attributed to preparing for and passing GCSEs. Furthermore, the next section (Chapter 5, Data Analysis I) show that GCSEs form a central component of how VET is presented in a number of the documents reviewed for the study.

### *Curriculum-as-plan: Review of a selection of England's vocational education-related curriculum policy documents, 2002-2011*

As with any other school subjects, a range of government policy documents have been prepared and disseminated about vocational education and the courses that are categorized within that domain. Some of these documents relate official policy while others are discussion documents. Thus we may find that some of the documents are aimed at teachers and school administrators (e.g. 2002's *New GCSEs in vocational subjects: a general guide and overview of the new qualifications*), while others are intended to be read by parents or guardians, students and the public at large (e.g. 2003's

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

*GCSEs in vocational subjects – A general guide and overview of the qualifications*). In general, the documents are created by government and/or educational institutions to define and structure the work that they do, the work that they expect schools and teachers to do and the outcomes and experiences that they anticipate students should have. While, these documents represent ‘the plan’, to use Aoki’s term, and they say much about what is expected of the intended audience, they also reflect the socio-historical settings in which they are created.

This review of a selection of England’s vocational education-related policy documents (2002-2011) was conducted in an effort to explore the UK government’s view of what constitutes vocational education and the extent to which issues of gender are considered within those documents. This review serves an important function in this research story because it provides a sense of the macro level setting and issues that help shape the micro level work of schools and in part informs student experience and understanding of themselves and their educational and occupational choices. The following summary highlights some of the key areas such as purpose, intended audience, and whether (a) a definition of vocational education is provided; and (b) the extent to which the issue of gender is discussed or not. A more detailed table that lists each document reviewed can be found in Appendix XI (pp. 319-346).

### *About the documents: a summary*

A total of 13 VET policy-related and discussion documents that cover the period 2002 to 2011 were reviewed for the purpose of this study. This particular period was selected because it represents a time of education policy, political and economic change

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

in England. At the start of the decade the New Labour party led by then Prime Minister Tony Blair had been in power for several years and had promised to usher in VET reforms that sought to “...build and education system which will deliver the technical and vocational skills of an advanced economy so that everyone will have a pathway to success” (DfES, 2003a, p. 4). Upon Prime Minister Blair’s departure from elected office in 2008, Gordon Brown assumed leadership of the New Labour Party and a minority government. Two years later in 2010, Conservative politician John Cameron formed a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats and became the new Prime Minister. Over the course of those ten years the country had seen a shift from a solid majority New Labour government to one led by parties positioned closer to the right of the political spectrum. Against this backdrop of changes in government leadership, attempts at VET reform were undertaken.

The documents included in this review were selected on the basis that the topics of vocational education program planning, implementation and/or evaluation were addressed at some point in the document. In addition, all documents could be easily accessed through the DfES website or through other online sources at no cost. For the purpose of this summary, the documents are grouped on the basis that they (a) deal specifically with school policy and regulations; (b) are intended to inform teachers, parents and students about changes and subject offerings; and (c) are research papers or reviews that examine how education is or should be provided to young people 14-19 years of age.

The first group of documents that contained information about policy and regulation, includes two were short overviews of the subject offerings (DfES 2002a and

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

DfES, 2002b). The other documents in this group were longer and more detailed and dealt with the inspection of vocational courses (Ofsted, 2002) and laying out policy for school managers (2003a). The 48 page inspection document included specific details about the inspection policy and was intended to assist secondary, post-secondary institutions and their partners as they “improve standards in vocational programmes and qualifications; improve attainment in general...promote and consolidate the use of key skills, develop employability...improve careers education. Included are sections on VET courses in the curriculum; standards, teaching and learning, as well as other factors that affect the quality of Ofsted inspection of VET courses. Meanwhile, the 32 page guide for school and college managers created by the Curriculum and Standards division of DfES highlighted the aims and benefits of VET and work-related learning, resources available to education providers along with DfES expectations. In terms of regulations, this document highlights that all schools are required to offer work-related learning opportunities to all students as part of the Key Stage 4 curriculum (i.e. Year 9, 10 and 11). A definition of work-related learning is provided however, as is the case with all of the other documents in this group no clear definition of vocational education is provided. As such, it remains unclear whether in these instances VET is synonymous with work-related learning. In relation to talk of gender only the Ofsted (2002) guide on inspecting vocational subjects makes reference to the issue. The guide notes that evaluators must be aware of government legislation about gender.

The second group which covers documents that offer information to teachers, parents and students about the changes and subject offerings include a four page guide that is aimed at providing teachers and other professionals with general information about

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

the new GCSE vocational course offerings prior to their introduction in 2002 (DfES, 2003b) and a second similar general guide that was prepared for students and their parents/carers (DfES, 2003c), as well as a 12 page document on gender-related myths and education (DfES, 2009). Like the teachers and professionals guide, this second document listed the new GCSE level vocational subjects that were to be offered, however, the document does include a section that discusses issues that parents and carers should consider when selecting GCSE vocational subjects. Some of those issues listed include “...approaches to assessment of the qualifications;...the total work-load of all the subjects taken, especially in the amount of course work; and the teaching and learning styles used by teachers of the GCSEs ... (DfES, 2003c, p. 4).

Meanwhile, the discussion document on myths about gender and education (DfES, 2009) was intended to present a way to begin dialogue among educators and students at primary and secondary levels of schooling. Included in the document are 11 myths about gender and student achievement, however, the document pays particular attention to myths that highlight the issue of boys’ underachievement and engagement with the curriculum.

Several of the documents included in the first group (DfES, 2002a; DfES, 2002b; DfES, 2003a; and Ofsted, 2002) could be categorized as multi-purpose and feature in this section as well because they were meant to inform specific groups about the new subject offerings. Among this second group, five of the documents did not have a definition of VET (DfES, 2002a; DfES, 2002b; DfES, 2003b; DfES, 2003c), while the remaining documents contained partial definitions (DfES, 2003a; Ofsted, 2002) as discussed above.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

The final group include: two research briefs, of which one is a study conducted about the vocational pathways taken by the 2002-2003 cohort in England and Wales (Payne, 2003) and the other identifies the key points and findings of a study commissioned to assess the “value of Vocational Qualifications (VQs) and Vocationally-Related Qualifications (VRQs) that fall outside the general vocational qualifications structure (Burgess & Rodger, 2010). Other discussion documents in the group include a review of Pathfinder projects that was done in 2004 (Hayes, Wragg & Mason, 2005); and a research brief that outlined the findings of a survey of employers about National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) (Roe, Wiseman & Costello, 2006). Additional items that comprise this group include a discussion document that includes research about subject choice and attainment levels of boys and girls in primary through to secondary school (DfES, 2007); and a broad-based review of vocational education in England that was commissioned by the education secretary, Michael Gove (Wolf, 2011).

The four page research brief on the 2002-2003 cohort (Payne, 2003) provided information about a number of issues including: vocational qualifications after 16; trends over time; information about the kinds of young people that take vocational qualifications in full-time education; government supported training; entry and exit from government supported training; early drop out from vocational training; and issues arising from the analysis. A total of 13 key findings are listed in the document and one deals with gender segregation. Specifically the authors state that gender segregation exists based on occupation and young girls and women were less likely to pursue higher level Advanced Modern Apprenticeships or seek to attain level 3 qualifications. Other study findings relate to: the percentage of students who listed vocational education as their “main study

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

aim” (1/3); the number of those pursuing vocational studies on a full-time basis (3/4); performance on GCSEs and likelihood of pursuing vocational qualifications (e.g. those in the bottom third, almost all who chose to obtain qualifications chose vocational options).

The seventeen page research brief on VQs and VRQs (Burgess & Rodger, 2010) that provides information about the delivery of the qualifications, learner performance and progression, routes to higher education, implementing the 14-19 strategy and barriers to implementation and recommendations. Some of the recommendations include refine the diploma structure to better reflect learner needs; misconceptions about and delivery of the Diploma needs to be addressed; strengthen the selection criteria and standards; remove the option for schools to offer double VQs/VRQs; and improve the quality and variety of advice and guidance that is available to learners about education and careers.

The 95 page Equality and Pathfinders (Hayes, Wragg & Mason, 2005) report is part of a working paper series done for the Equal Opportunities Commission, DfES and and Joint Intervention Partners (JIVE). The Pathfinder program was a government initiative set up to establish best practices for 14-19 education and training; identify how the roll out of 14-19 policies are helped or hindered; identify barriers to implementation and demonstrate how 14-19 reforms could be put into practice in a range of social, cultural and education settings. This research assessed the degree to which Pathfinder Projects challenged inequalities and stereotypes that have an impact on learner choices and monitored individual and group outcomes on the basis of gender, ethnicity, disability, in care status, gifted and talented, and underachievement. Key conclusions found that nine of the twenty-nine Pathfinder providers examined in the study had developed gender-related initiative for learners. The authors also found that there was a general lack

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

of awareness among the providers about the DfES requirement that activities, performance and results on the various groups be tracked.

The 4 page brief on employers regarding their perceptions and use of NVQs (Roe, Wiseman & Costello, 2006) is based on a survey of 1500 employers across the country and 25 employer interviews. The study authors found that employers surveyed had limited understanding of the NVQs, are somewhat skeptical of their benefits and believe that they do not play a major role in skills certification.

The 132 page report on gender, subject choice and attainment (DfES, 2007) presents information about gender differences in special needs education, school exclusion, attendance and bullying. The authors also address the question of gender difference in participation and achievement levels and offers suggestions about way to tackle low attainment levels. Among the 18 chapters of the report, one was devoted to a discussion of strategies for increasing boys' attainment levels; however, there is no corresponding chapter about girls' attainment, despite the authors' acknowledgement "...that many girls face significant challenges" (DfES, 2007, p. iii).

The final item in this group is the vocational education review document on research conducted in 2010 (Wolf, 2011). The review was intended to be comprehensive in scope and deals with Key Stage 4 (14-19 years old) learners. The review assessed the current state of vocational education provision but also provides a series of recommendations about implementation, evaluation and future provision. The author lists 27 recommendations and identifies three main principles for reform that include programmes offered should be useful and should be geared towards providing skills that are readily transferable to the labour market or further higher education; careers

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

information advise and guidance should be of good quality and easily accessible to all students, but changes to government oversight and reporting on performance is needed; and simplification of vocational education provision is needed in order to make way for greater innovation and efficiency and free-up teaching and learning resources. Some of the recommendations include: undertake significant changes to the organization, funding, regulatory structure and quality assurance. It is expected that the changes will facilitate institutional response to labour market change, greater employer engagement in programme delivery and quality assurance.

### *About the documents: A closer look*

As a whole, the preceding group of documents says several things about vocational education policy and the format used to disseminate policy information in England. The documents provided information that was (a) both general and brief, or (b) were longer guides and research documents. In addition, clearly stated definitions of vocational education were difficult to find.

First, basic information about changes to policy and curriculum for a particular audience is often presented in the form of a pp. 4-6 brief or leaflet. For example, a four page leaflet was made available to “teachers and other education professionals” (DfES, 2002a) at the time the new General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSE) was launched in 2002, while similar length documents were prepared for “...careers teachers, personal advisors and other professionals providing careers guidance” (DfES, 2002b, p. 1), and “students and their parents/carers” (DfES, 2003c, p.1). In the cases above, the document included a listing of the 8 new subjects that were to be offered along with a

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

short one-paragraph description of the expected outcomes for each subject. Second, the subject descriptions could be categorized into distinct areas; some subjects highlight the provision of basic industry information and general knowledge, while others emphasize process and skill development (see Table 7 below).

**Table 6.** New GCSE vocational subjects as of 2002

<b>Applied Art and Design</b>	“provide opportunities to understand” the industry
<b>Leisure and Tourism</b>	
<b>Manufacturing</b>	“provides for insights into the process” or
<b>Engineering</b>	“introduces the pupil to the process
<b>Health and Social Care</b>	“introduces pupils to a wide variety of work” in an array of services and organizations in the area
<b>Applied Business</b>	“enables students to gain knowledge, understanding or relevant business skills”
<b>Applied Information and Communication Technology (ICT)</b>	“gain an understanding of the professional world”
<b>Applied Science</b>	

Second, in addition to the use of short briefs and leaflets, the policy-related documents also took the form of longer guides, research studies or reviews that ranged from 32 pages to approximately 150 pages. The guides were, practical in nature; providing school administrators and teachers involved with assessment with information and examples of what constitutes good inspections and evaluations (Ofsted, 2002); and school and college managers and their community partners on DfES aims and expectations for vocational and work-related learning, as well as resources available to them (DfES, 2003a). For example, in the words of OFSTED (2002) document detailing inspection policy, the guide aimed at evaluation and assessment professionals was:

intended to help school inspectors, headteachers and staff to evaluate vocational courses in secondary schools for pupils pre-16...

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

The booklet gives guidance on the context, inspection issues and evaluation of evidence for vocational courses. You will find advice on what issues to explore, and points to consider when gathering first-hand evidence and information on funding. Inevitably, the scope of a booklet such as this is limited: only some of the facets of vocational courses affecting pre-16 education are featured, and these are in a state of evolution (p. 5).

Apart from the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED, 2002) document, the remaining research studies and reviews were conducted toward the latter part of the decade (Haynes, Wragg & Mason, 2005; Roe, Wiseman & Costello, 2006; DfES 2007; Burgess & Rodger, 2010). Resultantly, one may surmise that preparation of longer research studies signals a shift in focus, from that of planning and implementation to that of assessment, where the progress and impact of government reforms are examined. For example, in 2006, DfES commissioned a study to learn about employer use and perceptions of the National Vocational Qualification (NVQs) system in England because employer instigated training of employees was considered an important part of the government's skill strategy (Roe et al., 2006). The authors of that report conducted a survey of 1500 employers and conducted interviews with 25 employers and found "that there is limited understanding of NVQs amongst employers and NVQs have not fulfilled the intended universal role in certifying skills in England. However, Roe et al. added, awareness of NVQs is widespread, and of those employers that do use NVQs, "most reported benefits to staff and organization" (p. 1). There is also the more recent study that looked at the "operation, role, and value of Vocational Qualifications (VQs) and Vocationally-Related Qualifications (VRQs) that are currently delivered as standalone qualification and outside the four pathways" (Burgess & Rodger, 2010, p. 1). The four pathways mentioned, refers to "the general route – GCSE and A-Levels; Apprenticeships;

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Diplomas; Foundation Learning” (Burgess & Rodger, 2010, p. 1). According to the authors the four pathways, the research was conducted in order to inform the government about 14-19 qualifications strategy going forward.

Overall, it was a relatively straightforward process to identify that the policy-related documents talked about: the new subject offerings, the basic aims and modes for assessment of the courses, and the intended audience (DfES, 2002a, 2003b, 2003c; OFSTED, 2003). The documents also talked about student participation rates, or employer perceptions (Payne, 2003; Haynes et al., 2005; Roe et al., 2006). In cases listed document content could be easily identified because the information was usually presented early in the text, in an introduction or executive summary. At other times the information was found in sections that dealt with a specific element or issue, like *Purpose, Key Skills, Key Findings, or Recommendations*. However, what proved to be more elusive in the documents was a clear and consistent definition of the term ‘vocational education’. Lack of a clear definition could be interpreted in a number of ways. First, one could assume that what it means to do VET is self-evident and taken for granted by those tasked with developing and disseminating policy-related information. Second, defining VET is a difficult and daunting task because it must take into account the needs and interest of varied stakeholders. Finally, a more critical read as to the elusiveness of a definition of VET assumes that the nature and purpose of VET in England is intended to be unclear. Specifically, that a lack of clarity regarding a basic definition is indicative of the ancillary and subordinate status of VET and those who take part in these programs within the broader context of education and occupational possibilities and choice. This last reading assumes that the discourse of education policy,

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

in this case how VET is defined (and not) is implicated in determining which forms of knowledge are valued, legitimized and reproduced (Apple, 2004).

Among the documents reviewed, a definition of sorts was provided in one instance.

Vocational courses give an appreciation of the occupations available in a specific sector. They develop the skills knowledge and understanding required to prepare students for employment or to enable them to progress to further education and training in that sector. These forms of work-related learning may lead to a nationally accredited course or qualification. (DfES, 2003a, p. 6)

The definition above can be found in the document *Vocational and work-related learning at key stage 4: Guidance for managers in schools and colleges and their partners* (2003a), which provides information and direction about planning, management frameworks, teaching and learning, accreditation and partnerships. The definition was one of several listed that had been “agreed by DfES [Department for education and skills], Ofsted [Office for Standards in Education] and QCA [Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency] (DfES, 2003a, p. 6). Definitions were also provided for work-related learning, work-related programmes, work experience, work-based learning/routes, and enterprise education. In Foucaultian terms the documents impart particular forms of knowledge to the reader that establishes boundaries about what is expected of schools, teachers, managers and student bodies (Rabinow & Rose, 2003; Foucault, 1990). In this scenario, the school assumes the role of disciplinary institution that is expected to prepare and train student bodies to assume their role as an employed and therefore contributing member of society. By extension teachers are tasked with facilitating and managing said training of these bodies. The student bodies that follow the procedures to a pre-determined acceptable level that is outlined in the training are

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

then eligible to pursue further and more detailed knowledge acquisition elsewhere. As the student acquires sufficient knowledge as defined in the policy, there is the possibility of accreditation at a national level. Such accreditation identifies their maturity and readiness for entry to gainful employment (and compensation) that acknowledges their knowledge and skill sets. In this scenario, the school may be defined as a technique of social control that exerts power through the subjects offered, how those subjects are structured and taught, and the means through which student bodies are managed, evaluated and deemed ready (Foucault, 1990). The school is implicated in establishing the prerequisites for admission and acceptance to the world of work and society at large.

Aside from the aforementioned instance, ‘vocational education’ was primarily presented as a bulleted list of aims and benefits, key skills, or qualifications that are to be achieved in a particular group (GCSE) of subjects or courses. For example, the four page general guide and overview document (DfES, 2003b, p. 1) states:

The GCSEs in vocational subjects aim to

- *introduce* learners to a broad sector of industry and business;
- *encourage* understanding of the sector, key concepts and theories prevalent in it; and
- *develop* capability in some skills used within it.

Meanwhile, the document intended for teachers and education professionals involved in the evaluation of vocational courses included the similarly worded and presented text under the heading “*What are vocational courses?*” (Ofsted, 2002, p. 9).

This booklet takes vocational courses to be those leading to qualifications that:

- introduce pupils to a broad sector of industry and business;
- encourage understanding of the sector;
- develop capability in skills representative of it.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

As laid out in the various DfES (2003a) documents, the scenario for the vocational education student appears to be a fairly straight forward one that offers the generic student body the opportunity to learn basic skills and knowledge and prepare for further work-related learning. However, by discussing the student in generic terms, a silence remains about how different gender(ed) bodies are managed and prepared for introduction into the vocational learning and work environment.

A clear, formal definition of ‘vocational education’ was also absent from the longer reviews and research reports. For example, the research document that looks at subject choice and attainment levels along gender lines does not include a definition of vocational education (DfES, 2007). In fact, the document includes separate sections for GCSE and A-Level attainment but does not include a similar section on vocational education courses.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) may have published a document (2003a) which said that vocational and work-related learning is important to the UK government’s overall strategy for the educational system, but government policy and documents are less explicit in formally stating what is the unifying or overarching philosophy that spans across the range of vocational courses available to students in England. The government and by extension DfES stance regarding the importance of VET may be interpreted as fulfilling two purposes. First, the apparatus of DfES fulfills its function as an administrative mechanism that oversees what and how knowledge is to be disseminated. Second, as a state apparatus it is assumed that DfES plays a role in maintaining an orderly and happy population (Foucault, 1990). In so doing, it

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

acknowledges vocational education as important aspect of the education system is to acknowledge the value of those bodies that have knowledge of and train in this sphere as contributing members of society. However, the absence of a clear formal definition regarding VET also produces a certain kind of knowledge, one that questions the actual level of importance that the state has ascribed to VET. Is vocational education in England intended to be (a) training for vocations (in the style of apprenticeships and trades); (b) training in a vocational style (i.e. there is some component of learning through work); and/or (c) training by a vocation. In the end, one is left to glean some semblance of understanding about said philosophy through what is said (and left unsaid) in the policy-related documents.

### *Looking back: Things said – things left unsaid*

What do we know about vocational education in England during the period 2002-2012? In 2003 the UK government intended to establish a system that offers students the opportunity to develop “technical and vocational skills of an advanced economy” (DfES, 2003a, p. 4). In order to do so, they embarked upon a reform of secondary school (14-19 year old) education provision that would demonstrate the commitment to

... providing a more coherent 14-19 phase which is responsive to individual needs, offers a broad range of choices from the age of 14, and promotes progression at every stage through to further and higher education and the world of work. (DfES, 2003a, p. 1)

The

The Department will move towards this vision by reforming the 14-16 curriculum from September 2004, so fewer subjects are compulsory between the ages of 14 and 16. We will ensure high quality vocational

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

options are available to all students and make work-related learning and enterprise education statutory requirements for all 14-16 year olds to better prepare young people for the world of work. These changes will allow more freedom for young people to follow individual programmes that meet their needs and aspirations... (DfES, 2003a, p. 1).

The preceding DfES (2003a) document also talked about the important role that vocational education can play at both an individual and national level. Specifically, the document states that the government intended to create an education system that provides "...opportunity for continued employment in the world of work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century... which will deliver the technical and vocational skills of an advanced economy so that everyone will have a pathway to success" (DfES, 2003a, p. 4). Such government discourse suggests that vocational education can provide opportunities for learning as well as gainful employment that contributes to the betterment of the nation. According to the excerpt above, DfES has determined how best to train "all students" and that is to simultaneously offer them greater freedom to choose while also requiring that they participate in forms of learning that are work-based and entrepreneurial in nature. Upon closer examination, one could surmise that DfES has instituted certain directives and procedures that are designed to govern the conduct of young student bodies (Rabinow & Rose, 2003). More specifically the newly approved modes of learning are on one level intended to train and (in)form students about work, but they are also about preparing students to assume greater individual responsibility for learning and creating their own unique work opportunities. The excerpt can also be read as an attempt to govern the body in uncertain financial times – students and the population at large can no longer rely upon the State to ensure that employment opportunities can be found.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

The preceding discourse also implied that the vocational education system was in need of changes. The changes needed to reflect new economic realities, that the world of work is technology and knowledge driven. Flash forward 10 years and the recently published Review of vocational education – The Wolf report (Wolf, 2011, p. 22) contained a similar message, that “major changes” and “simplification of the vocational education system for 14-19 year olds” is needed. Professor Wolf (2011) adds that change is required in vocational education

organization and funding, its regulatory structures, and its quality assurance mechanisms. These will allow institutions to respond to local and changing labour markets; and engage employers more directly in delivery and quality assurance. They will give schools greater access to vocational professionals, and young people greater access to specialised instruction” (p. 22).

As with the earlier DfES (2003a) document, certain ideas are repeated regarding the need for VET reform and the idea of greater choice and freedom. While the Wolf Report is not official education policy, the author was given the mandate to review VET with the intent to examine not just the current state of VET in England but also to recommend where and what change is needed. As such, the review provides an indication of what direction the State is likely to take as it considers future policy changes in VET provision and practice. As we see below, the author (Wolf, 2011) proceeds to elucidate how the suggested changes will benefit the State, the schools, the stature of VET and the student body.

The proposed changes will increase efficiency across the system, and reduce direct expenditures in a number of areas. It will also ensure that the courses and qualifications offered to young people have genuine labour market value and credibility. While decentralisation and flexibility are critical, central government retains a core responsibility

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

to set broad policy and assure quality. It must ensure that our education system takes account of a changing world, of the demands made by the labour market, and the world economy, and of what this implies for young people's long-term progression, opportunity and success. It must also assure basic quality" (p. 22).

The discourse used re-presents particular meanings that are tied to history and context and have often been used to characterize VET policy discourse. The use of phrases like "increase efficiency", "reduce direct expenditures", "ensure...genuine labour market value and credibility" and "assure basic quality" are quite powerful. Who among the general public is likely to rail against changes that create a more efficient and less costly and fiscally responsible VET system particularly if it 'ensures' that the outcome for students will knowledge and products that are of value in the long-term. Furthermore, the State no longer wishes to shoulder the responsibility for VET provision alone, hence the idea of decentralization is coupled with talk about the importance of a more flexible and current system.

An examination of documents published during the intervening years also emphasize either directly or indirectly similar messages, that economic contributions and changing labour market realities are important aspects of how vocational education for 14-19 year olds is structured, provided and evaluated or assessed. For example, a four page brief that provides students and their parents or carers with information about the then new GCSE vocational subject offerings notes that " the GCSE vocational subjects aim to: *increase* understanding of the world of work; *enable* students to start getting the skills for working life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; *introduce* students to an industry or business sector, such as engineering or leisure and tourism; and *help* develop some of the skills used in a chosen sector" (DfES, 2003c, p. 1; original emphasis). The preceding list or

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

variations of the list could be found in other government publications that provided information that was general (DfES, 2003b), as well as specific to school and college managers and community organizations (2003a).

In keeping with the aims to *increase* knowledge of the world of work, *enable* and *help* develop some skills, *introduce* students to certain occupations or business sectors, some of the publications reviewed also highlighted the need to take into account individual student needs and interests (DfES, 2002a, 2002b, 2003a & 2003c; Haynes et al., 2005; Wolf, 2011). In instances where individual student needs and interests are discussed it was suggested that by offering too many compulsory subjects, individual students were deterred from pursuing their interests and achieving their educational and occupational goals. In turn, one might assume that the government desire to offer ‘fewer compulsory subjects’ in order to “ensure high quality vocational options are available...” (DfES 2003a, p. 1) is synonymous with, with having greater freedom to choose and making better academic choices. This last point assumes that students have or will obtain a basic understanding of the range of options that are available to them.

Greater choice came in 2002 (DfES 2002a), when the government introduced 8 GCSE vocational subjects that covered a range of subject areas and functions as a replacement for the Part One General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) subjects. The areas of focus include Applied Art and Design; Applied Business; Engineering; Health and Social Care; Applied Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Leisure and Tourism; Manufacturing and Applied Science. The courses selected for introduction and inclusion in vocational education offerings were supposed to provide or add ‘broad’ knowledge but also help students develop skills that

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

can translate to the workplace and specifically the industry or business sector that is being studied. DfES document uses the terms “broad” and applied. The use of these terms for me speaks to the need to prepare students to be flexible for a ‘knowledge driven’ economy. However, these two terms are in some ways incongruous. *Knowing* how something is done does not necessarily translate into an ability or skill to *do* it. This point will be explained further in this thesis’ subsequent chapters.

For now, it is noteworthy that these new offerings were also discussed in a brief four-page document that provided teachers and other education professionals with information about the new GCSE vocational subjects prior to their introduction in 2002 (DfES, 2002a, 2002b). The offerings are intended to introduce students who are interested in vocational fields with “...the opportunity to explore these areas in a distinctive and innovative way - by developing knowledge and understanding of a particular vocational area and sharpening investigation and research, creative and entrepreneurial skills within a vocational context...” (DfES, 2002a, p. 1). This, the document continues, is done through the use of work placements and visits, project work and industry and occupation-specific research. As a starting point, schools were expected to craft clearly defined policies about the kind of teaching and learning that is expected in school and off-site learning.

The call for schools to develop clearly defined policies and provide workplace or off-site learning opportunities, very significant to note, assumes that these same schools have resources (financial or personnel) or know where to obtain those resources to ensure that the policies are enacted and experiential opportunities are made available. To that end, access to resources was included as part of the new structure. Under the new

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

system, schools that wished to offer the new vocational subjects could obtain support from the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) (DfES, 2003a). As a result, Further Education (FE) colleges that established linkages with secondary schools could obtain funding through Learning Skills Councils (LSC) whereby interested students could take part in placements at colleges and other training organizations. This set up was expected to give schools the freedom to create links and share resources.

Meanwhile, other documents (for example, DfES 2002a, 2003a) that served as a general guide and overview of the new vocational subjects available as part of the GCSEs. As a plan, these documents argue that the “GCSEs in vocational subjects give them [students] an opportunity to find out about the world of work, while keeping open their ability to continue further studies in college and higher education. They let students work within a business or industry, solve real work matters and talk to people in the sector. They learn about some of the jobs available in the business sector they study” (DfES, 2003c, p. 2). The vocational subjects are meant to serve as an end in itself but they are also meant to provide a possible route that leads to further qualifications and potentially higher degree studies (university). “The new GCSEs can be used to study another qualification in school or college, such as a VCE (vocational A-Level), an AS level or an A-Level in a closely related subject area” the DfES (2002a) document contends. The document adds, “students might go to university. Students might start work and take an Advanced Modern Apprenticeship leading to a skilled career or management training and later to a foundation degree or higher education course” (DfES, 2002a, p. 5). The language used in the preceding excerpts to talk about what future possibilities exist for students who hold GCSEs in vocational subjects displays a

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

particular hierarchical arrangement and reinforces certain discourses regarding what is ‘true’ and appropriate (Rabinow & Rose, 2003; Foucault, 1990). It is true that the vocational subjects provides opportunities to develop knowledge and skills that will result in employment but the reader is also told that there are other advanced stages that can be pursued, of which higher education is at the top of the hierarchy.

Further changes to the England’s education system were introduced with the release of a 2005 government publication that dealt with 14-19 education provision. This White Paper entitled *14-19 Education and Skills* outlined a 10-year program of reforms that would lead to major changes to the education of 14-19 year olds in England. Some of these changes included the introduction of Diplomas that were supposed to begin in the 2008/09 academic year, a new range of qualifications and an expanded Apprenticeship system. However, in 2008 another document was released that was intended to reform and streamline what was perceived to be a complex 14-19 qualifications system. This new streamlined system was to be in place by 2013 (Burgess & Rodger, 2010).

By the end of 2010, a new Conservative Party government had been in place for several months and the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove called for a review of vocational education. Although the final report was published during the writing of this thesis, I refer to it in order to demonstrate that another call for far-reaching changes to VET structure and curriculum has occurred over the relatively short timeframe of 10 years. According to Minister Gove (Wolf, 2011, p. 1) “technical and practical” education had continuously fallen short of expectations. He referred to the success of other developed nations in providing technical education that results in “robust

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

manufacturing industries” and can contribute to the nation’s “...capacity to generate growth by making things” (as cited Wolf, 2011, p. 1), while lamenting the UK’s ability to keep pace. Minister Gove’s remarks are rather interesting because when he talks about expectations he is not referring solely to student or maybe parental expectations, he is also talking about broader, national expectations. Foucault (Rabinow & Rose, 2003) refers to apparatus as the various techniques (e.g. institutions, administrative mechanisms) that augment and maintain the exercise of power. As an apparatus of the State, VET policy and programs have a responsibility to provide tangible results, demonstrate their effectiveness and usefulness to produce goods and materials for trade. He asserts that thus far VET has failed in its responsibility and therefore a review and potential overhaul of the system is required in order to better train its subjects (students) to meet those ‘expectations’.

Minister Gove’s concerns regarding vocational education provision led him to enlist the aid of Professor Alison Wolf to conduct a review of “...pre-19 vocational education” (Wolf, 2011, p. 1). Professor Wolf’s report was released in early 2011 and includes a list of 27 recommendations. Key features of the report include a call for the cessation of micro-management of vocational education by central government and simplification of the system. She argues that today’s vocational education system must respond to certain features of the current labour market; students are more likely to pursue further education until age 18 which is due in part to shrinking youth labour market; employers value and reward work experience as well as formal qualifications (credentials) therefore a strong apprenticeship system is of value. However, she also notes that the value of some formal qualifications for students and employers are highly

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

questionable if not useless because they offer the individual limited (or no) employment opportunities and possibilities for advancement. In addition, English and Maths, she adds, are considered to be crucial vocational skills. In her view, the skills taught should be general and the educational system itself should be flexible. Professor Wolf's recommendations corresponds with concerns raised by Minister Gove, in that she identifies what is needed to meet national expectations, management must be decentralized and responsibility offloaded to other parties. Additionally, the labour market should have a voice in determining VET focus, and students should expect to continue their search and acquisition of recognized credentials in order to meet the needs of the marketplace.

Specifically the Wolf Report (2011) suggests the need for changes to the funding and accountability structures, that "...should remove the perverse incentives which currently encourage schools and colleges to steer young people into easy options, rather than ones which will help them progress" (p. 11). It is expected that these changes would result in cost reductions and the development of stronger links to "...awarding bodies, employers and providers" (i.e. schools, colleges and training providers) (Ibid.). In other words Professor Wolf recommends that funding be on a per student basis, English and Mathematics be required throughout the students' studies, greater responsibility and oversight should be off-loaded to awarding bodies and institutions so they can determine which programmes of study are to be offered; employers should have greater involvement in establishing and determining quality assurance; and subsidies should be introduced for those willing to offer general education instead of skill training.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

As a whole, Professor Wolf's review works to reinforce negative perceptions and VET and puts forth certain discourses about VET curriculum. Mainly, that it has the potential to offer greater returns to students and the nation in terms of knowledge and skills that are current and relevant but it has yet to do so. The earlier attempts at changes were inadequate therefore further changes or (re)form are required vis a vis curriculum policy, provision and management. Hence she proceeds to outline the benefits of her suggested changes. Through the curriculum and its associated policies, the State works to produce or train students through VET policy about the kinds of citizens its needs to meet 'expectations'.

In sum, the review of policy-related and discussion documents shows that discussion and consensus regarding VET purpose is lacking. How then might one define 'vocational education' in England? If I were asked to provide an overarching definition of vocational education, I would be hard pressed to do so. In some respects it is education intended to impart a particular skill, but in other areas it emphasizes general knowledge. There is learning through work component, but the work may be short, medium or longer term, as well as intermittent or for extended periods (e.g. one day tasters, short or long-term co-op placements, or apprenticeships). In fact upon reviewing these documents, I now walk away with a sense that there is no formal definition because there is uncertainty or a lack of clarity about what it should be and how it should be offered. Clearly, the government wishes to be directive, but does not wish to be overly directed. Industry and employers input and oversight have been deemed necessary but uncertainty remains about the areas and degree to which they should be involved. Add to this mix, the ongoing fiddling that takes place in terms of reform, restructuring and

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

simplification and the result is a section of the education system that seems to be in constant flux. The cynics response would be to say at flux exists because the purpose of VET is uninterrogated and controversial because it is essentially an attempt to steer less ‘academically’ inclined students into lower paid and valued forms of employment. Unfortunately, if that is the case I would hazard to guess that ten years from now many of the same calls for change will be made. Possibly the only difference will be the set of politicians and policy makers that are to be quoted.

It is within this structure of seemingly ongoing calls for reforms and greater flexibility that the daily work of teaching and learning must occur. Regardless of whether the government proposes changes or is in the process of instituting changes to the vocational education system, students still attend school and hopefully attempt to amass some of the knowledge and skills needed for adult life. While I have talked about how vocational education has been discussed over the last ten years, I have yet to examine how the documents talk about the students. More to the point, I have yet to consider how the issue of gender has been addressed (or not) within the documents. However, before I begin that discussion on gender I will briefly talk about ‘change’, a discourse that has run through and across the various policy-related and discussion documents reviewed in this section.

### *Curriculum-as-plan/-lived and the ‘change’ rhetoric*

Governmentality in Foucaultian (Rabinow & Rose, 2003) terms refers to the process of governing the body politic, the population, as well as the means through which the body is governed. This idea of government is not viewed solely in terms of state

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

politics, it also assumes the presence of varied techniques of control that are specific (of the self) or in broadest terms (of the population). As defined, this concept of governmentality asks us to think about power and the management of bodies in terms of a scaled hierarchical and relational structure but it also seeks to include forms of social control present in disciplinary institutions. Moreover, governmentality is considered an alternative to sovereign or disciplinary because it also refers to the government of the self as well as others. As a disciplinary institution, schools function as a form of social control. The internalization of knowledge and discourse that are found in curriculum policy and practice (curriculum-as-plan) of schools enables the ability to govern the behaviour of populations but also that of the self.

In reflecting upon the policy-related and discussion documents reviewed in this chapter, there is a particular discourse that appears - the need for 'change' or in some cases 'reform' (Wolf, 2011; DfES 2003a; DfES 2002). There has been talk of the need to change the structure, the subject offerings, and the management of VET in England and this talk of change is positioned as necessary to create a more efficient, high-quality, flexible VET system that is responsive to student need and interest. If as Foucault (Rabinow & Rose, 2003; Foucault, 1990) claimed, there are discursive regimes that help to shape a certain form of biopower, in this case curriculum-as-plan, then the need for changing the rhetoric helps to define, describe and limit what can and cannot be said with respect to VET in England. First, talk of the need for change helps to define the ground rules for what kinds of work surrounding VET provision and practice is to be regarded as legitimate. So, when various documents highlight the need for fewer subjects but broader scope in those subjects, or greater freedom of choice for pupils it serves as a message

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

about what citizens (individually and collectively) are expected to internalize. When government documents talk about the de-centralization of management and fiscal responsibility but they also mention maintaining central government control over setting broad policy they suggest that what is valued is a change that results in greater individual responsibility and self-government (DfES 2002a; DfES, 2002b; DfES 2003a; Haynes et al., 2005; Wolf, 2011).

For VET students, talk of change refers to greater individual freedom and choice to determine their education and professional futures. However, the idea of greater freedom and choice proves to be problematic in the VET context because it assumes that all students begin on a level playing field. In the end, one wonders about how these documents deal with gender as a discursive construct that has implications at a societal and individual level. To quote Bordo (1999, p. 253) “the fact that power is not held by anyone does not entail that it is equally held by all. It is ‘held’ by no one; but people and groups are positioned differently within it.” Thus young girls and women in certain VET settings are positioned differently because social and cultural practices have helped to define and mark their bodies as other. These disciplinary practices create “desires, attaching individuals to specific identities, and establishing norms against which individuals and their behaviours and bodies are judged and against which they police themselves” (Sawicki, 1999, pp. 190-191). As will be shown in the Chapter 6 (Data Analysis-Take II, Curriculum-as-lived) some of the student narratives speak directly to how the young girl’s body is judged and self-governed but their narratives also provide examples of how the norm is contested and subverted.

*Gender talk*

My review of the vocational education policy-related documents shows that much has been said about skills development, preparation for work and further studies, and the role that employers and industry can and should play in vocational education provision. However, this review is also intended to show the degree to which gender is discussed in vocational education policy documents. Simply put, there has been a growing silence around the topic of gender in vocational education and discussion regarding the gendered nature of vocational education remains limited, if not negligible. Few of the documents reviewed for this study account for gender in VET and none of the documents have the experience of student in school as a starting point. In this case, silence regarding the topic of gender suggests the presence of discourse that sees it as a non-issue.

In general, vague statements have been made about the need for schools to present policy statements that “include a clear statement of how equal opportunities for all students are ensured” (DfES, 2003a, p. 8) or reminding those involved in the evaluation of vocational courses that they must “...be informed about the responsibilities and duties of schools regarding equal opportunities as they pertain to gender, race and disability” (Ofsted, 2002, p. 7). In the case of the Ofsted document, vocational subject evaluators are expected to have knowledge of government legislation that deals with discrimination such as the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, since the Act informs government policy regarding inclusion, achievement and the school’s role in achieving these things. The discourses regarding opportunities, participation and evaluation present in the documents are for the most part non-gendered and therefore generic. Interestingly, around the same time as the release of the Ofsted document, the government commissioned and released a

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

report on educational and training options selection among young people aged 16-19 in England and Wales for the period 2002-2003 (Payne, 2003). Of the 13 key findings listed in the document, two dealt specifically with issues of gender and vocational education selection. The study, found that “there was marked sex segregation in the GST [government supported training] in the type of work done. Female trainees were less likely than males to be in Advanced Modern Apprenticeships (AMAs) or to work for level 3 qualifications” (Payne, 2003, p. 1). The other key finding stated that “when GCSE results were the same, young men were more likely than young women to choose A levels rather than vocational qualifications” (Payne, 2003, p. 1). A review of the full report elaborated upon the aforementioned findings regarding gender difference in government supported educational and occupational training selection. Payne (2003) put it thus, and he is worth quoting at length:

70% of male trainees were in hand craft occupations, amongst which the most common were, in order of frequency, motor mechanics, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, bricklayers and painters and decorators – all trades in which women workers have not as yet gained much of a foothold. In contrast, three quarters of female trainees were in either personal service or clerical and secretarial occupations. More than half of the former – one third of all female trainees – were in hairdressing, and the other two personal service occupations of any size were nursery nurses and care assistants. In clerical and secretarial occupations more than half of female trainees were classified as general office assistants and clerks...[T]he different occupational profiles of males and females in GST had implications for the type of programme that they were on...three fifths of AMAs were in hand craft occupations, almost all done by young men. Clerical and secretarial occupations, usually done by young women, were more likely to involve an FMA [Foundation Modern Apprenticeship] than an AMA. Amongst the predominantly female personal service occupation, only hairdressers and travel agents were represented to any substantial degree in AMAs. (p. 63)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

The study findings speak to the existence of subject and programme selection that is delineated by gender.

A later publication (Haynes et al., 2005) did examine concerns that increased interest in vocational education "...could compound the stereotypical vocational choices already made by many young people and further contribute to occupational segregation" (p. iii). The research which was commissioned by the Equal Opportunities Commission, in conjunction with DfES and Joint Initiative Partners examined the extent to which government supported Pathfinder Projects<sup>15</sup> were "...challenging inequalities and stereotypes affecting young peoples' choices and monitoring the outcomes for individuals or groups, with particular reference to gender, ethnicity, disability, those who are looked after, the gifted and talented and those who are underachieving" (Haynes, Wragg & Mason, 2005, p. iii). Their study of the 39 Pathfinder Projects across England found that increased emphasis on vocational education and the introduction of vocational GCSEs "...could, potentially, reinforce stereotypical patterns and restrict choices at an earlier age than before. Equality issues need to be more than just an 'add-on'. They need to be a consideration at every stage of planning, implementation and evaluation" (Haynes et al., 2005, p. vii). Specifically, they found that of the 39 Pathfinders, gender was generally not considered a top priority, in that only 9 had undertaken gender-related interventions that offered students a chance to potentially "... 'taste' non-traditional courses, meet positive role models and consider non-traditional options" (Haynes et al., 2005, p. v).

---

<sup>15</sup> "Pathfinder" is a program set out in the government's green paper on 14-19 education provision. 14-19 Pathfinders and their associated projects were expected to establish best practices for the roll-out of 14-19 education and training; examine how 14-19 policies fit or hamper the carrying out of other policies; identify barriers to 14-19 policy implementation and show that 14-19 reforms could be rolled out across differing sociocultural and educational settings. Pathfinders were expected "by the DfES to track the impact of their activities on different groups of young people" (p. iv).

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Meanwhile, the authors found that gender, along with disability and ethnicity does have an effect on the types of educational and occupational routes that students select.

A recent document that deals specifically with gender is the DfES publication entitled *Gender and education – mythbuster. Addressing gender and achievement: myths and realities* (DfES, 2009). The document was created to be used by “...educators from all phases and stages of schooling. Its purpose is to identify and dispel some of the current and unhelpful myths about gender and education and to counter them with an evidence-based rationale” (DfES, 2009, p. ii). The publication is intended to be employed as a tool to open dialogue about gender-related issues with teachers, school staff and students. Of the myths discussed in the publication, the majority focus on the underachievement or performance of boys in the classroom learning environment. The starting point for the discussion appears to center on the boy’s perspective and boy’s experience in school. For example, myths listed include the following:

<p><b>Myth:</b> Boys underachieve across the curriculum <b>Reality:</b> Boys broadly match girls in achievement at maths and science</p>
<p><b>Myth:</b> Changing or designing the curriculum to be ‘boy-friendly’ will increase boys’ motivation and aid their achievement. <b>Reality:</b> Designing a ‘boy-friendly’ curriculum has not been shown to improve boys’ achievement.</p>
<p><b>Myth:</b> Boys’ educational performance suffers because the existing school curriculum doesn’t meet boys’ interests. <b>Reality:</b> There is no evidence to suggest that the content of the secondary curriculum reflects particularly gendered interests, or that such interests equate with attainment.</p>
<p>(DfES, 2009, pp. 3-6 )</p>

A reading of the text might lead one to believe that issues related to the performance and participation of girls in the classroom is secondary. Moreover,

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

instances when girls' performance and attainment levels are discussed, such as the third myth listed above, highlight their improvements in maths and sciences or their traditionally higher achievement levels in reading. While this document is intended to dispel myths and inform educators and students about gender and education, no myths or realities that relate to vocational studies are mentioned in the document.

The lack of discussion regarding the myths and realities associated with vocational studies is particularly striking in light of the earlier Payne (2003) study on VET participation and the recent government commissioned review of England's vocational education system that was undertaken by Professor Alison Wolf (Wolf, 2011). In her review, Professor Wolf states that the overwhelming majority of students age 14-19 pursue some form of vocational education. "A small minority follow entirely academic GCSEs, but most 14-16 year olds take some form of 'vocational' qualification...post-GCSE, about a third take only A levels, the conventional 'academic' route. In other words, two-thirds do not—and almost all of these young people will spend all or some of the years from 16-19 on courses which are partly or wholly 'vocational'" (Wolf, 2011, p. 20). Professor Wolf's statements echo the findings of the earlier study that looked at the vocational pathways taken among a cohort of 16-19 year olds in England and Wales (Payne, 2003). Payne's study found that 34% of 16-19 year olds were pursuing some form of vocational qualification. Clearly, the interest in vocational education exists, however, divisions along gender lines persist, yet the recent government review of vocational education neglects to mention it as a cause for concern. Discursively, the documents suggest that the State is either reluctant or unwilling to view VET

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

policy and curriculum along gender lines, instead as noted earlier there is a desire to highlight individual choice and responsibility. The absence or seeming reluctance to present gender issues as a point of concern while foregrounding individual responsibility, are in part, examples of what Elliott Eisner (1985, p. 107) calls the “null curriculum”. Eisner (1985, p. 107) defines the null curriculum as “...the options students are not afforded, the perspectives they may never know about, much less be able to use, the concepts and skills not part of their intellectual repertoire”. In paying attention to the null curriculum, we are asked to consider the things that have been left out when curriculum is developed. In essence, we are asked to question the appearance of neutrality of the knowledge presented and the issues that are addressed (and not). Moreover, we are then able to pose the question whose interests are being served and reproduced through existing curriculum and school practice? So, within the context of VET, while gender is missing from most of the policy and discussion documents reviewed, its very absence reflects a particular discourse about the purpose of VET education, what it should look like, who it is for (and not) and which bodies are appropriate for those environments. This point will be elaborated upon in the next section.

The apparent lack of attention to gender in the most recent review and call for vocational education reform does not bode well, because this document serves as an indicator of the kind of changes and initiatives to expect in the coming years. Issues of gendered divisions in vocational education participation and occupations will likely prove to be a non-issue. Whether government policy openly talks about or investigates (or not) the role that gender plays in vocational education has

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

immediate and longer term implications. In the short term, government policy foreshadows the kind of approach to curriculum and the associated initiatives that might be found in schools and classrooms. In turn, that policy has an impact on how students engage with, learn from and experience the curriculum and can directly (or indirectly) determine their educational and occupational direction and future. In the longer-term, those educational and occupational choices can impact the extent to which they experience personal, occupational satisfaction along with a sense of financial well-being.

### *The gendered body in policy*

Vocational education, as a sphere of learning and preparation for the world of work, is one in which divisions persist along gender lines. In England, these divisions were found in a 2002-2003 study of 16-19 year olds (Payne, 2003), and they were also written about in a later study that examined the work conducted by Pathfinder Projects across the country (Haynes et al., 2005). It is equally important to note that more recent reports and reviews of vocational education (DfES, 2007; DfES, 2009; Wolf, 2011) pay scant attention to female take up and completion rates in vocational education, let alone non-traditional vocational education and occupations. On the surface, one could claim that overall the documents reviewed have little to say about issues of gender, but examining these documents from a feminist perspective opens further the discourse possibilities.

From a feminist perspective, continued division of educational and occupational participation along gender lines says something about general

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

perceptions regarding young women and vocational education, their subsequent occupational choices and their perceived role in the world of work. This portion of the story invokes feminist thought and words in order to consider some of the things that have been said (and left unsaid) in the policy-related documents.

As noted above, discussion of the gendered (woman's) body was rarely included in the policy documents. Instead, gender (man and woman) generally fused to be presented as 'young people' or 'students.' In either case the terminology used presents the idea of the generic and, dare I say, disembodied individual. This generic pupil/student has policies created for them, which are intended to offer them choices within a government approved and established structure. The sense is that all pupils have access to the same choices irrespective of gender - that access and the ability to participate is equal for all students. As a stance, this position of equal access and ability is an admirable one to take, however, it negates the reality of statistics that demonstrate girls and boys do not participate equally across the range of vocational subjects on offer. For example, the research study by Payne (2002) on the 2002-2003 cohort in England and Wales that listed the divide that exists between vocational subjects followed by males and females is illuminating. The study found that while male students (70%) were more likely to train for trades like motor mechanics, carpenters, plumbers, and electricians, young women (75%) were more likely to be found in "personal service or clerical and secretarial occupations" (Payne, 2002, p. 63). These statistics clearly indicate that take up by gender across different vocational training options is not equal. More importantly, while it was not addressed in the cohort study, the

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

findings have longer term professional and financial implications for young women.

The fact that a preponderance of females can be found in the low paying and often low status personal care or clerical occupations reinforces societal notions of what constitutes ‘women’s work.’ This notion of ‘women’s work’ links to sociohistorically based conceptions regarding male and female roles. The prevailing ethos regarding gender-based divisions of work assumes that females are intellectually, temperamentally, and physically better suited to positions that involve listening, caring, service and simple manual tasks. Meanwhile, their male counterparts are often encouraged to take an interest in roles that require physical and manual strength. In the *Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir spoke of women as “new competitors” in a professionally and economically male-dominated world (1989/1949, p. iii), but the findings of the youth cohort research study indicate that there remain spheres in which women barely compete. In male-dominated spheres like the trades, the female body (physically and intellectually) is viewed as out of place, ‘the other.’ The female body gestates and takes care of hearth and home – it does not pound, grind, and heave in order to build structures.

Even when the documents did talk openly about issues of gender, the female experience was spoken of as secondary to that of the male student. Take for example the document that presents a series of achievement-related myths and realities, the starting point for the discussion was generally represented by the male student experience (DfES, 2009). It talks about boys’ underachievement, and boys’ lack of interest in reading, there is no corresponding document that takes the female

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

experience as starting point. Not only does the use of the male/female binary assume homogeneity of experience but it assumes the secondary, supporting role of the female. In Foucaultian terms, the curriculum-as-plan helps to shape the young girls body and experience through its presence and absence in VET documents (Foucault, 1979). Furthermore, the young girl's body is invoked in order to define and validate institutional policies and practices (Foucault, 1979). In other words their bodies have been marked *not* in an effort to further enhance their engagement with, and experience of the curriculum; instead it has been used to highlight the shortcomings of boy's experience. Therefore, we are left with a sense that the boys need the attention and help, while the girls are alright. If the girls are alright then it is not imperative that action (policy) be taken on their behalf. A similarly crafted document that focused on the myths and realities of female experience across vocational education options, I would hazard to guess, would likely have shed light on the need for a different set of institutional policies and practices.

A second example in which gender served as the focal point is the DfES (2007) document that looks at the issues of boy and girls subject choice and attainment levels in primary through secondary school. The report identifies the following as the main focus

This paper focuses primarily on gender differences of school-aged pupils. An important objective of this paper is to put the gender debate in context by examining the extent of the gender gap and discussing the role of gender in education alongside the role of other pupil characteristics, particularly social class and ethnicity. (DfES, 2007, p. iii)

However, particularly interesting is the special attention (in the form of a dedicated chapter) that is given to the issue of boys' attainment and possible strategies for

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

increasing their attainment levels. As a document intended to investigate gender differences, no similarly dedicated section has been included on girls' attainment levels. Despite the author's statement to the contrary, one would be hard pressed to say that the issue of girls' attainment levels has been afforded an equal level of importance and attention. The omission of a dedicated section on attainment levels and possible strategies for girls relegates them as a group to secondary status. Moreover, it illustrates one of the ways in which the exercise of power at the macro-level (i.e. the State; curriculum-as-plan) can have implications at a micro-level (lived experience of the individual) (Rabinow & Rose, 2003; Foucault, 1979). The absence of a girls section in a document intended to focus on all students suggests the presence of a curriculum discourse that is skewed toward the needs of boys.

Even when the government did establish policies and programmes intended to address gender disparity in certain vocational areas, like that of the Pathfinder Project, the outcomes proved to be less than stellar (Haynes et al., 2005). In that case, gender was one of several areas to be addressed by Pathfinder initiatives but the authors found that gender was not considered to be a priority issue in the majority of Pathfinder projects. Institutionally, gender was not deemed to be an area that warranted individual attention or separate policy, it was one of many. Resultantly, the program providers picked and chose from the list. The ability to choose from a list of options is an example of how freedom serves as a condition for exercising power at macro- as well as micro-levels (Rabinow & Rose, 2003; Foucault, 1979). Pathfinder Projects that did offer gender-related initiatives, such

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

as the opportunity to try non-traditional courses and interact with role models, reported an increased awareness about those educational and occupational areas among female participants (Haynes et al., 2005). Initiatives like the Pathfinder projects taste of non-traditional courses and mentoring opportunities exposed young women to a range of educational and occupation options they might otherwise not consider. It allowed them to move beyond the confines of a binary (male/female) that ascribes and inscribes upon the female body ideas and expectations about what is appropriate and possible.

Given that vocational education continues to be a route selected by many 14-19 year olds, gender-based educational and occupational segregation remains. While the government documents may call for equal opportunities to participate in any school offerings, girls interested in vocational education still tend to choose from a narrow field. Government documents show that educational and occupational choice often corresponds to gendered notions of the body that are based on a dualistic paradigm. Certainly, institutions as a whole are implicated in either directly re-presenting or reinforcing these notions. For example, when policies highlight the male experience at the expense of female student's experience, one can assume that priority in identifying and addressing needs and strategies is assigned to one group instead of the other (DfES, 2009). Or when policies intended to address female under representation in certain vocational areas, is actually presented as one of a list of issues to choose from, it diminishes the need for action on the issue (Haynes et al., 2005). However, one would be remiss in assuming that institutional forces working solely toward governing student

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

educational and occupational choice. As Foucault (Rabinow & Rose, 2003) notes, governmentality may be understood as the government of populations (bodies) as well techniques through which those bodies are governed. However, in the Foucaultian sense governmentality is as much about the individual or self-government and autocorrection. Therefore, without diminishing the important role that broader government policy (or lack thereof) might play, it is equally important to note that schools, teachers, community members and certainly students themselves shape choices. The individual's understanding (or not) of themselves and of gender have implications for the kind of educational and occupational choices they make.

The next part of this story delves into the student experience. Specifically, I explore what happens when girls are offered the chance to participate in a taster day initiative that is meant to redress gender disparity in vocational education and non-traditional skilled trade professions. The group of girls share their thoughts about the taster day experience; their reasons for considering (or not) to pursue non-traditional vocational studies; and their thoughts about gender and the role it plays in determining their educational and professional pursuits.

## **Summary**

This chapter briefly outlined the format that has been used to present the document and student narratives about their experience of the taster day sessions. Presentation of the data analysis invokes Ted Aoki's notion of curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived. Aoki's concepts were used in order to illustrate the dual, yet

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

interrelated aspects of curriculum process and provision and the ways in which the curriculum may be experienced. This first part of the data analysis focused on the analysis of a selection of VET curriculum-related policy, the way(s) in which VET has been defined and the ways in which gender has been addressed or discussed in those documents. Analysis of a selection of England's VET policy related documents for the period 2002-2011 suggests that the UK government has repeatedly called for changes to the vocational education system and it is their view that these changes should reflect labour market and general economic realities and needs. In addition, there have been calls for curricula that meets the needs of the knowledge based economy and the introduction of subjects that introduce students to the world of work, offer opportunities that lead to post-secondary qualifications and take into consideration individual interests.

Analysis of the selection of documents suggests several things. First, there is a lack of formal definition of what VET is, what it should be and how it should be provided. Meanwhile, questions and concerns regarding gender in the policy-related documents appear infrequently. The lack of attention given to gender in the VET documents has short and long term implications. In other words it is assumed that school and class-based initiatives are unlikely to address gender-related issues which in turn can impact student participation, engagement and experience of the curriculum. The VET policy-related documents showed that despite taking the stance that all students have equal access to curricula choices, there remains a lack of participation among young girls in traditionally male-dominated VET fields.

## CHAPTER 6

### DATA ANALYSIS – TAKE II: CURRICULUM-AS-LIVED

Plumbing can be a male job and what's a female job? There aren't any anymore. (Stephanie, a former Garden Road student)

Ted Aoki (1993, p. 267) wrote of the need to create a “curriculum and implementation landscape” that is more open and willing to contemplate and consider the knowledge and experience that is held by those who live within that landscape. In essence, Aoki asks that we be more attentive to the ‘curriculum-as-lived.’ This lived curriculum encompasses the everyday activities and experiences that take place within schools, and in particular classrooms. It is about what teachers do, how they do their work, how they engage with students and what they think about their work and the students. While Aoki wrote primarily about the teacher’s role and experience when discussing curriculum-as-lived, it seems equally important to consider and acknowledge the student experience as part of that curriculum landscape. After all, the curriculum is supposed to be *about* and *for* students.

This part of the research story is about the lived curriculum as seen from the student’s perspective. The story relies upon my conversations with students who are, or were registered at *Garden Road Community and Technology School* (GRC), a secondary school located in the north of England. The students, whom I have categorized as ‘current’ and ‘former’ all took part in girls only ‘taster day’ sessions that were intended to introduce them to and potentially consider non-traditional skilled trades education and professional options. ‘Current’ refers to students who were officially registered at Garden Road Community and Technology School at the time of my interviews.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Meanwhile, 'former' refers to students who had attended and are now graduates of Garden Road Community and Technology School. The story also relies on my discussions with two former Garden Road Community and Technology students who decided to pursue non-traditional skilled trade education and occupations in the automotive and construction fields.

In total, interviews were held with 15 students, of whom 13 were current and 2 were former students at GRC. In addition, interviews were conducted with 2 instructors from GRC who have acted as taster day session leaders; 1 senior administrator at the school and 2 former students who chose to pursue VET professions. Individual or group interviews were conducted with the students while individual interviews were held with the teachers, administrators and the two young women who chose to pursue non-traditional VET professions. In all instances, an interview guide was prepared and used during the audio-taped interviews. The questions used during the interviews were primarily open-ended and were intended to generate discussion regarding the session content and process, the individual's knowledge of and exposure to traditionally male-dominated VET fields; their perceptions regarding gender and the role gender plays in VET fields. In the case of the young girls, the questions posed also sought to generate conversation about their experience as a participant in the gender-specific taster day session. The majority of student interviews were conducted individually, however two group interviews were held with 5 students who took part in the Engineering session and 7 students from the Construction session. The group interviews offered an opportunity to observe and capture peer interaction and discourses on issues such as gender, their

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

gender(ed) experience of the sessions, and their views regarding the impact of the session on their future education and professional choices.

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed, analyzed and organized based on the themes or issues that were most commonly discussed by the study participants. An Excel spreadsheet was created and used to categorize participant comments based on the preliminary themes. The initial themes were based upon the foundational concepts that were discussed and defined in Chapter 3 (Conceptual Framework). For example, some of the initial themes included; gender, ‘bodily’ experience, non-traditional occupations, the initiative, and girls and women in non-traditional occupations. Participant comments that touched upon the aforementioned issues were identified and placed under the associated theme. In addition, the interview transcriptions were used to create a narrative account of each person’s interview. The spreadsheet and narratives were then reviewed and analyzed several times during the research process in order to identify specific themes that would better reflect participant perspective and experience. What follows next are the students’ narratives and themes that represent their lived curriculum.

The story of curriculum-as-lived will be told in three parts. The first section provides context for the student narratives whereby a brief description is given of the school, the taster day sessions discussed and the students and non-students interviewed for the study. The second section, which represents the bulk of my analysis, features my examination of the students’ narratives. This section has been divided into three subsections in order to present the students’ narratives in as simple and straightforward a manner as possible. The student narratives are presented based on the order in which most of the interviews took place. The three subsections recount the story of former, then

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

current students that took part in one of three gender specific taster days (aerospace technology, engineering or construction). The third subsection covers my analysis of interview data gathered during discussions with the two former students who decided to pursue non-traditional skilled trade education in automotive and construction fields.

In each subsection, the student narrative is organized based on themes that were discussed most frequently among those within that group. As a whole the theme-based narrative recounts their thoughts and feelings about their respective session(s) and in the case of the students, the subsequent impact that the day had on their perceptions about vocational education, women and gender in non-traditional skilled trades and their interest in non-traditional VET educational and occupational options. The narratives also explores difficulties and/or possibilities associated with creating initiatives that seek to encourage girls to consider the trades as they make their educational and professional choices.

The third and final section of the chapter examines and responds to the research questions posed at the outset of this study. The responses to those research questions rely upon my analysis of the participant narratives and the policy-related documents discussed thus far. Also discussed in this section is how curriculum-as-plan and –lived interrelate. While the research story of the lived curriculum is focused on student experience, interviews were also conducted with instructors and administrators. Whenever possible, these additional narratives have been included as a means to provide further context to the case as a whole and student conversations in particular.

*Taster days: The setting, the sessions, the students*

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Garden Road Community and Technology School is a secondary school located near a major urban centre in the North of England. The school is a co-educational institution that has approximately 700 students and school personnel. The school offers the standard secondary school curriculum of Math, English, Geography and History and has additional departments in several other areas that include Modern Languages, Physical Education, Drama, Music, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Design and Technology. The gender specific taster days discussed by the students fall under the Design and Technology department and the broader school practice to provide students with careers information and guidance.

The term ‘taster day’ was commonly used by all study participants when referring to the gender specific sessions. In general, taster day sessions refer to offsite visits to local colleges, universities and vocational education and training facilities that focus on a particular educational and/or professional field. The taster days mentioned in this study were held offsite and were divided into two segments, lecture-based and practical/experiential. In a sense, the format was representative of what is expected of students registered in the various VET programmes at the host institution. Female students at Garden Road Community and Technology school were told about the pending taster day sessions during morning assembly.<sup>16</sup> While all students are told about the sessions, participation in a given session is subject to criteria that could include: student age, grade level and/or available spaces as determined by the offsite provider. The sessions discussed in this story include aerospace technology, engineering and construction. In all, 13 students who took part in taster day sessions were interviewed

---

<sup>16</sup> All students are expected to meet in the school auditorium prior to their first class. The morning assembly time lasts approximately 10 minutes and school administrators or teachers use the time to make special announcements about upcoming changes to procedure or forthcoming events or activities.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

either individually or in a group setting. The two students classified as ‘former’ (Danielle and Tracey) attended the aerospace taster day approximately four years before the time of this research and those classified as ‘current’ took part in either the construction or engineering taster day approximately two years ago (2011). The aerospace session was organized and held at a local college (Cranfield College) and the construction and engineering sessions were organized and held simultaneously at a local vocational education and training facility (VETrain). I was present for the classroom portion of the construction taster day session. Interviews were also conducted with two former students who upon graduation decided to pursue non-traditional vocational education and training.

As mentioned previously, additional interviews were conducted with several instructors and administrators. Specifically, interviews were done with (3) members of the Garden Road Community and Technology staff and one representative from VETrain. All interviews with current and former students (with the exception of Emma the automotive student) as well as school personnel were conducted in an office or classroom at Garden Road Community and Technology school. Emma and Ms. Nancy (Program Managers at the training facility) were interviewed at their place of employment.

A list of all individuals interviewed during the course of this research study can be found in Table 8. Included in the chart are brief descriptions of the individual or group, their area(s) of educational and occupational interest (where applicable) and an excerpt from their interview that exemplifies their perspectives on issues that are central to this study (e.g. gender and gender-specific initiatives or non-traditional education and occupations).

**Table 7. Participant List**

Name	Status	About	Educational/Occupational Interest
------	--------	-------	-----------------------------------

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Name	Status	About	Educational/Occupational Interest
Danielle	Former student	Participated in one of the earliest taster day sessions offered at the school. She was part of a small group of girls who attended an aerospace taster day at one of the universities in the region. Now 18 years old, she now attends a local 6 <sup>th</sup> form college and is preparing to attend university.	Plans to attend university. Areas of study under consideration include: language studies and teaching (if all else fails).  “...the cleverer you are the more you’re expected to do your A levels, do a degree, go on...”
Tracey	Former student	A former student, this 17 year old was also a part of the group of girls that attended the aerospace taster day. She is now 17 years old and is registered at the same 6 <sup>th</sup> form college as Danielle. She intends to continue her studies at university.	Considering occupational therapy and teaching. She had also considered the army (relatives have and do serve in the Armed Forces).  “[In the early years] they say to you ‘you don’t need to think about that [future education and job choices] concentrate on your GCSEs but once you get your GCSEs, you don’t know what your going to do with them after”
Fran	Current student	A 13 year old student that is currently registered at the secondary school, she attended the construction taster day. This was the first time that she took part in one of the taster day sessions.	Plans to attend university possibly in veterinary studies or Law  “I think that there is a need for these kinds of days because it should open girls’ eyes to see that they don’t have to be restricted, that they can do whatever they want.”
Iris	Current student	This 13 year old student attends the secondary school and was part of the group of girls that took part in the construction taster day. She was also a first time participant in a gender-specific taster day.	Originally expressed an interest to become a property developer but at a later meeting, she had decided upon automotive studies.  “I think at first I’m not doing a boys job, it’s a boy’s job. Now you look at it like if boys are doing it, you still have a right to do it.”
Michelle	Current student	A 13 year old student who took part in the engineering taster day. She was part of the other group of secondary school students that attended the training venue’s taster session. Relatively new to the school, this was her first time participating in a skilled trade taster session.	She has always wanted to be a primary school teacher.  “Women [should] just do what they want and not just do what people think you should do.”
Katie	Current student	A 13 year old student who attended the construction taster day session.	6 <sup>th</sup> Form then university but she is uncertain about her area of

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Name	Status	About	Educational/Occupational Interest
		This was her first time attending an offsite taster session intended for girls.	study. “I remember on the bus on the way there I was just thinking this is not for me, going on a construction day, a girl. I was just sat there thinking, ‘no, this is going to be bad. I’m not going to go out and build and be cold’ but when we got there and we went into that room and they showed us all the Powerpoints, I was like ‘oh, I could do that.’”
Eve, Olivia, Karen, Felicity, Tash	Current students	This group of 13 year old students were interviewed as a group and shared their thought about their experiences on the Engineering taster day. All participants listed said that this had been their first gender specific taster day session.	“I think you should do it before Options year, we should have done it in Year 8 and then you get a clearer idea about what it is to do it and then our options are clearer in our heads instead of rushing into it all.” (Karen)
Lesley, Fran, Rachel, Helen, Iris, Louise	Current Students	A group of 12 and 13 year old students who took part in the Construction taster day. This was their first gender specific event.	Areas of interest varied and included; hairdresser, nurse, police officer, actress, property developer.  <b>Lesley:</b> [If it was boys and girls] they might have laughed at us. It’s like a boy’s job isn’t it really. <b>Iris:</b> That is really prejudiced, sexist. <b>Rachel:</b> That’s the only reason I wouldn’t do it because it’s boys.
Emma	Former student training in trades	An 18 year old that has always held a strong interest in automotive work. Her stepfather and several other family members work in the trades. While at school she took part in a 1 week work experience at the automotive facility where she is now employed.	Automotive apprentice (employed and attend local college on Part-time basis)  “This is the best - school gave me the best experience I ever had. Not school itself - I mean like bringing me hear. Because if it weren’t for that teacher listening in and then getting that work placement, I wouldn’t have got a job...they phoned me and said they’ve got a job on panel beating and it’s like 17 other lads applied for the job but you were the first person to come to mind. So whether that was just cuz I was a girl, I don’t know, or whether I made an impression or whatever but when I got that phone call I was like ‘woo!’”

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Name	Status	About	Educational/Occupational Interest
			From then I started and I've loved every minute of it. It's been great.
Fiona	Former student training in trades	While at school, this 18 year old attended a local college information day but no gender-specific taster days. She has long held an interest in construction and was regularly exposed to it because her father worked in the field, as did other relatives.	<p>Attended local college full-time in a trades program (construction) did not complete.</p> <p>Anticipating switch to health and social care</p> <p>"I did two years and it's three years the course but because of all the stick<sup>17</sup> I go on the course for being a girl and I just got bullied on the course. So I stuck it out for two years on the course and thing I thought I just give up."</p>
Ms. Nancy	Program Manager	She has worked in vocational education and training for more than 20 years. Her develops and runs programs for the training provider.	<p>She has experience in human resources, training, and marketing.</p> <p>"The curriculum that they've got to do in schools is weighty enough as it is without having to do any sort of enrichment or extra curriculum things and that's where we've got a specialism because we've got 300 odd companies on our employer base that every year are saying to us 'we want apprentices', so it makes sense for us to engage the schools, for us to be able to bring the employers to the table you know, but that's in the collaboration."</p>
Bob	Head teacher	A long time teacher and senior administrator at the school	<p>Background in the sciences</p> <p>"You are at the mercy of who is in government. From one year to the next, you never know if there is going to be security with it or not. So we've hastened slowly, we have got involved in vocational education when we think it's right, in the areas that we think it's right...we struggle with the idea of putting large numbers of students on</p>

<sup>17</sup> British slang term for "severe criticism or treatment". Retrieved from <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/stick?q=stick>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Name	Status	About	Educational/Occupational Interest
			vocational courses, who at the end are going to be unemployed. So we've been very selective about how we get involved and when we get involved.
Ms. Sarah	Teacher and Taster day lead	She has been a teacher at the school for a number of years and at times has been a careers and guidance resource	"They've got to get as many experiences as possible I think before they decide where they want to go. The girls one was particularly nice because they got that opportunity even if they thought it wasn't likely to be in the direction they want to go in. I think it might have just broken down some myths and preconceptions they might have had."
Ms. Barb	Teacher and former taster day lead	A teacher at the school for over 10 years, in the past she has acted as key contact for the gender specific taster days.	She has a vocational background (hospitality and catering).  "They [colleges, training organizations] invited you on the first one and then I think once they know you're a school that would go out then we would get information back saying 'these are the kinds of things we've got, is there anything you would like'."

The 'taster day' session participants listed above were required to meet at GRC approximately 15 minutes before the start of the regular school day and were transported by rented bus to the pre-arranged location where they were met by representatives of the session provider. In the case of the group of 'current' students two buses were used to carry them to the engineering and construction sessions. Each bus had 12 students (based on session) and a representative from GRC (teacher or teaching assistant). I was able to travel with the students registered to attend the construction taster day and I had the opportunity to be present for the lecture portion of their session. Once at the training facility, students were taken to a classroom to begin their respective session. The sessions were led by an instructor and an assistant who was an employee or student registered in

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

the engineering or construction program. The sessions were held over the course of a school day and generally included classroom lectures and practical components. The lectures took part in the first part of the day while the afternoon was set aside for students to work on practical tasks that might be found in the field in question. For example, students who participated in the construction day were asked to work as a team to build a model bridge made of plastic connecting rods. In some cases, the students were moved to another room (onsite) that housed the materials needed to complete the practical task. During the lecture portion of the sessions, the instructor provided information about a range of topics, including but not limited to; areas of employment in the field, salary ranges, and gender stereotypes and gender imbalance in the profession. Instructional materials and resources used during the lecture included: short (1 page) questionnaires/checklists about gender stereotypes; photographic images (e.g. slides, powerpoint) and short video presentations about gender stereotypes in non-traditional occupations. Students and school representatives were transported back to Garden Road Community and Technology school by rental bus following the end of their session in time for the end of the regular school day.

First interviews with currently as well as formerly registered students; teachers and school administrator were conducted at Garden Road Community and Technology School over the course of several days following the engineering and construction taster days. Subsequent follow up interviews were held at the school several months later. During the interviews, current and former students were asked questions about: their thoughts on the gender specific session (content and process), the knowledge gained from the session; their thoughts about and interest in non-traditional vocational education and

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

occupations and the extent to which the session had an impact on their future education and professional choices.

### *Individual and Group Narratives*

The two former students interviewed for this study attended their sessions at Cranfield College, while the group of current students participated in sessions held at a local vocational education and training provider (VETrain). According to the Head of School (Bob), the change in taster day providers is due in part to shifts in government policy and funding over the years, and the way in which those changes have affected secondary and post-secondary programme provision and funding. Bob's comments are significant for several reasons. First, it addresses several issues that include government funding strategies and the difficulties associated with offering initiatives that rely on government funding. In addition, it also touches upon the importance of offsite partnerships in offering these kinds of initiatives and the growing sense of competition that exists among various education providers and levels of education. Furthermore, his comments are also illustrative of the kinds of power relations that can exist between and across government and the institutions that it funds, oversees and expects to impart policy directives. As he put it, and he is worth quoting at length:

In the early days it was quite rare [to have initiatives aimed specifically at girls in non-traditional roles] but 5 years ago there was a government push for this sort of thing and we had twelve months where we had maybe half a dozen sessions within the space of that twelve months. And then the funding for that ran out and so there was very little afterwards and it got resurrected on a much smaller scale last year so this year there have been a couple of sessions. (Bob)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

The quote above highlights the shifting nature of government funding policies whereby funding is made available, initiatives are developed and put in place but within a relatively short time span of approximately two years funding ceases to be offered. As presented, this is an example of how macro-level strategies of power can exist at different levels in education but also how they translate in tangible terms. For example, in this case, the State and the college exercised their power to determine when and what areas and types of education received attention and resources. First, the cessation of funding meant that the college had to determine whether they should continue to offer information sessions that may attract a few individuals (girls and young women) versus establishing a session format that targets a wider audience. Then, as Bob points out in the quote below, the secondary school was also faced with the challenge of no longer having access to the gender specific session and the college resources.

The earlier group was part of the government funding that went direct to the training providers and colleges. None of that money came directly to the school, we just got information that these are the courses that have become available, if you want to come along then fine but if you don't want to come along no problem. We didn't have input into the type of courses that were offered. (Bob)

The quote above also illustrates the type of power dynamics that exist between the secondary school and the post-secondary institution that receives the funding and has the power to exert control over the session content and structure.

The local colleges that we worked with are no longer offering the kinds of sessions to the local schools that they did. We've come to realize over the past 4 or 5 years particularly that our local colleges have become more mercenary, and will only do things if the funding is there. So when the funding for that project dried up, it stopped immediately and they've not been replaced by anything. (Bob)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Implicit in Bob's comments, particularly in the final paragraph is a sense of frustration at the lack of resources and input that Garden Road Community and Technology school has had in providing this kind of gender specific initiative. Bob takes issue with the dictatorial nature in which the college chose to exercise its power, their "mercenary" manner and their unwillingness to view the school as fellow arbiters of power. As he notes below, eventually the school chose to exercise its power through the creation of "new offerings" that the college now views as "competition". In creating new offerings that could meet the needs of their students, Bob (and the school) demonstrated that as power relations exist so to does the opportunity for resistance (Rabinow & Rose, 2003; Foucault, 1990).

They will still do open sessions for health and social care, open sessions for construction but they do it as an open evening. Anybody interested in construction come in and experience construction with us. But their relationship with us has cooled somewhat because they think we may be in direct competition with them because of some of our new offerings. I think they do feel threatened and they are looking at the final impact of that. It is a very shortsighted view I think. (Bob)

As a whole, Bob's quotes and Ms. Barb's below offer some idea of the power relations that have been exercised in regards to the taster day sessions. Furthermore, their comments illustrate that power is not centralized in the State or possessed solely by a given group or individual. Instead, it is present in a range of relationships and exchanges (Macleod, & Durrheim, 2002).

We didn't have input into the course content. They would even specify what type of students they sometimes would need, so they might say we need the C-B borderline preference or for this course it would be best to be the higher ability range. So we have had courses for higher, middle and low ability students, it's been as prescriptive as that, some have been home year or x number. (Ms. Barb, teacher and former taster day coordinator)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

As Ms. Barb, notes above, the college's requirements could pertain to the number of students, their academic ability and even participant grade level. In addition, the college did not solicit input regarding course offerings or content from the school. So what existed was a situation in which the college had decision making powers and the secondary schools were viewed solely as recipients of information and services. Moreover, the preceding quote also illustrates how images were actively created by the college about which bodies are appropriate for a given course. Not every student has the opportunity to attend, instead limits are established and bodies are identified and categorized based on "type of student", "higher, middle or low ability" and grade level. Furthermore, the quotes may also be read as an example of how teachers and administrators can be implicated in the re-inscription of certain discourse and practices because the meaning and purpose of terms like 'low, middle and high ability' remain uninterrogated.

Together, Bob and Ms. Barb's comments provide a backdrop against which to present and discuss the narratives of the two students that were formerly registered at Garden Road Community and Technology. Their narratives speak to the curriculum-as-plan.

The former students interviewed for this study were part of that early group that had the opportunity to spend a day at Cranfield College. More specifically the two students took part in an aerospace technology taster day that was aimed at attracting young women to the field. Next, I provide the students' accounts of the sessions and their experience. These narratives on the session content and process, non-traditional

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

vocational education and occupations, and student education and professional interests and choice represent the lived curriculum.

*Former students - 'The opportunity drew me'*

Danielle and Tracey arrived for their joint interview wearing their 6<sup>th</sup> Form college uniform of black trousers and white long sleeved shirts. Dark haired, tall and athletic looking the two young women walked into the room with smiles on their faces and talking animatedly to each other. Introductions were made and following some informal discussion about how it had been a while since they had been back at the school, the interview began. Danielle, an 18 year old (at the time of this research) is a former student who attended one of the first gender specific taster days<sup>18</sup> that was held several years before. While the experience was interesting, it did not impact her educational or professional choices. She is now registered at a local 6<sup>th</sup> Form college and expects to attend university once she has completed her A levels. Her choice of study will likely be occupational therapy. According to Danielle her choice is due in part to her mother's suggestion and belief that it represents a useful and safe option. For her, one's choice of education or occupation is probably more closely aligned with those of our parents than we would care to admit.

Like her friend Danielle, 17-year old Tracey is a former student at the school who attended one of the first gender specific taster days. The session in question was

---

<sup>18</sup> According to Danielle and Tracey, the students that attended this first session in aerospace technology were considered high academic achievers at Garden Road Community and Technology School. As Tracey, noted during her interview "it was only the set 1 [science] that was allowed to go." The students description of who is classified as set 1 was confirmed by Bob, the Head of School who explained that set 1 refers to student who obtain above average grades in the standard school curriculum courses (i.e. Math, English, Science).

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

organized and held at one of the local colleges. Like her peer she found the experience to be a positive one however she found one female aerospace technology student's remarks during the lecture portion of the session particularly disturbing. According to Danielle's group the young woman in question commented to her group that 'girls should consider the aerospace technology program because of the high percentage of males registered in the program.' In Danielle's view the comments reinforced stereotypes and were counterproductive to the aim of the sessions.

Danielle and Tracey had much to say about their perceptions of the experience, about gender, as well as their academic and occupational choices and interests. Their conversations, individually and collectively covered the areas of: gender specific taster days; the opportunity to make something; the content covered by presenters during the session; when the session was offered; and the role that family and peers played in their educational and occupational interests.

### *On Gender*

Danielle was drawn to the "opportunity" to do the taster day. To both girls the session represented a chance to do something different. A major part of this difference stemmed from the fact that the session on aerospace was unlike anything that they had done thus far and that "it was just the set 1 girls" (Danielle). The term "set 1" refers to their status as students who perform well academically. The aerospace taster day session was aimed specifically at young girls who fall within the 'academic' group, the criteria for participation was established by the college<sup>19</sup>. Interestingly, neither Danielle nor

---

<sup>19</sup> College entrance requirements for the program state that applicants should have a sound background in Math and Science which could explain their decision to limit the session to students who perform well in those subject areas. While the students

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Tracey expressed discomfort or displeasure with the use of what could be viewed as elitist criteria that values students who get good grades (high academic achievers) in Maths and Science over females who do not perform as well in these areas. Instead the students focused on the fact that the taster session on aerospace technology is an area of education that few women pursue and the gender specific (girls only) nature of the session. As Danielle mentions in the quote below, they appreciated the opportunity to be able to ‘make’ something without having to worry about the boys taking over.

If the boys would have come, the boys would have taken over because it was a hands on kind of thing. Like in aerospace, we were making, were making hovercrafts. (Danielle)

Meanwhile, Tracey spoke positively about the girls only nature of the session.

It sort of showed that career is open to girls as well and it emphasized that point as well because if you just put anyone into it’s as if it’s just a career. But then I think they focus it on girls a bit more. (Tracey)

Their comments regarding the sessions highlight how the girls know that their gender sets them apart in the vocational setting. The VET body is active and strong, culturally and historically these descriptors refer to the athletic man. Conversely, their knowledge of what it means to be a girl does not include being “hands on” neither does it include a sense that all careers are “just a career”. In addition, Danielle’s comment about “the boys taking over” indicates how the presence of boys in some settings can result in girls feeling overshadowed or silenced. This notion of the silent or silenced voice, as will be pointed out, is mentioned in some of the other girls’ narratives.

While both young women talked about positive aspects of having girls only sessions, their recollection of the experience also highlighted some shortcomings. When asked what they remembered, Tracey immediately recalled the following:

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

I remember it, one of the lecturers, no it was a girl who was studying it [ ]<sup>20</sup> about mechanics [ ] yeah it's really great cuz girls are doing it because everyone that's on the course is a boy. I thought oh yeah, that's why I should be taking [the program]<sup>21</sup>.

Apart from enjoying the experience of making a hovercraft, her most vivid memory dealt with gender-based stereotypes. When asked to share her reaction to the student's comments, Tracey said

I just thought that was a bad way to sell the course to me. Instead of going like going it's really interesting, there's loads of career opportunities, oh there's loads of boys so girls will [ ]. I will never forget that...

Yeah, in fact. That probably would end up convincing girls to go to a another career field by saying 'you know what there's lots of boys' so even though the idea of it was to get away from stereotypical jobs types it was, I don't know it was stereotypes that were that were trying to convince, you know what I mean. (Tracey)

While the student may not have been authorized to say what she did, and may have meant it to be a joke, her comments allude to certain assumptions about what drives female choice. Tracey found the student's comments surprising and annoying given the purpose of the session which was to provide information to the girls, possibly generate interest and demonstrate that young women can and should consider it an appropriate field of study. The conversation was so memorable that even as she retold the story in the interview she exhibited bewilderment and displeasure at having heard it. As an example of gendered knowledge, the student's comments demonstrate how gender can be performed in contradictory ways. Specifically, the student has entered a field that remains male-dominated and in that sense has resisted traditional conceptions of what should constitute woman's work, but her joke panders to and re-inscribes negative views

---

<sup>20</sup> The symbol [ ] is used to identify words of sections of the audiotape that were inaudible.

<sup>21</sup> The inclusion of words within the symbol indicates that the I have made changes to the original text in order to maintain anonymity.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

about what constitutes a girls' job and what girls/women are really after. As Bordo (1999) has written, "...one can acknowledge that women are not always passive 'victims' of sexism, but that we may contribute to the perpetuation of female subordination..." (p. 253).

While Danielle did remember the student's comments, it did not have as strong an impact on her as it had on Tracey. Instead, she recalled what she felt was missing from the session.

They didn't really show that it would have been tough. I think they were trying to advertise it. But I think that now men are going into all these female jobs, things like nursing, stereotypically female jobs whereas men are going into it now. If women go into a male, a typically male job they might get criticized for it. That's probably why there wasn't many females that were instructors on the course.  
(Danielle)

Danielle's statement speaks to the likelihood that a young woman who chooses a male-dominated sphere or "male job" would face challenges. She does not elaborate upon these challenges but her statement raises questions about the gendered nature of work and career choice in vocational education and specifically what happens to young women who do choose to enter a male-dominated work environment. While the session was intended to provide information about the university's programme and the occupational opportunities, she felt that they did not get the full picture. For her, that picture includes addressing concerns about the difficulties that young women might encounter on the programme and in the workplace.

Danielle's comments, also acknowledges the use of gender-based stereotypes to differentiate between occupations but interestingly she acknowledges that it is likely to be the woman that is criticized for pursuing a "typically male job". No similar reference is

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

made about men who enter “stereotypically female jobs”. There is a sense that while more young men may be entering traditionally female occupational spheres like nursing, a corresponding upswing in the number of women doing the same is unlikely to occur.

When asked to comment further about what might be classified as male or female jobs, she responded in the following manner.

Plumbing can be a male job and what’s a female job? There aren’t any anymore. (Danielle)

This comment is particularly striking because it brings into question why “male jobs” remain and there are no longer “female jobs”? In reference to the place of women in the workplace, de Beauvoir wrote “woman must constantly win the confidence that is not at first accorded her: at the start she is suspect, she has to prove herself. If she has worth she will pass the tests, so they say” (de Beauvoir, 1989, p. 701). If we consider de Beauvoir’s quote in light of Danielle’s comment it can be said that this new reality regarding “female jobs” indicates that men continue to have greater occupational choice and freedom while a woman is expected to “prove” that she belongs.

### *On the trades*

As we spoke about their knowledge of vocational education and non-traditional skilled trades, the student’s comments dealt with the kind of jobs they felt young women were likely to be drawn to (Danielle) and general perceptions about vocational education and skilled trade occupations (Tracey). For example, Danielle felt that women were more likely to be drawn towards certain kinds of work.

I think that women are a bit more, they want to do the office type jobs. Like they want to wear the fancy suits to go to work in and at the end of the month get a really good pay. (Danielle)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Her comment about work preference centered on external appearance and the satisfaction that a woman may derive from wearing a “fancy suit” as opposed to specific knowledge or skill sets that the office job might require. Her talk of the “fancy suit” provides an example of what Butler (2006, p. xv) called the “...gendered stylization of the body”. Danielle’s statement alludes to one of the ways in which young girls and women are often expected to perform their gender in work environments. The “fancy suit” conjures an image of neatness, demureness, restraint, this is not the image of an individual who is to be found out on the construction or automotive site. The act of wearing the suit confines and constricts the woman to particular roles and in the case of a construction or automotive site, the role is likely to be an administrative one. Interestingly, one wonders if the standard ‘office type job’ is likely to offer the kind of financial rewards and freedom that would be needed to purchase the “fancy suit” without incurring debt.

Meanwhile, Tracey’s comments regarding vocational education and occupations focused on how people tend to value the trades as an educational and occupational choice. In her estimation, if given the choice a high academic achiever is more likely to pursue the standard academic route and complete their A levels followed by pursuit of a university degree.

Because we’re doing our A levels at [ ] it’s sort of just expected, like you do your GCSEs, you do you’re a levels, you do a degree, you get a job. Like in assembly you don’t really talk about apprenticeship. Like the cleverer you are the more you’re expected to do your A levels, do a degree and go on. I think parents, well mine would rather I had a job and went on and did a degree. (Tracey)

Discursively, her comment speaks to the divide that often exists between vocational and academic streams. According to Tracey there is a path to follow, and for

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

students who do well academically, that path does not include trades-based education and occupations. Perceptions regarding the appropriate path are reinforced by the lack of exposure that the trades are given within the school setting but also by parental/familial expectations. Academically inclined students like Danielle and Tracey receive limited information about trades-related education and occupations because it is expected or assumed that their academic abilities will be put to use elsewhere. Their attendance at an aerospace taster day as opposed to other skilled trades like construction or automotive could be interpreted as further reinforcement of the kind of educational and occupational choices that are expected of the academically inclined student. In my analysis, aerospace education is perceived as academically demanding and more challenging than the standard skilled trade options, hence the need to limit participation in the aerospace technology taster day to the girls in 'set 1 science.' Danielle and Tracey's comments indicate how the educational policy and practice results in the categorization of students as either vocationally- or academically-oriented. Moreover, it demonstrates how those macro-level categorizations can play out at the micro-level. After years of being in a system that repeatedly examines, tests and labels the individual, the student body comes to understand and 'know' their category. Internalization of this knowledge enables self-government, therefore the "high academic achiever" is not expected to resist or veer away from the boundaries of their category and possible education and professional trajectory.

### *On making choices (educational and occupational)*

Information and advice received in school regarding education and occupation choices were important to both girls, Danielle and Tracey, but family was an equally important source of information and guidance. Danielle sums up this contention thus:

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

So at the moment everyone is starting to talk to their family and their friends about what they are going to do about which university they want to go to. That is all we seem to talk about is university and getting a job, cuz we're at that age now...

While, at the macro-level the State and schools impart certain knowledge about education and careers, it also occurs at the micro-level of the family. For Danielle, implicit and explicit cues received from parents and other family members about what forms of education and occupations are appropriate.

My Dad was always supportive...he would say to me 'why don't you go into the Army' and things like that so I think my Dad is quite into me doing anything that I'm good at and I'm quite good at like physical activity. It's like when I do graphics at school, I'm into more of the woodwork side of things rather than the drawing and the pretty colours like that. So I think my Dad is into me doing that but my Mum's more into me doing Nursing and Occupational Therapy. She quite likes me thinking about doing that. So, I think it is quite down to your parents and what they allowed you to do... (Danielle)

What is interesting about the quote above is its demonstration of the differing familial perceptions about the performance of one's gender a student may be exposed to. The quote offers an example of how "...the influence of others upon the child is a factor almost from the start, and thus she is indoctrinated with her vocation from her earliest years" (de Beauvoir, 1989, p. 268). It asks the question, how are choices made when parents do not agree on educational and professional choice. In Danielle's case, her mother viewpoint assumes greater weight as she deliberates upon her educational and professional future.

It's probably only because my mum does occupational therapy that I thought I was going to go into occupational therapy and it's probably only because my Dad was in the Army and my grandDad was in the Army and my brother was in the Army, I was thinking about going into the Army. (Danielle)

On the same point, Tracey argued:

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

I think that I'm doing what I want to do. Yeah, because my mum is just 'do what you want' kind of thing but then again if I went home and told her that I'm not going to university in September and that I'm going to join the army, she would probably laugh at me. [laughter]...I think parents, well mine would rather I had a job and went on and did a degree.

As illustrated above these students' parents have explicitly or implicitly expressed their wishes or desires regarding the path they should follow. This path centers upon academic achievement and completion of a degree. The natural progression for the academically inclined secondary school student involves completion of 6<sup>th</sup> form studies, followed by acceptance and completion of a university degree programme, which culminates in gainful employment. This progression does not necessarily take into account local and global economic market downturns. To that end Danielle made an interesting observation regarding assumptions about what gets counted as gainful employment options and choices. As her quote above indicates, she believes that her mother would 'probably laugh at her' if she said wanted to join the Army. Danielle's assumptions regarding her mother's reaction are worth commenting on given that a number of family members including her brother and grandfather have enjoyed satisfying and well-paid careers in the Army.

You can go down the university, job route and you are supposedly going to get a better job at the end of it. Like my brother at the moment he lives [elsewhere], he's in the Army, he lives [elsewhere] and that's where he's based, so he loves that and then he's getting paid so much money he just doesn't like the pressure of going to Afghanistan for six months at time but he's got the better job at the end of it because he's, well he's earning more money, he lives [elsewhere] and he's got the solid job he wants. They won't like kick him out, and they won't fire him or anything like you could do when you get a normal job. So in some ways having a job, he's in a job where he didn't do any A levels or anything, he just went straight into that. So, if you don't go down the A levels route then in some cases, you do get a better job. (Danielle)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

On one level Danielle questions the need to pursue the education and professional route that has been ascribed to the “high academic achiever”. She realizes that some career options outside the academics-oriented category might be financially lucrative and possibly offer more employment security. However, Danielle has opted to follow the “university, job route” despite being aware of the potential pitfalls associated with getting a “normal job”. In her case, Danielle prefers to conform to her familial expectations regarding appropriate education and occupation choices for a high academic achiever even when she knows that those choices may not result in a solid and satisfying career. Meanwhile, although we did not discuss her mother’s reaction to her brother’s occupation choice during the interview, her comments about her mother does imply the reification of gender and occupational stereotypes.

### *Conflicting Message*

I think that the early years of high school there should be full of things to encourage you to think about what you want to do in the future because they actually say to you that you should not think about it. They say that ‘you don’t need to think about that concentrate on your GCSEs but once you get your GCSEs, you don’t know what you’re going to do with them after. (Danielle)

Danielle’s comments speaks to the need for a range of taster days that can serve as learning opportunities and information sources for students but her comments also speak to a contradiction that often exists within the school structure. Students are expected to focus on performing well on their exams and obtaining their GCSEs, but aren’t necessarily encouraged to think about potential education and occupation choices – at least not at the outset of their high school years. However, as those high school years begin to draw to a close, students begin to feel the pressure to make choices in a

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

relatively short time period. Discursively, the system presents conflicting messages but these messages may in fact serve a purpose, one that involves imparting particular knowledge about the need to follow regulations, participate in various forms of testing, working to meet certain criteria and internalizing these various knowledges as the norm (Foucault, 1990). The students are taught the skills needed to take up their role as citizen that is in part based upon how they have been categorized (i.e. academic or vocationally inclined learner). From a feminist perspective, gender also represents a mode of categorization that works to define which bodies should and are expected to perform which roles (Macleod & Durrheim, 2002).

At the moment we're [ ] to university courses [ ] feedback so at the moment everyone is starting to talk to their family and their friends about what they are going to do about which university they want to go to and that's all we seem to talk about is university and getting a job, cuz we're at that age now. But we never talk about things like apprenticeships or the trades. (Danielle)

In Danielle's case much time was spent talking about their university and programme choice, all with the intended goal of obtaining employment. However, the talk that does occur is limited, and silence surrounds a broader spectrum of educational and occupational choices that includes discussion of vocational education and skilled trade occupations.

### *Current Students: Two buses, two skilled trade sessions and 28 girls*

As noted by Bob earlier in the chapter, over the years there has been a shift regarding which organizations are willing to provide gender specific taster days. The group of current students interviewed fall within the more recent attempts to inform and possibly encourage young girls to consider non-traditional education and professional

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

options. This more recent offering, according to Bob, represents a shift in terms of the degree to which the school is able to provide input about what sessions are offered to whom.

With this new incarnation we have had more say in the kinds of things that are done. We have had a long history working with the [training provider]... so we've got that good relationship with them. When Nancy phoned up and said we've got this course on, would you be interested; at the time she was only offering one of the two sessions and we suggested that maybe she would like to broaden that and offer two sessions, and she did. (Bob)

Thus far a different power dynamic has emerged, unlike the earlier taster days the school administration now feels like it is in a position to exercise some power regarding the session format and content.

We mentioned it in the year group assembly. We agreed with Nancy which year group would be most appropriate because the original group the girls in gas was offered to the Year 10 and that was too late because they'd already chosen their GCSE Options, they had already started their classes, they were already well established into what kind of groups they wanted to go in to so it was completely wrong timing. So we said that it would be better for them do it in Year 9 around the same time that they are choosing their options courses and which subjects they wanted to pursue in their GCSE. So the two sessions took place at around the same time as their options deliberately so. (Bob)

Bob is talking about what I called 'current students. I am referring here specifically to the students who attended one of two 'taster day' sessions on construction or engineering. The girls in both groups attended the gender specific sessions at VETrain. This particular establishment is not considered a local college but it does offer vocational (and apprenticeship) programs in a range of areas. The programs offered at their locations receive funding from government, private enterprises or industry associations and the programs are directed at recent secondary school graduates, adult learners or long-term unemployed. The organization has longstanding training

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

relationships with locally-and-nationally-based enterprises and has made a concerted effort to offer information and taster day sessions to local area secondary and in some cases primary schools for a nominal fee. The fee charged is intended to cover basic personnel and student transportation costs. According to the Program Manager, Ms. Nancy, these sessions are needed and represent an important information source for students because, as she put it, and she is worth quoting at length:

There is number one almost universal lack of information of facts and guidance that young people are leaving school with but not even leaving school in year 11 that they don't have access to before they make the year 9 Options... (Ms. Nancy)

For Ms. Nancy, Year 9 is an extremely important time in a student's school life because it is during that year that students are expected to select course options that often set the stage for their future educational and occupational paths. As we see below, it is her view that the knowledge need to make informed choices is not being imparted.

I think there is a misunderstanding in schools about what role they play in promoting information, advice and guidance. I don't know whether you are aware but in the last couple of years it has become a standard requirement that schools promote impartial information, facts and guidance that challenges stereotypical behaviour.

I ask a lot of questions when I am in schools and talking to teachers and I can't get to the bottom of what they are doing. I don't think that they understand what their duty is so I am trying to say that I've got this range of products here that meets your requirements. Let me come into school and do this work that I know will work because I have evaluated it but that message isn't actually being understood. And I think that the information that [ ] they need before they make their Options choices at Year 9, is probably the most crucial time that they get that information about information, facts and guidance and I've no evidence that that is being given to them at all. And that gives me great concern because we will never change the output of the year 11 learners unless we start doing something at lot earlier on. The second thing is the misconception around a lot of the occupations and again it is this total

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

lack of information about what [for example] is an engineer. (Ms. Nancy)

A more critical take on the lack of information that is provided to all students would state that the students are provided the information that they need in order to be governed. In other words, as a technique of the State, the education system facilitates the management of individual bodies and populations to make them socially productive (Foucault, 1979). The management he speaks of entails the categorization of certain, limited number of bodies (high academic achievers) receive or have access to information about what it means to be an engineer. Meanwhile, low academic achievers receive the most basic of information that is geared towards facilitating their quick transition to the general, less educationally demanding and skilled workforce. Ms. Nancy may expect a ‘change in output’ and “misconceptions” but the imparting of comprehensive careers information may not facilitate the internalization of knowledge about how to be the socially productive citizen that the nation requires..

Explicating what Ms. Nancy was talking about, Bob, the Head of School, provided some basic information about the Options selection process that takes place during Year 9. Here, he explains, the decisions taken by the students has implications in their future and is taken under tremendous pressure:

The way we choose the Options is quite a long process, so early on they have lots of information, lots of talks by subject leaders. They have about a week that’s put aside where they get bombarded by information about all the sorts of courses that are available. Then we ask them for the initial options to get a flavour for what kinds of courses they might be interested in without them having to commit to anything and from that we actually put the time table together. So, if there is a year group for example, where a lot of them want to do Health and Social, we actually try to build that into the timetable. If there is very little demand for a subject then we won’t even put it on the timetable and we

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

won't offer it. So, about three months after that we then do the formal options and we do the options evening with parents and they fill in their actual options form. (Bob)

The Options process is an integral part of the GCSE exam preparation process and as such it unfolds over the course of several months. In addition to their compulsory courses (Math, English, Science), these Options courses are taken over one term or the academic year. Given that it establishes a general direction for the remaining years of secondary education and potentially further studies, the school's practice has been to offer (whenever possible) taster day sessions between the time when initial information about Options choices is provided and the time when final Options selection must be made.

I first spoke with the 'current students' (either individually or in a small group format) approximately two weeks before they were expected to submit their final Options choices, and at times their responses did reflect their level of preoccupation with the issue of Year 9 Options selection. However, the students also spoke about their views on the sessions; the idea of girls vs boys jobs; perceptions about working in 'non-traditional' skilled trades; and the impact (or lack thereof) the sessions had on their educational and occupational choice. The following section presents several themes that emerged during my individual and/or group conversations with the students.

### *Year 9 Options – Making 'informed' choices*

The issue of Year 9 Options was raised to varying degrees by every person interviewed for this study (i.e. students and non-students alike). As mentioned above, interviews with a number of the students resulted in references to their pending Year 9 options selection. In some cases, some had a fairly clear vision of what they wanted to do

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

(or not do), while others were more vague about their options, choices and possible educational or occupational interest(s). Below are excerpts from the group interviews with the Construction and Engineering taster day session attendees that dealt with the pending selection of Options courses and when the taster day sessions were or should have been offered. In general, session participants in the Engineering group (see below) felt that the sessions were made available too late and as a result students were unlikely to incorporate the newly gained knowledge and experience into their Options selection process.

Eve: Yeah, I think you should have done it before options

Karen: Yeah, we should have done it in year 8 and then get a clearer idea about what it is to do and then our options are clear in our heads instead of rushing into it all.

Olivia: Yeah, because we're getting our options sheets this week so we just went last week so it's like all right then. Most people have already decided what they wanted to do and then, not it's like, oh I don't know but

Tash: They only started like taking us on trips like and things just after Christmas

Eve: So, you kind of have everyone deciding what they wanting to do and then it's like 'oh, I think it's changed quite a few people's minds because I don't know what to do now. (Engineering Focus Group)

Meanwhile, members of the Construction taster session assumed that the sessions would have been held on a regular (possibly weekly) basis. Some students, like Iris expected to have a broader range of activities. As with the Engineering group, these activities were seen as learning opportunities that could assist them in making their selections for the coming year.

Helen: Yeah, we get our form in the afternoon

Rachel: I reckon I thought that we were going to do a thing one week and then the next week another thing, like keep out of school on Mondays

Iris: But that's hard, actually really hard

Rachel: Like one thing every week

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Iris: Like more activities every week so you can learn about construction and things like that  
(Construction group)

Student discussion about the pending Options selection process, often took place in the midst of responding to questions about the taster day sessions. In my analysis, the issue of Options selection loomed large and the two activities of options selection and taster days were seen as closely connected. As such some students like Jessica in the Engineering Group or Rachel and Iris of the Construction group would have liked to have taken part in more taster day sessions during the academic year but also earlier in secondary school (e.g. Year 8). The students' conversations highlight the disconnect that can often exist between the plan that is created at a macro level and what transpires and is considered beneficial to the intended recipients at the micro-level (students). It indicates a top-down hierarchical exercising of power that does not account for how power circulates at all levels and is co-extensive with resistance (i.e. the individual can simultaneously conform to and resist the exercise of power) (Rabinow & Rose, 2003; Macleod & Durrheim, 2002).

### *On the session*

The taster day sessions included an in-class 'lecture' that talked about the trade in question, roles and responsibilities, salary ranges, as well as misconceptions about the skilled trade area in question. The sessions were led by a man (Construction Group) and a woman (Engineering Group) included a 'lecture' component interspersed with questions and answer segments, questionnaires, and/or practical tasks. I had the opportunity to sit in on the construction session and was able to watch the girls as they

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

listened to the content, asked questions and completed the hands on tasks of erecting a bridge using plastic connecting rods. The second half of the session required the girls to screw/weld some pipe that would be used in plumbing. Students participating in the engineering session followed a similar format but their practical task required them to build a clock which they got to take home.

When asked to recount how they came to hear about the sessions, most of the students (e.g. Michelle, Katie, Iris, Fran, Engineering Group) said that they learned about the sessions in one of their daily morning assemblies. However, several of them stated that apart from knowing the location and being told that they could take part in either the construction or engineering session, they received no specific details about the taster day content. Fran recounted it thus:

I went on this taster day because I wanted to see what it was like. I learned about the visit during one of our school assemblies and I decided to sign up. I chose the engineering session because I didn't know a lot about it but I know a bit about construction, like they build stuff. The engineering was a little bit different. I didn't have any information about engineering or what the trip would include. I wasn't nervous but I had no idea what to expect. (Michelle)

Yeah, about the construction day I didn't know what to expect really but I was nervous. The other girls were also wondering what was going to be on it and had no idea. None of us knew. (Katie)

I wasn't going to go but my friend was going and she really wanted me to go and I just signed up but I really enjoyed it. I enjoyed it by mistake. I'm not going to lie but ultimately, we just went cuz we got a day off school. I didn't really have an idea of what we were going to do. (Fran)

While the information provided to the students may have been limited, the lack of information about the day was not viewed as a shortcoming. In fact some of the girls

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

found the lack of information to be a bonus. There was a level of excitement and surprise, students explain, that came from not knowing specifics about the session.

I wasn't nervous but I had no idea what to expect. (Michelle)

I like the fact that you didn't know because it was nice just to learn in stages, like something new in every Powerpoint. It was nice that we didn't know what was coming. (Katie)

I went on the course cuz it was something different, to see what else is on offer. (Iris)

Despite her excitement, Katie (and Fran) also expressed feelings of uncertainty and a degree of trepidation about, on the one hand, attending their respective sessions and not knowing specifics about their sessions, on the other.

I remember on the bus on the way there, I was just thinking this is not for me, going on a construction day – a girl. I was just sat there thinking 'no, this is going to be bad'. I'm not going to go out and build and be cold – but when we got there and we went in that room and they showed us all the Powerpoints, I was like 'oh, I could do that'. (Katie)

Before going, I was worried we would get filthy, we just didn't want to get mucky to be honest...I really didn't have an idea of what we were going to do. (Fran)

Knowing specifics about sessions or not, a number of students drew links between their gender as 'girls' and their perceptions about the vocational areas like construction and engineering. Comments were made about physicality; boys' jobs or girls' jobs; and in some case the work attire or assumptions regarding gendered (female) desire to avoid danger that might be found in construction or engineering jobs. As Katie said at different points during the interview:

It's the word construction that comes to mind, it's building and you think about the physical and muscles...I really thought 'oh, it's all about being stuck outside in the rain and getting all wet'. (Katie)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

The underlying assumption appears to be that girls are not physically capable of doing construction work, that the female physique limits their ability to ‘build.’ The comment may be viewed as representative of her rudimentary understanding of the various aspects associated with the construction industry. The student’s lack of knowledge and exposure to the various occupational opportunities and work conditions available in construction possibly contributes to her dismissal of it as an educational or occupational sphere to consider. Her knowledge regarding the performance aligns with traditional perceptions about gendered categories of work. Interestingly, following her taster day, her views on construction did change.

...some of the other girls had a similar feeling because we thought we’re just going to be shown how to build, how to build a house and we’re like when we got there it wasn’t. It’s more like you could plan out what you want to build outside. The experience has made it a bit clearer for me. (Katie)

Instead of thinking about the physical strength that might be required; or the potentially uncomfortable physical environment she might need to work in (i.e. rain and cold), Katie emerged with a greater awareness of the varied occupational requirements and environments that can be found in construction.

On the theme of boys jobs and girls jobs, students’ comments were at times similar, in that jobs that required physical strength or those deemed to be ‘dangerous’ were done by boys. Even when some of the girls (e.g., Iris and Fran) talked about the possibility of girls being able to or having the right to do ‘boys jobs,’ they spoke not of themselves in those roles but ‘other’ girls. In Fran’s case the ‘other girls’ are likely to be those who would find the work ‘thrilling’; while in Iris’s case, she spoke about ‘the right to do it.’

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

It could be quite dangerous being out there on a building that's why not many girls will want to do that but there is some girls that will get a thrill being there doing something like that (Fran)

I think at first I'm not doing a boys job, it's a boy's job. I'm not doing it, now you look at it like if boys are doing it, you still have a right to do it. (Iris)

This exchange is interesting because it demonstrates the potential to experience the session in a way that is both present and outside of the moment. In both cases, there is a line drawn between what the individual envisions doing, or is capable of doing and what they perceive a different kind of girl might want to pursue. This practice of talking about the unidentified 'other' girl also surfaced during the group discussions.

Olivia: I think girls think like 'oh I'm not going to like it but once they get into it they're like 'oh I really like this' but that it's just the thing that boys like or you don't normally do because your going to get dirty and like or that's what you think and you just grow up to think 'oh, I'm not going to go into do a job that's dirty but it's actually quite fun when you get into it.

Eve: I'd like to do it me.

Karen: Yah, I wouldn't mind (Engineering Group)

Although the girls did talk about the likelihood that you might get 'dirty' on the job, and that boys were more likely to be drawn to the work, their experience on the taster session was such that they did not quickly dismiss it as an option. Olivia, Eve and Karen in the above quotation did not shy away from the possibility of working in conditions that might be less than ideal from an appearance standpoint. The girls references' to getting "dirty" and "wet" are noteworthy because once again the comments reflect a particular understanding of what it means to 'act like a girl'. Girls do not perform their gender in a way that might result in dirtiness and wetness, instead there is an unspoken assumption that they must comport themselves in as pristine a manner as possible. What comes to

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

mind is the picture of the doll in its case, it looks pretty, untouched and protected from the elements.

### *Where the boys aren't (or are)*

Discussion about the presence of boys in the learning setting may hold some clues about student unwillingness or hesitancy about entering a 'boys job' or the likelihood that some 'other' girl might be interested in 'boys jobs'. It may also hold some additional clues about the girls' thoughts regarding the performance of gender. When asked how they felt about including boys on these kinds of taster day sessions and the decision to hold girls only sessions, several of the students talked about the change in dynamics that is likely to have happened if the boys were present. "As for the girls only session," Michelle contends, "I am not sure what I think about it." But, she adds, "having boys there probably would have been disruptive." The same arguments were echoed by Katie and Fran, who contend that:

I think it would have made a difference if the boys were on the taster day, no – I don't think it would actually, I'm not sure. If boys were there they think that they could do everything but with the plumbing thing it would be good if you could do it before them (Katie)

If there was boys there [at the taster day] you wouldn't want to try as much because they would like get it straight away and you don't want to look like their more better. You would have been more hesitant (Fran)

The presence of boys in these kinds of outings were viewed as potentially disruptive and off-putting, in that the girls would have been more reticent to attempt the tasks. Fran's comment about the boys getting "it straight away" raises an interesting point about assumptions regarding intelligence, ability, gender and work. It is assumed that the boys

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

have innate or acquired knowledge that gives them an advantage when it comes to understanding skilled trade work. As such the girls feel at a disadvantage in their presence and would prefer to save themselves the embarrassment (or possibly taunts) of not understanding quickly enough. Although the taster session gave them an opportunity to subvert the idea that they are less able, the girls comments show that they did not completely resist the idea that boys are somehow better at this kind of work.

Physical appearance was another point of concern raised – what one wears and how one looks can take on greater importance. As shown below, some of the girls looked forward to wearing the attire of the skilled tradesperson but their interest in doing so was connected to perceived physical transformation taking place away from the gaze of boys and their usual learning space (the school).

We was all like wanting uniforms because with no boys it would have been like a fun thing, something new but with boys there more people wouldn't have done it but I wouldn't have been bothered with what people think. (Fran)

Helen: I wouldn't do it, I'd be embarrassed

Iris: No, I couldn't do it

Louise: No, I wouldn't go

Iris: It's alright when I'm home doing it with my Dad and that but with the school lads, no I couldn't

Lesley: I think I would be doing more flirting than working [laughter]. I think I definitely would.

Rachel: They might have laughed at us. It's like a boy's job isn't it really.

Iris: That is really prejudiced, sexist

Rachel: That's the only reason I wouldn't do it because it's boyie.  
(Construction group)

Foucault's (1980) comments regarding the gaze seems well-suited to this exchange,

There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end up interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer,

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

each individual thus exercising surveillance over, and against himself  
(p. 155).

In essence, the presence of boys during the taster day session(s) might have resulted in greater feelings of inadequacy, increased focus on personal physical appearance and the need to sublimate ability, as opposed to the session content and tasks. It is an example of how surveillance (the gaze) works to elicit self-consciousness and auto-correction.

### *What they learned about non-traditional trades*

As part of the interviews, all students were asked to recount what information and knowledge they gained from attending these sessions. Individually (Iris, Katie) and collectively (Construction group interview) the comments were positive in nature and the students talked about the variety of occupational choices and the opportunities for employment that exist for those entering non-traditional trade professions. However, the students also talked about how the sessions provided new insights into the roles and responsibilities of non-traditional skilled trade occupations, as well as the physical environment in which one might be required to work.

They talked about opportunities for girls in engineering and said that many people will apply for the opportunity because of the jobs, or they don't like getting dirty. (Michelle)

It's more about sitting at a desk and drawing and working on the computer and maybe you're going outside sometimes...I just thought construction was just building and things, I didn't think it was like drawing it, like visiting it, I didn't think it was like that. (Katie)

For some of the students, participation in the gender-specific sessions resulted in a greater awareness of job roles and responsibilities in various skilled trades. Moreover,

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

the experience also opened them up to the education and employment possibilities that exist for boys *and* girls. Katie argued thus:

At the beginning when you look at a girl you don't think of construction or building or drawing, you think more hairdressing or nursery. But when I went out, I kept walking around thinking she could do this if you really put your mind to it. I did talk with friends saying you know you could do that and they would say 'yeah, I could think about that'. I was thinking she [the assistant on the construction day activity] is the same as me so I could probably do that (Katie)

On her part, Fran lends support to Katie by arguing that, "I didn't know that girls did it and that they offered it to girls. I think I learned about what roles there were." Fran goes on to say, "I think there is a need for these kinds of days because it should open girls' eyes to see that they don't have to be restricted, that they can do whatever they want." Fran and Katie's comments represent a subtle shift in their discourse regarding gender and education and professional choices following the taster day session. It is a discourse that remains gendered in some ways but they did see the possibility to resist the traditional conception that skilled trades work are solely for the boys.

While the sessions may have resulted in greater awareness about skilled trades education and occupations, this new found knowledge did not result in a desire amongst the students to consider non-traditional skilled trades or 'boys jobs' for themselves. As mentioned before, and as we see next, a degree of distancing and a desire to conform to expectations occurred when many of the students talked about their newly acquired knowledge about skilled trades and the educational and occupational choices they envisioned for themselves. Alternatively, their willingness to conform could signal a desire to avoid the experience of intimidation and harassment in as a girl in a 'boys job'.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

### *Impact on their choices (educationally and occupationally)*

Areas of educational interest mentioned include; teaching, healthcare related occupations (occupational therapy, nurse, etc.), veterinary studies, hairdressing, fashion design, and police officer to name but a few. Of the students interviewed only one, Iris stated her intention to pursue a non-traditional vocation; namely, automotive. So while the students spoke broadly about the potential for girls such as themselves to enter non-traditional skilled trade professions, almost none of them identified non-traditional VET or skilled trade professions as their area of interest. The reasons cited for their decisions included: feeling that a career in the area did not interest them, that they lack the necessary skills, that other areas like food technology might be easier or that other fields of study like health and social care might offer greater employment opportunities.

Michelle, Katie and Fran, respectively, explain it thus:

It didn't really make a difference that they had a woman talking about engineering, because women should do what they want and not worry about what people think (Michelle)

I did think about drawing for like construction but I can't draw but then I thought some people can do it on a computer so I thought about that. So, then I thought about graphics for my DT [design and technology] but then I took Food Tech – it was easier cuz I thought I can't draw. I was thinking about doing something in construction because of that day but then I thought if I didn't get into that, I'd have more of an option [with Health and Social Care]. (Katie)

It didn't have an impact on what I was choosing for options because I was like I don't want a career in that. (Fran)

Iris, the student that intended to pursue a non-traditional vocational education did not always feel that way. During our initial discussion she expressed a desire to become a property developer; it was not until our second meeting that she talked about her interest in automotive work. As she explained it,

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

I liked doing the plumbing bit but I would have liked going on the other one as well cuz you have more on offer to you then. You have more choice to see what the differences are...I would like to go again though and do something different, maybe something on cars...For my work experience, I am going to go to a garage, everyone else is going to café's and that but I'm going to go to a garage.

It appears that between the time of our first and second interview, Iris gave more thought to her education and occupation interests and she subsequently spoke with the Program Manager at VETrain. She speaks directly and rather defiantly about her interest in doing something different. Iris was now willing to actively resist conventions about how young girls should perform gender.

I was going to do fashion but there are too many around and I like cars so I decided to go for something not everybody else is doing. Going on that session made a difference, after I talked to Nancy and she said she would talk to my mum and I am going to go around and take a look at the facility. Before I was thinking about property development cuz my parents are in the area but now I am proper like hooked on it. I really want to do that. I don't know if I am going to do an apprentice but I'm going to go to college first and then like give it a go and hopefully I'll like it, start my own business when I get good at it and then I should be alright for the future. (Iris)

Like so many other students, (e.g. former students Danielle and Sarah), Iris education and occupational interest reflected the work of her parents. However, participation in the taster day session exposed her to new and different possibilities. Although her immediate reaction was to dismiss the non-traditional option, having gained some insight into new and different options, as well as identifying a potential source of information and guidance (Ms. Nancy in this case, the Program Manager) has led her to seriously think about and decide to pursue new and different possibilities.

*Moments of displeasure and unease*

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Although the students generally spoke highly of the experience of attending the sessions (e.g. Michelle, Iris and Katie), some did comment on what they considered to be shortcomings of the taster day events. In some cases, these shortcomings dealt with the timing of the sessions, while others commented about how the practical activity was handled. Fran, for example, argued in three different contexts that, “It might have been nice to see a few more girls in that career and see how they came to that choice,” that, “I think we should have stayed there like, we should have done a few days on it like so we could do more practical things” and that, “I think we should do it again but different but do different things”.

In my construction group interview, I asked the ‘girls’ to reflect upon the practical task that all students were required to take part in. They responded as follows:

Lesley: That were good

Louise: Yeah.

Helen: Yeah.

Fran: I liked that

Rachel: I thought that it were unfair though because everyone else got to finish up their lot but me and Iris didn’t get to finish up ours because they didn’t have enough pipe so we didn’t get to finish it

Iris: No, we didn’t

Rachel: Me and Iris didn’t, they just left us to do nothing

Helen: We got to bend it and Rachel and them didn’t

Iris: We went up, it was like ‘oh, you can’t finish it now’, but I was like well everyone else has had a chance to finish it.

Lesley: I would have liked if we could take it home to show what were done

Fran: Yeah.

Louise: Yeah, we didn’t get anything to bring home

Rachel: Yeah, in engineering they got to bring it home

Iris: I got home and mum were like ‘well what have you done, have you brought anything’ and I was no. She thought well that were a bit weird that, it would have been nice to see what we actually learned.

Well, you would think that because you made that it you would get to take it home because they already had the hose [ ] and that means that other people would have to use them once again

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Rachel: I don't think it were right, they should have let you bring it home. (Construction Group)

A number of students in the Construction group expressed disappointment at not being able to take home their practical work. They also talked about the confusion and frustration that ensued when several of the girls did not have the requisite tool(s) and were therefore unable to complete their task.

Helen: Yeah, we get our form in the afternoon

Rachel: I reckon I thought that we were going to do a thing one week and then the next week another thing, like keep out of school on Mondays

Iris: But that's hard, actually really hard

Rachel: Like one thing every week

Iris: Like more activities every week so you can learn about construction and things like that  
(Construction Group)

Meanwhile, some of the girls who attended the engineering session felt the need for more practical sessions. For example, Eve said "I think they should have more practical work because everyone enjoyed the practical". In addition, Karen compared the taster day session experience to what she learned in a recent visit to a local college, "It weren't like the taster day, it was more like 'this is what we have and this is what we do'. It wasn't like there was the practical stuff too – I think you need the practical stuff." The student narratives suggest that the opportunity to create a tangible take home item was a welcome change from the often lecture heavy approach found in some secondary school classrooms.

We move now from the secondary school setting to examine the experiences of two young women who chose to pursue their interest in vocational education fields that remain male-dominated. Their stories take place in two different fields (construction and automotive mechanics) and represent two different approaches to vocational learning.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

One program is a college-based and includes a practicum component, and the other is primarily workplace based (apprenticeship) learning that is complimented by part-time onsite college courses. In both cases the young women discussed a range of experiences that covered their reasons for selecting their respective field and their interactions with peers, employers and instructors as young women in traditionally male learning and work environments.

### *Former Students: Tradeswomen in the making?*

Emma and Fiona are recent graduates of the secondary school who decided to pursue non-traditional skilled trade education and occupations, Emma in automotive and Fiona in construction. These two young women chose to obtain their education and training in different ways. Emma works at a local automotive facility on a mostly full-time basis while attending her college automotive courses part-time (4 days per month), while Fiona registered for a full-time construction course at one of the local colleges. Fiona's program required students to obtain short or long-term work placement experience as part of the program. In Fiona's case, students receive some assistance from program coordinators to identify potential work placement opportunities but they are not guaranteed a place. Ultimately, the onus is on the student to secure the requisite work placement. These two young women decided to take non-traditional vocational education paths but their experiences while pursuing their respective path differed significantly. While they are not currently registered at the secondary school, their narratives have been included because it offers a glimpse into what facilitated their decision to pursue their respective studies and what *can* happen when girls decide to pursue 'boys jobs.'

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Emma is an apprentice at a local automotive repair facility. She is an 18 year old of average height, with a slender build and long auburn hair with highlights. By many people's standards, she has a decidedly feminine look about her; she is an attractive young woman with long hair and a slender build. I make reference to her physical attributes because, from a 'modernist' and 'traditional' (Foucault, 1970) point of view, based on her external appearance many would expect her to be the young woman who goes to get her car repaired, not the person to do the repairs. Given the commonly held belief that automotive repair is a male domain, her gender and overall physical appearance set her apart from her peers (see also, Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, 2006).

At the time of her interviews Emma had been in the automotive programme for approximately 4 months and she was the only female registered in her college course. The program is expected to take three years to complete. Emma's interest in automotive work began early. At the age of 10, her mother remarried and her stepfather (a mechanic) gave her ample opportunities to learn about and work on cars. In addition to her stepfather, she has several family members who work in skilled trades, all of whom have encouraged and supported her decision to pursue automotive bodywork as an occupation.

While in secondary school Emma attended a work experience at the same automotive facility for one week, followed by another week-long work experience in Year 11 at the same organization. At the end of the second work experience, she was offered the chance of work as an apprentice upon graduation

The other 'former' student I interviewed was Fiona: an 18 year old of average height with short cropped, spikey hair and several piercings. In contrast to Emma,

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

common perceptions about what constitutes the feminine ideal are less likely to be ascribed to Fiona. Based solely on her physical appearance people are more likely to perceive her as the tough girl who is ready to stand her ground and fight if necessary.

At the time of the research, Fiona was registered at one of the local colleges in a construction-related course. While she did not participate in any gender specific taster days, she did take part in the school organized visit to one of the local colleges. Her interest and exposure to the world of skilled trades is attributed to her father's work – she used to go out on jobs with her Dad who has worked in various aspects of construction over the years. Like Emma, her family members were highly supportive of her decision to pursue a skilled trade.

Upon completing secondary school, Fiona applied for the college-based course and was accepted. Students registered for the construction course are expected to find employment while attending the program. While the college does offer some employment search assistance, the onus rests primarily with the student to ensure they gain on-the-job experience over the course of the 3-year program.

While Emma and Fiona's experiences on their respective courses may have differed, their narratives do cover some similar themes; such as family and peer support, previous exposure to the skilled trades, dealing with stereotypes and/or overt and subtle discrimination, program and employer support, academic versus practical aspects of secondary school, dealing with the physical nature and aspects of the profession; and boys jobs and girls jobs. In what follows, I will address each of these elements.

### *The importance of support*

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Both Emma and Fiona were introduced to the trades by male parental figures. In Emma's case, her stepfather has played a significant role in her introduction, continued exposure and interest in a non-traditional skilled trade. She became interested in automotive mechanic work at a fairly young age because her stepfather supported her interest and gave her chances to work on his cars. Over the years she has helped out and he, as well as other family members, has been supportive of her desire to enter an automotive trade. As she remembered it,

I did the work experience in Year 9 and then I came here for a week but I did the mechanics side rather than the body side, and then I come for another week in Year 11 and then they said to me, here they said, 'do you want a job when you leave school'?

At 10 years old my mum remarried and my stepDad got his own business doing mechanics so when my Dad was fixing his car, I'd just go and help. (Emma)

Fiona's introduction to construction, on the other hand, occurred as a result of her father's work in the area. As with Emma, her father let her perform small tasks while he was working on jobs. For both girls their fathers along with the support of their mothers and other members of the family opened up an area that might otherwise have been closed off to them.

I didn't take part in any taster days but in Year 10 I did a trip to the college to walk around all the different areas. We also had the prospectuses for different colleges and you just look up what you want to do. I ended up thinking about the apprenticeship role because I used to go out on jobs with my Dad. He does all sorts of that kind of thing, plumbing and joining, all that. I can't remember how young I was, I was pretty young. I used to go out on jobs everywhere with my Dad. I did some joining work on my house, fixing the attic, I enjoyed it. My Dad was pretty pleased about me doing that as well. He could see that I was enjoying it and all. Also, my brother, he is a qualified mechanic. (Fiona)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Not only did parental and immediate family support prove to be important factors in their decision to pursue a non-traditional trade, the two young women also talked about the role that friends and even teachers and other members of the school administration played in their decision to enter non-traditional vocational education or occupation. In the case of Emma, she noted that a teacher learnt of her interest in automotives and helped to facilitate her eventual work experience at a local automotive facility. Moreover, she spoke of the generally positive support that she received from her friends and her peers. In fact, she explains, thanks to her interest in the automotive field one of her female friends is also enrolled in a similar non-traditional trade programme. Her relationship with this friend has meant that they can discuss programme content and experiences in the classroom and at work and share their thoughts for the future.

Respectively, in two occasions, she put it thus:

I was talking with my friend and we were having this conversation about ‘what are we going to be when we grow up’ type of thing and I said I was going to be an auto mechanic and they said why. And then I was like it’s just different and not every day you see a girl going into well what we call a male’s job. And then from there a teacher must have overheard us or something like that and he come up to me and said I hear you want to be a mechanic, and I was like yeah. He said we will try and sort out with a week’s work experience so then you can decide if that’s what you definitely want to do before you leave school type of thing. So, he sort it out with other members of staff in school and presto it was a week’s work experience. (Emma)

The quote above demonstrates that Emma was well aware of the discourse that surrounds gender and the skilled trades, specifically that it is considered “different” for a girl to enter a trade like auto mechanics. This knowledge did not dampen her interest in the work but her conversation with her friend shows how her decision was likely to be

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

questioned. Luckily, a teacher was willing to exercise their power to arrange for “a weeks work experience”.

My friends were dead supportive. They were like go for it. One of my friends [a girl] is at college full time college course on mechanics. So, we would talk about ‘well yeah, I’m doing calibrating on Tuesday. Yeah well I’m doing [ ] and when we’re both qualified we’ll open our own business. I am definitely thinking about that as part of my future. My stepDad brought up the idea at first. When I’m fully qualified and I’m working a few years after that, and I definitely know what I’m doing then he said it would be a good idea. (Emma)

While she may be surrounded by supportive individuals, Emma has not been without her moments of fear and worry about how her male co-workers might perceive her presence on the shop floor. For example, she recounted her intense physiological experience of feeling nervous about going to work. Her desire to do the work and the level of support that she knew she had did not lessen her concerns that she could face taunting because she was the only female in the group. Her gender set her apart from her co-workers and as a result she was uncertain about the kind of reception that she might receive.

I felt nervous before I went in, really nervous, but a lot of the guys, I know from knowing people that know them kind of stuff. So it weren’t to bad as if I were just going in not knowing anybody. I knew a few people before I started. But it was absolutely, I was dreading it. What if they all took the mickey out of me.

When I came to the site, they were acting more excited than I were. I thought yeah! I got started, everybody was like yeah, I’ll give you summat to do, so they came over and they just gave me basic things like servicing a car. I was only allowed to do bits not a full service. (Emma)

Ultimately, her gender has not really proved to be a problem. She has been welcomed by others but this welcoming may have been a result of her pre-existing relationship with friends of some of her co-workers. In any event, not without moments

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

of hesitation, thus far her experience as both student and worker in a non-traditional trade has been a positive one and she has not felt singled out by her employers, co-workers or the clientele because of gender.

In contrast, Fiona's experience has been a more difficult and ultimately disheartening one. By her own account, she has the unfailing support of her parents and immediate family, but encountered sustained harassment while attending her college program and to a lesser extent during her work experience. Her story is one of loneliness, frustration and abandonment of a dream.

I still like it but I don't think that I would ever go back to it because of the experience. Just the experiences, I didn't really like the college either, I didn't really bond with anyone so I just felt like the outsider all the time...

It was just a mix between them but I prefer to be hands on, doing things on my feet all day. That's why I picked construction. I get on with lads more and I knock about with them at home so I thought that was the way to go. If I had bonded really well and got a job all the way through then I would have done it now, I would have finished it. (Fiona)

Fiona entered the program because she enjoyed the hands on nature of the work. She felt comfortable and confident doing the work because she had watched and helped her Dad out for years, but the learning environment proved to be toxic. Her enjoyment turned to frustration at having to function in a verbally caustic environment. Fiona had the misfortune to perform gender in difficult territory that from her perspective did not have or made room for her to act in ways that resisted or subverted normative views of what it means to be a girl/young woman and a skilled trade student and professional. She is worth quoting at length:

Because it was something I wanted to do but I'm getting bullied for it. I mean now I gutted that I'm not doing it but then again I'm like why should I go into class and do another year and just get stick. I thought

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

just go and do something else and be happier. I mean I'm gutted that I'm done now because it was what I actually enjoyed but at the end of the day there is no point coming home in tears...

In the end Fiona decided to exercise her power in the only way she felt she could and that was to remove herself from the situation. While, doing so probably preserved her psychological well-being in the long run, it was not without a cost. The emotional and stressful experience of being in the program has written itself onto her body because at the time of our interview she still felt "gutted". As we see below, there was a palpable sense of loss and longing present in her account of the events and its emotional impact on her and her family.

My Mum would get upset over it because I'm upset. She helped me all the way through it, she'd come out, like we'd go to the library, the job centre, she'd come out all the time. She'd do all sorts to help me find a job but it just never worked because it's just the way it was at the time. All the companies were like she's not got experience or were looking for people with experience so, I'd be getting stressed at home. I'd just go home in tears all the time because of what I got at college.

My Dad were gutted that I quit but my Mum was like 'whatever you do I will support you in it'. My Dad was gutted because he wanted his little girl to work in construction, even my Dad helped as well. But it got stressful at home as well, obviously not getting a job I just sat there and moaned like, they'd be like 'you alright' and I'd say no. My Mum just said if you don't want to do it then don't do it. So, then I had this massive talk with my Mum about what do you think about me quitting. Well, she was like 'it's up to you', she said 'I don't want to say anything because I don't want you saying later that I did because you said so', she said 'whatever you want to do just do that'. So she supported me through it and she's happy now because I'm happier because I'm not getting picked on all the time at college. I didn't like it one bit. I used to dread it when it was my day and I had to go to college.  
(Fiona)

While her decision to leave the program was a difficult one to make, and her future educational and occupational prospects remain uncertain, she does feel a sense of relief at no longer having to deal with the constant barrage of comments and criticisms.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

### *Stereotypes, overt and subtle discrimination*

On the issue of negative comments and criticisms, the two girls' experiences were vastly different. While Emma spoke about her supportive work environment, Fiona was subjected to daily harassment from peers in her trade program. However, it is worthwhile to note that Emma acknowledges a level of surprise at the reception she received in the workplace. She anticipated having to hear and deal with comments from her male peers that would take aim at her right to be at the automotive facility and her ability to do the work well. As she put it,

There aren't any girls on the course but that's been not that bad? You'd have thought that they would go 'well you can't do it cuz you're a girl. What you doing?'. They're all like dead supportive if you know what I mean. I don't know, like none of them will take the mick. If I'm struggling to do something then they'll just come and help, they won't go 'ah look you can't do it cuz you're a girl' they all like help me, the same I'd help them if they needed help. (Emma)

I didn't really worry about whether they were going to take the mick out of me or not. I wouldn't be bothered. I have a bit of a temper. I don't take nothing off of nobody. (Emma)

On her part, Fiona did expect to have to deal with negative comments about her gender and her capacity to complete work-related tasks, but she did not anticipate the extent to which she would be harassed. Most of the negative comments directed towards Fiona dealt with her gender and at times her sexuality. However, a review of some of Fiona's interview comments does allude to the existence and practice of subtle discriminatory practices. Here are two examples where she explains some of these discriminatory practices:

It's 3 years the course but because of all the stick I got on the course for being a girl and I just got bullied basically on the course.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

She uses the term “stick” to refer to the constant harassment that she received from the male students in her class. According to Fiona, the male students regularly criticized her ability to do the work and her quality of her work during the class. The comments made were generally snide and made reference to her inability to do the work because of her physical strength and gender. As she notes in the quote below, her status “a girl” figured prominently in the way her classmates thought about her capacity to perform job-related tasks. One could argue that the boys worked collectively as a disciplinary institution might by categorizing and marking Fiona’s body and its very presence as other and therefore abnormal.

Because I was the only girl on the course it was like ‘why are you doing the course, you’re a girl, you’re not going to be able to do it. Obviously, we’re not going to make you lift as much as they can because they are men.’ I mean they were constantly commenting on my work when actually if you asked the tutors, they couldn’t handle being beaten by a girl in a man’s trade. I think that’s why I got picked on a lot. (Fiona)

In her attempt to understand why she was subjected to regular taunts, Fiona assumes that the male students in the programme felt threatened by her ability to do good work. It is her way to make sense of what happens to her, but while she may feel confident in her skills, she becomes increasingly unable to deal with what she perceives to be constant pressure and critiques. When she does attempt to take a strong stance against the harassment, even her decision to respond is used against her. Once again her gender, as female and ‘other’ within this environment is held up to ridicule by her peers.

I think they were just childish bullies in there so they’d pick at each other but it seemed to all the time picking at me because I was the girl there. It’d be like if I was stressed, they’d blame it on ‘o it women’s problems’ and I like ‘am I not allowed to be stressed’. They’d be ‘oh,

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

just ignore it, its just women things, oh look at her, she's getting stressed. Like I can't even talk back and tell them how I feel. It was all childish in that group. (Fiona)

When she tries to exercise her power and deal with the situation by speaking with the tutors, she receives little support and limited action is taken against the perpetrators of the harassment. According to Fiona's account, the male students' behaviours are brushed aside by the course instructors. One could argue that their inaction served to bolster and reinforce the culture of the classroom as appropriate. It is also an example of how when curriculum-as-plan does not tackle gender in these settings it can shape gendered experience and the performance of gender. Here, her frustration is evident:

I spoke to one of my tutors and they had a word like but you know what lads are like, they just carry on don't they, just childish. I still like it but I don't think that I would ever go back to it because of the experience... They [the tutors] said they'll get bored. But it never happened, it just carried on. They could actually see that you were getting stuck and you would tell them but it was like going around in circles all the time. I was like well why am I going to stick on a job I want to do, I'm getting bullied when I could do something else because it was something I wanted to do but I'm getting bullied for it. I mean now I gutted that I'm not doing it but then again I'm like why should I go into class and do another year and just get stuck. I thought just go and do something else and be happier. (Fiona)

The masculine heteronormative culture of the program and her classroom is steeped in conceptions about biological essentialism and determinism that defines girl/woman in terms of their reproductive physiology. The boys "...regard the body of a woman as a hindrance, a prison, weighted down by everything peculiar to it" (de Beauvoir, p. xxii). Fiona is thus 'easily stressed' as women are want to do and therefore cannot handle things rationally and objectively like a man.

Although Fiona found the entire classroom experience difficult to deal with, she did appear to have a slightly better experience during her work experience. As she points

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

out, in some ways finding employment, proved to be an equally stressful endeavour because she was at a loss to understand why she was unable to secure employment. Ultimately, Fiona did find an apprenticeship role with assistance from the program personnel. However, this was after she had gone on a number of interviews, fully prepared with portfolio in hand but she was unsuccessful in getting the job.

I got really annoyed because I would go in with a nice portfolios of everything I done. I'd have photographs from school from tech year and I was just getting nowhere and the lads would just turn up late with nothing, no portfolio and they would get the job. So, I'd be like so what am I doing wrong. (Fiona)

While she does not dwell on this experience, Fiona's comment about attending interviews fully prepared and continually walking away unsuccessful against "the lads" hints at other factors assuming importance in the hiring process. Namely, that she was a girl in a lads world.

I just had one job or six months. The college, the companies come to the college asking for apprentices so there were quite a few of us out of jobs but they sent me on it, because they knew how much I wanted a job and the knew what I was like and that I weren't messing about. They just sent me for the interview because I was the only one who went for the interview. I got the job because they needed someone to start right there and then. But, I've been on interviews before that and they sent me with a few lads and they just pick the lads over me. (Fiona)

When she does get the job, she feels a sense of joy and relief but the work experience was not without its own difficult moments. As a member of the team she does encounter some harassment about her gender and sexuality but in this context she was unwilling to remain quiet for long and spoke up for herself when needed.

I got told in the interviews what to expect, that you're going to get stick and stuff like that. Yeah fair enough, I can put up with that but not the way they were doing it. I expected to get stick and that, I knew what I was getting myself into but its just after 2 years I was getting tired of it.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Everyday I mean, even at work I got it sometimes. [ ] but when you start going into your sexuality and by shouting it on the site and stuff like that, it's like well yeah it's not to annoy me or do trick on me and stuff like that but just leave my own personal life out of it. [She continues,] When I got the job it was good but I got stick for being a girl again and for my sexuality, so I go a little stick for that but when, because I use to just bottle it up I used to just take it and get on with it and in the end I just thought, no right I just told them all what for basically and I just spoke to their boss but other than that it were good. I enjoyed it, I got loads of work. (Fiona)

As the excerpt above illustrates, unlike in the classroom setting, she asserts herself and this time it seems to make a difference. She spoke with the instigators, then the supervisor and what followed was a relatively incident free work experience. However, it is interesting to note that Fiona seemed to draw a line between being harassed because of her gender and her sexuality. Based on her comments, taking issue with her sexuality proved to be one form of harassment she was unwilling to overlook. Her reaction brings to mind Butler's (2006) statement about the importance of distinguishing between gender and sexual discrimination. Butler states the following,

Gay people... may be discriminated against in positions of employment because they fail to "appear" in accordance with accepted gendered norms. And the sexual harassment of gay people may well take place not in the service of shoring up gender hierarchy, but in promoting gender normativity (p. xiii)

Unfortunately, six months into her employment, she was laid off and was unable to find another position, which played a role in her decision to leave the program.

For both, Emma and Fiona, incidents of harassment (or lack thereof) have played a role in determining how they view their experiences. What sets the two girls apart is the level of support (or the lack thereof) that they received from those in positions of power (i.e. employers, supervisors, instructors). While, Emma felt comfortable and

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

welcome in her work and classroom setting, Fiona felt decidedly unwelcome and an interloper while in the college program and to a lesser extent while at work.

### *Program/employer support*

Peer support (or, again, the lack thereof), were themes raised by both young women, but the level of support received from program personnel, supervisors and/or employers also proved to be important factors. Overall, while the level of support received varied, it would be safe to say that those in positions of authority or power have undoubtedly had an impact on both girls educational and occupational trajectory. Put simply, Emma had a great deal of support from supervisors or others in positions of authority, while Fiona did not.

Emma spoke highly of her experience at the secondary school and the fact her current position is due in large part to the efforts of a teacher who heard what she wanted to do and then attempted to find an opportunity to gain work experience in that area. Moreover, while on the work experience she appears to have made a positive impression on those in authority.

This is the best - school gave the me the best experience I ever had. Not school itself, I mean like bringing me to here. Because if it weren't for that teacher listening in and then getting that work placement and then I wouldn't have got a job... At school I was asking about work experience but I didn't know exactly how to get around it and how it worked or if they still did it cuz it's very rare that they do work experience today cuz of the insurance and all that ruffraff. But probably if that teacher hadn't listened in I wouldn't have got my two weeks, my two separate weeks. But after the first week, I asked, I then phoned up and asked if it's possible I could go and do another week in the future or whatever. Obviously, they said yeah we'll follow it up. (Emma)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

In part, her ability to secure a second week at the automotive facility was due to her proactive approach which serves as an example of the productive use of one's power. While on the week-long work placement, she enjoyed the work and took it upon herself to follow up about future opportunities. It is interesting though that while she was asked back for a second week and upon graduation was hired by the organization her comments illustrate a level of uncertainty about the reason for her employment.

When they phoned me, I did apply for a mechanics job, they phoned me and said they've got a job on panel beating and it's like 17 other lads applied for the job but you were the first person to come to mind. So whether that was just cuz I was a girl, I don't know, or whether I made an impression or whatever but when I got that phone call I were like woo! From then I started and I've loved every minute of it. It's been great. (Emma)

While Emma does think that she may have made an impression, there appears to be unspoken questions as to whether she was hired *because* of her gender. Her uncertainty about the reasons for being asked to return demonstrates an awareness of the possibility that gender could be a deciding factor during the hiring process. Her comments indicate an awareness that certain perceived truths exist about which bodies are ideal and appropriate for a skilled trade profession. She has learned these truths along the way but she has chosen to pursue her interest despite her knowledge that girls aren't really expected to be interested in automotive work.

So I think it is something that girls should get into. I know that if people like a challenge then this is a very good job, if you can get into it. But if their not up for the challenge then it's pointless because everything you do is different and you learn new things every day. But sitting typing on a computer, you're doing the same thing day in day out all the time constantly the same thing. If you're an accountant at work you're doing the same thing every day. (Emma)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

On the other hand, Fiona applied and gained entrance to the college program upon completing her secondary school studies and by her own admission she expected to be the object of comments and criticisms from her male peers. She had entered a male domain and understood that some people would express overt displeasure at her decision to do so. While she anticipated having to deal with the taunts, she also assumed that she would feel supported by the program. In the end, she felt that program administrators failed to provide adequate support in a number of ways. She describes the failure this way:

Obviously, if a girl comes on to the course and she's like, like they should obviously stick up for them more because obviously they're going to get stick. I guess it all depends upon how many girls are in the class. If there are a bunch of girls then I think it'd be different if you were all friends together. But they just need to, it like the tutors used to tell the guys when I was there 'alright stop it and just carry on'. It was just like school and I didn't like school so I thought well so I'll just go now, because I'm doing a job I like to do but it's just like school, so I thought there is no point. (Fiona)

Fiona assumed that since she was the only girl on the course, program personnel would be extra vigilant about dealing with incidents of harassment that might be directed at her. Instead, she felt the tutors made half-hearted attempts to diffuse any situations that arose. In Fiona's view the program personnel had the power to do something and they chose to do nothing. As such their actions indicate willful ignorance and/or a lack of forethought about the difficulties that young women might encounter in the skilled trade learning and work environment. It also suggests that the gender neutral stance of the curriculum tacitly reinscribes the view that the girl in VET is the exception not the norm.

It is also interesting to note that she thinks she might have been able to deal with the taunts and inadequate support from program personnel, if she had other females on

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

the course that she could turn to. Unlike secondary school, where she was one of many girls, she now felt completely alone in an extremely hostile environment. There was no lifeline - no other female or male peer(s) that she could turn to and commiserate with. Her assumption is that such a lifeline would have given her the strength needed to carry on in the program. Her comment “they should just look after girls more” is worth noting because, there is a ‘traditional maternal’ tone to it. Fiona assumes that the college and the program should impart knowledge about the particular trade but it should also nurture (take care of) the young girl. In a sense, the college and program are cast in the role of surrogate parent/guardian that should look out for those in its care. What is striking about this comment is that it immediately seems to be at odds with the decidedly ‘masculine’ view of skilled trade education and professions that is considered the norm.

It felt like I was starting all over again but obviously there were no girls on my course while obviously in school there was. It was like half isn't it whereas in college it was just me. I mean I don't mind, I was trying to get on with it the best I can because I get on with lads better but it's just them, they were just childish. They should just look after girls more really. If they're getting picked on just go over and stop it there and then instead of leaving it because once it's left and they know they can do it then they're not going to stop are they. (Fiona)

To a lesser extent, Fiona also thought that there was a limited support and understanding from program personnel about the difficulties of finding and remaining employed. If we think about this in terms of Foucault's definition of governmentality, then it is possible to interpret lack of job search support as indicative of a technique intended to prepare and train the citizen to be self-sufficient. In other words do not expect the college or program to find jobs, the student should exercise their ingenuity and knowledge to fend for themselves. Although the economic climate was particularly difficult at the time, it appears that no specific program time was allotted to assist

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

students in identifying, preparing and/or obtaining the employment experience that was needed to fulfill the program requirements. As she explained it,

At the college, we used to go to classes on our own time, we would go on the internet to go to sites and look for a job but obviously because of the way that everything went at that time, because everything like the credit crunch and all that and a lot of companies were going bust at the time that I was going into my last year, so it was really hard for anyone and a few guys in my class that got laid off as well. The company went bust or they couldn't afford to keep them on. (Fiona)

As previously mentioned, Fiona did obtain employment with a local firm but she was laid off six months later. She believes that this lay off was a direct result of the way in which organizations receive funding for employing students. She was hired as part of a funding scheme but was also laid off because of said funding scheme. Ironically, at the time she was laid off the company did express interest in having her come back once she had completed her program. If Fiona's assumption is correct, the employer had no real incentive to keep her on past the end of the funding cycle.

Then the company laid me off to take a plasterer on instead. They had me in just for six months because you got paid, so they go rid of me to take a plasterer on even though there's no plasterers on site. So I don't know what he's doing and then I think that after six months they could take a bricklayer on. So, I think every six months they can take someone one. They blamed it on funding and they said to me once you finish college and you get your qualifications give us a ring back and we'll talk about taking you on fulltime and I thought well I can't after 3<sup>rd</sup> year without a job. Because most of your last year is out on site. I don't think you're in college as much, so you need a job really. (Fiona)

Once unemployed, Fiona found it increasingly difficult to justify her continued participation in the program. She enjoyed the work, she was good at it, but continued harassment in class and now unemployment proved to be too much. She felt continually frustrated and stressed and those feelings began to affect her interactions with family

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

members, whom she felt were her main line of support. As a result, she felt there was no other choice but to quit the program and consider other options.

Once she informed program personnel about her decision to quit, they did attempt to have her reconsider her decision. Efforts were made to connect her with another female who was in the last phase of the program. This individual also had to contend with taunts from peers but she had persevered and went on to be quite successful in the program. Fiona is worth quoting at length in her explanation:

My tutor he was basically begging me to stay on the course because they like girls to be on courses, like male courses. All the tutors got me in on a Friday when it was not a college day and they got this girl in from the year above us because she got this stick, she went through all the same things but she went on to winning awards. I think she ended up awarded 6 grants to start her business up, but she bonded with all those guys in her class and I think that's where it were a bit different for her. So they got her to talk to me.

In “begging” her to stay in the program, the tutor was asking Fiona to exercise her power and resist and subvert the heteronormative culture of the classroom that worked to select and exclude members. However, what the tutor and by extension the program failed to do was hear Fiona’s voice regarding her experience of the program and offer the support that might have facilitated her staying.

So I thought, ok if I stick it out for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year but then I just thought I couldn't be bothered... I didn't really think about her too much after that because obviously she was just some girl that I didn't know so I didn't feel confident enough to go up and talk to her. I wasn't all that confident in college like in mixing with people. I mean like I would see her, walk past her and say hi but I wouldn't walk up and talk to her about advice or problems, anything like that. It's not like she is going to be in the class with me. I mean she could tell me about her opinion and how to go about it but she's not in that class at the time. (Fiona)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

While Fiona appreciated hearing what the student had to say, she felt their situations differed because unlike her, the other student had been able to establish friendships with some of her classmates. No connection or bond was established between her and this student. Fiona was at a point where she didn't need someone who had gone through it and survived, what she needed was a compatriot who could share her difficulties, triumphs and workspace in the moment. She needed the physical presence that could serve as a buffer against the regular barrage of criticism.

While their forays into non-traditional vocational education and occupations have resulted in very different experiences, one thing is certain: both of these young women assumed that they would encounter 'stick' (a term Fiona used). They expected taunts and they expected their abilities to be questioned, so the question remains knowing the difficulties that they might encounter, what prompted them to pursue studies in these non-traditional vocational areas? In both their cases, their choices are partly due to their experience and perception of what takes place during secondary school.

### *Academic vs Practical*

As discussed earlier, both Emma and Fiona had family members who have worked (or still do) in skilled trade occupations. In addition, those family members, particularly their fathers, introduced them to skilled trade work at an early age. These young women had the opportunity to work and learn alongside these professionals and developed an interest and sense of ease about non-traditional vocational occupations. Aside from exposure to the field and the mentoring and support received from parents, these two young women had something else in common; by their own admission they

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

were not academically inclined. In their cases ‘academic’ refers to traditional modes of learning that require students to sit in a classroom, learn theory, write papers, and acquire the knowledge needed to perform well on written exams. Instead, they both expressed a desire to learn by working with their hands.

I’m not really a theory person, I don’t like sitting in a classroom writing in a book. I’m not that kind of person, I’d prefer to, I’d learn more doing the job like somebody show me how to do it and I do it. But with the theory, some of it’s complicated because obviously I only an apprentice and obviously I won’t understand what their on about, but apart from bits that I don’t understand it, it’s good and I learn a lot from it. (Emma)

I prefer to be hands on, doing things on my feet all day. That’s why I picked construction. I get on with lads more and I knock about with them at home so I thought that was the way to go. If I had bonded really well and got a job all the way through then I would have done it now, I would have finished it. (Fiona)

While they acknowledge the difficulties that they might experience in understanding the theory, they are not completely averse to learning the theory. However, what they prefer is to pursue occupations that allow them to work primarily with their hands, and learn from others in a workplace setting. It is how they learn the most and feel a sense of personal satisfaction. Emma and Fiona, respectively, told their stories this way:

Working in company office – boring. I have a friend who, I don’t know what she’s doing now but last time I knew she were working with mum looking after elderly people. Pretty much the rest of them are at college doing child care and health and social and stuff like that. My co-op mate, she was doing fashion, so we’re like completely opposite. See I work getting all greasy and dirty and she is there designing clothes and keeping her hands clean. Obviously, if I want to do the job I have to wear overalls and boots [interrupted by someone]. I had to adapt obviously to the job that I want to do. I knew that’s how I were gonna dress and me I don’t care what anybody else thinks. As long as I’m having fun and enjoying myself doing a job that I want to do dressed like this [she points to the baggy overalls that she is wearing], people can think what they want. (Emma)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Emma's comment about work attire is worth noting because it suggests an awareness of how her choice of dress might be interpreted as subversive and inappropriate for the work environment. She acknowledges that for skilled trade professions, acceptance requires and is in part dependent upon being able to adapt to the environment.

As Emma mentions above, the possibility of having to wear what might be described by most as unattractive clothing does not deter her from her pursuit of vocational education or a profession in a non-traditional skilled trade. In fact, she expresses her willingness to adapt to the dress code if it means she gets to do the work she enjoys. Emma's discussion of work attire is a point of discussion that was raised earlier among the current and former students interviewed for this study.

I'd rather be doing a man's job and get out there than sit in an office. Because I've been at work experience in school for a week with my Dad but I wasn't able to work onsite because of insurance, I wasn't covered so I worked in the office. I mean I enjoyed it for the week but I thought I couldn't enjoy this for a living so that's what made me pick up construction. My Dad was like 'come on [ ]', I would do all sorts of jobs with him. Every time he went out I was like Daddy's little helper. I enjoyed it, just go out get me hand dirty, I used to love it... I didn't particularly like college but as soon as I got the job I was so happy because I thought I could start learning, start building stuff like that but then when I lost the job it was like back to square one again. (Fiona)

Emma and Fiona's preference for educational and occupational spheres that emphasize skill development and hands-on tasks is also evident in the way in which they talk about work environments. The idea of working in an office setting is of no interest to either of them. They consider such work to be uninteresting and uninspiring. However, Fiona's reference to "doing a man's job and get out there than sit in an office" suggests a conflicted understanding and experience of gender. On the one hand, she has pursued education and work in this area of personal interest but her words suggest an underlying

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

belief that she has stepped into the rightful domain of men. In a way she subverts and reinforces a gendered view of her skilled trade education and occupational choice.

### *Boys jobs and girls jobs*

Job delineation based on gender is a topic that was raised by current and former students interviewed for this study. Even the two former students (Emma and Fiona) who chose to pursue non-traditional vocational education and occupations referred to “boys jobs” and “girls jobs.” Emma and Fiona spoke about these jobs as if distinctions based on gender are clear and uncomplicated. In Emma’s case, she referred to the secondary school course that provides careers information to students. Based on her account cues regarding gender-based distinctions about occupational fields are often provided by course instructors. Both Emma and Fiona seem in agreement here:

At school there was PSCHE and that is basically everyday life kind of lessons and they do talk about it but they don’t, they talk about jobs for lads and jobs for girls and stuff like that but don’t really say much about if a girl wanted to go into a males job or a guy wanted to do hairdressing or childcare or whatever. The problems aren’t really talked about, they say there are so many jobs and these are a few. (Emma)

The girls’ use of these descriptors highlights how well-entrenched gender-based perceptions about education and employment often are and the extent to which schools and the curriculum can be implicated in the reification and legitimization of particular kinds of knowledge as ‘truths’.

Among my friends, I think that half of them went on to do like hairdressing or you know like the girl jobs, you know like nursing. I think like half of them went on to do that. There weren’t any mates that I have in the girls that went into construction. (Fiona)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

The two descriptors were also used by Fiona as she talked about educational and occupational choices made by her friends. In both cases, the girls' jobs included hairdressing, nursing and childcare, while the areas they selected to pursue (construction, automotive) were considered to be boys' jobs. Although they chose to pursue 'male jobs' they did not question the accuracy of ascribing certain categories of education and occupations to a particular gender. In fact, they anticipate that girls are likely to encounter difficulties should they opt to enter a traditionally male domain but they did not question or express stronger feelings of outrage about the education and job categorizations that do exist. Not only did they gain their gendered understanding of education and occupation choice through the curriculum and school but they have internalized that knowledge as truth (Foucault, 1979). However, Emma and Fiona's decision to pursue non-traditional skilled trade does demonstrate that although they have learned certain 'truths' about vocational education choice they chose to resist these truths by deciding to pursue their educational and professional interest.

### *Words of encouragement and caution*

The two young women made the choice to pursue educational and occupational options that they knew would entail difficulties. The difficulties in question didn't necessarily have to do with their ability to learn the material, instead they dealt primarily with their concern about how their presence in predominantly male learning and work environments might be received by male peers. Their interest and desire to work in their respective non-traditional areas eventually one out over their concerns and worries and while their experiences may have differed both young women felt that there is a place for

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

women in non-traditional vocational spheres. For example, Emma commented “I know that if people like a challenge then this is a very good job, if you can get into it”.

Meanwhile, Fiona strongly argues the following:

Well, if a girl says they really want to do it, I would have to say go for it, but honestly I would warn them about the stick that they are going to get for being a girl. I don't know, I think if you're gonna do it you cannot moan about getting your hands dirty or getting picked on, you've got to be strong because you're gonna get stick, it's obvious that you're gonna get it for being a girl. Like I say, you can still go for it if you want to but if you get into a job and you manage to keep that job for all the time, you got it all right. (Fiona)

Fiona believes, in sum, that young girls should pursue non-traditional trade education and professions but cites the need for them to be aware of what they are about to encounter.

Yeah, I mean it's great for them to go on that trade but it doesn't necessarily mean that that they will get a job in that trade. I mean say if more girls got on the course and there wasn't just the only girl like I was, say maybe there was more in the class then maybe they could group together. (Fiona)

Both young women's comments, particularly in the case of Fiona, were tempered by words of caution about how their male peers view their presence and interact with them; the possibility of obtaining and retaining employment and the level of support they might gain from those in positions of authority. Her words of caution reflect her own college and work experience but she still appears to be hopeful. While she feels like she was “bullied out,” she still seems to hold a sense of hope for those young girls who are able to establish peer relationships with other programme participants. This possibility for success may also rest with the level of support obtained from programme providers and employers. Here, as we see in the following section, especially what Fiona is

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

addressing is a question of policy as much as it is a socio-cultural question (of gender behavior and expectations).

*The story that lies within: Policy-related documents, interviews and the research questions*

Having conducted a review of the policy related document (see Chapter 5) and interview data, I now return to the research questions. The questions functioned as guide during this study, they were informed by my literature and conceptual framework and in turn they helped me to structure and refine the methodology and analysis employed during this research endeavour. As such, it seems fitting to conclude this section on data analysis by returning to those questions and briefly explore the participants' narratives in light of those questions. Once again the research questions are as follows:

*Micro-Level Questions*

- What are the gendered bodily experiences of young female participants in a vocational education initiative that seeks to increase female participation in 'non-traditional' skilled trades?
- What occurs within the learning setting? That is, what does (or did) that experience mean for individual educational and/or occupational choices?

*Macro-Level Questions*

- How has gender been addressed in England's VET policy?
- What (if any) commonalities exist across participant experience that could inform how this or similar VET initiatives are developed and presented to a specific audience?

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

- In general, what does that experience mean for how VET initiatives are developed and administered?

In keeping with my earlier presentation and discussion of the policy-related documents and student interview data, I begin with an exploration of the broader (macro level) questions. As highlighted in the research questions this macro level story emphasizes how gender in VET policy-related documents has been discussed; common (or uncommon) student experiences and what they could mean for similar gender-specific initiative. The story then shifts to the micro level where I consider the young women's experiences in relation to the intended goals of the taster day sessions and the young women's proposed or actual educational and/or occupational choices.

On the broader question of gender in England's vocational education and training policy, it can be said that policy regarding gender inequities in vocational education and training is not extensive or particularly explicit. Some documents have acknowledged that gender-based segregation does exist in vocational education and that said segregation should be addressed (DfES 2003a; Payne, 2003d; Haynes et al., 2005). Legislatively, schools are expected to provide equal access to all students (DfES, 2003a; Ofsted, 2002). However, there are no specific guidelines as to how this should be achieved. It is often left to the school or affiliated educational body to establish programs that are aimed at redressing disparities in vocational education (DfES 2003a; Haynes et al., 2005). The approach to offload responsibility for creating initiatives to the local level has resulted in varied attempts and success. At the local level decisions are made about which issues require attention. For example, the study that examined Pathfinder projects across the country, found that few of the regions surveyed chose to create initiatives that dealt with

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

gender segregation and gender disparities (Haynes et al., 2005). While the government policy may have expected Pathfinder projects to create initiatives that deal with gender disparities in vocational education, program providers did not necessarily view it as a requirement. Moreover, there is no indication that there were repercussions for non-compliance. In essence, gender is one of many issues that Pathfinder providers and schools could choose to deal with and as such the decision to create gender-focused programming remained within the purview of local providers and schools. In general, there are several worthy of mention from the review of policy and discussion documents: there is a lack of discussion regarding gender and educational and professional choice, the purpose of vocational education in secondary schools remains conflicted and controversial, and among the documents reviewed, none uses student experience in VET as a starting point for policy discussion or examination. In the end, local responsibility and willingness to address gender-based occupational segregation in vocational education are the main drivers for action.

The findings of the document review suggests the presence of discursive practices that work to reinscribe biologically essentialist claims about which bodies are best suited for vocational education and skilled trade professions. The prevailing discourse is one that is steeped in the history of the education system in England and the advent of industrialization, both of which have focused on the teaching and training of working class boys and men. First, these individuals have been marked by their class and as such the education system was intended to provide them with the basics, theirs was not to be the education of the landowner or aristocracy. Second, they were to be trained to assume low level or possibly lower management positions for the nation's industries.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Meanwhile, young girls and women of a similar class were marked and trained to assume primarily service-related positions. They were not expected to compete with their male counterparts for employment in most areas because their primary responsibility remained the maintenance of hearth and home.

It is within this context that this school has sought to inform young girls about non-traditional vocational education and occupations. According to Bob, the school has no ongoing formalized strategy for informing young girls about non-traditional vocational educational and vocational options, instead the senior administration has relied upon a range of ad hoc strategies that includes presenting information through the careers and advice course; informal discussions with teachers and administrators; developing partnerships with other local area schools; and establishing informal networks with area colleges, vocational education providers and employers. The idea of local responsibility and action was voiced by some of the study participants. For example, Bob, the Head of School noted the following:

There isn't a formalized system in place that helps to identify girls that might be interested in the trades and help them along and provide contacts. There doesn't seem to be the will nationally to put one in place but if a particular student had a particular desire to do that then we as a school support them as far as possible. So, for example, Emma, the automotive apprentice that you met we made special arrangements for her to do two work placements down at the garage during the course of Year 11 because we knew that was what she was interested in. (Bob)

Ms. Barb, a senior instructor and former lead on the taster days also spoke about the role that local as opposed to national organizations have played in offering gender specific sessions.

Originally, the taster days were mostly run out of [the local college] and the college obviously needed students from within the area to go for the courses, so what they started to do, and lots of places are doing this is

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

they would send out flyers to Heads of Year or PSCHE to say 'we've got this course' and a lot of them from my year got at the time things like Girls in Industry because they were looking and saying we don't have enough good quality people going into and especially girls in certain industries. (Ms. Barb)

However, reliance upon local organizations, whether they be colleges or other secondary schools can prove problematic, particularly when those institutions are themselves dependent upon government funding. As discussed earlier, the issue of relations of power that are both repressive and productive (Foucault, 1979) are present within the context of the taster day sessions. For example, the college opted to make unilateral decisions about who could attend a given session or the government chose to cease funding the colleges, both of which denied some students the chance to participate (repressive). Alternatively, while the school adhered to guidelines established by the college, they also decided to create alliances with other secondary schools and seek direct funding in order to expand the vocational options available to their students (repressive and productive).

The only way that schools would be able to do it is to cluster. So in our area we agreed with all of the other schools which of the school would lead on behalf of the area on each of the diploma lines for example... We have been very pleased with how that is working out on providing for students from other schools but at the moment we have very few of our students that go to other schools. That is partly because some of the other courses didn't get up and running and then the funding was pulled out from under their feet... (Bob)

The range of possible resources is not stable and can change as a result of government policy, economic climate and concerns about potential competition. Hence, as shown with the group of students interviewed for this study one year the school relied on one of the local area colleges to act as offsite information and taster day session provider but that relationship deteriorated as government funding previously available to the college for such events ran out. More recently, the school has re-established its

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

relationship with a local post-secondary vocational education and training provider that requires them to pay a small fee for providing one day taster day sessions. So far this relationship appears to be beneficial to all involved.

While the provision and administration of gender specific taster day sessions can be difficult, analysis of the young girls' experiences in these different taster day settings found that their thoughts regarding the sessions, their format and the information gained are quite positive (e.g., Danielle, Tracey, Fran, Iris, Katie, Engineering Group). The students expressed an excitement about being able to take part in a gender only session and as voiced by several students they appreciated not having to worry about what the boys might think or do had they been present (Rachel, Helen, Iris, Engineering group). One could say that there was a level of freedom to explore and try that might otherwise have been stifled in the presences of boys. One aspect of the taster day sessions was thought to be particularly appealing – the practical (hands on) task that required the young girls to create a product that might be found in the non-traditional vocational education under discussion (Danielle, Tracey, Iris, Michelle, Katie, Engineering Group, Construction Group). There was a general consensus that working on the product or task was challenging, fun and informative. One could argue that the practical task was the highlight of the day – because it engaged the students and it challenged pre-conceived ideas about what they and others might think themselves capable of doing.

When considered individually or collectively the student narratives showed several things. First, the majority of students who participated in the study found the sessions to be interesting and informative (Danielle, Tracey, Iris, Katie, Engineering Group, Construction Group). For most of them the day began with limited knowledge

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

about the education and occupation choices that comprise non-traditional vocational education and training. However, all students acknowledged gaining a better understanding about the breadth of vocational occupations that exist and the possibilities that employment in these spheres can mean for young women. Second, they found the inclusion of a practical task a particular highlight of the sessions. Third, the majority of students expressed having a greater appreciation for the skilled trades sector. Finally, while the students may have found their session(s) to be interesting and informative, attendance at the sessions generally did not translate into a desire to pursue non-traditional education and occupations. In fact, the students' educational and occupational interests remained fairly standard, whereby they spoke of careers in teaching, social services, business studies and law (Danielle, Tracey, Engineering Group, Construction Group). The sole exception was one student (Iris) who had originally expressed an interest in pursuing a career in property development but later said she had decided to train as an automotive apprentice.

The fact that most students expressed an interest in and chose to pursue more traditional (stereotypical) education and occupations may be interpreted in several ways. Participation in gender specific taster day sessions so close to the Options selection process was a help and a hindrance. For most of the students, it was their first time taking part in a gender specific initiative and while they found it to be a worthwhile outing they had already made their Options decisions. Student perceptions regarding gender appropriate education and professions were well entrenched and therefore these kinds of gender specific sessions might make a greater difference if they were offered earlier and more frequently in their secondary school years. As several individuals

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

pointed out, it is a difficult task to get these young girls to think beyond traditional roles and careers.

We are a quite parochial part of the country here, we have parochial views, we behave in a certain way, we take a long time to change. (Ms. Nancy)

They've got a very traditional view of it I think and we need to widen those views and give them the chance to make more informed decisions. We haven't really pushed that hard enough probably. In school we have got a very traditional bunch of kids and the parents probably have very traditional careers and come from traditional role and its hard to break down those perceptions I think. (Ms. Sarah)

Both Ms. Nancy and Ms. Sarah refer to the role (overt or covert) that family plays in guiding a young person's thoughts about potential and appropriate educational and professional possibilities. Their thoughts were echoed in some of the comments made by the students like Danielle and Tracey. The importance of family perceptions was also evident in the narratives of the two young women who decided to pursue non-traditional trades (Emma, Fiona). In light of the student narratives, one wonders what could foster changes to these students' perceptions. As Ms. Sarah, the teacher and taster day lead said during her interview, "to generate more interest, I think they would have needed to do more than just one day. The more experiences you give them the better". However, Garden Road Community and Technology School's ability to offer more (and varied) taster day sessions throughout the school year and across grade levels is likely to remain difficult. To date the school has had to rely upon external resources and providers, specifically government funding of vocational education related initiatives at post secondary and vocational education and training institutions. The school's reliance on offsite providers leaves this kind of gender specific initiative vulnerable to the vicissitudes of organizational strategy and financing.

## **Summary**

This chapter represented the second part of the data analysis and uses the students' narratives to illustrate Ted Aoki's idea of curriculum-as-lived. This conceptualization of curriculum-as-lived foregrounds the individual and their experiences and understanding of the curriculum. The chapter was divided to reflect the groups of students interviewed during the course of the study and as such was separated on the basis of the individual's status as current or former student of Garden Road Community and Technology School. Each section of student narrative highlighted the main themes that emerged during analysis of the interview content.

The former students' narratives suggest that a significant level of importance is attributed to parental knowledge, influence and support as they consider their future education and occupation choices. Their experience of the gender specific taster day also suggests that this kind of gender-specific initiative is of interest to young girls, however, the discourse of those involved in presenting the information has the potential to taint the experience and overshadow the original aims of the sessions. The group of current students' narratives suggests that offering the sessions does not necessarily lead to increased interest and uptake of VET programs, they are perceived as interesting and worthwhile. Students held positive views of the sessions because they felt they offered opportunities to gain knowledge about areas and attempt activities they might be reluctant to do in the presence of male peers. Finally, the narratives of the two female students who chose to pursue VET professions suggests that consistent familial, peer, program and employer support are important elements that: inform and foster positive student experiences; and engender a sense of belonging in traditionally male-dominated learning

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

and work environment. In addition, the narratives of Emma and Fiona in particular suggest that harassment, hostility and exclusion in VET settings remains cause for concern among young women who pursue non-traditional occupations. While efforts to encourage young women into these professions are to be applauded it is equally important to encourage and foster learning and work environments that are inclusive. The change in learning and workplace culture may require a combination of awareness education and zero-tolerance legislation. The learning and workplace environment may not change unless it is forced to do so.

## CHAPTER 7

### (IN)FORMING AND PERFORMING GENDER (AND NOT): A CONCLUSION

Eve: Yeah, I think you should have done it before options

Karen: Yeah, we should have done it in year 8 and then get a clearer idea about what it is to do and then our options are clear in our heads instead of rushing into it all.

Olivia: Yeah, because we're getting our options sheets this week so we just went last week so it's like all right then. Most people have already decided what they wanted to do... (Engineering Focus Group)

#### Summary of the study

This exploratory case study has been about vocational education and training at the secondary school level and the experiences of a group of young girls who participated in a gender specific VET initiative at a secondary school in the North of England. The initiative involved offering day-long information sessions in a range of vocational fields that have traditionally been male-dominated. The sessions, commonly referred to by students and non-students alike, as 'taster days' were intended to provide young girls (12-14 years old) with information and exposure to non-traditional skilled trades education and professions such as plumbing, welding, construction, and engineering. The initiative was about building awareness and possibly generating interest among the girls about non-traditional skilled trade education and professions.

The sessions discussed in this study include construction, engineering and aerospace technology. The construction and engineering sessions were held on the same day at a vocational education and training facility in the region (VETRain), while the aerospace taster day was held at a local college (Cranfield College). Each session consisted of instructional as well as practical components that required the students to work individually, in pairs or in small groups. The sessions were led by

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

instructors/representatives of the college or training facility and included a lecture component as well as hands-on activities such as pipe assembly in the Construction session and building a clock in the Engineering session.

As stated previously, the purpose of this study has been to examine the girls' gendered experience of the sessions, their understanding of non-traditional VET as an educational and occupational choice and the subsequent impact of the sessions on their future educational and occupational choices. This study has also been about examining the place of gender within England's VET policy. As such, the study includes a review of a selection of VET policy-related documents. The review was conducted in order to examine the extent to which gender has been discussed and shaped secondary school VET policy in England. The study assumes the importance of macro level (i.e. VET policy and practice) and micro level factors (i.e. individual experience of the curricular initiative, gendered (female) experience, context of the initiative) and the interrelation between the two factors. Also of particular interest is how macro and micro level factors impact student educational experience and their subsequent education and occupational choice.

From a methodological standpoint, individual and group interviews were held with a mix of students, instructors, and administrators. The study participants consisted of individual or group interviews with 15 young girls (12-13 years old) at Garden Road Community and Technology School who had recently participated in a gender specific taster day session. As mentioned earlier, the students took part in either the one day construction or engineering taster day that was held at VETrain. Interviews were also conducted with two recent graduates from the Garden Road Community and Technology

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

School who took part in one of the earliest taster day session on aerospace technology that was held at Cranfield College. Additional interviews were held with two former students who elected to pursue non-traditional skilled trade training and professions, as well as two instructors and one administrator from the school and one VETrain administrator. Interviews with the instructors and administrators were conducted in order to provide additional context to the student narratives when needed.

Garden Road Community and Technology School was selected as the site for this study as a result of a fortuitous meeting and discussion with one of its senior administrators (Bob). This individual was also extremely helpful in distributing the initial letter calling for study participants to current and former Garden Road Community and Technology students as well as instructors and administrators who participated in gender specific VET taster day sessions. With the exception of the interview with Ms. Nancy at VETrain, individual and/or group interviews were scheduled and held in person at the school over the course of two weeks. Subsequent follow up interviews were held several months later at the school with some participants in order to follow up on comments made during the earlier interview(s).

Data analysis for this case study consisted of two parts: first was a review of a selection of VET policy-related documents that were either created by or on behalf of the British government; and the second part focused on the analysis of the study participant interviews. The document review examined the extent to which gender has been discussed and/or considered an issue of concern during the period of 2002 – 2011. The participant interviews, particularly those of the students were examined and presented in a way that highlights the main themes discussed individually and/or in a group format.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Themes resulting from both the policy-related document review and student narratives were then discussed in relation to the research questions that form the basis of the study. The themes arising from analysis of participant narratives were also discussed in relation to the key concepts that were identified in the Conceptual Framework (Chapter 3).

This section of the story revisits some of the main themes that emerged during the analysis phase of the research and considers the students' narratives within the context of feminist informed theoretical discourse on gender. As presented in the literature and conceptual framework chapters (Chapter 2 and 3), this particular discourse on gender presupposes that the gender binary (male – female) is sociohistorical in its origins. This binary functions as the primary means of categorization and ascribes certain behaviours, interests and actions to each category. It is a binary in which male is normative while the female status is secondary. The secondary position of the female perspective has ramifications for what issues and concerns (social, political, historical) garner attention and action. That said, this discussion also assumes that macro and micro level sociohistorical factors play a role in shaping gender(ed) experience. In this case macro and micro level issues refer to government policy on vocational education and training, with particular emphasis on initiatives aimed at generating interest in non-traditional VET among young girls, the social construction of gender, familial and non-familial influence and the context within which the initiative takes place.

In order to facilitate this discussion phase of the research story, I begin with a brief overview of the overarching themes identified during my analysis of the student narratives. Points raised in the overview will then be used to delve further into a discussion that examines how gender in the context of this vocational education and

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

training initiative may have been informed by government and school policy and practice. This contextual exploration of gender and policy is then followed by a discussion of the relational nature of gender to notions of biopower and the gender(ed) body and how gender was performed (or not) by the student's in this study. The story concludes with a reflective piece regarding implications for vocational education and training policy and practice and research aimed at addressing gender segregation in secondary school vocational education and training.

### **Data analysis overview: Main points/themes**

#### *Session content and process*

Student narratives regarding the structure and content of the sessions were commonplace. In all, students (especially Iris and Eve) spoke of their interest in and need to have more of these kinds of taster day sessions throughout the school year and possibly earlier in their secondary school lives. They were perceived as important opportunities to assist them as they consider and eventually decide upon their Year 10 and 11 options classes. Specifically, a number of students spoke about their desire to gain more 'practical' knowledge whereby practical refers to the opportunity to work with one's hands and create products that are tangible and can be exhibited to others. For example, students (especially Eve and Karen) who participated in the engineering sessions expressed a sense of pleasure and pride at being able to create the clocks and take them home at the end of the day. Meanwhile, a number of the construction taster day participants (especially Fran, Rachel and Helen) said they appreciated the hands on tasks such as building a bridge during the classroom sessions or shaping the pipe as part

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

of the afternoon activity. In fact, several of the students (e.g., Iris and Lesley) expressed disappointment at not being able to take their pipe home with them.

So, while the classroom lecture format was important for imparting information about vocational education and careers, students also wanted more time and opportunities to carry-out tasks that would be found in the occupation in question. For example, students like Katie, Rachel and Iris who that took part in the Construction taster day enjoyed the challenge of working in groups to assemble the bridge but they also indicated that they would have liked to have the chance to complete other activities as well.

Another point raised by some students dealt with gender-specific nature of the sessions. A number of students (e.g., Lesley, Eve and Olivia) discussed how the presence of boys in the learning sessions might have resulted in distraction, uneasiness, and sublimation of ability and initiative among the girls. There was concern, especially by Lesley, Fran, Rachel and Olivia, that the boys might 'take over the whole thing' and the girls would have been reticent to demonstrate their abilities or express their interests.

From an administrative standpoint, many of the students (current and former: e.g., Katie, Michelle, Iris, Lesley and Rachel) stated that they received limited information about the session format. They were told about the opportunity to participate in the sessions during their morning assembly and received information about name, time, date and the need to dress comfortably. Apart from the need to obtain parental or guardian permission, information regarding content was not provided in advance of the sessions. Interestingly, this lack of information was not perceived as a negative. In fact, a few students (Katie and Iris for example) talked about a level of excitement that comes from not knowing in advance.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

In terms of instructors, the presence of women as instructors or assistants in the sessions was considered positive. However, it was not an issue that was discussed extensively. In fact, students were more likely to highlight the difference that it made not to have boys take part in the sessions. As mentioned earlier, boys were at times talked about as potential distractions, who might try to take over the activities and assume that they know how to complete the tasks better and faster. There was a palpable sense that the young girls were more at ease and willing to try things because they did not have to contend with the boys' gaze.

Following each session, students were not required to provide or participate in any formal evaluations. Discussions with their school instructor who led the outing or other school personnel were done on an informal basis. However, in one case, a student (Iris) did seek to obtain additional information about the training facility she visited and has since spoken with Ms. Nancy at VETrain about the steps needed to apply to one of their programs. In terms of post-session reviews or assessments, it is worthwhile noting that the sessions occurred at a time when students were likely to have already given much thought to their Options courses selection. The Options courses selection helps to determine Year 10 and 11 subject selection and to a great extent the courses also help to establish a student's post-secondary educational and occupational route.

### *Gender(ed) talk and non-traditional vocational education and occupations*

The discourse of *boys' jobs* and *girls' jobs* was mentioned during all student interviews and in each case they spoke of the distinctions in a matter of fact way. Whether they were academically inclined or were interested in, registered in, or working

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

in non-traditional vocational spheres, the students talked about certain professions as female (e.g., child care, nursing, or hairdressing) or male (e.g., construction, engineering). Discussions regarding the distinctions often revolved around why the students were reluctant to venture into male domains (especially in Lesley, Iris, Rachel, Eve, Olivia and Karen discourses). Concerns were voiced about the potential for harassment and the possibility of being singled out because of one's gender. Fiona's case provides examples of the very real nature of these concerns, the emotional toll that harassment can take and the power these experiences can have in regards to a young woman's education and occupational choice. A number of participants (e.g., Katie, Lesley and Helen) also held assumptions about what non-traditional vocational education work might entail. Discourse surrounding male jobs and female jobs also highlighted assumptions about required physical strength and ability to endure uncomfortable work environments (e.g. physical space, weather) (see Katie, Lesley and Rachel discourses).

While student talk may have been based on stereotypes it would be incorrect to assume that the students did not attempt to question these stereotypes. In fact, several of the students (e.g., Michelle, Fran and Iris) did in their own ways talk about a person's right to pursue their interest even if it doesn't conform to the norm. However, while some of them may have talked about having the right to 'do what you enjoy,' they did so in a somewhat detached manner. The 'rights' that they spoke of were often ascribed to others, it was not personal in the sense that they talked about *their* right to venture into a 'male' domain. These rights become general and abstract and not personal and therefore from a feminist perspective the students' discourse is noteworthy and troubling. The lack of explicit ownership of one's right is noteworthy because it signals a potential

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

disconnect between understanding what education and occupation opportunities are possible and developing a willingness to take advantage of and pursue those opportunities. A disconnect between what is possible and deciding to pursue those possibilities has immediate and long-term ramifications in that students may limit themselves to more traditional educational choices that do not offer the chance for advancement and personal or financial satisfaction.

On the whole, analysis of the student narratives contains both practical and personal aspects that suggest several things about how they understand gender, and non-traditional vocational education and training. I will begin with the girls' summative narrative on gender-specific VET initiative, and use bullet format:

- First, an interest in and willingness to participate in more (and varied) non-traditional VET gender-specific initiatives does exist among the young girls. For example, students stated that they would like to have had more sessions offered over the school year (Iris, Rachel, Katie, Eve and Karen), or they would have liked taster sessions to begin in an earlier grade (Karen, Eve).
- Second, traditional (stereotypical) constructions of gender and gendered behaviour are commonly employed to categorize job-related discourse. Students' use of the terms boys' jobs and girls' jobs indicates that gender is used to identify which education and occupation routes might be appropriate for them which in turn imply a belief that certain jobs may be better suited to a particular gender. For example, Iris talked about a girls right to do what she pleases even if it is a boy's job and Fiona the

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

- construction apprentice talked about how her male classmates were unable to handle “being beaten by a girl in a man’s trade”.
- Third, student knowledge of, understanding and exposure to information regarding non-traditional skilled trade education and professions is at best basic and limited.
  - Finally, knowledge of non-traditional VET is generally dependent upon their exposure to non-traditional areas by immediate or extended family.

The points above are the result of sorting through the student narratives and while they are interesting in and of themselves they also lead one to ponder how and why their views have come to be. The next section of this chapter is intended to interpret the student narratives. This interpretation is based on a feminist informed perspective on gender and the gender(ed) female body that takes into account the practical and personal aspects of the students’ narratives, as well as the relational nature of the two aspects. The practical pertains to the session content and process and the personal highlights the way in which gender is informed and performed (and not).

### **A feminist informed gaze: Gender, biopower and gendered bodily performance**

All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players...  
(Shakespeare, W., Retrieved Jan. 2013 from  
<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/asyoulikeit/>)

The preceding citation from the William Shakespeare play *As you like it* (Act II, Scene 7) seems to capture much of what has taken place with/in this research, especially

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

much of what the girls went through. Their narratives showed that they seemed to be dragged onto a stage to play a part in a play for which they did not have a script. Here, as this research story draws to a conclusion, I find Shakespeare's reference to men and women as players on "the world stage" to be compelling because it conjures an image of life as an ongoing and ever changing performance. If we step outside the confines of the theatrical stage to a stage that encompasses lived experience in a range of settings then we can assume that the players have different parts to play that might include for example, child, male or female, grandchild, student and teenager or a combination thereof at any given time. Furthermore, how we perform (or not) these roles is determined in large part by our interactions with others (family and non-family members) as well as broader social institutions.

Possibly the earliest role to be assigned to any individual is that of gender (male – female). This role of gender is assigned at birth and it is generally based on the outward appearance of biological sex. Once gender or biological sex (male – female) was assigned – the performance of gender began. However, the categorization of gender based upon the male – female binary is not unproblematic. The individual performance may be normative, subversive or varying degrees of both.

As noted by several feminist theorists, each category in the binary is based on socio-cultural (and contextual) ideas about what it means to be male and female (Butler, 2006, 1993; Paechter, 2003a/b). Gender in this sense, is a social construct that is often an inadequate means from which to understand lived experience. Hence, some authors have chosen to query this notion of gender as a simplistic and static binary. Instead they have opted to think and talk about gender as performative in nature (Butler, 2006; Moffatt &

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Norton, 2008; Pillow, 2002). If gender is performative then it offers a means to acknowledge and talk about the myriad and at times contradictory ways in which gender can be performed (Moffatt & Norton, 2008; Pillow, 2002). This notion of gender as performance also makes room for one to consider the ways in which institutional structures like schools and the policies generated within those structures can influence that performance. Incorporation of the place and role of institutional structures like schools and their policies as part of gender performance reflects Foucault's (1979) perspective on 'biopower' or how social/state institutions and their ensuing policies help to categorize, define, mark and train the body. School is one of those institutions, therefore it as whole and the programs and initiatives generated and offered therein are implicated in the performance of the gender(ed) body.

When Michel Foucault (1990) wrote about 'biopower', he discussed several things that are relevant to this research story. First he talked about the role of the state in establishing instruments through which it may act out its power and he specifically refers to schools as one of those state instruments. Second, he talks about the role and place that 'bodies' assume within the production machine (Foucault, 1990). Once again if we think about school as a kind of production machine then it is not too difficult to think about the individuals and stakeholders that can be identified within that machine (administrators, teachers, students). Third, he talked about the illusive nature of the power relations that exist within these instruments of control, training, and normalization. The power relations are considered to be illusive because while the school as an institution attempts to control and normalize student behaviour, the individual is not without power. While the body may be subjected to the control and normalizing effects

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

of the instrument, that same body has power to conform, resist or subvert attempts at its subjugation.

In this research story, the power relations refer to how broader education policies regarding vocational education inform the work that can and does take place within the school. In turn the work that takes place within the school either partially informs (or not) student exposure to, understanding of and interest in various forms of vocational education as viable and worthwhile professional options. However, this power relation does not flow in one direction, nor does it occur in a vacuum, while the student is subject to state instrument control, they also have the power to determine whether vocational education is an option that they wish to pursue. Their decision to select vocational education as an option is also dependent upon a number of other factors. Those additional factors can include familial and non-familial interactions.

The diagram first presented as part of the Conceptual Framework (Chapter 3) illustrates a similar understanding of power relations and the institutions and individuals implicated in it. In that diagram I presented a visual representation of what I consider the interconnectedness of government policy, family and non-family members and context. I returned to this notion of interconnectedness as part of the data analysis process through my introduction and invocation of Ted Aoki's (2003, 2000, 1993, 1983) writings about curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived and the interplay between the two (Chapters 5 and 6). In that section the young girls and their narratives represent what curriculum as lived can look like. The school is the instrument and the students are bodies that perform within the instrument. However, those same bodies are shown to hold power whereby their performance conforms, resists or simultaneously does both to varying degrees. The

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

next section examines in greater detail how student understanding, experience and performance of gender may have been informed by broader vocational education policy and the delivery and administration of the taster day sessions. I follow the discussion how gender may have been informed with a section that pays particular attention to the students' discourse and the ways in which gender was performed by the taster day participants.

### *(In)forming the performance of gender*

This section examines how the performance of gender among the research participants may have been informed by the 'instrument' and the varied ways in which gender was performed among the young girls. As already explained, Garden Road Community and Technology School administration may have been interested in providing female students with opportunities to learn about non-traditional vocational education and training but their attempts at doing so have been inconsistent. Taster day sessions are offered but they are done on a limited and infrequent basis. Moreover, according to some students (for example Iris, Karen, and Rachel) the sessions tend to be offered too close to the time when they must choose their Option courses. Here, the inconsistent provision of taster day session opportunities is not solely the fault of school administration. In fact, the school is dependent upon these sessions being offered at venues better equipped to provide vocational education and training (i.e. post-secondary institutions and training facilities). Dependency upon external offsite providers means that the school must work within a structure that is primarily outside their control.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

In turn these outside providers, in particular the local colleges and universities also rely on external funding sources, primarily government entities responsible for education (e.g. Department for Education and Skills). At times government funding comes with specific directives as to how funds are to be used but funding can also be made available to educational institutions as part of broader policy strategy. Take for example the case of the Pathfinder Projects that was discussed in Chapter 5 (Data Analysis, Take I). The Pathfinder Project was a government scheme that was established to address inequality and stereotypes that affect student choices in the areas of gender, ethnicity, disability and the gifted and talented in vocational education. While the DfES may have expected the project providers to create initiatives that addressed gender inequality and stereotypes in vocational education, what resulted was the inconsistent provision of such programs among participating institutions.

The criteria set for institutions to receive funding did not state explicitly and decidedly that all funding recipients must create initiatives that address gender and as a result many opted not to do so. The fact that few participating institutions chose to create gender-based initiatives indicates that they did not see it as a major issue worthy of their attention. The lack of attention by funding recipients can be taken as a sign that when faced with a choice gender is of low (or no) priority. Moreover, the decision by DfES to include gender segregation and stereotype as one of many issues to choose from further highlights the degree to which gender inequality within vocational education is considered a low level priority. This coupled with the fact that subsequent policy-related documents have paid scant attention to issues of gender segregation in vocational education as a whole and non-traditional vocational education in particular demonstrates

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

an unwillingness to identify and acknowledge gender segregation in this sphere as a problem to be dealt with. So, while government documents may at various times have called for ensuring that all students, irrespective of gender, have access to vocational education information, the reality is that not much has been put in place to ensure that this occurs.

The experience that Garden Road Community and Technology school has encountered over the last few years as it has tried to expose young girls to non-traditional trades illustrates the extent to which the topic of gender segregation in vocational education has received varying degrees of policy or financial support from senior government bodies responsible for secondary school curriculum. Garden Road Community and Technology school has at different times attempted to introduce opportunities into the standard curriculum such as the taster day session to give female students the chance to learn about non-traditional vocational options. Based on discussions with school personnel (Bob and Ms. Barb), it would be incorrect to state that the school has a set policy regarding the provision of these taster day initiatives. Instead the school has made the gender specific opportunities available to their students on an infrequent basis. From school administration perspective, interesting to note, the issue of gender segregation in non-traditional VET is one of many issues that they would like to address on an ongoing basis. However, the reality is that while the school administration may be aware of the gender-based selection of education and occupation choices among the students the system and required curriculum limits their ability to do anything on a continuous basis. Hence their approach thus far has been to partner with external providers such as local colleges, universities or vocational training providers when the

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

opportunity arises. Unfortunately, Garden Road Community and Technology School's reliance on offsite providers has certain drawbacks, the most apparent being that if funding for an offsite provider shrinks or vanishes then they are likely to cut back or completely eliminate the provision of taster day session. Such was the case with the early incarnation of the taster day sessions that was offered through one of the local colleges. Once the government decided to eliminate funding for gender specific (i.e. female only) taster day sessions, the college ceased to offer those sessions. Instead, the college opted to offer information sessions on vocational education that were geared to the general public – gender and gender segregation were no longer points of concern. The school's latest attempt at offering taster days sessions were done through another offsite provider, this time it is a local vocational education and training facility. This recent version of the taster day sessions requires that a nominal fee be paid that covers the basic costs incurred by the facility.

The lack of attention (in the way of policy and resources) on gender-based segregation in non-traditional vocational education potentially reflects how gender as a whole is viewed within England's educational structure. While gender as an issue may garner some attention if it relates to the standard academic curriculum, it is less common to find information that demonstrates an interest in gender-related issues in vocational education and rarer still to find material about gender in non-traditional vocational education and training. Much has been written and done by government education bodies about boys (and to a lesser extent girls) achievement in English, Maths, and Science but the same cannot be said for female participation, achievement and success in non-traditional vocational education and training. In the document that discuss some of the

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

myths about gender and education (DfES, 2009) the starting point for the discussion appeared to be boys' experience, while girls' engagement and participation were not dealt with similarly. In so doing, one could assume that little attention and resources need to be directed towards enhancing young girls' experience across curricula offerings.

On the whole, policy related to broader issues of student assessment and performance continues to garner the spotlight. For example, The Wolf Report (Wolf, 2010) on education that is intended to guide VET strategy that is to be employed for the foreseeable future mentions gender as a concern in passing and makes no mention of gender-related issues and concerns. What then might this lack of policy regarding gender segregation in vocational education and training mean for female students? Well, it means that they must rely primarily upon other sources for information and exposure to non-traditional VET. The student narratives illustrate that what they learn about non-traditional vocational education and occupations and who does and can work in these areas depends greatly upon information obtained from family members and possibly peers.

The student narratives suggest that familial and non-familial interactions have played an important role in how they perceive non-traditional VET and the place that gender holds within that sphere. Many of the students talked about the important roles that their immediate and extended family has played in determining their future education and vocational options. Whether it is the student who states point blank that her education interests have been guided by her parents (Tracey) or it is the two young women (Fiona and Emma) who chose to pursue non-traditional vocational education and professions both groups showed that their choices are often informed by overt or covert familial (or

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

peer) influences. Students who rely primarily upon family members (or peers) for information about vocational education and professions create a cycle that is difficult to break. As Ms. Nancy of VETrain mentioned during our discussion, they live in a very parochial part of the country and beliefs about what constitutes appropriate education and occupations for girls are often deep rooted and difficult to change. In such a context, it seems futile to assume that people's views on the skilled trades and who is best suited to pursue education and occupations in those areas will change of their own accord. As a result, if young girls like the ones spoken with are to learn about and possibly consider non-traditional vocational options they need broader societal structures like schools to inform them of the range of options available in the area.

### *Performing gender (and not)*

Returning to this notion of the world as a stage and people as players, we can say that the study participants all had roles to play on this school stage. The young girls were female, students, children, peers and future members of the workforce and each of these roles required them to act in particular ways. As students they are expected to attend school, complete their schoolwork, pass exams and prepare for the next level of schooling. As children, they may be expected to perform as polite, dutiful, obedient individuals who may heed the advice and counsel of their guardians and elders. As peers, they may be expected to be cool, or academically engaged, or tough, or 'feminine.' They may be expected to act in the manner deemed appropriate by their peer group. As a future worker, they are expected to learn skills that are readily transferable to the workplace and to conform to the needs of the workplace. The students' daily interactions

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

are likely to have required that they assume more than one of these roles at any given time.

On the whole, there were examples of these roles being played by the young girls in this study. There were the two former students (Danielle and Tracey) who were part of the aerospace taster day sessions that talked about the expectations placed on them and their peers who are academically inclined. Neither the school, nor their immediate family emphasized vocational education (and certainly not non-traditional skilled trades) as education and occupation options that they may wish to consider. While they may have found the sessions informative and a welcome challenge, a single exposure to a non-traditional profession did not impact their education choices. They acknowledged the power of their parents' opinions and opted to perform the role of the good university bound student. In their performance they outwardly conform to the wishes of their parents but expressed their awareness about the skewed information and cues that they received from school and their immediate family. Interestingly, one could also say that the two former students (Fiona and Emma) who did decide to pursue non-traditional vocational education and training also conformed to parental expectations. In the case of the latter pair, both had immediate family members who worked in skilled trades and as a result they were exposed to and learned about these professions from a very early age. By the time they were in Year 9 they had already decided upon non-traditional skilled trade education and occupations. However, while they may have conformed in a sense to their family's expectations, they simultaneously perform a role of resistance about what it means to be a girl in their community.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

The very presence of their female bodies in their respective education and training environments were indicative of their resistance against societal norms. However, their divergent experiences in those settings show how the individual's act of resistance may be overlooked or be met with obstacles at just about every turn. I think it is also noteworthy that in the case of these two young women, the person who encountered the most obstacles is the one who from a physical appearance and sexuality standpoint was the most different (Fiona). With her shorn head of hair, numerous facial piercings and lack of make-up, along with her pronouncements to her tormentors to 'back-off about her sexuality', Fiona presented an image and performed her gender(ed) role as young female student in a way that contravened the norm. It could be said that her physical appearance and her sexual orientation made her stand out and apart from the norm in one too many ways. Simone de Beauvoir (1989) summarized Fiona's plight succinctly in *The Second Sex* thus:

Woman must constantly win the confidence that is not at first accorded her: at the start she is suspect, she has to prove herself. If she has worth she will pass the tests, so they say. But worth is not given in essence, it is the outcome of a successful development. To feel the weight of an unfavourable prejudice against one is only on very rare occasions a help in overcoming it. (p. 701)

When I reflect upon the group of current student narratives, there were two things that stood out in terms of their performance as female students. First, for most of the girls their attendance at their respective sessions represented their first exposure to these kinds of education and training options. It was the first time that they learned about some of the areas that constitute vocational education and training, specifically, construction, engineering and aerospace technology. A number of these students are considered to be 'average' academic performers and as such they are not expected to, or even interested in

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

pursuing and obtaining university degrees. So while some of them may be interested in becoming police officers, accountants and teachers, the reality is that their options are more likely to be limited to lower paid positions in retail, health services and care or traditionally female vocational training like hairdressing. The education and occupation choices that many of the current young students identified indicate a desire to perform in ways that conform to societal perceptions about what it means to be a student, a productive and contributing member of the workforce and a young woman. Apart from their discourse that women should be able to enter non-traditional education and training or any other area of study and work what they want to, there were few signs of resistance or subversion against the norm. The one student that did decide to consider non-traditional skilled trade as an education and occupation option was also the one person (Iris) among the group of current students who spoke most vocally about ‘not caring what other people say’ and her expressed desire to ‘do something that is different from everyone else.’

The second and I think more important thing that stood out in the student narratives, was the realization that all of the students of Garden Road Community and Technology school interviewed for this study talked about ‘boys jobs’ and ‘girls jobs.’ Their repeated and unprompted use of the terms caused me to pause. The pause occurred because they employ the traditional male-female binary in which to differentiate education and employment options. From a feminist perspective these two descriptors are meaningful because they indicate that the binary is used to define, on the one hand, the individual but also, on the other, the occupational opportunities to which particular bodies may express interest and decide to pursue. The female body is thought to be ill-

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

suited to the demands of non-traditional vocational education and training like construction, and automotive. Interestingly the belief that some jobs are inappropriate for the female body persists despite technological advances in the workplace that lessen the physical demands of some of these workplaces. The presence of manual or automated machinery in skilled trade professions means that men and women of varied shapes and sizes are able to accomplish what may previously have been physically taxing work-related tasks.

The descriptors 'boys jobs' and 'girls jobs' also raise broader questions about the place that gender equality and by extension feminism as a concept and a way of engaging with their immediate and larger community plays in their lives. Furthermore, these two descriptors elicit a reaction because of the time and place in which they are voiced. The terms have been used by a group of young girls who live in what is generally referred to as the information age. They also reside in a first world nation that has legislation aimed at ensuring gender equality in education and employment. So, why then do they resort to using this particular categorization which essentially set limits on education and employment options and opportunities?

I would argue, following Pillow (2003), that they do so because that is how they have learned to think and talk about education and occupations. They do not appear to have any other lexicon from which to choose. Despite the introduction of legislation that guarantees their rights, theirs is a lexicon that remains defined by long standing custom. Why is that custom; and why do they continue to use terms based on 'outdated' (Lather, 1991) notions of what constitutes women's work? Moreover, how might we move beyond this lexicon and begin to think of new, possibly gender neutral and transformative

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

ways of talking about education and occupation choice? Is it sufficient to introduce new ways of talking about occupational choice and gender at the secondary school level or should this undertaking begin during the elementary years.

My interest in and concern about gendered lexicon is academic as well as practical. For example, Emma and Fiona's experiences in VET learning and work environments help to illustrate some of the ways in which the gendered lexicon of jobs has implications for occupational choice. While, Emma has had a fairly positive VET experience thus far, she is cognizant of the potential for discord, and unease that stems from her position as 'a girl in a boys' job'. Alternatively, Fiona's experience represents the other end of the spectrum because for her the practice and belief in gendering education and jobs imposed limits and denied her education and occupational choice.

I began with a series of questions that help to structure this particular study and I find that I am ending with new questions and therein rest the possibility for further research. I think these new questions that pertain to how these girls (and others) talk about education and occupations is worthy of further examination because as this study has shown, talk about boys and girls jobs sets limits about what they (and girls in general) can and should be able to do. It limits their performance possibilities as students, young women and future workers. Such talk also works to re-inscribe the sociohistorically constructed gender binary as the norm against which individuals and their decisions and actions must be compared.

Another possibility for research would require a different reading of the student narratives and the policy-related documents that considers the impact of de-industrialization and the rise of the service-based economy in England. This alternative

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

reading could for example explore student understanding and experience of harassment in male-dominated VET workplaces shape educational and occupational choice. This study could be based on two assumptions. First, that students elect not to pursue ‘boys jobs’ because of their awareness of the forms of verbal (and possible physical) harassment they may have to endure on a regular basis. Second, that their decisions may derive from a sense that to enter a male-dominated sphere would take away the ‘boys jobs’. This perspective would consider more closely how the girls’ understand and perceive the impact of educational and occupational choice on family dynamics and gender relations in the short and longer-term.

### **This is not a conclusion: Final Reflections**

This has been a case study bounded by the issue (non-traditional vocational education and training), the population (young girls 12-13 years old) and the context (a gender specific initiative at one secondary school in England). As a single in-depth and exploratory case study, it is ill-advised to make sweeping generalizations about students of a similar age, or in a similar context because to do so would be beyond the scope of this study. Nonetheless, it is possible to reflect upon the policy and research related implications of this exploratory case study. I do so in order to identify possible directions for future policy and research related work on the issues of gendered (female) experience, non-traditional vocational education and training initiatives and education and occupation selection among young girls. I will begin with the *implications on Policy, practice and research*

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

From the outset I have indicated that this case study was to be exploratory. It has been exploratory because it focused on an aspect of the education system (i.e. non-traditional vocational education and training) that has not received a great deal of attention. To do so I structured a study that explored issues of gender, the gender(ed) body and how it is discussed, understood and experienced within a particular context that relates to the provision and take-up of non-traditional vocational education and training. It is a study that has sought to position student experience and understanding at its centre, while also taking into account other issues that can have an impact on student experience and understanding. Through this case study I attempted to conduct research that is somewhat different but also relevant to those interested in the work that schools do and the kinds of experiences that students are exposed to and lived in schools. The case study was borne out of personal interest and curiosity about the issues but it is also intended to offer insight into issues that deal with the policy and practice of vocational education as a whole and non-traditional vocational education and training in particular. So, it is only logical that I herein offer some thoughts on my research implications for policy and practice and provide examples about how this research might be disseminated to a wider audience.

Based on my review of government related documents and my interviews, I find that I must repeat what others have said about the state of vocational education and training in England. Vocational education and training, particularly in the skilled trade area have gone through a number of reforms over the years. Furthermore, while broad statements about its value and

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

importance as part of the education and work landscape persist accompanying government interest and financial backing has been less than consistent. This lack of consistent policy, practice and resources has meant that schools like Garden Road Community and Technology School must work with limited resources and establish and maintain a range of community based resources. So when schools like Garden Road wish to offer gender-specific taster days they are then faced with the challenge to identify interested and willing local partners.

Meanwhile the students' narratives regarding their lack of exposure to information about non-traditional skilled trades, coupled with the positive narratives about being able to participate in their respective sessions indicates that there is both a need and an interest in having these gender specific taster day sessions. However, student comments about the timing of the sessions is indicative of a need and interest in having the sessions offered earlier in the academic year and possibly in earlier years (e.g. Year 7 and 8). While there may be a course geared to providing information, advice and guidance, it appears that scant attention is given to vocational education. This finding should elicit concern from educators and policy makers because a course on careers that does not cover the spectrum is a course that fails to consider a portion of the student population's interests and aptitudes. As such, the following might serve as the overall recommendations of my research. I would also like to take this opportunity to note that while this has been an exploratory case study about a

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

VET initiative at a secondary school located in the North of England my recommendations might be of interest to us in Canada as well<sup>22</sup>.

- Provide students with information about vocational education and training and related issues earlier in their school life (e.g. Year 7/8 and even earlier). The information provided could cover areas of study, occupations, remuneration, gender stereotypes and occupational segregation, salary comparison by occupation and gender.
- Include vocational/skilled trade professionals in careers information sessions held at the school.
- Invite former students like Fiona and Emma to provide information and first hand accounts of the work they do and the work environment. These young women can also serve as peer mentors or support to female students who wish to consider non-traditional vocational education and professions.

Furthermore, student (and non-student) narratives that referred to boys jobs and girls jobs demonstrates a need for more information about gender stereotypes that relate to education and professional options. Possibilities do exist within the existing curriculum structure to allow for the dissemination of information about gender stereotypes, the realities and opportunities of the skilled trades. Careers information courses are an ideal setting in which to

---

<sup>22</sup> The state of vocational education in Canada is in many ways similar to that found in England. For example, in Canada there have also been calls for VET reforms and greater attention to attracting females to the trades as a result of current and anticipated labour shortages. As Alison Taylor and Bonnie Watt-Malcolm (2010, p.2) wrote in their report Opportunities and constraints related to vocational education partnerships in Canada, “since the 1990s, provincial governments across Canada have become interested in developing and promoting high school apprenticeship programs as a way of facilitating students’ transitions to skilled work and addressing employers’ concerns about labour shortages.” Retrieved January 2013 from <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/ccl/Research/FundedResearch/201010Taylor.html>.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

introduce student to information about skilled trade education and occupations as well as gender based stereotypes and the realities of working within those fields. Particular attention can be paid to the misconceptions regarding gender, ability and knowledge required in that educational and occupational sphere. Since, there are no formal policies in place to offer gender-specific taster days on an ongoing basis, some thought could be given to assume a more proactive stance that involve establishing such a policy for Year 9 and earlier.

The findings and recommendations of the study are well-suited for modification and presentation to a range of audiences. For example, part of the knowledge mobilization strategy includes providing the findings and recommendations in an abbreviated (e.g. shorter case study articles) version to the senior administrators at Garden Road Community and Technology School and VETrain. In addition, other venues that are to be contacted include organizations like *Women and Manual Trades* which is a national organization in England to provide training and campaigns on behalf of women in a host of skilled trade profession. In Canada, a similar organization to contact is *Skills Canada – Ontario* which is a resource aimed at generating interest in vocational education and skilled trades. Additional modes of dissemination include papers and presentations at educational association meetings and in article form for scholarly journals. Examples of these associations and journals include: the *Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE)*, *American Educational Research Association (AERA)*, the *Journal of Vocational Education Research* and *Gender and Vocational Education*.

*Implications for Research*

From a research perspective this case study addresses a gap in the literature on gender and gender specific initiatives in vocational education and training. Although some researchers have examined policy pertaining to vocational education and training or particular projects that have been instituted to address gender based segregation in vocational occupation selection, they do not explicitly identify the young female student experience as a central aspect of their work. Given that these young girls are expected to make education choices that impact their future education and occupation opportunities, future research that considers the female students' perspective on vocational education in non-traditional spheres is both needed and worthwhile. Research that examines young female students' perspectives could provide additional insights about education and occupation selection and possible ways to broaden student knowledge and experience base. In addition, Canadian curriculum theorist Ted Aoki's ideas regarding the curriculum process could serve as the backdrop against which to conceptualize studies on gender that seek to consider education and curriculum as a bi-fold process of plan and lived experience.

The students' narratives regarding job distinctions by gender also suggests the need for further study about why students make these kind of distinctions and possible ways to transform the gendered discourse of jobs and education that takes place in schools. The practice of gendered job talk among the young girls in this study raises questions about the limiting impact of such talk on their education and occupation interest and selection. In broader terms,

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

the level of gendered job talk among the students also suggest the need for further study about the knowledge, role and place of feminist informed ideals in the life of these young students.

From a Canadian perspective, concerns have also been raised about the level of female participation in non-traditional skilled trades and the lack of equity driven measures aimed at increasing said participation. For example, recent research on the state of vocational education in Canada found that women were one of the groups commonly underrepresented in VET programs across Canada (Taylor & Watt-Malcolm, 2010). As the authors noted, the under representation of females in skilled trades and the lack of policies or programs aimed at redressing representation rates are surprising given government and labour market concerns about a shortage of skilled trade professionals. The authors' findings regarding female participation suggest that there is a need to understand why the lag in female participation continues. Moreover, it also raises questions about how young girls in Canada think and talk about non-traditional skilled trades as potential education and occupation options. In sum, the authors' findings suggest the need to identify and investigate equity-driven initiatives that might be implemented or modified in Canadian settings.

As de Beauvoir (1989, p. 679) wrote “it is through gainful employment that woman has traversed most of the distance that separated her from the male; and nothing else can guarantee her liberty in practice”. It is more than 60 years (it was first published in French in 1949) since Simone de Beauvoir wrote those words and since then there have been several ‘waves’ of feminist thought and work to achieve equality, the fact that a group of young girls continue to think in terms of boy’s and girls jobs show that the

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

work is not done. It is difficult to say that equality or equity has been achieved when the next generation of young women continues to limit what they see as appropriate and possible education and occupation choices.

## REFERENCES

- Acker, S. (1999). Caring as work of women educators. In E. Smyth, S. Acker, P. Bourne, and A. Prentice (Eds.), *Challenging professions: Historical and contemporary perspectives on women's professional work* (pp. 277-295). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Ainsworth, J.W., Roscigno, W.J., & Vincent, J. (2005). Stratification, school-work linkages and vocational education. *Social Forces* 84 (1), 259-286. Retrieved January 15, 2007 from <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=19&hid=105&sid=f995f2f2-fbeb-49c4-9db9-7e5bc886d4db%40sessionmgr104>
- Aoki, T. (2005a). Locating living pedagogy in teacher "research": five metonymic moments. In Pinar, W. and Irwin, R. (Eds.), *Curriculum in a new key: the collected works of Ted T. Aoki* (pp. 425-432), Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Aoki, T. (2005b). Language, culture and curriculum Chapter. In Pinar, W. and Irwin, R. (Eds.), *Curriculum in a new key: the collected works of Ted T. Aoki* (pp. 322-329), Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Aoki, T. (1993). Legitimizing lived curriculum: towards a curricular landscape of multiplicity. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 8(5), 255-268.
- Aoki, T.T. (1983). *Curriculum implementation as instrumental action and as situational praxis*. Monograph No.9, Curriculum Praxis. Department of secondary education, University of Alberta.
- Apple, M.W. (2004). *Ideology and curriculum, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.* New York, NY: RoutledgeFalmer.

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Ashcraft, D.M. (Ed.) (1998). *Women's work: A survey of scholarship by and about women*. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press.

Atkins, L. (2009). *Invisible students, impossible dreams: experiencing vocational education 14-19*. Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.

Baxter, P. and Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report* 13(4), December. (544-550). Retrieved October 20, 2010 from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR13-4/baxter.pdf>

Beck, V., Fuller, A. & Unwin, L. (2006). Safety in stereotypes? The impact of gender and 'race' on young people's perceptions of their post-compulsory education and labour market opportunities, *British Educational Research Journal* 32(5), 667-686.

Bogdan, R.C. & Biklen, S.K. (2003). *Qualitative research for education: an introduction to theory and methods* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Bordo, S. (1999). Feminism, Foucault and the politics of the body. In J. Price, & M. Shildrick, (Eds.), *Feminist theory and the body: a reader* (pp. 246-257). New York, NY: Routledge.

Brighouse, T. (2002). The view of a participant during the second half-a perspective on LEAs since 1952. *Oxford Review of Education* 28(2 & 3), 187-196.

Brockmann, M., Clarke, L. & Winch, C. (2010). The apprenticeship framework in England: a new beginning or a continuing sham? *Journal of Education and Work* 23(1), 111-127.

Bronte, E. (2011). *Wuthering Heights*. New York: Signet Classics.

Burgess, M. & Rodger, J. (2010). *14-19 Qualifications Strategy Research* (Research Brief No. 055). Retrieved from Department for Education (DFE) website: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RB055.pdf>

Butler, J. (2006). *Gender Trouble*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Butler, J (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of sex*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Carnoy, M. (1994). Efficiency and equity in vocational education and training policies. *International Labour Review* 133(2), 221-240.

Cho, M.K. (2000). Bodily regulation and vocational schooling, *Gender and Education* 12(2), 149-164.

Clarke, L. (2007). The emergence and reinforcement of class and gender divisions through vocational education in England. In L. Clarke, & C. Winch (Eds.). *Vocational education: international approaches, developments and systems* (pp. 62-76). London, UK: Routledge.

Clarke, L. & Winch, C. (Eds.) (2007). Introduction. In *Vocational education: international approaches, developments and systems* (pp. 1-18). London, UK: Routledge.

Colley, H. & James, D. (2002). *Becoming the 'right person for the job': vocational habitus, gender and learning cultures in Further Education*. Paper presented at Learning and Skills Research Network Annual Conference, University of Warwick, 11-13 December 2002. Retrieved October 30, 2006 from [http://www.tlrp.org/dspace/retrieve/570/LE\\_BR\\_EX\\_HC\\_DJ\\_MT\\_PUB\\_11.12.02.doc](http://www.tlrp.org/dspace/retrieve/570/LE_BR_EX_HC_DJ_MT_PUB_11.12.02.doc)

Connell, R.W. 1987. *Gender and Power*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J.W. & Miller, D.L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice* 39(3), 124-130.

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Creswell, J. & Plano-Clark, V. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Crook, D. (2002). Local authorities and comprehensivisation in England and Wales, 1944-1974. *Oxford Review of Education* 28(2 & 3), 247-260.

de Beauvoir, S. (1989). *The second sex*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Department for Education and Skills (2009). *Gender and education – mythbuster. Addressing gender and achievement: myths and realities*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/00599-2009BKT-EN.pdf>

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007). *Gender and education: the evidence on pupils in England*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/00599-2009BKT-EN.pdf>

Department for Education and Skills (2002). *Vocational and Work-related Learning at key Stage 4: Guidance for Managers in Schools and Colleges and their Partners in the Community*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/dfes-0514-2002.pdf>

Department for Education and Skills (2003a). *GCSEs in Vocational Subjects - A General Guide and Overview of the Qualifications*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DfES0809200MI G1065.pdf>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Department for Education and Skills (2003b). *GCSEs in Vocational Subjects: An Introduction for Students and their Parents/Carers to the GCSEs in vocational education*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DfES%200810%202003>

Department for Education and Skills (2002a). *New GCSEs in vocational subjects: a general guide and overview of the new qualifications*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/dfes-0490-2002S.pdf>

Department for Education and Skills (2002b). *New GCSEs in vocational subjects: An introduction to links between careers education and guidance and the teaching and learning of young people who are taking new GCSEs in vocational subjects*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DfES%200779%202002>

Eardley, E. & Manvell, J. (2006). Legal remedies for girls' under-representation in nontraditional career and technical education. *International Journal of Manpower* 27(4), 396-416.

Exley, S. & Ball, S.J. (2011). Something old, something new: understanding Conservative education policy. In H. Bochel (Ed.), *The conservative party and social policy* (pp. 95-118). Bristol, UK: The Policy Press.

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Equal Opportunities Commission (1999). Gender issues in vocational education and training and workplace achievement of 14-19 year olds: an EOC perspective, *Curriculum Journal* 10(2), 209-229.

Fenwick, T. (2004). What happens to the girls? Gender, work and learning in Canada's 'new economy.' *Gender and Education* 16(2), 169-185.

Foreman-Peck, J. (2004). Spontaneous disorder? a very short history of British vocational education and training, 1563-1973. *Policy Futures in Education* 2(1), 72-101.

Foucault, M. (1990). *The history of sexuality. Volume 1: An introduction*. Toronto, ON: Random House.

Foucault, M. (1980). Body/Power. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews and other writings 1972-1977*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books..

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish*. New York, NY: Vintage.

Franklin, B. (2004). Education, education and indoctrination! Packaging politics and the three 'Rs'. *Journal of Policy Education* 19(3), 255-270.

Freedman, E.B. (2007). *The essential feminist reader*. New York, NY: Random House.

Fuller, A. & Unwin, L. (2011). Vocational education and training in the spotlight: back to the future for the UK's Coalition Government? *London Review of Education* 9(2), 191-204. Retrieved September 11, 2011 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14748460.2011.585879>

Fuller, A., Beck, V. & Unwin, L. (2005). The gendered nature of apprenticeship. Employers' and young people's perspectives. *Education & Training* 47(4/5), 298-311. Retrieved from [www.emeraldinsight.com/0040-0912.htm](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/0040-0912.htm).

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Gaskell, J. (1993). Constructing vocationalism. In R. Priegert Coulter and I.F. Goodson (Eds.), *Rethinking vocationalism: whose work/life is it?* (pp. 52-68). Toronto, ON:

Our schools/Our Selves Education Foundation.

Hager, P. (2007). Towards a new paradigm of vocational learning in England. In

*Vocational education: international approaches, developments and systems* (pp. 105-117). London, UK: Routledge.

Hardy, M. (2000). From vocational education and training to work: Representations from two occupational areas. *Journal of Vocational Education Research* 25(1).

Retrieved September 11, 2006 from

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JVRE/v25n1/hardy.html>

Haynes, G., Wragg, C. & Mason, K. (2005). *Equality and Pathfinders* (Working Paper

Series No. 36). Retrieved from <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7285/1/RW37.pdf>

Hill, D. (2006). Class, capital and education in this neoliberal and neoconservative period. *Information for Social Change* (23), 11-35.

Hoeckel, K., Cully, M., Field, S., Halasz, G. & Kis, V. (2009). *Learning for jobs: OECD*

*Reviews of Vocational Education and Training – England and Wales*. Retrieved from OECD website: <http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/43947857.pdf>

House of Commons Trade and Industry Committee (2005). *Jobs for the girls: the effect of occupational segregation on the gender pay gap. Sixteenth report of session 2004-*

*05*. Retrieved from

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmtrdind/300/300.pdf>

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

- Howeson, C., Raffe, D., Spours, K., & Young, M. (1997). Unifying academic and vocational: the state of the debate in England and Scotland. *Education and Work* 10(1), 5-35.
- Hunt, F. (1991). *Gender and policy in English education, 1902-1944*. New York, NY: Harvester/Wheatsheaf.
- Hunt, F. (1987). *Lessons for life: schooling of girls and women, 1850-1950*. New York, NY: Blackwell Publishers.
- Hyslop-Margison, E.J. (2001). An assessment of the historical arguments in vocational education reform. *Journal of Career and Technical Education* 17(1). Retrieved July 16, 2007 from <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JCTE/v17n1/hyslop.html>
- Jones, K. (2003) *Education in Britain: 1944 to the present*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Keep, E. (2007). The multiple paradoxes of state power in the English education and training system in England. In L. Clarke, & C. Winch (Eds.), *Vocational education: international approaches, developments and systems* (pp. 161-175). London, UK: Routledge.
- Kelm, M-E, (2003). A scandalous procession: Residential schooling and the re/formation of Aboriginal bodies, 1900-1950. In J. Barman and M. Gleason (Eds.), *Children, teachers and schools in the history of British Columbia* ( 2<sup>nd</sup> ed) (pp. 81-112). Calgary, AB: Detselig.
- Lather, P. (2006). Paradigm proliferation as a good thing to think with: teaching research in education as a wild profusion. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 19(1), 35-57.
- Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Lather, P. (1986). Issues of validity in openly ideological research: between a rock and a soft place. *Interchange* 17(4), 63-84.

Learning and Skills Council (2006). *Raising our game. Our annual statement of priorities – October 2006*. Retrieved September 20, 2009 from <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/aboutus/>

Lemke, T. (2002). Foucault, governmentality, and critique. *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture and Society* 14(3), 49-64.

Li, T.M. (2007). Governmentality. *Antropologica* 49(2), 275-281.

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 163-194). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N.K. Denzin, and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (pp. 191-216). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Llewellyn, K. (2006, Spring). Gendered democracy: Women teachers in post-war Toronto. *Historical studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 8(1), 1-26.

Lyons, J.E., Randhawa, B.S. & Paulson, N.A (1991). *The development of vocational education in Canada*. Retrieved January 14, 2007 from <http://www.csse.ca/CJE/Articles/FullText/CJE16-2/CJE16-2-02Lyons.pdf>.

Macleod, C. & Durrheim, K. (2002). Foucauldian Feminism: the implications of governmentality. Retrieved April 2013 from [http://eprints.ru.ac.za/765/1/Foucauldian\\_Feminism\\_preprint.pdf](http://eprints.ru.ac.za/765/1/Foucauldian_Feminism_preprint.pdf)

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

- Marshall, H. (1999). Our bodies, ourselves: why we should add old fashioned empirical phenomenology to the new theories of the body. In Price, J. & Shildrick, M. (Eds.). *Feminist theory and the body: a reader* (pp. 64-75). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Maxwell, J.A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: an interactive approach* (2<sup>nd</sup>. Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Meadmore, D., Hatcher, C, & McWilliam, E. (2000). Getting tense about genealogy. *Qualitative Studies in Education* 13(5), 463-476.
- Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded source book* (2<sup>nd</sup>. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miller, L. (2005). Addressing gender segregation in apprenticeships in England. *Education & Training* 47(4/5), 283-297. Retrieved September 25, 2007 from [www.emeraldinsight.com/0040-0912.htm](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/0040-0912.htm).
- Miller, L., Pollard, E., Nethery, F. Hill, D. & Ritchie, H. (2005). *Gender segregation in apprenticeships*. Working paper 25, Equal Opportunities Commission. Retrieved September 28, 2011 from <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pubs/summary.php?id=eoc0904&style=print>
- Miller, L., Nethery, F., Pollard, E., & Hill, D. (2004). *Occupational segregation, gender gaps and skills gaps*. Working paper 15, Equal Opportunities Commission. Retrieved September 28, 2011 from <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pubs/summary.php?id=eocwps15&style=print>
- Moffatt, L. & Norton, B. (2008). Reading gender relations and sexuality: pre-teens speak out. *Canadian Journal of Education* 31(1), 102-123.

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

O'Donnell, A. (2008). Gendered choices: young women's perspectives on non-traditional training and careers in Northumberland. *Education & Training* 50(6), 474-488.

O'Leary, Z. (2007). *The essential guide to doing research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) (2002). *Inspecting vocational courses 11-16 with guidance on self-evaluation*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/HMI%20780.pdf.pdf>

Ogbu, J.U & Simmons, H.D. (1998). Voluntary and Involuntary Minorities: A Cultural-Ecological Theory of School Performance with Some Implications for Education. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 29(2), 155-188.

Olesen, V. (2000). Early millennial feminist qualitative research: challenges and contours. In N.K Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.) (pp. 235-278). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Oxford Dictionary (2010). Retrieved January 23, 2011 from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/gender?view=uk>

Paechter, C. (2003a). Learning masculinities and femininities: Power/knowledge and legitimate peripheral participation. *Women's Studies International Forum* 26(6), 541-552.

Paechter, C. (2003b). Masculinities and femininities as communities of practice. *Women's Studies International Forum* 26(1), 69-77.

Payne, J. (2003). *Vocational Pathways at Age 16-19: An Analysis of the England and Wales Youth Cohort Study – Brief*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/rb501>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

- Payne, J. (2002). *Vocational Pathways at Age 16-19: An Analysis of the England and Wales Youth Cohort Study*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/rb501>
- Pillow, W. (2003). 'Bodies are dangerous': using feminist genealogy as policy studies methodology. *Journal of Education Policy* 18(2), 145-159.
- Pillow, W.S. (2002). Gender matters: feminist research in educational evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation* 96, 9-26.
- Pillow, W. (1997). Exposed methodology: the body as a deconstructive practice. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 10(3), 349-363
- Pring, R. (2007). 14-19 and lifelong learning in England. In L. Clarke, & C. Winch (Eds.), *Vocational education: international approaches, developments and systems* (pp. 118-132). London, UK: Routledge.
- Purvis, J. (1989). *Hard Lessons: lives and education of working class women in nineteenth-century England*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Rabinow, P. & Rose, N. (Eds.). (2003). *The essential Foucault: selections from essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Richardson, W. (2007). Perspectives on vocational education and training in post-war England. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training* 59(3), 273-277. Retrieved November 8, 2007 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13636820701520245>.
- Robinson, W. (2002). Historiographical reflections on the 1902 Education Act. *Oxford Review of Education* 28(2 & 3), 159-172.
- Roe, P., Wiseman, J., & Costello, M. (2006). *Perceptions and Use of NVQs: A Survey of Employers in England - Brief*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/RB71>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

- Sawicki, J. (1999). Disciplining mothers: feminism and the new reproductive technologies. In Price, J. & Shildrick, M. (Eds.). *Feminist theory and the body: a reader* (pp. 190-202). Routledge: New York.
- Schwandt, T.A. (ed.) (2001). *Dictionary of qualitative inquiry*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Shakespeare, W. (2013). *As you like it*. Retrieved January 12, 2013 from <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/asyoulikeit/>
- Simon, B. (1999). *Education and the social order: 1940-1990*. London, England: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Smaller, H. (2003). *Vocational education in Ontario secondary schools: past, present – and future?* Retrieved January 20, 2007 from <http://www.yorku.ca/crws/network/english/Smaller.pdf>
- Smyth, E. & Darmody, M. (2009). “Man enough to do it”? Girls and non-traditional subjects in lower secondary education, *Gender and Education* 21(3), 273-292.
- Snell, K.D. (1996). The apprenticeship system in British history: the fragmentation of a cultural institution, *History of Education* 25(4), 303-321. Retrieved September 12, 2011 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0046760960250401>
- Sommerville, J. (1982). *The rise and fall of childhood*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- St. Pierre, E. (2000). Poststructural feminism in education: An overview. *Qualitative Studies in Education* 13(5), 477-551.
- Stone, D. (2005). *Policy and Paradox: the art of political decision making*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Norton.

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Stone, J.R. & Aliaga, O.A. (2005). Career & technical education and school-to-work at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Participation and outcomes. *Career and Technical Education Research* 30(2). Retrieved September 15, 2006 from

<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/CTER/v30n21/stone.html>

Taylor, A. & Watt-Malcolm, B. (2010). *Opportunities and constraints associated with vocational education partnerships in Canada*. Retrieved from the Canadian

Council on Learning website: <http://www.ccl->

[cca.ca/pdfs/FundedResearch/Taylor\\_FullReport.pdf](http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/FundedResearch/Taylor_FullReport.pdf)

Taylor, A. (2005). 'Re-culturing' students and selling futures: school-to-work policy in Ontario. *Journal of Education and Work* 18(2), 321-340.

Taylor, A. (2005). Finding the future that fits. *Gender and Education* 17(2), 165-187.

Taylor, M., Evans, K. & Behrens, M. (2000). What does it mean to become skilled for young people in Canada, England and Germany? *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 8, 109-128.

Tellis, W. (1997). Application of a case study methodology. *The Qualitative Report* 3(3), September. Retrieved October 20, 2010 from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR-3/telis2.html>

Unwin, L. (2009). *Sensuality, sustainability and social justice: vocational education in changing times*. Institute of Education, University of London.

Unwin, L. (2004). Twenty-first century vocational education in the United Kingdom: what would Dickens think? *Pedagogy, Culture and Society* 12(2), 175-199.

Retrieved August 2007 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14681360400200195>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

- van der Meulen Rodgers, Y. & Boyer, T. (2006). Gender and racial differences in vocational education: An international perspective, *International Journal of Manpower* 27(4), 308-320.
- Watt-Malcolm, B. (2005). *Employers and Canada's policy initiatives to promote women in skilled trades*. Paper presented at "When women gain, so does the world", IWPR's Eights International Women's Policy Research Conference. Retrieved April 4, 2007 from [http://www.iwpr.org/PDF/05\\_Proceedings/Watt-Malcolm\\_Bonnie.pdf](http://www.iwpr.org/PDF/05_Proceedings/Watt-Malcolm_Bonnie.pdf)
- Watt-Malcolm, B. & Young, B. (2003). *Canadian women in the industrial trades. A historical perspective*. Retrieved from [https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:xmlHEHz\\_Pk8J:citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi%3D10.1.1.203.3476%26rep%3Drep1%26type%3Dpdf+Canadian+women+in+the+industrial+trades,+watt-malcolm&hl=en&gl=ca&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESh6W\\_6bZEXMtVi\\_pHED\\_i1yELqNhWXG9AhrsWdAcSEZdBmm7TWLePTfj8dMjA3\\_TKg4RsmXtPyA43VXQdS5O68Wpn-j3b71hKWZHtemR4e7jd8NAdHB26op3RH2BLDfarParc1&sig=AHIEtbRj62udb1D-fg-nyxNIa9r2a9F-A](https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:xmlHEHz_Pk8J:citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi%3D10.1.1.203.3476%26rep%3Drep1%26type%3Dpdf+Canadian+women+in+the+industrial+trades,+watt-malcolm&hl=en&gl=ca&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESh6W_6bZEXMtVi_pHED_i1yELqNhWXG9AhrsWdAcSEZdBmm7TWLePTfj8dMjA3_TKg4RsmXtPyA43VXQdS5O68Wpn-j3b71hKWZHtemR4e7jd8NAdHB26op3RH2BLDfarParc1&sig=AHIEtbRj62udb1D-fg-nyxNIa9r2a9F-A)
- Whittock, M. (2002). Women's experiences in non-traditional employment: is gender equality in this area a possibility? *Construction Management and Economics* 20, 449-456.
- Williams, S. (1999). Policy tensions in vocational education and training for young people. The origins of General National Vocational Qualifications, *Journal of Education Policy* 14(2), 151-166.

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labour: how working class kids get working class jobs*.

Farnborough, England: Saxon House.

Winch, C. (1998). Two rival conceptions of vocational education: Adam Smith and Friedrich List. *Oxford Review of Education* 24(3), 365-378.

Winch, C. & Hyland, T. (2007). *A guide to vocational education and training*. New York: NY. Continuum.

Wittig, M. (1981). One is not born a woman. *Feminist Issues* 1(2), 47-50.

Wolf, A. (2011). *Review of vocational education - The Wolf Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00031-2011>

Workplace Partners Panel (2006). *Business and labour leaders give their perspective on skills shortages*. Retrieved September 21, 2006 from [http://www.wpp-clbc.ca/News/VP\\_release\\_310806.asp](http://www.wpp-clbc.ca/News/VP_release_310806.asp)

Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case study research: design and methods* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix I

#### Request for research participants (School Administration)

Date

Mr./Ms.  
Executive Headteacher  
Garden Road Community & Technology School  
The Midlands  
England

Dear Mr./Ms.,

In September and October 2007 you were kind enough to allow me to speak with several of the students who participated in the skilled trade careers exploration workshops. I am scheduled to be in the UK during the month of \_\_\_\_\_ and if convenient, I would like to speak with some of the students who are current and/or past participants in the skilled trade career workshops.

As with the previous interviews, the participants will be asked to discuss their experience, what they saw, what they learnt, and the impact it may or may not have had on their decision to consider 'non-traditional' skilled trades as a future career. In addition, I would also like to speak with you and/or any other member of the school faculty and administration who are involved with this careers initiative. The information garnered during the interviews will be used to prepare my PhD in Education proposal and subsequent thesis at the University of Ottawa. More specifically, interview commentary gathered will be used to further explore the issue of gender and the vocational education setting, particularly gender discourse in vocational education. The data obtained and a summary of findings may also be presented at a student symposium, conferences and/or in written publications such as journals and abstracts.

All information shared during the interviews will remain strictly confidential. Participant confidentiality will be respected by the omission of all data that may identify the individual (i.e. name, position title etc.). Participants will also have the opportunity to review, edit and approve their interview transcript prior to its inclusion in the study. Only approved transcripts will be used by the researcher during the study. Confidentiality will be assured through the use of pseudonyms in the transcripts, summary of findings and discussion in the text of the PhD (Education) thesis or other public discussions, conferences, and/or written publications.

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Within the next week I will follow up with a telephone call, in the meantime, should you wish to participate in the study or should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sandra Parris  
Doctoral student  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

**Thesis Director:**  
Awad Ibrahim, Ph.D.  
Graduate Studies Programs  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

## Appendix II

### Request for research participants (College Administration)

Date

Mr./Ms.  
Administration  
Cranfield College  
The Midlands  
England

Dear Mr./Ms.,

I am Doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, Canada. My research focus is the issue of gender in vocational education, in particular female participation in non-traditional skilled trades. I understand that your college offered a series of skilled trade career workshops to the students of Garden Road Community & Technology School. While I am interested in speaking with those who participated in the workshop sessions, I am also interested in speaking with individuals who have played a role in developing and/or delivering these skilled trade career workshops. I am scheduled to be in the UK during the month of \_\_\_\_\_ and if convenient, I would like to speak with members of the college faculty and/or administration that were involved in the development or delivery of the workshops. As such, I kindly request your assistance in the identification of school administrators and faculty that were involved in the development and delivery of the workshops.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. The participants will be asked to discuss the role they played in developing and/or delivering these skilled trade career workshops. Specifically they will be asked questions about purpose, process, workshop content, outcomes and evaluation. Those who agree to participate in the study will be asked to take part in at least one audio-taped formal interview session that should last up to 60 minutes. The interview will be scheduled at a time and place of mutual convenience. Participants may also be asked to take part in one follow-up telephone discussion lasting a maximum of 30 minutes that will provide clarification and/or elaboration of statements made during the formal interview session.

The information garnered during the interviews will be used to prepare my PhD in Education proposal and subsequent dissertation at the University of Ottawa. More specifically, interview commentary gathered will be used to further explore the issue of gender and the vocational education setting, particularly gender discourse in vocational education. The data obtained and a summary of findings may also be presented at a student symposium, conferences and/or in written publications such as journals and abstracts.

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

All information shared during the interviews will remain strictly confidential. Participant confidentiality will be respected by the omission of all data that may identify them (i.e. name, position title etc.). Participants will also have the opportunity to review, edit and approve their interview transcript prior to its inclusion in the study. Only approved transcripts will be used by the researcher during the study. Confidentiality will be assured through the use of pseudonyms in the transcripts, summary of findings and discussion in the text of the PhD (Education) dissertation or other public discussions, conferences, and/or written publications.

Within the next week I will follow up with a telephone call, in the meantime, should you be willing to provide assistance with the identification of names or should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sandra Parris  
Doctoral student  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

**Thesis Director:**  
Awad Ibrahim, Ph.D.  
Graduate Studies Programs  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

### Appendix III

#### Request for research participants (Students)

Date

Mr./Ms.  
Executive Headteacher  
Garden Road Community & Technology School  
The Midlands  
England

Dear Mr./Ms.,

I am Doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, Canada. My research focus is the issue of gender in vocational education, in particular female participation in non-traditional skilled trades. I understand that you took part in the one-day skilled trade career workshops initiative for girls offered at Garden Road Community & Technology School. I am scheduled to be in the UK during the month of \_\_\_\_\_ and if convenient, I would like to schedule a time to speak with you about your experience. Specifically, I am interested in speaking with current and/or former participants who took part in the workshop sessions about their experience, what they saw, what they learnt, and the impact it may or may not have had on their decision to consider 'non-traditional' skilled trades as a future career.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Should you decide to participate you will be asked to take part in at least one audio-taped formal interview session that should last up to 60 minutes. The interview will be scheduled at a time and place of mutual convenience. You may also be asked to take part in one follow-up telephone discussion lasting a maximum of 30 minutes that will provide clarification and/or elaboration of statements made during the formal interview session.

The information garnered during the interviews will be used to prepare my PhD in Education proposal and subsequent dissertation at the University of Ottawa. More specifically, interview commentary gathered will be used to further explore the issue of gender and the vocational education setting, particularly gender discourse in vocational education. The data obtained and a summary of findings may also be presented at a student symposium, conferences and/or in written publications such as journals and abstracts.

All information shared during the interviews will remain strictly confidential. Your confidentiality will be respected by the omission of all data that may identify you (i.e. name, position title etc.). You will also have the opportunity to review, edit and approve your interview transcript prior to its inclusion in the study. Only approved transcripts

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

will be used by the researcher during the study. Confidentiality will be assured through the use of pseudonyms in the transcripts, summary of findings and discussion in the text of the PhD (Education) dissertation or other public discussions, conferences, and/or written publications.

Within the next week I will follow up with a telephone call, in the meantime, should you wish to participate in the study or should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sandra Parris  
Doctoral student  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

**Thesis Director:**  
Awad Ibrahim, Ph.D.  
Graduate Studies Programs  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

## Appendix IV

### Request for research participants (Administrators and Instructors)

Date

Mr./Ms.  
Workshop Administrator (or Instructor)  
Garden Road Community & Technology School  
The Midlands  
England

Dear Mr./Ms.,

I am Doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, Canada. My research focus is the issue of gender in vocational education, in particular female participation in non-traditional skilled trades. I understand that you have acted as administrator, coordinator and/or instructor in the trade career workshop initiative offered at Garden Road Community & Technology School. While I am interested in speaking with those who participated in the workshop sessions, I am also interested in speaking with individuals who have played a role in developing and/or delivering these skilled trade career workshops. I am scheduled to be in the UK during the month of \_\_\_\_\_ and if convenient, I would like to speak with you about the workshops.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Should you decide to participate you will be asked to take part in at least one audio-taped formal interview session that should last up to 60 minutes. The interview will be scheduled at a time and place of mutual convenience. You may also be asked to take part in one follow-up telephone discussion lasting a maximum of 30 minutes that will provide clarification and/or elaboration of statements made during the formal interview session.

The information garnered during the interviews will be used to prepare my PhD in Education proposal and subsequent dissertation at the University of Ottawa. More specifically, interview commentary gathered will be used to further explore the issue of gender and the vocational education setting, particularly gender discourse in vocational education. The data obtained and a summary of findings may also be presented at a student symposium, conferences and/or in written publications such as journals and abstracts.

All information shared during the interviews will remain strictly confidential. Your confidentiality will be respected by the omission of all data that may identify you (i.e. name, position title etc.). You will also have the opportunity to review, edit and approve your interview transcript prior to its inclusion in the study. Only approved transcripts

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

will be used by the researcher during the study. Confidentiality will be assured through the use of pseudonyms in the transcripts, summary of findings and discussion in the text of the PhD (Education) dissertation or other public discussions, conferences, and/or written publications.

Within the next week I will follow up with a telephone call, in the meantime, should you wish to participate in the study or should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sandra Parris  
Doctoral student  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

**Thesis Director:**  
Awad Ibrahim, Ph.D.  
Graduate Studies Programs  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

## Appendix V

### Request for research participants (Skilled Trade Professionals)

Date

Mr./Ms.  
Skilled Trade Professional  
The Midlands  
England

Dear Mr./Ms.,

I am Doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, Canada. My research focus is the issue of gender in vocational education, in particular female participation in non-traditional skilled trades. Specifically, I will be examining the issue of young girls' experiences in a series of skilled trade career orientation workshops at *Garden Road Community and Technology*. The girls will be asked to discuss their experience, what they saw, what they learnt, and the impact it may or may not have had on their decision to consider 'non-traditional' skilled trades as a future career. As part of the study I would also like to speak with women who are currently employed in the skilled trade sector.

As someone who has completed your vocational education in the area of \_\_\_\_\_ and are currently employed in the skilled trade sector as a \_\_\_\_\_ in the Midlands might you be willing to speak with me about your educational and professional experience? In particular, you will be asked to discuss: (a) how you came to choose non-traditional vocational education; (b) your experiences as women in vocational education learning environments; and (c) your perspective on the usefulness of this and similar gender specific vocational education schemes. Please let me know if you might be available to speak with me while I am in the UK. I am scheduled to be in the UK during the month of \_\_\_\_\_ and would greatly appreciate your participation in this study.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Should you decide to participate you will be asked to take part in at least one audio-taped formal interview session that should last up to 60 minutes. The interview will be scheduled at a time and place of mutual convenience. You may also be asked to take part in one follow-up telephone discussion lasting a maximum of 30 minutes that will provide clarification and/or elaboration of statements made during the formal interview session.

The information garnered during the interviews will be used to prepare my PhD in Education proposal and subsequent dissertation at the University of Ottawa. More specifically, interview commentary gathered will be used to further explore the issue of gender and the vocational education setting, particularly gender discourse in vocational

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

education. The data obtained and a summary of findings may also be presented at a student symposium, conferences and/or in written publications such as journals and abstracts.

All information shared during the interviews will remain strictly confidential. Your confidentiality will be respected by the omission of all data that may identify you (i.e. name, position title etc.). You will also have the opportunity to review, edit and approve your interview transcript prior to its inclusion in the study. Only approved transcripts will be used by the researcher during the study. Confidentiality will be assured through the use of pseudonyms in the transcripts, summary of findings and discussion in the text of the PhD (Education) dissertation or other public discussions, conferences, and/or written publications.

Within the next week I will follow up with a telephone call, in the meantime, should you wish to participate in the study or should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Sandra Parris  
Doctoral student  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

**Thesis Director:**  
Awad Ibrahim, Ph.D.  
Graduate Studies Programs  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa

## Appendix VI

### Letter of Consent

**Name of Researcher:** Sandra Parris  
**Thesis Director:** Dr. Awad Ibrahim  
**Institution/Department:** University of Ottawa, Department of Education  
**Telephone Number:**  
**E-mail Address:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, (name of research participant) agree to participate in the research conducted by Sandra Parris, PhD Candidate, University of Ottawa. The project is under the supervision of Dr. Awad Ibrahim. The purpose of the research is to explore the issue of gender in vocational education settings. Specifically, the research seeks to examine the experiences of the young girls who participated in a scheme aimed at encouraging females to consider non-traditional skilled trades as possible educational and professional possibilities.

My participation will consist essentially of attending one audio-taped telephone interview (approximately 1 hour) during which I will be required to answer and respond to prepared questions concerning my experiences in this vocational education initiative. I understand that the content of the interview(s) will be used for the purpose of preparing and submitting a PhD (Education) thesis at the University of Ottawa. I also understand that research findings may be used in on-line and printed publications, such as journals, reports, abstracts or conference papers.

I understand that since this information may deal with personal information, it may cause me some emotional discomfort and that therefore, I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, and that I have the right to refuse to answer any questions that I deem to be inappropriate or too sensitive. My responses to the interview questions are strictly confidential. My name will not be used and a pseudonym will be assigned to me. Tape recordings of the interviews, as well as other data collected will be kept in a secure manner. I do understand that the Research Ethics Board of the University of Ottawa may review the research records from this study in order to verify that the research has been conducted in accordance with the university's regulations.

Any information about my rights as a research participant may be addressed to Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 159, (613) 562-5541 or [ethics@uottawa.ca](mailto:ethics@uottawa.ca).

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which I may keep.

If I have any questions about the conduct of the research project, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor at

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Sandra Parris Doctoral student Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa	Awad Ibrahim, Ph.D. Graduate Studies Programs Faculty of Education University of Ottawa
---	--

Researcher's Signature:

Date:

Research Participant's Signature:

Date:

\*Parent (or Guardian) Signature (if required)

Date:

\* In cases where a participant is 17 years old or younger, a parent or guardian's signature is required.

## Appendix VII

### Are these the Skilled 'Tradeswomen' of Tomorrow? Initial Interview Questions (Students)

#### Background – 'Her' story

- How old are you? What grade are you currently in?
- Do you live in the immediate area? Have you always lived in the area? If not, where did you live before?
- Do you have siblings? If yes, how many? Are they male(s) or female? What age?
- What were (and are) your dreams about your educational and professional options? In other words what did you (and do) you want to be when you grow up?
- What are your parent's or guardian's educational (and employment) background?
- Have either of your parents ever worked in the trades? If so, which one and in what area?
- Have your parent's or guardian ever spoken to you about the skilled trade sector or vocational education as a possible educational or professional option? If not, what areas (if any) of education or types of professions did they talk to you about?

#### Introduction: Learning about the scheme

- How did you hear about the scheme?
- Who told you about it?
- Did anyone in particular suggest that you participate in the scheme? If yes, who? What did they say about it?
- What did you understand to be the purpose of the scheme? What were you told about the courses?
- What were your thoughts when you heard that the scheme was specifically for girls?
- Why did you decide to participate?
- What did your family (parents, siblings etc.) think about your decision to participate in the workshops?

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

- What did your friends think when you said that you would be participating in the workshops?
- Did anyone try to discourage you from participating in the workshops? If yes, who? What did they say about the workshops and/or women in skilled trades?

## **The Experience**

- What did you expect to get from the experience?
- What emotions did you experience prior to, during and after the workshops (e.g. nervous, excited, fearful)?
- Provide a brief description of this particular course? Where was it held? When? How long?
- Did you dress differently when you attended the workshops? If yes, was that by choice or did someone tell you that you should dress a particular way? If yes, how did you dress for the workshop(s)? If no, then did you think about dressing differently while attending the workshops?
- Did the course meet your expectations? If yes, (or no) then why?
- What if anything surprised you about the experience?

## **Knowledge Gained: What did they learn?**

- Was the focus of the course technical or practical? Were you provided with an opportunity to handle the materials of the trade?
- How many instructors were present?
- Provide examples of some of the things you learned during the course?
- Did the course speak specifically about women working in skilled trades? If yes, what did they say?

## **Instruction: How was it organized?**

- What did you think about the method of instruction? What did you like or dislike?
- Did you have any female instructors? If yes, did this make a difference to your experience of the session.
- What would you like to see done differently?
- Overall, did you find the experience to be beneficial? Why?

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

### **After the course**

- Did you have a chance to discuss your experience (i.e. what you saw and learnt) with others?
- Who did you speak with (teachers, fellow students etc.) about your experience?
- When did you speak to someone about your experience (the same day, a day after, a few days later, never) on the course?
- If you did speak with someone, what did you have to say?
- If you **didn't** speak with someone, then would you have liked to? Why or why not? If yes, then when and with whom would you have liked to speak?

### **What does this mean for the future?**

- Has the experience changed the way you think about this field of study and work?  
Has the experience changed the way you think about women in this field of study and work? Why or why not?
- Has the experience changed (or reinforced) your desire to work in this or similar areas? How so?
- What area might you see yourself studying in? Why?
- Would you participate in similar courses in the future? Please explain.
- What do you think you will be doing in 10yrs time? Do you think about your gender as you think about possible future educational and/or occupational choices?

**Appendix VIII**  
**Are these the Skilled ‘Tradeswomen’ of Tomorrow?**  
**Initial Interview Questions (Administrators)**

**Personal Story:**

- Do you live in the immediate area? If yes, for how long? If not, where do you live and how far away is it from the school (college)?
- How long have you been working at the school (college)?
- What is your current role? What are the responsibilities associated with your role? How long have you been in that role?
- What is your educational background?
- Do you have prior experience developing, delivering and/or managing vocational education related programs and initiatives? If yes, please elaborate.
- In general, what are your thoughts about vocational education (and non-traditional skilled trades) as an option for students in general and girls in particular?
- Do you have school-aged children? If yes, do they attend the school and/or college? Are they interested or involved in vocational education? If yes, what area?

**Background: What is this ‘scheme’ about anyway?**

- What is the name of this scheme?
- Is this a nationally mandated scheme or is it a more local government initiative?
- What is the stated purpose of the scheme? Why was it developed or introduced?
- Is there documentation outlining the scheme (process, responsibilities, promotion etc.)? If yes, is that documentation available for public viewing? Is there a website?
- When was the scheme first brought to your attention?
- How were you informed of the scheme?
- What are your thoughts about the scheme being specifically for girls? Do you see a need for such initiatives? Why or why not?

**Administration**

- Who has direct responsibility for the scheme (national, local, and/or school level)?

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

- In particular, what are the roles of the school and the local college(s) as defined in the scheme?
- Who is responsible for ongoing administration of the scheme (day-to-day operation)? (Alder Grange, the local college etc...)
- Does the scheme require that a specific number of courses be offered during a given period? If yes, what number and over what period of time?
- How are courses selected and by whom?

## Process

- When was the scheme formally introduced (year or month) at the school level?
- How was the scheme promoted (marketed) to the students?
- Who is eligible to participate?
- Is participation in the courses purely voluntary? If not then how are students selected for participation? Who is involved in the selection process (administrators, teachers...)?
- Are students expected to participate in all of the courses offered or can they pick and choose? Are the students expected to dress a particular way in order to participate in some or all of the workshops? If yes, how so and how are they informed of the dress code?
- How is student progress (interest) monitored?

## A Question of Curriculum

- How was the course content selected for each session? Who was involved in selecting the course content?
- Was there a particular purpose for selecting particular course content? If so, what was the purpose?
- Was any consideration given to specifically involving female professionals in either the development of the course content and/or instruction of the courses?
- Do the workshops contain specific information and/or discussion about women in vocational education and non-traditional skilled trades (e.g their experiences, opportunities available and barriers to entry, resources specific to women etc.)

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

- Was the course content changed at any point during the duration of the program? If yes, why? What mechanisms are in place to assess the course content?

### **Quality Control: Evaluating ‘Success’**

- How (if at all) is “success” defined in this scheme?
- Is there a formal review process of the scheme? If yes, how often is this to be done?
- What processes are in place to assess or evaluate the success of the scheme? What steps are to be taken and by whom (nationally, school level)?
- Is anyone tasked with speaking with the girls about their experience in the workshops? If yes, who does it and when does this discussion occur? Might you be able to provide some general comments?

### **What does the future hold?**

- Will this initiative continue in the foreseeable future? If not, why?
- What, if any changes are slated to take place regarding the course content and/or administration of the initiative in the near future?

## Appendix IX

### Are these the Skilled 'Tradeswomen' of Tomorrow? Initial Interview Questions (Instructors)

#### Personal Story:

- Do you live in the immediate area? If yes, for how long? If not, where do you live and how far away is it from the school (college)?
- How long have you been an instructor at the college? How long have you been an instructor in X?
- What is your educational background? Do you recall when and how you first became aware of vocational education and the skilled trade sector?
- What factor(s) prompted you to consider entering your trade (e.g. interactions with peers, your parents and/or teachers, all of the above)? What were the reactions of various people around you (parents, teachers, peers)?
- Currently, what are your thoughts on the place of vocational education and the skilled trades in the education system? What might you like to see change and why?
- What are your thoughts about vocational education (and non-traditional skilled trades) as an option for students in general and girls in particular?
- Do you have school-aged children? If yes, do they attend the school and/or college? Are they interested or involved in vocational education?
- In your time as an instructor, have you seen an increase in the number of females that enter and complete skilled trade programs?

#### Background: What is this 'scheme' about anyway?

- What is the name of this scheme?
- Is this a nationally mandated scheme or is it a more local government initiative?
- What is the stated purpose of the scheme? Why was it developed or introduced?
- Is there documentation outlining the scheme (process, responsibilities, promotion etc.)? If yes, is that documentation available for public viewing? Is there a website?
- When was the scheme first brought to your attention?
- How were you informed of the scheme?

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

- What were your thoughts when you heard that the scheme was specifically for girls? Do you see a need for such a scheme? Why or why not?

### **Administration**

- Who has direct responsibility for the scheme (national, local, and/or school level)?
- In particular, what are the roles of the school and the local college(s) as defined in the scheme?
- Who is responsible for ongoing administration of the scheme (day-to-day operation)? (Alder Grange, the local college etc...)
- How are courses selected and by whom?

### **Process**

- When was the scheme formally introduced (year or month) at the school level?
- Have you been involved in promoting (marketing) the scheme to students (e.g. open houses)? If so, how?
- How is your session organized? Do you work with other instructors and/or the program administrators at the high school or college to prepare for the session(s)? Do you work with female professionals in the field?
- Were the students asked to dress in a particular way during the workshop(s)? If yes, how?
- How is student progress (interest) monitored?
- What has been the reception from students so far?

### **A Question of Curriculum**

- How was the course content selected for each session? Who was involved in selecting the course content?
- Was there a particular purpose for selecting particular course content? If so, what was the purpose?
- Was any consideration given to specifically involving female professionals in either the development of the course content and/or instruction of the courses?

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

- Do the workshops contain specific information and/or discussion about women in vocational education and non-traditional skilled trades (e.g their experiences, opportunities available and barriers to entry, resources specific to women etc.)
- Was the course content changed at any point during the duration of the program? If yes, why? What mechanisms are in place to assess the course content?

### **Quality Control: Evaluating ‘Success’**

- How (if at all) is “success” defined in this scheme? Do you think that the scheme has been a success to date? Explain.
- Is there a formal review process of the scheme? If yes, how often is this to be done?
- What processes are in place to assess or evaluate the success of the scheme? What steps are to be taken and by whom (nationally, school level)?
- What, if any, suggestions do you have for making this initiative more beneficial to students?
- In general, do you think that this kind of initiative will make a difference in generating interest among young girls for the vocational education and non-traditional skilled trades?

## Appendix X

### Are these the Skilled 'Tradeswomen' of Tomorrow? Initial Interview Questions (Professionals)

#### Background – 'Her' story

- Do you live in the immediate area? If yes, for how long? If not, where do you live and how far away is it from the school (college)?
- When did you decided to enter your particular skilled trade? What is your educational background? Where did you receive your skilled trade training? What was that experience like?
- Do you recall when and how you first became aware of vocational education and the skilled trade sector?
- What factor(s) prompted you to consider entering your trade (e.g. interactions with peers, your parents and/or teachers, all of the above)? What were the reactions of various people around you (parents, teachers, peers)?
- How long have you been working in the skilled trade sector?
- Has your gender been an issue during your skilled trade training and/or professional career? If yes, how so?
- Currently, what are your thoughts on the place of vocational education and the skilled trades in the education system? What might you like to see change and why?
- In general, what are your thoughts about vocational education (and non-traditional skilled trades) as an option for students in general and girls in particular?
- Do you have school-aged children? If yes, do they attend the school and/or college? Are they interested or involved in the vocational education?

#### The scheme

- Have you heard about the scheme to introduce young girls to the non-traditional trade sector? How did you hear about the scheme?
- Were you ever contacted about being a part of the scheme (i.e. guest speaker, instructor, mentor etc.)? If yes, when and by whom? If no, would you have agreed to participate in the scheme? In what capacity?

#### Building on training, personal knowledge and professional experience

- What do you see as benefits and hindrances to entering a non-traditional skilled trade?

## Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

- Based on your experience as a woman in the non-traditional skilled trades sector, would you encourage young girls to enter the field? Why?
- Would you advocate the introduction of programs at the secondary school level that are geared specifically towards encouraging young girls to enter the trades? Why?
- What ideas (if any) might you suggest to educators who wish to encourage young girls to consider non-traditional skilled trades as a viable educational and professional option?

**Appendix XI**

Overview of UK Government produced documents on vocational education (2002-2011)

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
Department for Education and Skills (DfES)	New GCSEs in vocational subjects: a general guide and overview of the new qualifications	2002a	A four page leaflet that was released prior to the September 2002 launch of the new General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs) vocational subjects. The leaflet presents in bullet format aspects of the new policy such as the purpose of the new GCSE format and provides a list of the new subject titles and a brief description of each subject. The document was intended to provide basic information to “teachers and other education professionals” (p.1) about the 8 new subject areas: Applied Art and Design, Applied Business;, Engineering; Health and Social Care; Applied Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Leisure and Tourism; Manufacturing; and Applied Science. Also included in the leaflet are short sections (approximately 1 paragraph) on Key Skills that are to be covered in the subjects; Qualification Design which covers the grading system for the new GCSEs; how the GCSEs are to be taught; Assessment techniques that will be employed; how the new GCSEs can be used to progress; and Local Support networks.	<p><b>No</b> definition of vocational education is provided but it does link the development of student interest about the world of work with increased interest in vocational learning.</p> <p>The new listing of courses are intended to be general in nature and the “purpose is to “introduce learners to a broad sector of industry and business”; “encourage understanding of the sector, key concepts and theories”; and develop capability in some skills.</p>	<b>No</b> – use of generic terms like “pupils” and “young people” can be found in the document.

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			<p>The leaflet also mentions that the DfES is in the process of preparing other (similar) leaflets that will aim to address questions about vocational learning that may be raised by students, parents and employers.</p>		
DfES	<p>New GCSEs in vocational subjects: An introduction to links between careers education and guidance and the teaching and learning of young people who are taking new GCSEs in vocational subjects</p>	2002b	<p>Similar in layout to the general guide leaflet (2002a), this two page document provides the reader with an overview of the 8 subject areas that fall within the GCSE vocational offerings that reflect the policy. These new offerings listed cover a range of subject areas and is intended to function as a replacement for the Part One General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) subjects.</p> <p>The areas of focus include Applied Art and Design; Applied Business; Engineering; Health and Social Care; Applied Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Leisure and Tourism; Manufacturing and Applied Science. The leaflet includes an Introduction that identifies the intended audience as "...careers teachers, personal advisors and other professionals providing careers guidance" (p. 1) since they will assist individual students as they prepare to develop and prepare their learning plans.</p>	<p><b>No</b> specific definition of vocational education is provided.</p> <p>The advice should include information about "the role of the new GCSE as a general preparation for work, at whatever point they choose to enter employment; the value of the new GCSE as an introduction to a broad vocational area, rather than training for entry into a specific area; local and national labour market information relating to a broad vocational area; and the teaching and learning styles involved and the approaches to assessment of the new vocational areas. The leaflet mentions that "some schools have developed vocational taster</p>	<p><b>No</b> mention of gender at any point in the document.</p>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			<p>The leaflet talks about where the courses will be offered (schools, 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges and further education colleges); the purpose of the new subject offerings; the role of careers guidance in preparing students to make their option choices in Year 9. The kind of advice and information that should be provided to students and parents preparing to select their subjects pre-and post-16 is presented in broad terms.</p>	<p>activities for students in year 9 before they make their options choices. Another section talks about what careers and advice professionals can do to offer support to learners throughout the GCSE courses. The importance of work experience as part of the new GCSE offerings and the role that careers and advice professionals can play in providing that information as well as information about progression to a range of opportunities (e.g. employment or further education).</p>	
Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)	Inspecting vocational courses 11-16 with guidance on self-evaluation	2002	<p>This 48 page document was prepared by the Office for Standards in Education and is intended as a guide for school administrators and teachers who are involved in assessing vocational subjects offered at the secondary school level (pre-16).</p> <p>This document lays out the policy for inspection and is intended to assist secondary, post-secondary institutions and their partners as they “improve standards in vocational programmes and qualifications; improve attainment in general...promote and consolidate</p>	No definition provided	<p><b>Yes</b> – the section Common Requirements notes that inspectors/evaluators should have knowledge of the “...responsibilities and duties of schools regarding equal opportunities, particularly in respect of discrimination on grounds of gender; race and disability. These are covered by the Sex</p>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			<p>the use of key skills, develop employability...improve careers education” and students ability to assess and make use of the information provided</p> <p>The document begins with an Introduction that talks about the purpose and intended audience and is followed by a section about Common Requirements expected of school inspectors/evaluators. The document is then divided into chapters, of which the first is “What are vocational courses’. The chapter is divided into vocational courses in the curriculum; standards, teaching and learning, other factors affecting quality and OFSTED inspection of vocational courses. The remaining chapters deal with individual subject areas. The subjects covered include art and design Part One GNVQ (and GCSE applied art and design); engineering (and manufacturing) Part One GNVQ (GCSE engineering), health and social care Part One GNVQ (GCSE health and social care); Part One GNVQ (GCSE leisure and tourism); and construction (NVQ). Each chapter includes examples of inspector or evaluation reports. Elements covered include initial information, standards and achievement; teaching and learning;</p>		<p>Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and the special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001” (p.7).</p>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			other information and summary.		
DfES	Vocational and Work-related Learning at key Stage 4: Guidance for Managers in Schools and Colleges and their Partners in the Community	2003a	<p>This 32 page document was written in 2003 by the Curriculum and Standards division of DfES and was intended to serve as a guide to school and college managers, as well as their community partners about the policy changes and new subject format. The document begins with an Introduction section that covers the aims and benefits of vocational and work-related learning , definitions and checklist of opportunities for vocational and work-related learning that provides information about resources, and DfES expectations . Additional major headings include: coherent management frameworks and what that would include within the context of vocational and work-related learning (e.g. policy development, staffing, monitoring and evaluation, legal requirements); planning provision; teaching and learning; accreditation; and partnerships.</p> <p>The introduction commences by saying that “both vocational and work-related learning are key elements of the Government’s vision for a high-quality and well-focused education systems... The Government intends to build an education system which will deliver the</p>	<p><b>No</b> specific definition provided but it does include the following text.</p> <p>“Vocational courses give an appreciation of the occupations available in a specific sector. They develop the skills, knowledge and understanding required either to prepare students for employment or to enable them to progress to further education and training in that sector. These forms of work-related learning may lead to a nationally accredited course of qualification” (p. 6).</p> <p>The “The Government is committed to providing a more coherent 14-19 phase which is responsive to individual needs, offers a broad range of choices from the age of 14, and promotes progression at every stage through to further and higher education and the world of work” The</p>	<b>No</b> specific section dealing with gender issues.

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			<p>technical and vocational skills of an advanced economy so that everyone will have a pathway to success” (p. 4). The document also highlights that from 2004 onwards all schools are required to offer work-related learning opportunities as part of the curriculum for key stage 4 (i.e. Year 9,10, and 11). Work-related learning is defined as “planned activity that uses the context of work to develop knowledge, skills and understanding useful in work, including learning through the experience of work, learning about work and learning the skills of work”(p. 4). In addition to work-related learning, definitions have been provided for work-related programmes, vocational courses; work experience; work-based learning/routes and enterprise education.</p>	<p>document aimed at school administrators notes that “the Department will move towards this vision by reforming the 14-16 curriculum from September 2004, so fewer subjects are compulsory between the ages of 14 and 16. We will ensure high quality vocational options are available to all students and make work-related learning and enterprise education statutory requirements for all 14-16 year olds to better prepare young people for the world of work. These changes will allow more freedom for young people to follow individual programmes that meet their needs and aspirations.”</p>	
DfES	GCSEs in Vocational Subjects - A General Guide and Overview of the Qualifications	2003b	<p>This brief (4 page) document is intended to provide teachers and other education professionals with information about the new GCSE vocational subjects prior to their introduction in 2002. The document highlights that these new offerings are intended to be introductory in nature for those students interested in vocational fields.</p>	No definition provided	No discussion included
DfES	GCSES in Vocational	2003c	Very similar to the 4 page document	No definition provided	No discussion included

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
	Subjects: An Introduction for Students and their Parents/Carers to the GCSEs in vocational education		that provides a general guide and overview of the new vocational subjects available as part of the GCSEs (DfES, 2003). The document outlines when the new GCSE vocational subjects were introduced (2002) and lists the subjects that qualify. The document does include a section that talks about issues that parents/carers and students should think about when considering whether to do GCSE vocational subjects.		
Payne, J.	Vocational Pathways at Age 16-19: An Analysis of the England and Wales Youth Cohort Study - Brief	2003d	<p>This 4 page discussion document provides an overview of research that was conducted for DfES. The study examined the educational and training options selected by young people (age 16 or 17) in England and Wales during the period of 2002-2003. The document is divided into several sections that present the key findings; vocational qualifications after 16; trends over time; information about the kinds of young people that take vocational qualifications in full-time education; government supported training; entry and exit from government supported training; early drop out from vocational training; and issues arising from the analysis.</p> <p>Apart from the findings regarding gender, other findings included the percentage of students who listed vocational education as their “main</p>	<p><b>No</b> specific definition provided .</p> <p>The brief does not include a definition of vocational education used for the purpose of the study.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> - of the 13 key findings listed in the brief, one dealt specifically with gender. It was found that “...there was marked sex gender segregation in the GST (government supported training) in the type of work done. Females were less likely than males to be in Advanced Modern Apprenticeships (AMAs) or to work for level 3 qualifications”.</p>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			<p>study aim” (1/3); the number of those pursuing vocational studies on a full-time basis (3/4); performance on GCSEs and likelihood of pursuing vocational qualifications (e.g. those in the bottom third, almost all who chose to obtain qualifications chose vocational options). Other findings touched upon issues of ethnicity (i.e. visible minority participation in vocational qualifications); comparisons with participation rates of previous years and completion rates of those who seek qualifications.</p> <p>The additional sections presented in the brief provide more information about the key findings.</p>		
Haynes, G., Wragg, C. & Mason, K.	Equality and Pathfinders	2005	A 95 page discussion document that is part of the Equal Opportunities Commission’s working paper series on Occupational Segregation. The research was funded in part by EOC, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and Joint Intervention Partners (JIVE). The research investigates the “...extent to which Pathfinder Projects were challenging inequalities and stereotypes affecting young people’s choices and monitoring the outcomes for individuals or groups, with particular reference to gender,	<b>No</b> clearly identifiable definition was provided in the document. However, the researcher do point out that the 14-19 Education and Skills white paper released in February 2005 “emphasized general intentions to improve vocational education and introduce specialized lines of learning. The greater emphasis on vocational education for 14-19 year	<b>Yes</b> – there were clear references to issues of gender and the connection between gender based stereotypes and vocational education and occupational choice.  Given that this research was part of a working papers series on occupational

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			<p>ethnicity, disability, those who are looked after, the gifted and the talented and those who are underachieving” (p. iii).</p> <p>Methodology for the research included a combination of analysis of documents that pertain to the Pathfinder projects; distribution of a questionnaire survey to all 39 Pathfinders in June 2004 that inquired about how DfES equality requirements were understood by Pathfinders, the groups and equality issues targeted by their projects, the extent to which their projects challenge inequalities and stereotypes, their tracking of project outcomes and examples of best practice. The research also included four in-depth case studies of Pathfinder organizations that were selected to reflect a range of issues that was conducted in Nov/Dec 2004.</p> <p>“Pathfinder” is a program set out in the government’s green paper on 14-19 education provision. 14-19 Pathfinders and their associated projects were expected to establish best practices for the roll-out of 14-19 education and training; examine how 14-19 policies fit or hamper the carrying out of other policies; identify barriers to 14-19 policy implementation and show that 14-19 reforms could be rolled out across differing sociocultural and</p>	<p>olds raises issues and challenges” (p.1).</p> <p>Young people often already make vocational choices that are stereotyped and therefore contribute to occupational segregation. Greater choice at 14 and entry onto vocational routes into work at that age could compound the problem unless equality issues are raised and targeted work is done to open up choices in the delivery of new vocational opportunities” (p.1).</p>	<p>segregation, the issue of gender was addressed at several points in the document. First, as mentioned in the summary, the research states that Pathfinders were required to establish and track the performance and outcomes of projects that challenge gender inequality. However, the researcher found that few of the Pathfinders had created and made available projects that addressed gender issues. The researchers found that the Pathfinder objectives were rather broad and as a result specific equality issues that pertained to gender were not always considered a priority. The authors suggest that the “introduction of the new vocational GCSEs, could potentially, reinforce stereotypical patterns and restrict choices at an earlier age than</p>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			<p>educational settings. Pathfinders were expected “by the DfES to track the impact of their activities on different groups of young people” (p. iv).</p> <p>Sections of the document include: executive summary; introduction; documentary analysis; questionnaire survey; case studies; and conclusions and implications. Key findings identified in the report include: lack of awareness among Pathfinders about the need to track the impact of their activities (e.g. participation rates, outcomes etc.) on a range of groups that include gender and ethnicity, therefore there was a lack of data in these areas. Nine of the 29 Pathfinders did not think it was part of the DfES requirement to develop initiatives that were specifically aimed at challenging stereotypes and less than 1/3 (nine of twenty-nine) had developed gender-related interventions. Two of the case studies included in this report (Doncaster and Durham) had established activities that offered young people the chance to “...taste non-traditional course, meet positive role models and consider non-traditional options” (p. v).</p>		<p>before. Equality issues need to be more than just an add-on. They need to be a consideration at every stage of planning, implementation and evaluation” (p. vii).</p> <p>Other references to gender can be found in the section that presents examples of Pathfinder interventions. For example, the Durham location “female role models from the construction industry in its training programs in collaboration with the Construction Industry Training Board” (p.15). Another example was found at Southampton, where materials that challenged gender stereotypical views of occupations were prepared for students and parents.</p> <p>The researchers found that projects like those established by the Doncaster Pathfinder</p>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
					<p>“...raised the students awareness of careers for women within the construction industry and provided interesting and engaging hands-on activities in a variety of settings, in a female-only group” (p.33).</p>
<p>Roe, P., Wiseman, J., &amp; Costello, M.</p>	<p>Perceptions and Use of NVQs: A Survey of Employers in England - Brief</p>	<p>2006</p>	<p>A 4 page research brief prepared by members of BMG research for DfES. The authors were asked by DfES to look at the extent to which employers use and understand the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) system in England. Because the government considers employer perceptions to be an important component of NVQ provision. According to the authors, NVQs are still important to the government because they form part of the government skill strategy which is reliant upon employer instigated training for employees.</p> <p>Included in the text is a discussion of why NVQs were introduced in the 1980s. They were intended to “...certify outcomes” instead of showing that a person had gone through a specific training period, and “...they are based on units which allow a full NVQ at a particular level to be constructed from a number of models.</p>	<p>No specific definition of vocational education or training was provided in the brief.</p>	<p>No -gender is not mentioned in the brief but the full document does include references to data on the gendered nature of NVQ take-up and occupation selection.</p> <p>For example, they note that more women (55%) than men (45%) take up an NVQ. In addition, “the area of awards is strongly gendered, reflecting gender patterns within and between occupational participation. Thus, for example a high proportion of male awards are in skilled trades occupations whilst a high proportion of female awards are in</p>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			<p>They were supposed to be more flexible in order to better meet individual and employer needs.</p> <p>The study involved a literature review on NVQs, survey of 1500 employers across the country, interviews with 25 employers. The brief is divided into several sections: Introduction, Key Findings, literature review, survey methodology, survey findings and a conclusion. The authors found that there is limited understanding about NVQs among employers surveyed. NVQs also do not play as extensive a role as hoped for in skills certification. There is a level of skepticism among employers surveyed about the benefits of NVQs. Employers that do use NVQs consider them one of several options that can address their training needs but they would continue to use them and possibly augment their use of NVQs.</p> <p>Other findings were that qualifications isn't the only thing considered when recruiting (other elements include e.g.. personality, literacy and numeracy skills, interview performance. Where qualifications are concerned for lower skill levels NVQ and other qualifications are equally important while at intermediate and higher skill</p>		<p>personal services occupations” (p.12). There is also a section of the report that discusses Gender differences in use of NVQ and other qualifications that examined NVQ use in organizations with different proportions of males and females.</p>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			<p>levels NVQ is assessed as lesser value.</p> <p>Authors conclude that “NVQs occupy a legitimate place in an array of vocational qualifications” (p. 1).</p>		
DfES	Gender and education: the evidence on pupils in England	2007	<p>This 132 page discussion document does not focus specifically on vocational education and training instead it looks primarily at subject choice and attainment levels of boys and girls in primary through to secondary school. Current statistics are provided and summarized within a historical context where possible. Attention is also given to the issue of gender differences in special needs education, school exclusion, attendance and bullying. The authors attempt respond to the question of why are there “differences in girls’ and boys’ participation and achievement and examine what strategies are effective in tackling lower attainment levels” (p. iii).</p> <p>The report is divided into 18 chapters that include key findings, public examinations at the end of compulsory schooling; public examinations at age 18, national curriculum assessments; gender, social class and ethnicity: relative impact and interactions; has the gender gap increased; why is there a gender gap; strategies for raising the</p>	<p><b>No</b> – definition of vocational education is provided. In fact, while the report has separate chapters for GCSE and A level attainment, vocational education is not dealt with similarly.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> - The issue of gender is central to this report. As the authors note, the report focuses “primarily on gender differences of school-aged pupils” (p. iii). Particular attention is given to the issue of boys attainment.</p> <p>However, particular attention is given to the issue of boys attainment while no similar chapter has been created to discuss girls attainment. However, the authors do state that “the focus is not solely on the concept of the gender gap and boys underachievement but also acknowledges that, on the one hand, many boys are high attainers, on the other, that many girls face significant challenges” (p. .iii).</p>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			attainment of boys; and single sex education to name a few.		
Department for children, schools and families	Gender and education – mythbuster. Addressing gender and achievement: myths and realities.	2009	<p>This 12 page discussion document was created to be used by “...educators from all phases and stages of schooling. Its purpose is to identify and dispel some of the current and unhelpful myths about gender and education and to counter them with an evidence-based rationale” (p. ii). It is considered a way to open dialogue about gender-related issues with teachers, school staff and students.</p> <p>The document takes a look at 11 common myths about gender and education and provides a brief paragraph discussion of the reality behind the myth. The short paragraph is followed by a listing of research that supports the ‘reality’ behind the myth.</p>	<p><b>No</b> formal definition is provided for vocational education or training. While some of the myths discussed include male and female performance in science and math or pupil learning style, no reference is made regarding gender-based myths and vocational education.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b>, as indicated by the title, the entire document is about dispelling common myths about gender and educational achievement. Some of the myths include: “boys underachieve across the curriculum; and “...Boys’ educational performance suffers because the existing school curriculum doesn’t meet boys’ interest” (p.3-4).</p> <p>...boys are ‘naturally’ different to girls, and learn in different ways...coursework favours girls and ‘sudden death’ examinations favour boys” (p. 3-4))</p>
Burgess, M. & Rodger, J.	14-19 Qualifications Strategy Research	2010	A 17 page research brief commissioned by the Department for children, schools and families in 2009 to assist the government in the development of the 14-19 Qualification Strategy. “The focus of the study was the operation, role, and value of Vocational	<p><b>No</b> clear definition is proved for vocational education</p>	<p><b>No</b> – mention of gender in the document</p>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			<p>Qualifications (VQs) and Vocationally-Related Qualifications (VRQs) that are currently delivered as standalone qualifications and outside the four pathways” (p.1). The four pathways refer to the main routes used by students to obtain qualifications in England which include: “the general route – GCSE and A-Levels; Apprenticeships; Diplomas; and Foundation Learning” (p. 1).</p> <p>In-depth interviews were conducted with a range of organizations and education providers that included; local authorities, schools, colleges and work-based learning providers and learners. The discussion document provides an executive summary, along with section that discuss the government’s 14-19 qualifications strategy; the current qualifications landscape; delivery of standalone VQs/VRQs; VQ/VRQ learner performance and progression; vocational route to higher education; implementing the 14-19 qualifications strategy; gaps in the current 14-19 offer; barriers to implementation and recommendations.</p>		
Wolf, A.	Review of vocational education - The Wolf Report	2011	Commissioned by the newly elected government in 2010, Dr. Alison Wolf was asked to conduct a comprehensive review of vocational education provision for Key Stage 4 (14-19 years old). According to Dr. Wolf the 197	<b>Yes</b> - in her discussion of the scope of the study, Dr. Wolf makes the following statement regarding how vocational education has and is defined within the	<b>No</b> – the term or concept of gender is not formally mentioned in the report. No distinction is made between male and

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			<p>page review is intended to discuss how to “improve vocational education for 14-19 year olds and thereby promote successful progression into the labour market and into higher level education and training routes” (p. 19). The review is based on a review of data pertaining to vocational education strategy and structure in England and abroad. The document is divided into 6 main parts that include: Introduction; the social and labor market context; the educational context; an audit of current provision; recommendations; and conclusions and destinations.</p> <p>The report does not provide a listing of key findings, instead it includes a total of 27 recommendations and according to Dr. Wolf “underlying them are three very clear organizing principles for reform” (p. 8). These principles include (1) students should not be steered towards ‘dead end’ programmes, “any young person’s programme, whether ‘academic’ or ‘vocational’, should provide for labour market and educational progress on a wide front, whether immediately or later in life”; (2) good careers information and advice should be available and readily accessible to all who are interested, but less micro-management of vocational education by government is also needed which</p>	<p>English context. “Vocational education’ for 14-19 year olds can incorporate a wide range of provision, with very different purposes and outcomes. We have never, in this country, adopted an official definition. We do, however, have a relevant working one available. 14-19 is a highly regulated phase of education dominated by formal qualifications; and regulators currently require that all these qualifications other than GCSEs, A levels, iGCSEs and the IB incorporate clear vocational content and referencing. This rule usefully delineates the scope of this enquiry as involving, at a minimum, any such qualifications delivered to 14-19 year olds, and all young people on courses leading to them. This group of students is the focus of the Review” (p. 19)</p>	<p>female roles, perspectives, or performance in vocational education, instead generic terms such as ‘young people’ or ‘students’. The only reference to the term ‘girls’ was found in a footnote in the section (Occupational Change) of the document that talks about UK education and training policy that focused on promoting “...highly specific qualifications based on current jobs” (p. 36). The footnote refers to a 2002 paper by Dr. Wolf that commented on government efforts to try “repeatedly to persuade young people, especially girls, to follow ‘manufacturing’ courses” (p. 187). The term ‘females’ can be found in a chart (p. 32) that looks at Wage Returns” for NVQ Level 2 holders when compared with those with no qualifications</p>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			<p>requires a change in how government oversees and reports on performance; (3) the system of vocational education provision needs to be simplified in order to be able to provide good careers information and advice, free-up teaching and learning resources, and encourage innovation and efficiency.</p> <p>English vocational education is extraordinarily complex and opaque by European and international standards. This is because of central government: it's repeated, overlapping directives, and the complex, expensive and counterproductive structures that result. We have had over twenty years of micro-management and mounting bureaucratic costs, and its time this changed" (p. 9).</p> <p>Dr. Wolf states that <b>“This review therefore proposes a fundamental simplification of the vocational education system for 14-19 year olds.</b> It proposes major changes in its organization and funding, its regulatory structures, and its quality assurance mechanisms. These will allow institutions to respond to local and changing labour markets; and engage employers more directly in delivery and quality assurance. They will give schools greater access to vocational professionals, and young people greater</p>		<p>or a Level 1 qualification. However, in her discussion of the chart data, it is the data regarding male qualifications levels and wage returns that is mentioned, “Table 2 shows that occupationally specific level 2 vocational awards (NVQs) generally offer poor or even negative returns, and are of particularly low value to males who obtain them in college or on public training schemes, and whose wages are on average 12% or 23% lower than those of matched contemporaries who are ‘less’ qualified (p. 31)</p>

Encouragement, Enticement, and/or Deterrent

Author	Document Name	Publication Date	Overview	Definition of Vocational Education and/or Training	Issues of Gender
			<p>access to specialised instruction.</p> <p>The proposed changes will increase efficiency across the system, and reduce direct expenditures in a number of areas. It will also ensure that the courses and qualifications offered to young people have genuine labour market value and credibility. While decentralisation and flexibility are critical, central government retains a core responsibility to set broad policy and assure quality. It must ensure that our education system takes account of a changing world, of the demands made by the labour market, and the world economy, and of what this implies for young people's long-term progression, opportunity and success. It must also assure basic quality" (p. 22).</p>		