Year Three, Primary School Children's Perceptions of the World of Work

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Candidates Declaration

I certify that this thesis entitled "Year Three, Primary School Children's Perceptions of the World of Work" which has been submitted for the degree of Master of Education, is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged and that this thesis in whole or in part has not been submitted previously for an award including a higher degree to an other university or institution.

Monica Clare Hodder

Signature

Date
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ABSTRACT

What perceptions do Year Three children aged 8-10 years have about the world of work? This study was initiated because, as a parent and teacher I had noticed that some children are motivated more than others to study in the pursuit of a career.

Most of the research on the career development of young children is based on the work of Gottfredson's developmental model (1981) in North America; it has not been established previously whether this model applies to Australian children. The findings of this study confirm Gottfredson's theory about children's capacity to make tentative career choices. Parents, teachers and the media all influence children's career aspirations in varying degrees. Although parents play a role in assisting their children to gain knowledge about occupational preferences children do not necessarily follow their parents in the same occupational interests. Parents are a good source of career education for their offspring. While children have some idea about the hierarchical nature of occupational work, they are still unclear as to specific aspects of the supervisory role. As with adults generally, children appear to have limited knowledge about the specific tasks related to particular occupations. It appears from this study that the most common way children access occupational information is through the media.

The implications from this investigative study are that children will benefit from greater access to career education, commencing as early as primary school. In order to make realistic future occupational selections children will benefit from having more specific information regarding occupational tasks. It therefore follows that teachers need to be made aware of these implications and plan relevant curricula to address the specific needs of students. It is also evident that parents could assist this process by making themselves available to clearly discuss their work roles with their children.
INTRODUCTION

What are the motivating factors that encourage a young person to take an interest in school and ultimately pursue a particular occupation? My interest in occupational aspirations has developed over a number of years. I began by thinking about occupational choices of my own children, friends' children and former students.

In my experience when young people have had an idea about a specific occupation they are more motivated to study in order to pursue their career goal. Occupation according to *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (2003) refers to a person's job or regular activity. For these individuals, occupational information has tended to come from a family member, friend or significant other who shows a passion for work and is able to articulate this love of a particular occupation well. Based on such observations it therefore follows that children who have access to interesting role models and career information may have a better chance to be motivated to pursue a particular career. Career according to *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (2003) refers to the job or series of jobs that you do during your working life especially if you continue to get better jobs and earn more money.

Currently, formal career education is in middle to late secondary school curricula. However, according to the research of Gottfredson (1981, 1985b, 1986b, 1996, 2002), vocational aspirations follow a developmental model, which suggests that some of the important decisions about futures have been made before an individual reaches adolescence. Vocation according to *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (2003) refers to a type of work that you feel you are suited to doing and to which you should give all time and energy, or the feeling of suitability itself.

Research developed by the Tasmanian Department of Education and published in *Learning Together* (2000) has identified that students need to be well prepared through curriculum, teaching and assessment to enable them to live and work in the twenty-first century. The report suggests that the working life of today’s students will be vastly different from that of their parents. Accordingly, students will need to become life-long learners and develop skills to assist themselves in the changing world of work. *Essential Learnings For All* (2002, 2004), Tasmania’s Primary School curriculum document, acknowledges that the responsibility of the education system is
to supply relevant career information and to assist students in identifying career opportunities. In Victoria, *Blueprint for Government Schools* (2003) has followed Tasmania’s lead and provided a curriculum framework to develop a more effective educational system. The student curriculum component designed in the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS)* was released in November 2004. This document, like Tasmania’s, advocates that students need to develop a range of competencies, to function adequately in a changing workplace.

Gottfredson’s developmental model (1981, 1985b, 1986b, 1996, 2002) proposes that children eliminate aspirational career choices according to their sex and social status, during primary school. Her vocational aspiration framework (1981) suggests that children classify jobs according to power and size, sex-type, social status and self-concept. According to Gottfredson using the information gathered over time, individuals construct cognitive maps of occupations. These cognitive maps contain zones of acceptable alternatives, that is, aspirations that are within a realistic and tolerable choice range, and which are bound by the criteria mentioned above, and this framework guides occupational decision-making.

Parents play a role in the guiding their children by, their social standing in the community, their own occupational roles and information they impart to their offspring. According to Trice (1990), when researching children aged around eight years of age, suggests that children in rural areas are influenced by their parents. This influence is deemed greater than their urban counterparts. Munchinsky (1994) finds that consistent influence on vocational interest comes from one’s relationship with parents, which may well be linked, to social status.

Children spend many hours and a total of seven years in primary school before moving onto secondary institutions. Although the primary education system, in Victoria, the *Blueprint for Government Schools* (2003) acknowledges the need to prepare children for the world of work, it fails to acknowledge that children are eliminating occupational options before they have acquired any real knowledge about the world of occupational work. As a primary school teacher I can see the benefits of assessing children’s perceptions of work in order to ascertain their level of occupational knowledge. Then, based on children’s knowledge, better education in career options could be implemented before secondary school. Children would then
be more informed and better able to make decisions about selecting subjects related to specific occupations.

AIM AND SCOPE

The aim of this study is to document the perceptions that Year Three school children aged 8-10 years have about the world of occupational work, in order to contribute to the limited body of knowledge, which is currently available in this field. There is a plethora of the vocational research located within secondary school curricula, tertiary and adulthood. However, there is minimal research in Australia involving primary school aged children.

According to Gottfredson’s developmental model (1981) stage two, children between the ages of six and eight years see occupational choices largely based on sex-role orientation. Children proceed to the third stage, social evaluation which is based on classification of people and objects according to social standing. Therefore, the occupational perceptions of Year Three School children aged 8-10 years is positioned within the second and third stages of Gottfredson’s research.

STRUCTURE OF THESIS

In chapter 1, current theories related to career development are presented. Main themes identified are the developmental model, the relevance of self-concept, and the career influencing factors, such as significant others and available resources are discussed. In chapter 2, research questions arising from the preceding theoretical discussion are identified. Also methodological issues such as selection of semi-structured interviews with children as a method of gathering data, and the process involved in feeding back information to all Year Three children for verification are considered. In chapter 3, the children’s interview responses are examined for themes to allow comparisons to be made with current vocational literature. Finally, chapter 4 presents the implications of this study for students and teachers as well as identifying questions that may require further investigation.
CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This study is located within current theories of career development Holland (1959, 1973, and 1985), Gottfredson (1981, 1985b, 1986b, 1996, 2002), Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad & Herma (1951), and Super (1953, 1963, 1981, 1990). It aims to investigate the importance of career as a developmental process, as well as the role of self knowledge and other influencing factors in occupational choice, with a particular focus on young children. Many studies Super (1953, 1963, 1981, 1990), Ginzberg and associates (1951) have researched the career aspirations of young people during their secondary education; however, there is limited research that investigates what primary school children know about the “world of work”.


This chapter organizes career research within several main themes. It commences with Parsons’ early research foundations, establishing career education as a developmental process. Other influential developmental career theorists will be outlined and the relevance of current educational research will be discussed. The importance of contributing factors such as the knowledge of self and sex-role stereotypes will be identified. The hierarchical structure of work and the nature of tasks involved in particular occupations will be outlined. Influential factors such as the role of parents, significant others or available resources on occupational choice will be discussed. Finally, the summary outlines the implications of career research for the education of today’s children.
**Early Research**

From a historical perspective the theories of career choice and development have been influenced by the early work of Parsons’ (1909) conceptual framework for career decision making. Parsons identified that young people need to have real knowledge of self and the requirements of a particular type of work and be able to adopt a sense of reasoning between these two sets of information. Career theory has developed from this premise.

In the early 1900’s major influences that impacted on modes of work were the collapse of the cottage industry, the world wars and the depression according to Brown, Brooks and associates (1996a). A pattern of career theories gradually emerged to meet changing needs. The main focus of these theories was to assist people to move into different types of occupations which would satisfy both personal and economic needs. These theories include the broad constructs of socioeconomic status of family, gender, self-concept and personal interests.

**Influential Theorists**

**Holland**

One of the most influential theorists in this field is John Holland (1959, 1973, 1985) who developed the theory of personality traits and environment fit as major factors in career choice. The Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI; Holland, 1959) was Holland’s tool for assisting people to make informed career choices based on self-reporting of personal interests. This inventory constitutes a profile of interests and occupations that can be grouped across six broad interest categories of “Realistic”, “Investigative”, “Artistic”, “Social”, “Enterprising” and “Conventional” (RIASEC). During 1970s the Self-Directed Search (SDS) became one of the most widely used instruments in Australia and Holland’s VPI was later incorporated into Strong Interest Inventory according to Campbell & Holland, (1972).

Holland’s categories of “Realistic” interests relate to manual or practical tasks and matched occupations, which would include those such as plumbers and mechanics. “Investigative” interests relate to problem-solving, data collecting and scientific tasks and matched occupations would include those such as doctors and biologists. “Artistic” interests relate to creative, performing and designing pursuits and matched
occupations would include psychologists and musicians. "Social" interests relate to nurturing, caring and interaction with others, and matched occupations would include teachers and social workers. "Enterprising" interests relate to selling goods, political and business pursuits and matched occupations would include those such as lawyers, general managers and caterers. "Conventional" interests relate to a preference for systematic tasks and working with technology and matched occupations would include those such as bookkeepers and secretarial workers. Holland proposes that a person's strength of interest in a particular area can be represented by one of types categorises by Holland as "Realistic", "Investigative", "Social", "Enterprising" and "Conventional". Holland’s VPI measures interest categories using a hexagon model where the relationship positioning of one’s interests is significant. For example, on this model the categories of “Social” and “Artistic” are adjacent and therefore, are more likely to be closer linked than the other widespread interests such as “Investigative” and “Enterprising”. According to Holland (1973) people generally tend to choose an occupation that fits in with their desired interests. Therefore, the development of one’s interests, according to this theory, plays an important role in one’s working life. This approach is very much based on the work of Parsons (1909) who first developed, what has become known as the "trait and factor" theory. According to the theory one must have a clear understanding and knowledge of oneself, together with specific occupational knowledge, the opportunity for success in a chosen field and the ability to bring these facets together is described as developing "true reasoning".

Holland (1959, 1973, 1985) has made a considerable contribution to vocational theory. The major focus of this work is the interaction between personal interest and environmental factors. According to Brown, Brooks and associates (1996a) Holland has focused on personal interests and environmental fit and completely ignores the development of certain personality traits, which may be influenced by hereditary and early life experiences.

While Holland (1992) has focused on personal interests, Gottfredson (1986b) examines economic status and occupational aptitude and concludes that intelligence is the most important distinction. Gottfredson reports that the higher the job level the more important intelligence is, whereas in lower status positions, motor skills are
considered to be more relevant. According to Gottfredson and Lapin (1997) this has implications for any career study involving young children.

Many children seem to have needlessly and inappropriately narrowed their options at an earlier age leaving them with only the remnant of choice. Many turn their attention away from good options for bad reasons. Compromise is a process by which individuals relinquish their most preferred future and settle for less compatible, less preferred options because the most compatible ones seem less accessible (pp. 426 - 427).

This suggests that the construct of self-concept has significant relevance to the process of compromise.

Alternatively, Super (1953, 1981, 1990), Super et al. (1963), Ginzenberg and associates (1951) and Gottfredson (1981, 1985b, 1986b, 1996, 2002) have suggested that a developmental process takes place which resembles the personal development of the individual.

**Super**

Super's (1953, 1963, 1981, 1990) "life-span life-space" theory, revised several times, draws on the fact that individuals have needs, values, interests and abilities that make them suited to several occupations. He states that within every occupation there is a certain pattern of required abilities. He acknowledges that the development of the self-concept (which is acquired through social learning) can change over time. With young children, he suggests that self-concept can be learned through observations and identification with adults and tends to become more stable during late adolescence. Super's (1953) developmental career model is linked to broad life stages, which differs from Gottfredson's (1981) developmental model which is confined to ages from preschool children to young adults. According to Super (1953), people play many social roles of which their occupation is one. Within this process there are a number of factors, which influence career path; these include such factors as intelligence, educational standard, personality traits, parents' socioeconomic levels
and life opportunities. Super asserts that the career choice process ends in a compromise between interests, values, capacities and opportunities.

Super's (1963) study revised his earlier broad stage theory to growth stages based on chronological age. The stages put forward include the "Process of Growth", "Exploration", "Establishment" and "Maintenance and Disengagement". According to Super the "Growth period" (4-13 years) is a time of developing career ideas and increasing one's confidence and ability in career decision making. He asserts that during the "Exploration period" (14-24 years), individuals identify and implement their choice of occupation. He further asserts that during the "Establishment period" (25-45 years) individuals spend time consolidating their career. His "Maintenance period" (45-65 years) could be termed as midlife questioning of an individual's career, and finally, he nominates "Disengagement" (65 years onwards) as the period which involves the preparation of younger staff members to take over positions as the older staff retire from the workforce.

The vocational theory proposed by Super acknowledges the existence of individual differences as well as viewing work as a "way of life". Unlike Gottfredson (1981) Super suggests that every person is able to succeed in a number of occupations during their working life. Parents and friends can be a source of identification and role models for their children. In the final analysis, according to Super (1953)

Work satisfaction and life satisfaction depend upon the extent to which the individual finds adequate outlets for his abilities, interests and personality traits and values, they depend upon his establishment of type of work, a work situation and a way of life in which he can play the kind of role which his growth and exploratory experiences have led him to consider congenial and appropriate (p. 190).

Super extends further this notion of career development as a life long process in later studies and reports that the career choices are continuous process throughout life rather than a single event. According to Super (1981)
Studies of the life-span and life-space have made it clear that occupational choice or assignment is not once in a lifetime, on leaving school or university... People and situations develop and... a career decision tends to be a series of mini decisions of varying degrees of importance (p. 38).

Super (1990) continues to acknowledge the implementation of one’s self-concept as fundamental in career decision making. He asserts that children begin to construct their own vocational self-concept by imitating the most appealing roles and forming opinions about relevant interests and skills. According to Super the continuous playing of certain roles with attention to results will strengthen one’s vocational self-concept.

Ginzberg and Associates

While many vocational theorists advocate a developmental model the structures tend to vary. Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma’s developmental model (1951) proposes that in early childhood occupational aspirations begin with a fantasy choice which children will eventually grow out of. They suggest that during this time however, children will make choices regardless of the barriers that may stand in their way. Furthermore, during the “Tentative Choice period”, which corresponds with nine and ten year olds, children begin to become more aware of reality, due to the pressures exercised by both parents and teachers to develop good working habits rather than being involved in play. They refer to the period that follows this stage as the “Reality Choice”, which corresponds with young people trying to make their own decisions with less reliance on parents. This, however, is often considered as a time of conflict as there is still financial dependence on parents. According to Ginzberg and associates (1951) the need to understand the required vocational behaviour becomes more relevant and specific, the closer one moves towards making a decision about an occupation.

Gottfredson

A significant developmental theorist is Gottfredson (1981). Her theory of circumscription and compromise is particularly relevant to the study of children’s career development. Gottfredson accepts the idea of self-concept and the person-job
fit but also includes the variables of class, sex and intelligence, as well as the process of compromise the integral to vocational development.

Gottfredson proposes that individuals have common occupational images that are usually based on the jobs of people they know, who lead a particular a life style, or on rewards associated with a particular profession. These occupational images or generalizations become the basis for cognitive maps of occupations. She relates that, although individuals construct their own cognitive maps about particular occupations, these images are based on limited information such as sex type or the field of work. These dimensions according to Gottfredson assist people in defining a shared view of individual aspects of each occupation which she terms as a cognitive map of occupations. It is suggested that at an early age children are making primitive maps about particular occupations, but as time goes by, these perceptions become similar to adults’ view of occupations. In her model, Gottfredson proposes the concept of social space which is structured by the range of alternatives that one might consider in the cognitive map of occupations. These acceptable alternatives are based on the reflected self perceptions of what one would like to be in the future. Over time, these perceptions can change according to perceived accessibility or compatibility of an occupational aspiration. Gottfredson describes this narrowing procedure in the developmental process when options are eliminated from further consideration because they are incompatible with one’s self-concept, as circumscription, and when unacceptable alternatives are relinquished as a preferred option, as compromise.

Gottfredson has modelled her theory on the work of the developmental psychologist, Jean Piaget (cited in Mussen, 1983). Gottfredson’s (1981, 1996, and 2002) four developmental stages coincide with a sequentially higher order level of thinking and provide a structure useful for conducting career research.

The first stage is:

“Orientation to Size and Power” (ages three to five years) and coincides with children’s abilities to discriminate, in a simple way, the concept of size and power.
Stage Two:

"Orientation to Sex Roles" (ages six to eight years), refers to children being able to identify sex-roles as the means of discriminating vocational aspirations.

Stage Three:

"Orientation to Social Evaluation" (ages nine to thirteen years), refers to children becoming aware of social standing as a means of discriminating between different occupations.

Stage Four:

"Orientation to the Internal, Unique Self" (ages fourteen years and over) refers to the final stage whereby all occupational knowledge is integrated. During this stage adolescents are considered better able to comprehend and integrate both abstract and complex information and become more aware of defining aspirational goals and developing self-concept.

Gottfredson's developmental stages have been briefly outlined above however, they will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

It is worth noting that unlike Super's growth stages which moved from four years of age to sixty-five years plus, Gottfredson's stages evolved over a much shorter period of time from three years of age to fourteen plus years. For comparison, it was useful for this study to have age related stages however, given that children develop at different rates, Gottfredson's later studies concentrated more on the stages rather than the age relationship.

**Contributing Factors**

**Knowledge of Self**

Self-concept is an encompassing view of oneself that develops over time. It is an amalgam of all aspects of life, one's interests, self-ratings, values and abilities. One can see the relevance of self-concept when a person is considering their interests in the context of Holland's measures of interests. However, if one has an inaccurate
self-concept or low self esteem, this could create a false or unrealistic view of one’s abilities and hence, an inaccurate view of themselves. Self-concept is important when thinking about future aspirations because it includes what we might think about ourselves in future terms.

Most developmental theorists have incorporated the construct of self-concept in their work. For example it is a major component of the theories of Super (1953) is also considered by Gottfredson (1981, 1996)

Gottfredson’s (1981, 1996) studies have identified, clarified and justified the use of a self-concept construct in developmental theories. According to Gottfredson (1981) gender self-concept is one of the most important. It will be the final compromise made regarding aspirations.

Gender self-concept will be the most strongly protected aspect of self followed by maintenance of one’s social standing or worth - one’s social class and ability self-concept. One’s identity is portrayed through one’s personality and specific interests and abilities on the job is the most flexible (p. 572).

Although for young children the self-concept might be immature, it nevertheless is considered to be a “well established construct” in theoretical terms.

Gottfredson (1985b) reports that the properties related to self-concept encompass one’s own perception including beliefs and evaluations of feelings. According to Gottfredson, “self-concept is physical, social, spiritual or moral being” (p. 159).

Gottfredson describes self-concept as being both what is and what is not important in the view of oneself. This view includes ability, interests, personality and place in society. According to Gottfredson, people generally are more concerned about affirming or protecting their self-concept than whether it is accurate or not.

Therefore, according to Gottfredson’s (1981) findings people choose careers that are most consistent with their view of themselves. Regardless of whether people are able
to articulate their self-concept accurately, they nevertheless act upon these self perceptions.

When looking at the process of compromise, everyone has priorities as to what perception of themselves they want represented. According to Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2002) the most strongly protected perception of self, is gender, and this is followed by social standing. The most likely to be sacrificed is a person's interests. This is done in order to maintain sex-type and prestige in relation to occupational choice.

Research suggests the relevance of self-efficacy as an influencing factor on career decision-making. According to Bandura (1997) "perceived self-efficacy refers to belief in one's capabilities to organise and execute the course of action required to produce given attainment" (p.3). While self-concept was previously defined as the total view one has of oneself, self-efficacy is one's ability to take an expected behaviour into account, and to achieve a desired outcome. Hackett and Betz (1981) relate this influence as affecting both the choice of occupation and the success and persistence in the choice decision. This knowledge of self can vary between males and females. According to Betz and Schifano (2000) in females there is measurably lower interest, self-efficacy and confidence than male counterparts. Self-efficacy directly relates to one's perceived ability to perform in an occupational role, therefore this has implications as to the range of occupations that females may realistically consider as viable options. For example, according to Betz and Schifano (2000) females involved in education, have been identified as having lower self-efficacy experience in areas of Mathematics and Science than males. Notwithstanding that this self-efficacy research relates primarily to adolescents and adults from a developmental perspective it may well have implications for younger age groups.

Another view of work perceptions in children is espoused by Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory, in which it is suggested that the strength or weakness of one's self-efficacy will determine whether coping behaviours will occur. Krumboltz (1979) believes that self-efficacy has a bearing on the cognitive and behavioural skills needed to perform different tasks. According to Krumboltz, the individual's belief in their ability to perform certain skills and the associated perceived outcomes achieved
through that performance is a better predictor of the behaviours than the actual skill performance.

An alternative view put forward by Nauta, Kahn, Angell and Cantarelli (2002) draws on Bandura’s (1997) work which reports that learning occurs through observing the behaviour of others. According to Nauta et al. (2002) there is an implication that the reciprocal relationship between career interests and self-efficacy is evident during early adulthood, with self-efficacy playing the more dominant role. Similarly, Holland (1985, 1992) considers interests to be stable, typically, by adolescence. However, there may be an interdependent relationship between these constructs as Tracey (2002) and Lent, Larkin and Brown (1989) report that the process may be even more reciprocal than Nauta et al. suggest. According to Lent et al. (1989) “Social Cognitive Career Theory” (SCCT) “task interest in turn motivates further interaction with the task, yielding more opportunity for personal and vicarious success experiences and further self-efficacy enhancement” (p. 286). Nauta et al. extend this notion further and relate,

The model suggests that outcome expectation (belief about the consequence of engaging a task or set of behaviours) also plays a pivotal role in interest development and self efficacy is believed to result from previous success or failure of the experience and other sources such as verbal persuasion, physiological arousal and vicarious learning (p. 299).

Nauta et al. (2002) report that another viable factor could be the exposure to a powerful role model, which may assist in the development of interests which after a period time, could, in turn, affect one’s self efficacy. This notion of the influence of role models will be considered later in the section under “Influential Factors”.

**Structure of Work**

Gottfredson has identified the concept of cognitive mapping of occupations. These cognitive maps are based on generalizations or images about a specific occupation. According to Gottfredson (1981), “a cognitive map is a generalization about an
occupation that links the individual images to each other into a more coherent whole”.
(p. 547).

Most of these images are stereotypes which often include characteristics and lifestyle aspects about people they know who work in these positions. The images that people hold are usually detailed and organized into categories of similarities and differences.

Gottfredson has drawn on the Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI; Holland, 1959) occupational categories together with gender, social and prestige status to plot “cognitive maps of occupations”. Gottfredson’s (1981) study showed that common cognitive maps of occupations can be defined by the axes of social or prestige status, fields of work and sex types. Figure 1 shows occupational choices grouped into the types mentioned above. According to Gottfredson there tend to be “Realistic” (manual) occupations clustered towards the masculine and positioned lower on the prestige scale while “Enterprising” (sales and management) and “Investigative” (medicine and science) occupations fall between the masculine axis and neutral range but higher than “Realistic” on the prestige scale. “Artistic” (creative and performing) occupations, while overall slightly higher than “Realistic” and “Conventional” on the prestige scale, are centred more towards neutral gender. The remaining “Social” (teaching and nursing) and “Conventional” (secretarial and bookkeeping) are skewed towards feminine axis and both fall well below the “Investigative” occupations. Gottfredson’s (1981) study attempts to clarify and provide a clear representation of the concept of shared cognitive maps of occupations.
Figure 1


Gottfredson’s theory proposes that all people hold an occupational image which is integrated into a “shared cognitive map” of occupations which Holland (1992) refers to as occupational stereotypes. Gottfredson (1981) suggests that the development of individual cognitive maps and zones of acceptable alternatives help individuals to distinguish the dimensions that differentiate occupations as either masculine or feminine, and high or low prestige. This makes possible the identification of acceptable fields of work, and allows different occupations to be rated against these dimensions. According to Gottfredson’s theory an individual’s vocational preference is represented as a range rather than as a single item, and children, as a rule, recreate their parent’s social order. Like Super (1953), Gottfredson reports that one’s occupation is a most important social role whereby one’s identity and lifestyle may be either determined or restricted. The occupational identity is a very public and ongoing representation of a person.

There is limited research evidence to confirm whether children have any detailed knowledge about the hierarchical nature of work or specific details about what
happens in any job. McGee and Stockard's (1991) investigation of the ability of a group of Year Four primary school children to assess occupational knowledge, specific occupational characteristics, and the effect that gender has on their perceptions is one of the exceptions. This study confirmed that children who had some personal contact with a person in the occupation or who had vicarious contact through the media, had more understanding than those children with no contact at all. There were no gender differences in the children's perceptions. Children's understanding of occupational roles according to prestige and status becomes more defined as children develop. De Fleur and De Fleur (1967), Gottfredson (1981, 1996).

Developmental theorists suggest that the formation of vocational aspirations starts early in life. It is, therefore, important to look at the beliefs of young children. Most of the current research is focused on aspirations rather than the construct of interests. However, Tracey (2001) has used a circular structure based on Holland's (1985) RIASEC types to research young children. According to Tracey (2001) children have a limited knowledge base regarding occupations, leading to claims that the validity of assessments of aspirations seems questionable. It appears that while the construct of self-concept has been well researched there has been little research defining its relationship to reported interests of children.

**Influential Factors**

A number of other factors have been suggested as exerting both positive and negative effects on the types of work that are deemed appealing for the general population. People look for jobs with specific characteristics that appeal to them. Role models play a major influence in the career decision-making according to Nauta and Kokaly (2001). The American Psychological Association (1982) defines role models as "real or theoretical persons perceived as being ideal standards for emulation in one or a selected number of roles" (p.150). Ginzberg and associates (1951) concede that both parents and teachers have an influence over children's vocational choices. They suggest that this occurs both directly and indirectly in the values that they teach regarding the prestige that is attached to occupations.

While there have been many studies to document parents' influence over children, Dryler (1998) reports that parents are important role models for their children. Glover (1978) suggests that parental influence is stronger with younger children for three
reasons. Children before entering school can often spend longer time with a parent, secondly children have not developed competent their social skills and finally children use parents as a means of assessing their competency skills.

Research suggests that parents and significant others have an influence over children’s career choices. Nauta et al. (2002) as mentioned earlier consider that exposure to powerful role models could have a positive effect both on interests and self efficacy. Some studies have nominated parents as playing a significant role. For example, Muchinsky (1994) reports that “Perhaps the life history factor having the most consistent effect on vocational behaviour is relationship with one’s parents” (p. 539). Likewise, Nelson’s (1978) study on age and sex difference in children’s occupational reasoning found that “It is evident the initial perceptions children have of adults is not of an occupational role, per se, but of their role in relationship to the child” (p. 295). However, according to Muchinsky there is a particularly strong relationship between girls and their mothers. Hackett, Esposito and O’Halloran (1989) report that female role models have a strong influence over female career choices. Socioeconomic status also has an influence on the vocational interests of women, although Goodale and Hall (1976) report that females are more independent of their parents’ background than males when formulating their future career plans.

There is also evidence put forward by Gottfredson (1981) to suggest that women in lower socioeconomic strata choose more traditional occupations like teaching or office work, while women from higher socioeconomic backgrounds select more non-traditional vocations such as artistic pursuits.

Trice (1990) notes the variation in influencing factors between rural and urban areas, when researching the stability of children’s career aspirations across two age groups of eight and eleven year olds. He found that these young children made a transition from fantasy occupational aspirations to more realistic responses when the children were retested eight months later. This study showed that children, particularly the eight year old cohort, made choices that are strongly related to those of their parents and others in the community. However, results for rural children revealed a smaller range of options which are more closely related to their parents’ occupations. Girls in the study had a smaller range of career options than the boys. However, it must be considered that there are often less options available in rural communities than urban
counterparts. According to Trice, when a close family member or friend is working in a particular job, the child’s knowledge of that career is more substantial.

Brown, Fukunaga and Umemoto (1996b), when reviewing the literature on Social Class, Work, and Retirement Behavior between 1990 and 1996 found that when taking into account the effect of social class status on career aspirations, a rise in the father’s occupational prestige correlated with a rise in the daughter’s career aspirations. It is suggested that other people, such as extended family, teachers and friends can also provide the opportunity to act as suitable role models for children.

**Educational Research**

Recent research reflects the relevance of career development theory to the educational needs of today’s children.

*Learning Together* (2000), documenting the Tasmanian Department of Education’s vision for the future of education, identifies the movement from an industrial era to an information age as being complex and diverse and, therefore requiring new skills. It advocates the notion of catering for a better quality of life and the requirement of life long learning skills. Similarly, Tasmania’s *Essential Learnings for All* framework (2002, 2004) has been designed to meet the challenges of our changing world. The Queensland Department of Education has developed a similar curriculum focus with *New Basics* (1999), which addresses the educational skills necessary to live in the economic times of today’s world. It is within this context that primary students will learn the essential skills acknowledged by *Learning Together* (2000), and the recently published Victoria’s *Blueprint for Government Schools* (2003) which provides comprehensive curriculum framework for all students from Prep to Year Twelve. This document outlines the aim of state education as providing for the students’ needs in terms of economics and well being. The *Blueprint for Government Schools* has drawn extensively on all current research to ensure that every aspect of education is covered in developing the needs to live in a more complex world. The document is divided into flagships of which the *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* (VELS) is the curriculum guidelines for teaching and learning. Other flagships include; curriculum development, leadership skill development and advancement, mentoring of new principals, role of parents and creating and supporting a performance and development culture, networking of educational institutions within the local and
global community. A draft is currently in place called Australian Blueprint for Career Development (ABCD). This document offers a framework for teachers and students to develop the competencies necessary to instruct and skills students in career education. This curriculum framework will assist teachers to improve and extend their current programs and to create career development as a life long project. This career development draft has nominated the specific areas that students will need to develop and the program will begin in Year Seven at the beginning of secondary school rather than later.

As all of these documents suggest, the main components of curriculum include developing high levels of competency in literacy, numeracy, information technology and problem solving, together with highly developed social skills such as personal communication and the ability to work both independently and co-operatively. It is stated that the development of life-long learning skills will enable transition to the wider community and a changing workplace. This development of skills for life complements the idea that children develop early career aspirations long before the need to access them.


As previously stated, Super (1963) predict multiple or varied occupations in a working life. This notion is reiterated by the Learning Together (2000) and Victoria’s Blueprint for Government Schools (2003) view of a future where experiences of social and economic change will further impact on the employment patterns of the worker. These changing patterns mean that workers may find it necessary to retrain or re-skill at different times during their working life. Therefore, Learning Together and draft
Australian Blueprint for Career Education advocate that young people are given accurate advice on the potential labour market, skill development and the opportunity to access it via the internet. It is essential then, as advocated in the draft Blueprint for Career Education that schools provide career planning advice.

SUMMARY

Several common themes in a broad range of vocational development theory are relevant to this study. Firstly, there is a general consensus among Ginzberg and associates (1951), Super (1953, 1963, 1990) Gottfredson (1981, 1996), and others that career development begins at an early age and that there is evidence to suggest distinct stages that correspond with the life span. Gottfredson (1981) identifies these stages as distinct periods where children use size, power, sex, status, social standing and self-concept to discriminate and develop career awareness.

Ginzberg and associates see this development as occurring over a shorter space of time than Super (1990) reports and in which parents and teachers assist the children to move towards the work ethic at a very early age. Super’s view of vocational development is across a much longer period encompassing a whole lifetime. Gottfredson proposes that people hold an image about a particular occupation inside their head and organize information into a shared cognitive map. Most of this information however, is based on a lifestyle related to a particular person or occupation rather than on any real knowledge about the type of tasks associated with it. Gottfredson’s theory of circumscription, in which career choice eliminations are made and never reconsidered, has implications for some young people who narrow their field of selection prematurely during childhood.

Development of one’s interests is a significant factor in one’s working life. Holland’s hexagonal model of interests has not been developed for children. Tracey (2001) uses a circular variation on Holland’s model but there is little research, at present, to establish the relevance of such interest models to the career aspirations of children. Tracey acknowledges that the mechanisms involved in children’s thinking about interests move from a childhood structure to an adult one. Again there is little research at present to define this process clearly.
Current Tasmanian *Essential Learnings for All* and *Blueprint for Government Schools*' curriculum document *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* (VELS) advocates that students be taught skills that will equip them to live in a rapidly changing world. At present, career research, specifically for younger children in primary school, is limited. It is suggested that, given the changing educational climate, more in-depth knowledge about children's perceptions of work during their early stages of development would be of benefit.
CHAPTER 2

ARGUMENT AND METHOD

One of the main themes identified in Chapter One is that career knowledge and decision-making follow a developmental process and, appearing from a very early age, the developmental stages correspond with the life span. Following the work of Holland (1992), Super (1953), and Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma (1951), Gottfredson (2002) describes the developmental process in terms of circumscription and compromise she poses the question, “Why do children seem to recreate the social inequalities among their elders long before they, themselves have experienced any barriers to pursuing their dreams?” (cited in Brown, Brooks and associates, 2002, p. 85). The four stages of development in self-concept and occupational preference, as outlined in Gottfredson’s theory, make it possible to study young children’s progression through this social process. While there is substantial career research for adolescents and adults, there is very limited documentation of occupational perceptions of primary school aged children.

In this chapter Gottfredson’s second and third stages of career development are examined in terms of their implications for primary children aged 8-10 years, leading to the articulation of research questions. Also included are details of participants and setting, selection of method, instruments used, the interview process and data collection, followed by ethical considerations and occupational information about the current study.

CAREER EDUCATION

Career choice seem removed from the primary school, let alone the Year Three classroom. However, over a number of years, topics such as sex, drugs, and bike education amongst other issues, have found a place in the primary school curriculum. One of the important roles of the educator is the development of the “whole person”. The early years of schooling have become an optimal time for social as well as academic development. In the case of career education, one would expect that early knowledge is preferable to a lack of knowledge.
The focus of this study is upon children's development at the ages of 8-10 years which occur within Gottfredson's Stage Two and Stage Three. In Australian schools children described in these stages will typically be in the Year Three classroom.

**Gottfredson's Developmental Model**

It is evident that self-concept is an integral part of many developmental models. According to Gottfredson and Lapin (1997),

> The circumscription and compromise theory follows earlier theories in emphasizing that career choice reflects people's efforts to implement their preferred self-concepts and satisfaction with career choice depends on how well that choice fits or matches the self-concept. The theory differs from others in viewing career development as an attempt to implement primarily a social self and only secondarily, a psychological self, that is, an attempt to place one's self in the broader social order (p. 420).

However, in the case of young children, one must keep in mind that the self-concept is not fully mature but still developing. Gottfredson (1996) reports that even though children have primitive images of both the world and themselves they still make judgments about themselves, and suitable types of work.

Gottfredson's developmental model (1981) was introduced in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2 the four stages are elaborated on in more detail.

**Stage One**

The first of Gottfredson's four stages is "Orientation to Size and Power". This first stage corresponds to children aged from three to five years of age. Typically, preschool children fit into this category. During this stage children are using intuitive thought processes and have not yet achieved object constancy. Children's perceptions of self and others are in terms of big and little. They can identify occupational preference in terms of an adult role rather than a child's one. As this stage has occurred prior to children reaching primary school age it will not be focused on in this study.
Stage Two
The focus of this study is, primarily, on the second stage, known as “Orientation to Sex Roles”, which corresponds to children aged between six and eight years of age. School children between the year levels of one and three fit into this category. At this stage the children can, according to Gottfredson, classify objects, people and occupations according to simple groupings. Children are developing more concrete thinking skills and can distinguish between good and bad.

Children’s perceptions of self and others are seen in terms of gender. They see occupational preference in terms of sex-role stereotypes. This refers to perceptions of a job being formed in terms of its suitability for a male or a female. Kohlberg (1966) supports the concept that children develop sex-role stereotypes early in life. Identification is no longer considered a male versus female concept but children are now aware of the status of occupations. This stage coincides with Piaget’s stage in which he asserts that children are able to think in concrete terms and refers to decisions which are based on the overt appearances of people, that is, hair, clothes, etc. He also asserts that their sex is the superior one. Vocational aspirations during this stage therefore involve assigning sex appropriate jobs. While there is a developing awareness of social class, children view status as based on being rich or poor. Gottfredson suggests that during this stage, children eliminate half of the occupational world as being unsuitable because of their sex-type perceptions.

It is noted that, while Gottfredson’s (1981) study has given a specific age range, Gottfredson (1996) acknowledges that there can be possible variations in rates of development; in fact, there can be a considerable variation in both age and ability between children within any primary school class. Again, the second stage is particularly relevant to this study, as according to Gottfredson, it describes how the interaction between children’s self-concept and occupational preference is based on gender perception.

Stage Three
The third stage of “Orientation and Social Valuation” corresponds to the ages of nine to thirteen years. School children between the year levels of four and eight fit into this category. During this stage children develop the ability to classify objects, people and occupations according to two major criteria. Their perceptions of self and others are made in terms of social class and intelligence. They see occupational preference in
terms of prestige. While Gottfredson’s second stage is the main focus of this study, the third stage also has some relevance given the variance in the age group. As stated previously, not all children develop at the same rate so there is evidence to suggest that some year three children may begin to classify occupations according to prestige level.

By thirteen years of age children are viewing jobs based on prestige in the same way as adults do. Muchinsky (1994) agrees with Gottfredson that gender and status are important determinants of vocational interest. During this stage Gottfredson asserts that there is a growing awareness of the links between education, income and occupations. Individuals are forming their own ideas about their ability to be compared to their peers and their ability to compete for particular occupations.

Stage Four
The fourth stage is titled “Orientation to the Internal, Unique Self” is relevant to children fourteen years and over. School children in year nine and above fit into this category. At this stage children are able to classify objects, people and occupations according to more complex groupings. Their perceptions of self and others are in terms of personal interests, values and competency. Children see occupational preference in terms of the field of work.

They are constantly making comparisons between themselves and others and attempting to fit into their society. At this stage, there is a greater emphasis on matching the field of work with the unique self which the individual desires. While the three previous stages have been more concerned with rejecting occupations, this stage is more devoted to accepting choices that are accessible. Gottfredson’s theory suggests that the existence of self-concept, the knowledge of self and interests are significantly involved in career choice. This stage occurs in the secondary school years.

Important Theoretical Concepts
Gottfredson’s theory supports the notion that it is only as children develop in knowledge of themselves that they are able to develop their knowledge of occupational choices fully. Children’s aspirations are developed in terms of occupational images. The concept of one’s self becomes more complex as the elements within each stage of the process are developed. According to Gottfredson’s
(1981) study, "It is more informative to view vocational development as growth in capacity to apprehend and organize relevant information about self and jobs than to view it simply as accumulation of information" (p. 554). It can be seen from this, that Gottfredson’s theory is strongly cognitive in nature.

One of the most interesting aspects of Gottfredson’s theory is the idea of progressive circumscription. As each of the stages in the theory builds upon the others the process continues to develop, beginning with the first stage where rejection is made in terms of adult occupations. Prior to this stage, children may perceive options such as those based on fantasy rather than real jobs, moving on to the second stage of rejecting those occupations which are seen as not appropriate for one’s sex. The third stage involves the rejection of low prestige jobs or those perceived as longer desirable. Children are beginning to form perceptions, similar to adults, about one’s general level of ability (intelligence). They are making comparisons with peers and assessing the level of difficulty required in obtaining desirable jobs. The final stage proposes that young people attempt to fit into the appropriate social group by developing interpersonal relationships and choosing activities that will make them more compatible with their desired group. This stage, unlike the first three, is about identifying and making an acceptable or preferred choice. Circumscription refers to the elimination of choices. Gottfredson views this as an irreversible process. Therefore if a choice is rejected, generally, it will not be reconsidered except under exceptional circumstances.

ARGUMENTS

Sex-roles and Gender Implications

Gottfredson’s “Stage Two” encompasses orientation to sex roles and is the primary focus of this study. To a lesser degree, some aspects of “Stage Three”, the orientation to social valuation, will also be considered. The interaction between the self and occupational preference within a developing process makes this an opportune stage to focus on, in this study.

Gottfredson’s (1981) study shows that the second stage, the orientation to sex roles, as the time when children are able to identify the kinds of behaviours that are applicable to each sex. It describes how children identify the more obvious features of a person’s appearance and their involvement in particular types of occupational activities related to a particular occupation. Most children’s observations, regarding the gender of a
person, according to Gottfredson, are based on clothing or appearance such as the type of uniform they are wearing. They can identify those stereotypes that are related to specific activities, such as the notion that women are more often involved with inside activities at home, while men often prefer outdoor activities. This stage focussed on how the development of cognitive processes corresponds with an ability to recognize the various aspects of stereotyping. Other general perceptions describe how males can be characterised by physical behaviours, and a "fighting mode", while females may be seen as generally quieter and well behaved. Overall, at this time in their development, children's preferences are presented as sex-typed, as they are unable to make a self-conscious decision about what is appropriate for one's own sex. Both girls and boys accept their own sex as the superior one. While there is a major focus on a same sex-type preference for occupations, at this stage, it may be based on knowledge about same sex activities. It is during this stage that children also conceptualise social status as based simply on being rich or poor.

Gottfredson, during "Stage Two", describes all options as circumscribed according to specific sex type. However, female preferences are often seen as being less prestigious than their male counterparts. Same-sex occupations are more visible to children at this stage because of the outward signs or equipment such as those associated with being a truck driver, activities characterizing a particular type of athlete, uniforms as worn by a nurse, or personal contact such as demonstrated by a teacher. At this stage, these factors are seen to assist in the identification of different occupations, so that, in their development, children eliminate from their world of work any occupations that are perceived as being the wrong sex-type. Given the same-sex identification for females in particular, and the fact that females' occupations in the cognitive map tend to be less prestigious overall than their male counterparts, there is evidence to suggest that females tend to choose lower prestige occupations.

In confirmation of Gottfredson's view of sex-typing, Tyler (1995) agrees that children have sex-typed occupational aspirations. Roe and Siegelman (1964), when describing the social orientation for female choices reports that when children at a young age are attached socially to others, they are more likely to make social choices, whereas others (males) who focus more on how things work rather than people, are less likely to be interested in social activities. Muchinsky (1994) confirms this view when
reporting that men are usually drawn towards occupations that involve things and ideas and that woman’s vocational interest are influenced by relationships with others. In another study, on interests and competencies, Tracey and Ward (1998) found that “The children used sex-typing and locus of activity (in school/out of school) in their assessment of interests and competencies rather than people/thing and data/ideas” (p. 300). This study reports that these concepts of sex-typing and locus of activities are used by young children because they are more concrete and reflect the real world, whereas college students rely on a different structure for evaluation of interests and competencies. Australian research also supports sex differences across adults according to Holland interest groups. For example, Naylor (1984) and Care (1994) report that males have a strong preference for “Realistic” and “Investigative” interests while the strongest interests of females lie in the “Artistic”, “Social” and “Conventional” areas.

The way that young children view the suitability of different occupations can be classified as ‘sex-stereotyping’. This refers to cognitive judgments that children make based on sex-role concepts and attitudes. The work of Kohlberg (1966) indicates that the family situation can either facilitate or impede the development of a child’s sex-role attitude. This suggests that environmental factors, in varying degrees, play an influencing role in children’s perceptions. According to Kohlberg (cited in Maccoby, 1966) these concepts and attitudes, while not innate, do develop early in children’s lives. “Basic universal sex-role stereotypes develop early in young children. Stereotypes arise from the child’s conceptions of body differences, conceptions that are supported by visual differences in the sex assignment of social roles” (p.165). Although there is Australian evidence of the applicability of much of the career interest theory (Naylor, 1993) in adolescence and adults, there is no evidence to date of the extent to which theorizing about career development stages applying to children in North America are applicable here. Consequently, a finding that the aspirations of Australian children are consistent with those anticipated on the basis of Gottfredson’s and Holland’s models and research findings will provide information which will enable educators to decide upon the applicability of international curricula for Australian children. In this study, it will be expected that there will be some evidence that the choice that the children make will be based on sex-typing, that is, that children will perceive their options as being suitable for their own sex. A majority of
the males' choices will be expected to fall into Holland's (1992) "Realistic" interest area and, a majority of selections made by female children are expected to fall into the "Social" or "Conventional" domains.

Relevance of Stage Three

Status

In the third stage of orientation to social evaluation, children are very much aware of what their peers think are and conforming to expectations. There is a developing knowledge about adults and what society deems as important in job preference as well as a developing realization concerning which jobs have differing prestige levels. Daniel (1983) defines "occupational prestige signals what economic resources I can command, and so it is closely related to class...announces my credentials and so it can confer authority" (p. 1). The criteria for defining social class therefore, is becoming more apparent as the developmental process continues as evidenced by the following: education, income, occupation residence, clothing and membership of particular social groups. According to Connell (1977) "class refers to superior/inferior access to and control over the process of production and the distribution of material goods" (p. 35).

During the third stage, options are circumscribed by social class and perceived ability. Children make judgments about their ability matched to their grade level. The school grade level offers the opportunity for children to measure themselves against their peers. At the beginning of this stage, according to Gottfredson, males view themselves in terms of truck drivers and athletes, whereas girls, as nurses and teachers. However, according to Gottfredson (1981), the truck or taxi driver options will disappear by about approximately of nine years of age. As development occurs, children are able to become aware of higher level prestige occupations, which suggest that, generally, girls tend to aspire to prestige occupations whereas boys tend to start at a lower level. In Gottfredson's findings, it is not the person's values or interests, or their parents' views that have the greatest impact on one's occupational aspirations; it is more related to children's perceptions of sex, social class and intelligence. Connell (1977) reports "status refers to superior/inferior position in an accepted or established hierarchy of social roles and functions" (p. 35). This, then, accounts for the fact that lower class children aspire to lower class level jobs. Low social class girls with low abilities realize that there are lower status jobs than nursing and teaching that are
acceptable to them. Based on the premise that children learn from their own families and communities which occupations are unacceptable in terms of social status, it therefore follows that jobs would be rejected on that basis. This is interesting, given that all children develop the same kind of occupational images and maps of occupations. However, as children grow, they are able to discriminate between the more subtle aspects of particular occupations.

Gottfredson reports that, by the age of thirteen, early adolescence, children are more aware of the relationship between prestigious occupations, socioeconomic status and the value of higher educational standards.

According to Daniel (1983) the prestigious occupation is not determined by a single factor but rather a combination of education, money, independence, conditions and fame. "Occupation is a clearly visible admissible indication of power and privilege in society; inherent in occupational title is an imputation of prestige that is widely believed and accepted" (p. 194).

This third stage of Gottfredson’s developmental model covers the ages of approximately nine to thirteen years. In this study, because the upper level of the age range is just over ten years, the children are not expected to indicate anything other than some beginning signs of social awareness. This ranking of occupations according to their social status will not, as yet, be established within this cohort of children. The findings will again be useful in informing Australian educators about the most timely scheduling of specific aspects of career education.

**Occupational Images and Roles**

One of the major concepts in Gottfredson’s theory is that people hold an occupational image, as Holland (1992) refers to it, an occupational stereotype, in their heads. These images are made up of a number of elements. These relate to people they know who work in those positions and the type of life they live. These images are more closely associated to life style, conditions, rewards and an image of people who could work in this occupation.

Gottfredson and Lapin’s (1979) cognitive map incorporates intelligence as a major component of high prestige occupations. Occupations, according to Gottfredson, using Holland’s types, can be clustered along the axis of prestige and sex-type to create a rating of occupations. This is consistent with Cairns and Cairns’ (1988)
assertion that children can construct common social maps. Although these maps are primitive in their early life, with cognitive development they become similar to adults. Notwithstanding that it appears that there are commonly accepted occupational images, there is much research to support the premise that children, like adults, do not really have much idea about the actual tasks that are involved in the day to day working of most occupations. The knowledge people have about specific occupations has come from people they know or from the media, printed and visual, which includes news and drama presentations of different occupations. Children have little knowledge of the structure and hierarchical nature of the workforce or the specific types of tasks that are part of a job.

De Fleur and De Fleur (1967), Gottfredson (1981) and others report that children’s perceptions of occupational roles develop with age. McGee and Stockard’s (1991) study of Year Four primary school children’s knowledge of occupations, the effect of gender, and the recognition of hierarchies within the workforce, confirm earlier research that children can mainly identify jobs that are part of their personal or vicarious (as seen in the media) experience. According to McGee and Stockard (1991) children are not able to recognise fully the notion of supervision of others within the workplace. However, although they can understand which people have authority over others, for example a librarian, they could not rank accurately the degree to which people carry out greater or less supervision. “Children telling others what to do was seen as a negative trait in interpersonal levels of interactions and did not necessarily associate it with hierarchies in the occupational world” (p. 124). This issue of hierarchy and supervisory relationships may well be a component of adult perception of status and prestige.

It is suggested that children in this study will have some general occupational knowledge and be able to recognize some of the main features of a given occupation. It is not expected that they will have the role as a supervisor in place as this is indicative of early understandings of status and its relationship to occupational aspirations as described in Stage Three of Gottfredson’s theory. The findings therefore, will be useful to determine to what degree Year Three children are aware of the role of status as a determinant of career aspiration development.
**Influencing Factors**

There are many influencing factors that children draw on when making decisions about work in general. One of the most documented is the role of parents, others involved the role of teachers and the media.

**Significant Others**

Primary school aged children are dependent on their parents for most aspects of their daily lives. According to Ginzberg et al. (1951) parents provide both perceptions of identification and practice of work-role and sex-role models for their children. Trice (1990), when studying eight year olds, relates that where children have stable career plans, they have typically been influenced by both parents and others. In rural areas children relate more closely to their parents than do urban children to their parents. This could be due to the fact that there are limited employment opportunities in rural areas and parents may be more actively involved in their children’s career plans. The influence of parents has far reaching implications that are not only work related. Roe and Lunneborg (1990) recognise that “family background” has a major influence in shaping children’s occupational focus, the type of education and rearing practices. The way that parents view, interact with and rear their children can have an educational affect on their children’s vocational development.

There are other reports that the father has a more influential role than other family members. Kohn and Schooner (1983) relate that the traits that are important to a father’s success at work can have a bearing on the qualities that a father admires most in his children. Goodale and Hill (1976) report that the father’s education and occupational status can have a direct relationship with children’s educational level and occupational status, whereas Brown, Fukunaga, Umemoto and Wicker (1996b) show that the mother’s educational standard has a positive effect on her children’s career options.

According to Brown et al. (1996b) the parent’s workplace assists in the development of their children’s career development because parents’ child rearing practices are shaped by the characteristics of the parents’ jobs. There is a strong relationship between education and occupational achievement.

The influence upon children does not have to come from a parent but, alternately may come from a “significant other” according to Tracey (2002). Exposure over a period
of time to a good role model can have a lasting affect after a period of time, on a child’s self-efficacy. If the good role model has an appealing job, this can strengthen Gottfredson’s proposal that the interaction between one’s self-concept and career information assists the development of career aspirations.

According to Lockwood and Kunda (1997) there is a need for children to choose a role model while they are growing up to show the way forward from their family unit to the community in the wider world. Tracey (2002), when discussing the experiences that influence children’s interest development, suggests that a positive effect can be attributed to exposure to a powerful role model. Gottfredson (2002) named teachers as well as parents as playing a major role in the lives of their brighter students by encouraging students to aim for higher education and occupational pursuits. Vondracek, Lerner and Sculenberg (1986) reports that “The school context is second only to the family in terms of its influence on career development of children and adolescents” (p. 48).

It is expected in this study that the parents of the children will play a major role in their children’s occupational aspirations. Given the young age of the children in this study, there has been little opportunity for them to have personal experience in the workforce. Therefore their parents will be the most likely source of occupational knowledge. It would be expected that some of the choices that the children make will be similar to the occupations that their parents hold. The findings will be useful to assist parents in the delivery of more accurate and relevant information regarding their work.

It is expected that teachers, given the amount of time they spend with young children in the primary classroom and the opportunity available to them to impart their views on specific occupations, will play an important role in the children’s occupational choices. The findings will be useful for teachers to develop relevant career curriculum and work in partnership with parents.

It is expected that given the age of the children, the parents will have more influence over imparting knowledge about the workforce than teachers.

**Available Resources**

The technological age we live in today makes knowledge more accessible than at any other time in history. Every primary school is well resourced with its own library and
computer network. An accepted and integral part of learning is the use of the internet. The Tasmanian Education Department’s *Essential Learnings for All* (2002, 2004) advocates the use of the internet as essential when equipping students to meet the challenges of living and working in the twenty-first century. Children are no longer restricted to the influence of a parent as the only source of knowledge as books, the computer and television as well as “significant others” are accessible in the search for knowledge.

Given the widespread role of the media in the daily lives of Australian children, it is important to understand the degree to which these children may be obtaining career information from these impersonal sources rather than from parents and teachers who may be targeting their information to children at a more personally appropriate level.

**SUMMARY**

**Developmental Stages**

There is sufficient evidence to accept Gottfredson’s developmental model as being a viable one, particularly, the “second stage” which is most relevant to this study. This stage of orientation to sex is when children become aware of and are able to understand occupations in terms of their sex-type stereotyping. Therefore, it is considered that children can use this information to eliminate occupations that are not perceived to be relevant to their own sex.

To a lesser extent the “third stage” of social valuation shows that children are aware of making occupational choices that are categorised by prestige. The developing awareness of peers and the socioeconomic status of parents and friends, as well as educational ability, have a bearing on the types of jobs that become possible options. The first three stages of Gottfredson’s model involve the process of eliminating choices rather than making a selection from options.

**METHOD**

There are two themes to emerge that need to be addressed. The first is the relevance of Gottfredson’s model in Australia, and the second is the extent to which parents, teachers and the media influence children. Since Gottfredson’s model was developed in North America in 1981, there have been many studies conducted in America and elsewhere to probe her theory. There has not been the same attention given to the model here in Australia. The following questions have emerged from researching the literature.
1. Are Year Three children aged 8-10 years able to articulate a preference for a future occupation and are those jobs sex-typed?

2. Does a parent’s occupation have an influence on the future aspirations of their Year Three child?

Today, with the availability of a range of media sources, children have access to a wide range of information not available to their parents when they were growing up. Television has made it possible to view events from anywhere in the world. People, including parents and teachers have the opportunity to talk to children about a whole range of topics such as careers. Therefore it seems relevant to consider which of the available sources is most appealing to young school children. To address this issue the following research questions have been identified.

3. What knowledge do Year Three children aged 8-10 years have regarding the hierarchical structure of work and the nature of individual occupational tasks?

4. What are the main influences on the future aspirations of a Year Three child aged between 8-10 years?

**Participants and Setting**
The participants and setting for this research involved eighteen Year Three students who attended a primary school in the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The cohort includes eight males and ten females whose ages ranged between 8.9 years and 10.1 years with the mean age being 9.3 years at the time of interviewing. This Catholic primary school had a population of approximately 320 students. The socioeconomic background of the students at the school was quite varied. According to the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria the school has a Socio Economic Status (SES) rating of 11; indicating that the students at the school came from families of medium to high socioeconomic status.

More than twenty percent of the students speak a language other than English at home. In the sample of children being interviewed, five out of the eighteen were classified as having a language other than English (L2/L) spoken at home. The total population of the school represented about eighteen different nationalities. More than twenty per cent of the cohort have been classified “at risk” in Literacy skills. About ten percent of all students and eleven per cent of the cohort have registered for the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
The school has good welfare structures in place to cater for the needs of students. A number of students qualified for funding under the Program for Students with Disabilities. The school employed non-teaching Literacy and Special Education Co-coordinators to support classroom teachers and to provide on-going support for students classified as ‘at risk’ due to lack of literacy skills and social-emotional concerns.

Selection of Method

Although a questionnaire is one of a number of different possible methods that may be considered suitable for gathering data, in this case it is not the best option given that five children out of the eighteen sampled have English as a second language. For these children this method could possibly lead to difficulty understanding and completing the requirements of the task.

McGee and Stockard’s (1991) research highlights the method of using cards to identify different aspects of occupational knowledge. In this study, the students are asked to sort the four decks of cards along selected dimensions. A disadvantage of this method is the possibility of limiting the children’s responses.

Participant observation is not a suitable research option for this group of children as the children’s current work patterns in the classroom are not relevant for this study.

Nelson (1978) used a modified version of Van Daele’s “Ego Idea” interview with a group of Year Three and Four children to assess the thinking process involved in children’s occupational choice and their perceptions of the adults’ working role. His study showed the importance of asking open-ended questions to highlight the cognitive processes that are used by children when discussing adults and career aspirations.

The opportunity to capture individual’s view points is appealing as a research method. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) this method provides both quantitative and qualitative researchers the opportunity to meet the criteria to elicit information. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) stress “However, the qualitative researchers think that they can get closer to the actor’s perspective through detailing, interviewing and observation” (p. 10).

Therefore, for this study, the personal interview format was identified as an appropriate way of eliciting the children’s responses. This also ensures the children
have the opportunity to have an explanation of the process. The opportunity for a detailed response was created without the worry of an onerous written task.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) the interview method, is not considered purely objective given that it creates an interaction between two people. Denzin and Lincoln offer the following explanation.

The interview is a conversation, the art of asking questions and listening. It is not a neutral tool, for at least two people create the reality of the interview situation. In this situation answers are given. Thus the interview produces situated understandings grounded in specific interactional episodes. This method is influenced by the personal characteristics of the interviewer including race, class, ethnicity and gender (p. 633).

Although the researcher did not teach the group of children in this study, there was, nevertheless, the potential for bias in the interview process. The researcher was fully aware of this potential. Denscombe (2003) states that the interviewer brings their own life experience and personal characteristics to the interview situation.

“The researcher’s identity, values and beliefs play a role in the production and the analysis of qualitative data; therefore researchers should come clean about the way their research agenda has been shaped by personal experiences and social background” (p. 269).

This view is relevant as it can assist the researcher to be open to their biases in a research situation. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003)

The goal is to become reflective and conscious of how, who you are, may shape and enrich what you do, not to eliminate it, shape your study open to being shaped by the research experience and to have your thinking inform the data (p. 33).

Denscombe supports Patton (2002) assertion that the researcher’s important responsibility to report all personal and professional information that may have an effect on the research process.
RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS
In order to obtain the required information, the children participated in standardized interviews. The children were presented with a short scenario about what they could see themselves doing when they would be about 25 years old and then asked a series of open-ended questions. The questions were presented in a simple structure to allow the students to give descriptive detail of their vocational knowledge. The questions used were previously trialled on children of the same age. A full copy of the questions is available in Appendix A.

The interviews were audio recorded to ensure accurate recording of children’s comments. The researcher used field observations to capture the non-verbal behavioural cues, such as difficulty responding, fidgeting or questioning the interviewer for clarification. It also provided the opportunity for the interviewer to reflect on personal performance during the interview process.

The interviews were conducted face to face with individual children. An informal conversation beforehand helped build rapport before proceeding with the interview. According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992) "There is a connection between rapport and subjectivity. Your capacity and limitation for establishing rapport are affected positively and negatively by your subjectivity" (p. 106). Developing rapport with children is a vital part of the interview process.

DATA ANALYSIS
Parent occupations were coded according to the ANU4 (Australian National University) scale. Jones and McMillan (2001) describe the ANU4 scale in the following way, “It is a socioeconomic index based on a scaling of occupations that maximizes the indirect effect of educational attainment on income, while minimizing its direct effect” (p. 547).

Children’s occupational choices and parent occupations were coded according to Vocational Preference Inventory (VIP; Holland 1959). The interest categories are Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Enterprising, Social and Conventional (RIASEC).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2001 occupations data was used as a means of determining whether an occupation is seen as stereotypic for males and females. Calculations of over seventy percent of male workers in particular types of work, for
example, motor mechanic, were used to identify occupation as “male stereotyped” and vice versa for females.

The findings of the study were presented both orally and in written form to the students for verification during a middle-school literacy lessons (Appendix B). The literacy focus involves reading and understanding a research report, so the activity served dual purposes.

The methodology adopted for this study draws on a qualitative design. The analysis follows a thematic approach. Boyatzis (1998) describes how this process of identifying themes can take place. “The themes may be initially generated inductively from the raw information or generated deductively from theory or prior research” (p. X111). Review of the literature provides the initial themes. Later, other themes are added which emerge from the data itself. At the completion of the study the raw data is organized and coded to reveal any patterns. Words and phrases from the raw data are given a code with a clear definition assigned which will describe the relevance of the code. The results are organized according to the similarities, contrasting concepts and summaries of the patterns.

The researcher was aware of the importance of the “trustworthiness” of the interpretation of the data. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) report that establishing “trustworthiness is firstly being able to identify the limitations of the study. The researcher needs to do the best job given the unique circumstances of the research site. Other major considerations for “trustworthiness” are the time spent at the research site, building a relationship with the respondents and using triangulation as a method to assist awareness of biases. In this study the three sources used for triangulation children’s interview comments, comparisons made with parents’ occupations and feedback of results to children for verification. More trustworthy interpretation of data can be achieved by the researcher’s own subjectivity, when it is acknowledged and taken into consideration. According to Glesne (1999), “The credibility of your findings and interpretations depends upon your careful attention to establishing trustworthiness. Time is a major factor in the acquisition of trustworthy data. When a large amount of time is spent interviewing with your research participants, they less readily feign behavior or feel the need to do so, moreover, they are more likely to be frank and comprehensive about what they tell you” (p. 151).
**Ethical Considerations**

The purpose of the interview was explained to the children. Permission for the interview had been granted by both the children and their parents (an outline of the research in a plain statement and permission form have been supplied and are available in Appendix C).

Pseudonyms are used throughout the report to ensure confidentiality, and children and parents were made aware that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Permission was granted by the Principal and the Catholic Education Commission to conduct the study and permission was also granted by parents to allow identification of their occupation from school records.

**Occupational Information**

Numerical codes were established to identify common key statements from the transcript of the interview responses. Short descriptive statements were attached to these codes (Appendix D).

Holland’s theory of vocational interests was used to describe and code the children’s aspirations and parents’ occupations. According to Spokane (1996),

> Holland’s theory describes the nature or disposition of the individual worker using six personality/interest types, and it also classifies the nature of the work environments in which those individuals function using parallel sets of constructs. The interaction of certain types with specific environments predicts and explains the behavior and interactions that occur in those environments (for example, satisfaction, stability, performance) (p. 39).

The children’s aspirations and the parents’ occupations were coded according to the Holland’s hexagonal model. This consists of the following categories of “Realistic” (R), “Investigative” (I), “Artistic” (A), “Social” (S), “Enterprising” (E) and “Conventional” (C) these RIASEC codes were assigned as designated by the inventory. For each of Holland’s interest themes there is a corresponding list of occupations. Some examples are automotive mechanic was coded as R; bookkeeper was coded as C; medical doctor was coded as I; nurse and teacher were coded as S; shop assistant as E and musician as A.
LIMITATION OF STUDY DESIGN
The setting was purposefully selected to ascertain the Year Three children’s descriptions of occupational aspirations. The Year Three children aged 8-10 years fit into the age groupings specified in Gottfredson’s developmental model (1981). However, one of the limitations of this study design is the small number of respondents involved, which means that it can not be generalized to the whole population of Year Three Primary School children.

Given that the coding was not replicated or checked by others, there is no information available concerning reliability.

CONCLUSIONS
This study aims to assess children’s perceptions of the world of work and has been undertaken because the research shows that there are limited descriptions of Australian children’s work knowledge available in the 8-10 year age group. According to the work of Gottfredson (1981, 1996), children think about their future occupations. Primary school aged children, according to Gottfredson, are classifying occupations, and the world of work generally, according to occupational sex-types and, to a lesser degree, by social status. Children are making decisions about what occupations are deemed unacceptable; it is true that at this early stage children are eliminating career options without conscious recognition that they are doing so.

There are other issues that need to be examined regarding children’s knowledge of work. While children are discounting a variety of options, it appears beneficial for children to be aware of what happens in the jobs they are rejecting. It is also considered important to children that the influencing factors upon which they are basing their decisions are identified.

Parents are certainly an important influence in all areas of their children’s lives but do they hold more of an influence over their children than teachers or, indeed, the media? It seems likely that children draw on a combination of influences in their career decision-making.
CHAPTER 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

A review of the literature identified two issues which led to the identification of the research questions. The first issue refers to the extent that Gottfredson's stages apply to Australian children. There is much evidence to support the developmental nature of vocational choices. However, whether Year Three children can articulate a preference for a future occupation and whether that job is, as suggested by the work of Gottfredson, sex-stereotyped is yet to be determined. Given that children can articulate future occupation it would be desirable to determine specific information about the hierarchical structure of work and the tasks involved in specific occupations.

The second overall issue refers to the various extents that parents, teachers and the media influence children though the provision of information. Given there are multiple influences over children's occupational decision-making, which of these has the greatest impact? Are parents a source of influence or are there other factors that have an impact? If the parents are a determining factor does a parent's occupation have a bearing on the future aspirations of their children? If so, does the parent's occupation play a major or minor role in their child's decision-making. The responses of the Year Three school children are discussed below.
RESULTS

OCCUPATIONAL PREFERENCE

The first question relates specifically to the job that the children might be doing in the future. The concept of future aspirations is quite difficult for children to discuss; they don’t appear to think or discuss it as part of their daily school routine. The idea of themselves as adults is a very complex concept. According to Vondracek and Kirchner (1974) this concept of viewing oneself in an adult situation becomes more developed with one’s chronological age. The results show that more than half of the children could nominate at least one preferred occupation. The rest of the cohort could nominate more, some as many as four preferred options. It is the first option nominated by the children that was pursued in more depth in the interview process.

The occupational choices nominated by the subjects cover a range across Holland’s occupational types “Realistic”, “Investigative”, “Artistic”, “Social”, “Enterprising”, and “Conventional”. The cohort’s responses show that the “Enterprising” and “Social” areas are represented more often than the other areas. Males in the cohort show a preference for an “Enterprising” occupation at least 50% of the time. More than 30% of females show a preference for a “Social” occupation. The female cohort, unlike the males, has a spread of preference across all the Holland types, as presented in Table 1.

The first child interviewed and represented in Table 1 is a female. The occupational aspiration chosen by this child is teaching. According to Holland this would fall into the Social category and as determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001) about 73% teachers working in Victoria are female. Teaching therefore could be classified as a stereotypic occupation for females. Since, only 27% of teachers are male according to ABS (2001) statistics, it therefore would be classified as non-stereotypical for males.
Table 1. Children’s Occupational Aspirations, with Holland Categories and Sex Percentages According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Holland</th>
<th>ABS Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Female</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Female</td>
<td>Medical Practitioner</td>
<td>Investigative</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Female</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Male</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>Enterprising</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Female</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Male</td>
<td>Sales Assistant</td>
<td>Enterprising</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Female</td>
<td>Sales Assistant</td>
<td>Enterprising</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Female</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Female</td>
<td>Pianist</td>
<td>Artistic/Social</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Male</td>
<td>Car Mechanic</td>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Male</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Female</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Realistic/Social</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Male</td>
<td>Plasterer/supervisor</td>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Female</td>
<td>Office Worker</td>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Male</td>
<td>Sales Assistant</td>
<td>Enterprising</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Male</td>
<td>Medical Practitioner</td>
<td>Investigative</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Female</td>
<td>Bookkeeper</td>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Male</td>
<td>Shop Assistant</td>
<td>Enterprising</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sex-role Stereotyping

The occupational aspirations of the children are, as Gottfredson’s (1981) study predicted, sex-stereotyped. It appears that sex-role stereotyping is stronger for females
than for males. The results show that 70% of occupational preferences for females could be classified as stereotyped compared with only 25% for their male counterparts. One must be aware when studying these results that these percentages represent a very small cohort of 18 children.

In Gottfredson’s “third stage” children are making occupational choices based on social value and status. It is possible that some of the children might be making decisions according to the “third stage” status, as well as using “second stage” sex-stereotyping, considerations. Given the age range of this group of children from 8.9 to 10.01 years, most children will fall into Gottfredson’s “second stage”. Some of the older children could fit into Gottfredson’s “third stage” of the theory which covers nine to thirteen year olds.

**Hierarchical Nature of Work**

The children were questioned about whether someone in their chosen job would tell them what to do. This question relates to their understandings of what actually happens in the world of work and the extent to which the workplace has a hierarchical nature.

*Table 2. Nominations of Authority Figures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Person</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Comments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A small number of children did not respond to this question. In Table 2 it can be seen that more than 44% of the cohort realised that there would be a boss or someone in authority. 17% of responses were classified as “Other Comments”, while not nominating a specific person implied a presence by saying “someone who timetables” or “when I am new” (someone will be telling me what to do). Therefore, at this age there is some realisation of the structure of work in terms of a hierarchical order and that there is accountability to someone in authority. Ryan, when considering the role of a teacher, shows an understanding of the authoritarian nature that teachers project over their students. “You learn lots of things and you tell people what to do.” It was not apparent from the responses whether the children considered this factor to be positive or negative.

Knowledge of work structure

The children were questioned about their perceptions of work tasks in the jobs they chose. This question is important because it assesses whether or not the children have a reasonable idea of which tasks are involved in the day to day work of their choice. This information is very difficult for adults to convey; it would therefore be even less likely for children to know details of job roles unless they have some personal experience. For the children whose preference is the same as their parent’s work it is expected that they may have a better idea than the rest of the cohort. For example, it is possible for children to have real understanding of an occupation such as “teaching” because it is clearly visible to them.

These results are presented in terms of the degree to which the respondents are able to articulate the individual tasks related to a nominated occupation. These responses were then coded into two categories reflecting the accuracy of the information which was described as “broad knowledge” or “specific knowledge”. “Broad knowledge” refers to a statement that does not specifically relate to the designated occupation, for example, “learn things” or “helps people”. It is considered that these responses are generic terms that can apply to many occupations besides the one given as a preference. “Specific knowledge” refers to a task that can be associated with the designated occupation, for example, “looks at plans” or “puts the price on the calculator”. These responses are interpreted as showing a greater understanding of the preferred occupation.
**Table 3. Broad and Detailed Knowledge of Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 28 occupations were nominated by the children. Of these only the first mentioned occupation or “most likely” as nominated by the child was used to determine results.

The results in Table 3 show that about 33% of the group can provide specific knowledge such as about their occupational aspiration. There is no evidence to suggest any major difference between male and female responses for specific knowledge.

The children’s responses at times included knowledge about training rather than the actual job. Nathan’s response, for example, to his preferred choice of how you’d know what to do as a lawyer is: “I’d go to university”. When probed a little further about the work that lawyers do, he stated that: “They go to court, tell the judge what’s happening and try and get people off in a good way.” When pressed to comment further about how he knows about lawyers, he replied: “Sometimes they have shows of it on the telly”. So even though Nathan has a perceived knowledge about his preferred occupation and the workplace, that knowledge came from an ‘unreal’ source rather than a real one.

The results show that even when children are aware of initial training such as in the medical profession, there is no real depth in the detail of the actual day to day tasks involved in the position. An example reported by Elaine “Well, I’d go to university, and we always go to the doctors and we see what they do with the patients.”

Aspiring teachers like Ryan have some knowledge of what teaching entails. Given that Ryan has a parent who is a teacher his response lacked clarity. “They (teachers) study and help kids with their work. They (teachers) explain work and learn; they know what they did when they were at school” (when they were young themselves).
Ryan is also in a position which enables him to observe and make judgments about his own classroom teacher.

**Motivation to Work**

The children's comments on what makes work enjoyable assists in gaining some insight into why particular occupations were chosen in the first place. The results were coded into various categories.

**Table 4. Perceived Motivation for Occupational Choice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With people</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monetary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good/Fun</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See places</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smell Bread</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Maths</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Work hard</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 4 the results indicate that a total of 39% of responses show a preference for being with or showing concern for others compared to 17% who consider the monetary gains as motivation for career choice. It is important to recognize that monetary gains imply an expression of work status. Some of the children see monetary gains as the motivating factor for their preferred occupation. These are translated into establishing security for the future. William has thought well about his plans for the future when he says: "Get money to buy things for the family. I would buy food to eat, clothes and shelter; a nice home."
There is evidence in the children's statements that reflects perceived enjoyment in choosing a working role. Emma conveys her understanding of what will make her work as a doctor a worthwhile experience. "Just meeting all the patients and like making them feel better would be good. (I would like) to know that I've made somebody be well and healthy." Lisa's response when describing the role of a nurse states that: "(It) would be to look after people and helping them".

Although the parent's occupation can have a positive effect on their child's occupational choice, in Yvonne's case it appeared to have the opposite effect. For Yvonne, what makes the job enjoyable is: "You don't have to work very hard like (you do) in a restaurant." This indicates that after observing her parent working long hours in a restaurant Yvonne is convinced that any other occupation would be a better choice.

Even at this young age Steven gives a response that appears similar to an adults' perspective reflecting what adults call "job satisfaction" by reporting: "Enjoyable? Like you see all the kinds of places, you could go to the city, see this construction with people working from your work. And doing something exciting . . . today I'm going to Melbourne city . . . and fixing up the Melbourne Exhibition Centre or like the new Parliament House in Canberra. Having a trip (like that) might be exciting."

The children's responses to occupational motivation reflect different levels of understanding. These responses range from "adult like" ideas such as providing the opportunity to express an altruistic side of their nature, to working for money and enjoying the benefits that money brings.

**CAREER INFLUENCING FACTORS**

**People Resources**

The children were asked if they knew someone else who did the kind of work they had nominated. This question relates to the knowledge that people have about certain occupations and how this knowledge is acquired. This could have some bearing on the occupational preferences nominated by this group of children. The results showed that more than 62.5% of boys and 60% of girls could nominate a person who worked in their preferred occupation. For this question there is no major difference between the
male and female group responses. The range responses include parents, teachers, friends and bosses.

Children were also asked to nominate a person that they would go to if they needed to discuss occupations. The following table summarises the results.

Table 5. Occupational Discussion-Nominees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominations</th>
<th>Male Number</th>
<th>Female Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No-one</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specified</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to ascertain the extent to which reliable experts are nominated by the children all responses are represented, including first reflections. Children nominated up to four people with whom they felt comfortable enough to seek information regarding occupations. The results shown in Table 5 are coded across different categories using the total number of response in the calculations. Less than half the respondents nominated their parents. If parents, as well as family members, are coded together it further strengthens the idea that the “family” has a very strong influence over children’s selections. The results of all responses would be as high as 51.9% if parents were coded as part of a family category. The results show that only about 11.1% of the group selected a teacher as having an influence and all but one of these is a male.
Available Career Information

The children were asked about how they would find out about different kinds of work. This question relates to where children believe they can gain information and who or what are the main sources of that information.

Table 6. Available Career Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Male Number</th>
<th>Female Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 6 show that children can nominate a range of sources from which information can be accessed. This study has used each child’s first response as the most preferred. The term media refers to both print and electronic forms. In 44.4% of responses children would seek information from a media source which was articulated by them as the internet, books, newspapers or television. Some children report their source as “thinking” or “pretending”, this was categorised as cognitive processing. Responses reflect that the children may acquire information from several sources and have now internalised this information and have assumed that this is part of their own thinking. The category of institution refers to a “university” or “college” as nominated by the children and suggests an alternative to the choice of a specific person.

One of the themes to emerge is the role that universities play in career choice. Yvette’s response shows a reflection on the role of the university in occupations.
"They normally send someone from university to a school to help a teacher get the idea of what being a teacher is."

The children show that future aspirations are a part of their thinking even though they are not necessarily voicing them publicly to others. Lisa, who aspires to be a nurse, reported that she thinks about many aspects that her future might hold and records her thoughts privately. When asked about this she replied, "I just think about what I am going to be when I grow up. I write in) my journal (I) want to be a doctor or horse rider or anything".

Naomi's one and only choice of occupation is to be a basketballer. When asked about how she would know what to do in this job she states that she'd learn about it at school but was not able to clearly define the particular tasks involved in what she would be doing. Her lack of knowledge in this area was surprising given her preference for basketball. Schunk and Hanson (1985) report observing peer role models, such as a sportsperson, can increase in children's self-efficacy and achievement. According to Schunk and Hanson, this self-efficacy learning is higher than observing a teacher role model or no role model at all. In some early career research, athletic choices have been considered as nothing more than a "fantasy" however, today this type of work must be taken as a serious consideration given the growing number of people who are making sport in such areas as soccer, football and tennis an on-going career option.

The results clearly show a range of options available to young children into accessing career information. Categories such as educational institution, parents and other people all have equal weighting in informing children about occupations while the media represents by far the most popular response from both males and females. This group of children shows that they are happy to seek information from different sources within the media before approaching a person.

The children's nominated occupational preferences, coded according to the ANU4 (Australian National University) scale, show that children's nominations cover all occupational prestige areas. When compared with their parent's occupations, the children aspired to occupations that are higher on the ANU4 scale than their parents. The children's aspirations (M = 61.6, SD = 20.3) were higher than the parents’ (M =
53.09, SD = 17.8) occupations. Given the small number of eighteen children in the study, more detailed statistical analysis is not warranted. In this cohort nearly half the total number of the children’s mothers are not in the paid workforce. Greenberger et al. (1994) report that mothers’ work histories could have an important influence on their daughters’ perceptions of work. According to Greenberger et al., “Women’s increasing labour force participation and contribution to family income has potential to alter the historically gendered nature of vocational socialization work-family connections” (p. 60). The lack of mothers employed in the paid workforce, in this study makes it difficult to identify their influence as working role models.

**Parent Occupational Influence**

The children were asked whether or not their parents worked in the field that they had chosen. According to Roe and Lunneborg (1990) family background is a major influence for children’s choices. If the parents are happy in their occupation, that could be a positive influence, but unlikely otherwise. There is a slight possibility that parents who discuss their work at home could assist their children to gain knowledge about specific tasks associated with the parent’s occupation.

**Table 7. Parents who Work in Children’s Nominated Occupation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 7 show that the majority of the children respond negatively to choosing an occupation which is the same as their parents. Of the cohort 56% gave a negative response to choosing the same occupation as their parents compared to 39% who responded positively. There may well be a link between children who have some detailed knowledge about their preferred occupation and choosing the same
occupation as their parents. Overall there is no evidence to suggest that children are interested in following in their parents' footsteps.

The children's responses reflect a range of parental influences. The children's responses showed that some parents gave practical information about their work while others gave vague impressions about their occupations. For example Patricia aspired to work in the same job as her parent. She said that she would like to be a bookkeeper like her mother and reports "that bookkeepers make sure that all the books are stored in the right place, almost like a librarian, only they have workbooks". Patricia, when asked how she would know what to do in her nominated occupation, reports that: "My mum will probably teach me". The implication is that her mother knows what to do and that she is a positive influence. Patricia is able to give some description of the tasks involved in a bookkeeper's job. It seems unlikely that at this age she would have picked up this information elsewhere.

William, who aspired to work in the same occupation as his father in a shop, reports that: "when we have to go home we pack up everything and put it in the fridge and when you come in, you just take everything out again and put everything back where it belongs." Here we see the direct influence of the parent through modeling the actual activity.

Steven's knowledge about his father's job shows that he focuses on some aspects that he is familiar with rather than all tasks related to the job. "He goes to the office and writes things down for the workers, receives lots of calls and helps people. He goes out to see which wood is on the truck going to the building site. If there was plumbing in the house he would choose pipes ... and guttering if he was doing the edges."

**Summary**

Australian children do demonstrate some aspects of development as proposed in Gottfredson's career development model. This cohort shows, that despite their young age, the children can nominate a preferred occupation. The males, as expected, nominate occupations within Holland's Enterprising area and the females, to a lesser degree in the Social area. Sex-role stereotyping, as reported by Gottfredson's studies, is more prominent for the females than the males. The small size of the cohort makes it difficult, however, to draw conclusions from these results.
Gottfredson’s theory suggests that, in the third stage, children eliminate jobs on the basis of perceived inappropriate status levels. There is not enough evidence in this group to confirm this finding. Given that the children are somewhat younger than those typically suggested as being in the third stage, and taking into consideration the occupational status level chosen, this cohort represents a higher occupational status level according to the ANU4 scale, than those of their parents.

Generally, children’s knowledge of occupational tasks is very superficial. About 56% of the cohort knows someone who works in the nominated occupation, but this was not reflected in specific knowledge about the work tasks involved.

The extent of the influence of parents, teachers and the media can be identified in this study as varied. For this group, while parents have an influence on their children’s occupational choices, they are not the major or only influencing factor. There is evidence that children ask their parents about occupations but children nominate the media as the main source for accessing occupational information. Interestingly, even when children say that they talk to their parents about work, they still have a broad knowledge rather than a detailed one about job tasks.

The teacher’s influential role as a person who can assist in their developing career knowledge was not as strong as might have been expected. Neither was the children’s general knowledge from observing their own teacher’s role in the classroom. It was surprising that children who talk about teaching don’t really articulate the role as well as might be expected.

One of the unexpected themes to emerge from this work is that, while children talk about university, they have little knowledge about what really happens there.
DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

The results of this study both uphold and refute various proposals suggested in the literature. The first general issue refers to the extent that Gottfredson's stages apply to Australian children. As Gottfredson (1981, 1996) predicted, the children in Year Three at primary school can articulate an occupational aspiration that they are willing to pursue in the future. These choices are distributed across Holland's types, as expected, for males and females. There is also a developing trend towards males being less stereotypic in their preferred choices. While this cohort shows an awareness of the hierarchical aspect of having a "boss", they do not have a clear understanding of the specific nature of the supervising role nor do they have detailed knowledge about the tasks that are related to their chosen occupations.

The second general issue refers to the extent to which parents, teachers and the media influence children through the provision of information. While parental occupation in itself is not an influencing factor for career choice with this group. It is evident that about half of this cohort seeks the advice of a parent for career information. However, the electronic and print media appears to be preferred over parents as sources which influence children's choices. Contrary to other studies, teachers who spend a considerable amount of time with children are not seen as having an influence in career information and hence, on children's preferences.

OCCUPATIONAL PREFERENCE

The results confirm Gottfredson's proposal that females tend to opt for occupations which may be classified as sex-stereotypic. According to Arbona (2000) there are discrepancies in the culturally accepted gender based expectations for girls and boys. Both teachers and parents treat girls differently in the activities they provide for them and react differently to girls' performances generally. This sex-role stereotyping is not evident to the same degree for the boys. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2001) occupations' data is used as a means of determining whether occupations are seen as stereotypic for males and females. And calculations of over 70% were deemed as sex-role stereotypic in this study. The feedback sessions with this age group
strongly reflect their ability to identify a sex-role stereotypic job. When discussing the study results, children were easily able to identify Holland’s Social occupations of teaching and nursing as being stereotypic. Further discussion revealed that the children had gained much knowledge in the English curriculum through observations of literature characters who were portrayed as non-typical sex-stereotypes. However, even though girls can identify females in non-typical sex-stereotype roles in literature they do not necessarily transfer this information to their own occupational choices.

Hierarchical Characteristics of Work

McGee and Stockard (1991) show that there are a number of variables associated with children’s perceptions of occupations. The type of exposure that children have to an occupation plays an important role in their recognition of it. “They confirm the results of earlier studies which suggest that Year Four children can more often identify jobs which are part of their direct or vicarious experiences” (p. 130).

The notion of supervision within the workplace has been identified in the previous studies of De Fleur (1966), and McGee and Stockard (1991). In this study while 61% of the children can recognise the supervisory role or presence of a “boss” there was no explanation or detail as to what the role means. It is considered that while the children are developing some knowledge of work, this study concurs with McGee and Stockard (1991) that “interpretation of occupational prestige and supervisory responsibilities would be common among students older than the fourth grade” (p. 134).

Motivation

The range of reasons for choosing an occupation that would be deemed enjoyable can be equated to the concept of motivational factors. Some of the research of Care (1994) and others has matched the occupational choices of adolescents with their preferred interests. This study did not attempt to ascertain the children’s liking for named interests, instead asking what would make a job enjoyable, assuming this to be a motivational factor. The children were well able to give reasons other than “good fun” for making their selection. A greater proportion chose “wanting to help, inspire or be with people” as a reason, reflective of their altruistic nature. Thirty-nine percent of responses centred on companionship and the caring nature of the worker in an
occupational role. This is pleasing for their teachers and fits well with the Christian philosophy of the school. The responses of some children also suggest that they have an understanding of the world of work in that work involves a contract of payment for services.

OCCUPATIONAL INFLUENCES

Parents are the first role model for children’s work-roles and sex-roles and hence, provide the opportunity for children to observe, practice and fantasize about the work role that they might eventually acquire, according to Ginzberg et al. (1951). The influencing role of parents has been a focus in many studies. Goodale and Hall (1976), Glover (1978), Gottfredson (1981), Trice (1990), Roe and Lunneborg (1990) Brown (1996) Dryler (1998) have all shown that the father, mother or both parents influence their children in a variety of ways. Gottfredson’s “third stage” of development indicates that children are influenced by status in their occupational aspirations and that their parents play a most significant role in how they view the world.

Occupations chosen by the children reflect a range of occupations across Holland’s types. Some of the choices reflect a similarity with the occupations of their parents while others do not. Those children who chose the same occupation as their parents do not appear to have a vastly more accurate or detailed view of the tasks involved in the occupation than children who chose occupations in which their parents are not involved. As expected, the types of occupations chosen are stereotypic for both male and females; however, they are represented more strongly for the females in the group than the males. This shows some support for the “second stage” of sex-types as presented in Gottfredson’s theory of vocational development.

According to Silberesien (2002), parents’ own education and occupational experience is an important point of reference when dealing with their own children. Parents who work in occupations and share their knowledge with their children influence their children in a positive way. These children are able to give some details about what happens in these occupations. However, this sharing is not detailed enough for their children to get a clear picture of the demands of the job. The children’s impressions are just that, impressions. There is no real depth of knowledge, even regarding a teacher’s job. Some of the teaching tasks, for example, might be described as follows;
“you need to prepare work, discuss, model, listen, correct work, direct, encourage etc”. This study has not shed any further light on the subject beyond that already reported by Trice (1990) and others. Generally, children have little detailed knowledge of what happens in a particular occupation, regardless of their degree of familiarity with it. In this study there is no evidence to suggest that children choose a particular occupation because their own parents are involved in that profession. In fact the opposite appears to be true.

**People Resources**

One of the unexpected findings of this study is that primary school teachers, despite having the perfect opportunity, do not have a major influencing role in the decision making skills of the children they teach. This study shows that very few children ask their teacher for advice. Two out of a total of eighteen children said that they would ask a teacher for information about a job. This means that the other sixteen didn’t think of a teacher as a reliable source. This is contrary to the research where teachers are nominated as having major influence over their student’s career choices. Landers and Lander 1973, Glover (1978) and Clark, Blair and Culan 1988 all cite teachers, in particular Physical Education and Heath teachers, as having an influence on student learning.

Daniel (1983), when discussing power, privilege and prestige related to one’s work acknowledges the position of influence that teachers have over those they teach. “The art of teaching is potentially an influential and highly esteemed vocation (p. 153). Daniel reports that this influence is an integral part of teaching where teachers have power over the formation and maintenance of ideas yet are restricted by the pressures of bureaucracy and society in general. Gottfredson (2002) reports that schools have the biggest impact on students’ recognition of what might be described as an unattainable occupational aspiration. In secondary schools, for example timetabling can create one of the greatest barriers to students making diverse subject choices which in turn affect career choices.

We read frequently in the press, stories of people who acknowledge a teacher has having had a positive influence on their lives. According to Muchinsky (1994) teachers are, along with parents, friends and colleagues an aspirational reason for a choice of occupation. Each week in the Education section of the Melbourne Age there
is a segment called “Tales out of School” where prominent people reflect on their school education which attests to this fact. The occupations reflected in these articles are diverse but each story has a familiar theme regarding the influence of one or more teachers on one’s future career direction.

Robyn Arianrhod, mathematician, author of Einstein’s Heroes and teacher at Monash University reflects on two teachers who made an impact on her learning.

We had an amazing all-round teacher, a Mr. Stafford, in grade 6 and he seemed to know everything about everything. Mr. Martin, whom we once believed to be old and authoritarian, was in fact kind and nurturing. He gave me a book that became very important to me. (This book) was saying that science makes great literature. That was a revelation to me and it was, in part, the basis for Einstein’s Heroes (March 8th, 2004 The Age, p.2)

These stories show the influence of teachers on the diversity of chosen occupations. In a further example, Eddie Perfect, Actor, reflects on his education in April 2004.

I got along very well with the literature teacher, Trish Carroll. I didn’t get along with a huge number of students, so it was great having an adult teacher as a friend. I remember when I graduated; Trish Carroll gave me a card with a poem by Robert Frost, “The Road Less Travelled”. It made such a huge impression on me and it never really left me. Our school motto was “Per Vias Rectas” (“By Right Paths”) The Frost poem urged me to find my own path and it is something that I have tried to do since leaving school (April 24th, 2004 The Age, p. 2).

Adrian Collette, Chief Executive of Opera Australia reflection’s on Primary and Secondary schooling was published in November 2004.
I spent three years at East Kew State Primary. I went to Trinity Grammar from grade 5 and spent the rest of my school days there. I cannot recall my teachers from East Kew but I can remember teachers from Trinity. Great teachers can make such a difference. There was Brian McFarlane, who taught literature. If you were part of his class, it was something very special and he filled the study with his passion and wit. He really inspired every boy in the class in 1972, as he had in many classes before, and he got astounding results. He was a very influential teacher and I fell in love with literature that year. I did a BA honours and masters in literature so it struck me very deeply (November 8th, 2004 The Age, p.2).

There is a strong relationship between these stories and the influence of the teacher. All the stories display a spark of interest that teachers have ignited in their students which has continued to grow and become an important catalyst in their career choices. While recent citing in the daily newspapers reflects the teacher’s influence on people’s established careers today. This study did not find evidence of strong teacher influence on Year Four school students but, like the newspaper stories, the influence may be stronger through secondary teachers than with primary school teachers.

Other Resources

There are a number of sources available today for children to access information about jobs. One of these television, perhaps provide confusing information for children regarding some occupations because the role models portrayed are fictional rather than realistic ones. In this study the method of accessing resources is not known. The response given by the children was merely that these sources of information were available. Across the range of responses there was no significant difference in the type of resource that was most preferred. However, as the cohort in this study shows, the information regarding specific details about a job is not accurate. Most times it is based on an impression rather than a specific knowledge of the role.
The children who attend the school which is involved in this study are very familiar with the internet as a means of accessing information. The target group is required to use the internet on a daily basis for their integrated studies in the classroom. This study shows that children would consider the internet as a source of occupational information as frequently as reading a book, newspaper, magazine or watching television, yet it appears that this has not been the primary source of their access to information about jobs.

Universities are seen by some children as places of learning skills. This is its legitimate role. When “attending university” is mentioned in the context of being a doctor or a lawyer, it is perfectly appropriate. On the other hand, when children respond that “you find out about different types of work at university”, and they are discussing being a baker it appears more likely that children do not have a clear understanding of what either ‘university’ or, alternatively, the functions of a particular occupation, are.

**Other Considerations**

**Participants**

The responses made by four of the five children in this study who have English as a second language (ESL) reflected the poorest rate to the interview questions. This could be attributed to the interviewer not having thoroughly established rapport with, or the trust of the children. This may suggest that a contributing factor to poor responses is the children’s lack of English and therefore, greater explanation prior to answering questions is required as identified in field notes (Appendix E). These children may have benefited from pictorial stimuli depicting occupational themes. This lack of interpretation of the questions has implications for the results of the study.

Two of the children (one male, one female) involved in the study live in single parent families. This represents about 11% of the total cohort. The female subject who has an ESL background and whose mother is not part of the paid workforce, had a low question response rate, showed a preference for a female sex-role stereotypic occupation and choose only school friends as resources for eliciting occupational
information. These factors suggest that this child has limited resources for assessing occupational knowledge.

The occupations chosen by the children often have a higher status than their parents’ occupations. (Appendix F) Although there are a number of mothers in the group who do not work in the paid workforce their children make similar occupational choices to the rest of the cohort.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The setting for the research is a Catholic Primary School with a medium/high rated socioeconomic level. It is a fee paying school with a Christian philosophy. The parents choose this type of educational facility based on their religious convictions, and therefore, it does not reflect the values of the wider community.

Forty-four year three students were initially invited to be part of this study; only 18 students were involved. Self-selection into this group may have led to bias.

There was limited information about the parent’s background available for this study with the focus being on the children rather than their parents. Although permission was granted to identify their occupations, it may have been useful to look at the educational standards as well as occupations. This would have provided the opportunity to classify the mothers in the group who are not in the “paid workforce”. Jones and McMillan (2001) have imputed an occupational score for people who are outside paid employment by using educational achievement or the age of leaving school as a method of classification.

Of the parents represented in the group, there are a relatively large number of mothers who are classified as “homemakers”. It is difficult to know what impact mothers have on their children’s occupational knowledge and whether mother’s employment is a motivating factor. Women do move in and out of the “paid workforce” and this group of women at another time may play a different role to the one represented today.

According to Muchinsky (1994), “changing national demographics have shifted to produce more single head households, individuals marrying later in life, compared to passed cohorts. The classic criterion variables of vocational preference and choice are undergoing considerable changes in this country” (p. 551).
Johnson and Mortimer (2000) support an observed difference in family orientations. “Change in the structure of both families and the labor force participation, individual orientations and goals may be changing” (cited in Parcel and Cornfield 2000, p. 281). This could mean the development of new type of “life style” for parents to those presently accepted and a different perspective of work in particular for daughters.

It is suggested that the interviewer’s technique could hinder the student’s responses. While the opportunity was taken to trial the questions on children of a similar age, it may be that the responses could have been different with a more experienced interviewer. Of particular concern is the lower question response rate from the students who have English as a second language (ESL). The interviewer’s lack of technique may have contributed to the ESL group’s results.

SUMMARY

The results of this study have shown that children at this age are thinking about occupations as indicated by Gottfredson’s (1981) study. Children, particularly females are choosing occupations by sex-types and are selecting across the range of occupations, as categorized by Holland (1973, 1985).

Children are aware of the hierarchical nature of the workforce and are conscious of accountability in the workforce. There is no evidence that they link this information with perceptions of status, supporting the notion that these children have not yet extended Gottfredson’s Stage Three is little evidence of actually knowing what particular occupations entail.

A parent’s role in educating their children will never be completely diminished as they are the first educators. It is the children whose parents are unable to supply any relevant occupational information, that are at a disadvantage. This group could be even more at risk of eliminating preferences because they lack the necessary knowledge.

This study does not support the suggestion that children who choose the same work as their parents have considerably more detailed knowledge. Children are able to give some general descriptions but they do not have a detailed knowledge of occupations.
The teacher does not play as significant a role as has been documented in other studies. Teachers do spend a considerable amount of the day with their students and have plenty of opportunity to give their opinions on a range of topics. The role of the teacher could be one to be strengthened as a reliable source of information through carefully planned delivery of the curriculum.

The internet does not play a major role in influencing children's job preferences however this may possibly be changed in the future. According to this study books, television, magazines and newspapers play an equal role with the internet in providing vocational information.

The university is identified by the children as a place where you find out how to do a particular job; however most children are bewildered as to what actually takes place there. Comments by the children show that its function is still unclear.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

The results of this study show that Australian children as early as primary school age are thinking about and making tentative career choices. These choices are based on the resources available at the time. Gottfredson (1981, 1996) has highlighted that children’s future career aspirations are continually being refined by a process of elimination. Parents are one important resource in the education of children and play a significant role in career education. Children do not necessarily want to follow their parents into the same profession but they are willing to know about parents’ experience in the workforce.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions reached and recommendations made take into account the limitations of the small sample study.

The children’s aspirations could be described consistent with Gottfredson’s propositions; evidence suggested that the females to a greater extent than males chose sex-stereotypic occupations. Teachers therefore need to be vigilant in identifying female stereotypes in literature and other areas of the curriculum.

Opportunities must be taken to fill the gaps in children’s career knowledge. Education of the students about specific aspects of work would be beneficial, with teachers playing a major role. However, the use of experts to share their experience about specific fields would be better. The school’s parent group is suggested as a good starting point for identifying role models for the discussion of work. Parents have been involved in small projects in the past as a source of information, however greater structuring and effective linking to curriculum topics could extend children’s occupational knowledge. One specific area that could be addressed is the role of a “boss” in discussing the occupational hierarchy.
Computer use is steadily increasing in classrooms. The use of the internet as a tool for information gathering about occupations could be used to greater advantage by primary school teachers.

It is possible that primary school children would benefit from being better educated about the role of university and the world of work. This study showed that the children are willing to discuss university as an option without a clear picture of what actually happens there. This school's joint projects with university students have always involved the senior students rather than students from lower levels. These projects have concentrated on providing students with activities related to Science. Future projects may be considered using younger students and disseminating information about the role of universities, and relevance to the future.

**Future Research**

Limited research is available about the cognitive processes involved in children's perceptions of occupation. An area of future study could include the assessment of children's occupational cognitive maps in greater detail. At present limited knowledge is available about the images that children produce for any given occupation.
REFERENCES


The Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms. (1982). American Psychological Association; Washington D. C.


Appendices

Appendix A: Research Questions  
Appendix B: Copy of Literacy Lessons  
Appendix C: Plain Statement and Consent for Parents and Children  
Appendix D: Descriptive Code Statements and Summary  
Appendix E: Research Field Notes  
Appendix F: Table of Nominated Occupations by Prestige
APPENDIX A

Questions for Interview

Today I would like you to use your imagination and think about the future. I want you to think about when you are a grown-up person about 25 years old. I want you to think about going off to work.

Where do you think you will be going to?

How do you think you will know what to do?

Will someone be telling you what to do?

Do you know someone else who does this kind of work?

Do your parents do this kind of work?

What is it that would make this job enjoyable?

How do you find out about different kinds of jobs?

Who would you talk to if you wanted to know about a particular type of work?
APPENDIX B

YEAR THREE, PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN’S PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORLD OF WORK

Introduction:
What are the motivating factors that encourage a young person to take an interest in study and ultimately pursue a particular career?
This study investigates a group of 18 Year Three Primary students to find out what they know about specific work occupations. Students discuss what they think they may do as a future occupation and the main influencing factors in the formation of their ideas.

Background:
The participants and setting involves 8 males and 10 female students aged between 8.9 and 10.1 years of age M=9.3. The children attend a Catholic Primary school in the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The socioeconomic background of the students at the school is medium to high. About twenty-eight percent of the students speak a language other than English at home.

Method:
The students were asked a series of questions and their responses were audio-taped. The parent’s occupations as noted on the school enrolment form were compared with the student’s responses. Information about the study was reported back to the students.

Discussion:
The need for this research has arisen because we do spend a considerable amount of our total lifetime engaged in the workforce. We are aware that the skills and requirements of the workforce are changing. By assessing the children’s perceptions of work at an early age this can assist the children to be better informed and the educator to identify and provide more relevant curriculum.
Research by Gottfredson (1981) tells us that children think about occupations from a very early age. Students group work into different categories of sex or status. Sex refers to whether a job is suitable for a male or a female. High or low status refers to whether the
job has good money or conditions associated with it. According to Gottfredson (1981) children have eliminated career options as early as primary school. Gottfredson. It is evident that neither adults nor children have much idea about particular jobs they usually choose them because they liked the lifestyle or a person who worked in the area. It was important to find out how children find out about jobs.

**Findings:**

This study shows the kind of choices made by the students as being spread across a few categories devised by Holland (1973)

In Table 1 male students show a preference for manual or enterprising categories while ignoring the artistic and conventional categories. The females are grouped into the social and the conventional areas. However, there is representation in all categories.

**Table 1: Male & Female choices in Occupational Groupings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holland Categories</th>
<th>Realistic</th>
<th>Investigative</th>
<th>Artistic</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Enterprising</th>
<th>Conventional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Manual/ hands-on</td>
<td>Fact finding/scientific</td>
<td>Creative/ hands-on</td>
<td>Caring/ teaching</td>
<td>Involving money</td>
<td>Works in an Office/figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Supervisor/ Plasterer Mechanic</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>Shopkeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Basketballer</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>Pianist</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>Shop Assistant</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>Basketballer</td>
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<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher Nurse</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Doctor</td>
<td>Pianist</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher Nurse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows from a quantitative perspective that children's knowledge varies from one-dimensional to multi-dimensional.

The table below shows knowledge about a specific occupation calculated by the number of items given by the respondents and linked to knowing a person in the field.

**Table 2: Items of Information and Knowledge of People Working in the Field**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Task</th>
<th>2 Tasks</th>
<th>3 Tasks</th>
<th>4 or more Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Occupations chosen by this group can be classified as stereotypic occupations. Stereotypic means that there are some jobs usually chosen by male or females.

Females prefer occupations where they are caring and helpful like teaching where they are required to use their social skills or doing office work and male like to work in hands-on type work or in enterprising like business or banking. Table 3 below shows that the males and females chose the sex-stereotypic and non-sex-stereotypic occupations.

More analysis was needed to decide how sex-stereotypic these occupations are according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001).

**Table 3: Sex-Stereotypic and Non-sex-stereotypic Occupations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sex-Stereotypic Occupations</th>
<th>Non-Sex-stereotypic Occupations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows sex-stereotyping of occupations is stronger for females than for males.

The children were asked if their parent work in the area that they had chosen for a future occupation.
Table 4: Negative & Positive Responses for Parent Occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows little difference in whether the parents were involved in a similar type of work as their children selected. What would make a job enjoyable was responded to in a range of ways from being with or helping people, monetary gains or fun. The responses showed little difference across the categories. Not enough to comment.

The method of finding information showed a range of mediums once again the spread was fairly even. The ways nominated by the children was using either print or electronic medium such as the internet, people as a resource, thinking about options or using educational institutions.

**Conclusion:**

This study shows that while the children identified a range of occupations. Those chosen by females were more sex-stereotypic than the male choices. The males chose from the enterprising and manual group and females, mostly social and conventional group. While most information about occupations comes from parents the specific knowledge was limited except when the children knew someone in the field. No conclusions could be drawn from the parent’s occupations as an influence on the choices.

A range of reasons were given for a particular occupation being enjoyable.

The methods children used to find out about a career were also varied.

Overall given the small number of respondents in this study more research would be needed to draw any definite conclusions.

**References:**


## Teacher Lesson Plan

### Reporting Research Findings to Year Three Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole class</td>
<td>Shared Reading</td>
<td>To read a research report</td>
<td>What are the features of a report?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To gain understand of research findings</td>
<td>What does the title tell me?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To introduce relevant terminology</td>
<td>What will I expect to see?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group</td>
<td>Guided Reading</td>
<td>To find and understand information in the text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Teacher)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What section of the report is this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What information does it tell?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What information will be reported to others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Hot Potato activity for all groups</td>
<td>To read, discuss, answer questions, record information.</td>
<td>What are the specific features?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>To move task onto next group for verification.</td>
<td>What information does it explain?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To read other tasks and record additional information if necessary.</td>
<td>What information will be reported to others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Class</td>
<td>Share Learnings</td>
<td>To articulate learnings about research report writing</td>
<td>What do I know now that I didn’t know before?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What do Year three students know about the world of work?

Dear Parents,

My name is Mrs. Monica Hodder. I am a student at the University of Melbourne. I would like to conduct a small piece of research at ... with a small sample of Year Three children. This is part of my Master of Education degree.

The aim of the project is to investigate what a small group of thirty Year Three students know about the world of work and the type of tasks that are involved in specific types of jobs. I am also interested in finding out how students gain their knowledge about particular occupations.

By assessing students' knowledge regarding work can assist in making career information a relevant part of the primary curriculum and giving students the opportunity to make more informed career choices in the future.

I would ask for your permission to interview your child and to use the information on the school enrolment forms regarding your own occupations. I would not be requiring any other personal information about the parents or be identifying you in my report.

The Principal, and the teachers have agreed to this project.

If you give permission for your child to be part of the project the interview will take place during school hours and should take no more than 20 minutes. Participation in this project is entirely voluntary (you can withdraw your consent at any time).

Your child's identity will be protected within legal limitations. As a university requirement, the responses will be locked safely away for 5 years after the project is completed. After 5 years they will destroy them.

Once the project is completed a brief summary of findings is available to you on application.

If you have any questions they can be discussed with myself, your child's teacher, my supervisor Dr. Esther Care or the Research Ethics office at the University on 8344 7507 or fax 93476739.

If you want your child to be part of this research project you will need to discuss it with your child and sign the two consent forms and return them in the envelope provided.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Monica Hodder (98774492)

Dr. Esther Care (83440995)
What do Year three students know about the world of work?

Dear Students,

My name is Mrs. Monica Hodder. I am a student at the University of Melbourne. I am doing a project to find out what people your age know about work and careers in the work force. When I am finished my project it will be part of my Master of Education degree. My teacher Dr. Esther Care helps me with my project. She is called my supervisor.

The aim of the project is to investigate what a small group of thirty Year Three students know about the world of work and the type of tasks that are involved in specific types of jobs. I am also interested in finding out how students gain their knowledge about particular occupations.

The Principal, and your teacher have given me permission to send you this letter to tell you about my project. Once you have read the letter you can decide if you would like to take part. You will need to talk to your parents about this project too.

If you want to be part of the project I would like you to answer some questions. I will be interviewing you and taping your answers to make sure that I make an accurate record of what you say. It should take no more than 20 minutes of your time. I will be conducting the interviews during school time. If you want to stop answering the questions you can tell me and go back to your class. If you don’t know the answer or don’t want to be involved it is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

Only my supervisor and I will hear your responses. The project will have nothing to do with your school work or your school report. I will protect your identity and your responses within legal limitations. In any written presentation or publication arising from the research you will be identified by a pseudonym. After the project finishes, the responses will be locked safely away for 5 years. I need to do this because it is a university procedure. After 5 years my supervisor will destroy them.

Once the project is completed a brief summary of findings is available to you on application.

Remember you don’t have to take part unless you want to. If you have any questions you should talk to your teacher or your parents. If they don’t know the answer they can contact me or my supervisor or the Research Ethics office at the University on 8344 7507 or fax 93476739.

If you want to be part of my project, and your parents agree, please sign your name on the next page where it says student and ask your parent to sign as well.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Monica Hodder (98774492)
Dr. Esther Care (83440995)
Department of Learning and Educational Development

Consent form for persons participating in research projects

PROJECT TITLE: What are Year Three Children's Perceptions of the World of Work?

Name of Participant__________________________________________________________

Name of investigators: Mrs. Monica Hodder and Dr. Esther Care

1. I consent to participate in the project named above, the particulars of which are a taped interview of my thoughts about work. A written copy of the information has been given to me to keep.

2. I acknowledge that:
   (a) participants will be referred to by a pseudonym and that participation or non-participation in the research will have no effect on grades or assessment
   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied;
   (c) The project is for the purpose of research in the field of education
   (d) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements.

Signature of Student:_________________________Date:_________________________

Signature of Parent:_________________________Date:_________________________
Department of Learning and Educational Development

Consent form for persons participating in research projects

PROJECT TITLE: What are Year Three Children’s Perceptions of the World of Work?

Name of Parent: ____________________________________________________

Name of investigators: Mrs. Monica Hodder and Dr. Esther Care

1. I consent to my child participation in the project named above, the particulars of which are a taped interview of my child’s thoughts about work. A written copy of the information has been given to me to keep.

2. I consent to the release my occupational details from the school enrolment form.

3. I acknowledge that:
   a. participants will be referred to by a pseudonym in the report
   b. participation or non-participation in the research will have no effect on my child’s grades or assessment
   c. I have been informed that participation in this project is completely voluntary. I am free to withdraw my consent at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied
   d. The project is for the purpose of research in the field of education
   e. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal limitations.
   f. The interviews will be conducted during school hours and will be no longer than twenty minutes duration.
   g. After the project the data will be locked away safely for five years and then it will be destroyed.

Signature of Parent: ___________________________________________ Date: ________________
Appendix D

CODING

Title: Gender:

Description: Gender of the respondents as being either male or female

Code
01: Male
02: Female

Results:
01: 8
02: 10
03: Total: 18

Codes for responses to all questions

Question 1: Where do you think you’ll be going to work?

Description: Nomination of specific jobs that appealed to the respondent as a future choice.

Codes

010: No response  Description of code: The respondent did not respond to the question.
011: One: Description: The respondent gave one response for an occupational choice
012: Two: Description of code: Respondent named two responses as occupational choices
013: Three or more: Description of code: Respondent named three or more responses as occupational choices

Results:
Table 1. Number of Choices for Males and Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 2: How do you think you’ll know what to do?

Description: Knowledge of the job: what kind of tasks are related to individual occupations

Codes:

020: None: No response  
*Description of code: The respondent did not respond to the question.*

021: One related item:  
*Description of code: The respondent named one task that is considered part of their nominated occupation*

022: Two related items:  
*Description of code: The respondent named two tasks that are considered part of their nominated occupation*
023: Three related items: *Description of code: The respondent named three tasks that are considered part of their nominated occupation*

024: Four or more items: *Description of code: The respondent named four or more tasks that are considered part of their nominated occupation*

**Results:**

020: 0

021: 5

022: 4

023: 6

024: 3

024: Total: 18

**Table 2. Number of Nominated Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Task</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Tasks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Tasks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four or More</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 2: How do you think you’ll know what to do?

Description: Accuracy of information: The respondent gave an account of the task involved in the nominated occupation

Codes:

026: no information  Description of code: The respondent did not respond to the question.

027: Broad Knowledge  Description of the code: The respondent made a statement that did not relate specifically to the designated occupation for example “learn things” or “helps people”.

028: Specific Knowledge  Description of code: The respondent responded with a task that could be associated with the designated occupation for example “looks at plans” or “puts the price on the calculator”.

Results:

026: 0

027: 12

028: 6

029: Total 18
Table 3. Broad & Detailed Knowledge of Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 3: Would someone be telling you what to do?

Description: Knowledge about the hierarchical nature of work: knowing about the nominated occupation

Codes:

030: No response  Description of code: The respondent did not respond to the question

031: Affirmative response  Description of the code: The respondent answered with a "yes" response

032: Boss nominated Description of code: The respondent responded with "boss" as the person telling them what to do.

033: Specific person nominated Description of code: Respondent answered by nominating a specific person for example "Principal" or "coach"

034: Other Comments Description of code: Respondent did not nominate a specific person for example “when I am new” or “someone who timetables”

Results:

030: 4
Table 4. Number of Nominated Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmative Response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss Nominated</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Person</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Comment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 4: Do you know anyone else who does this type of work?

Description: Knowledge about work structure: knowing about the nominated occupation from personal experience
Codes:

040: no response  
Description of code: Respondent did not respond to the question

041: Nominated a Named person  
Description of code: The respondent nominated a "named person" for example "neighbour" or "cousin"

042: Affirmative Response  
Description of code: Respondent responded to the question with a "yes" response

043: Negative Response  
Description of code: Respondent responded to the question with a "no" response

Results:

0: 1
041: 10
042: 1
043: 6
044: Total 18

Table 5. Known People who Work in Nominated Occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Named Person</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Response</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response

| Total | .8 | 100 | 10 | 100 |

**Question 5: Do your parents do this type of work?**

*Description: Knowledge about the nominated occupation*

**Codes:**

050: No response  
*Description: Respondents did not respond to the question*

051: Affirmative parent response  
*Description: Respondents answered with a “yes” response to the question*

052: Negative parent response  
*Description of code: Respondents answered with a “no” to the question*

**Results:**

050: 1

051: 10

052: 7

053: Total: 18

**Table 6. Parents who Work in Named Occupations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response

| Negative | 4  | 50% | 6  | 60% |


Positive 4 50% 3 30%

Total 8 100% 10 100%

Question 6: What would make this job enjoyable?

Description: The different aspects of an occupation that would make it worth considering as a choice

Codes:

060: No response  Description of code: Respondent did not respond to the question

061: Being with people  Description of code: The respondent nominated being with people as a reason for liking the occupation for example by saying “being around kids” or “meeting patients” but not “showing concern”

062: Concern for others  Description of code: The respondent nominated “helping” as a reason for liking an occupation. This could also be articulated as “make them better” or “helping people out” or “showing concern”

063: Monetary gains  Description of code: Respondent nominated a form of monetary gain as a reason for liking the occupation for example by saying “earn money” or “getting paid”

064: Good/fun  Description of code: Respondent nominated a sense of enjoyment expressed as being “good” or “fun” as a reason for liking the occupation

065: See Places  Description of code: Respondent nominated another alternative that did not fit in with any of the other categories mentioned above. Opportunity to travel or “see different places” as reason for liking the occupation

066: Smell the Bread:  Description of code: Respondent nominated another alternative that did not fit in with any of the other categories mentioned above.
Opportunity to enjoy the smells involved in "bread making" as reason for liking the occupation

067: Doing Maths:  Description of code: Respondent nominated another alternative that did not fit in with any of the other categories mentioned above. Opportunity to enjoy "teaching/doing Maths" as reason for liking the occupation

068: Don't Work Hard:  Description of code: Respondent nominated another alternative that did not fit in with any of the other categories mentioned above. Opportunity to enjoy "not to work hard" (like restaurant workers) as reason for liking the occupation

Results:

060: 2
061: 4
0622: 3
063: 3
064: 2
065: 1
066: 1
067: 1
068: 1
069: Total: 18

Table 7. Perceived Enjoyment of an Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With People</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monetary Gains</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good/fun</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Reason</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 7 How do you find out about different kinds of jobs?**

**Description:** Number of available sources to seek out information regarding occupations

**Codes:**

070: No response  
*Description of code: Respondent did not respond to the question*

071: One Nomination  
*Description of code: Respondent nominated one possible source for accessing information*

072: Two Nominations  
*Description of code: Respondent nominated two possible sources of information*

073: Three Nominations  
*Description of code: Respondent nominated three possible sources of information*

074: Four or more nominations  
*Description of code: Respondent nominated four or more possible sources of information*
Results:
070: 2
071: 5
072: 8
073: 1
074: 1
075: Total: 18

Table 8. Number of Sources for Accessing Occupational Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Named Source</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Named Source</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or More</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 8 100 10 100

Question 7: How do you find out about different kinds of work?

Description: Available sources to seek out information regarding occupations

Codes:
No Response Description of code: Respondent did not respond to the question at all

Media Description of code: Respondent nominated the media as a source of accessing information. The media refers to both the printed and electronic for example “internet” or “magazine” is considered acceptable as a means of knowing about occupations

Cognitive Processing Description of code: Respondent nominated some kind of cognitive deliberation for example terminology like “thinking” or “pretending” or “fantasizing” by writing about different occupations in a journal as a means of knowing about occupations

Educational Institutions Description of code: Respondent nominated an institution such as a “university” as a place where information can be sought regarding occupations

Parents Description of code: Respondent nominated a “parent” as a means of finding out information regarding occupations

People Description of code: Respondent nominated a person for example “boss” or a person in authority as a means of finding out information regarding occupations

Friends: Description of code: Respondent nominated a person for example “peer” as a means of finding out information regarding occupations not a “boss” or an authority figure

Results:

0760: 1
0761: 12
0762: 3
0763: 3
0764: 3
Table 9. Available Career Information Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Processing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 8: Who would you talk to if you wanted to know about a particular type of work?

Description: Number of people as a resource for accessing occupational information

Codes:

080: No response  Description of code: Respondent made no response to the question

081: One nominated source Description of code: Respondent nominated one person as a means of gaining occupational information
082: Two nominated sources  
*Description of code:* Respondent nominated two persons as a means of gaining occupational information

083: Three nominated Sources  
*Description of code:* Respondent nominated three persons as a means of gaining occupational information

084: More than three nominated Sources  
*Description of code:* Respondent nominated more than three persons as a means of gaining occupational information

**Results:**

080: 2

081: 6

082: 4

083: 3

084: 3

085: Total: 18

**Table 10. Available Number of Sources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Named Source</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Named Source</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Named Resource</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More Than 1 12.5% 2 20%
Three Named

Total 8 100% 10 100%

Question 8 Who would you talk to if you wanted to know about a particular type of work?

Description: People as a resource for gaining occupational information

Code:

0860: No-one nominated  Description of code: Respondent did respond to the question

0861: Parents  Description of code: Respondent nominated parents for example "mum" or "dad" or "parents"

0862: Teachers  Description of code: Respondent named teacher or teachers as a person for would have occupational information

0863: Friends  Description of code: Respondent nominated a person other than a family member for example "friends" or "school friends"

0864: Family Members  Description of code: Respondent named a family member other than a parent as a nominated person for example "cousin" or "brother" or "Grandma"

0865: Nominated person in a specific job  Description of code: Respondent nominated a person who had a specific role regarding the chosen occupation for example "lawyer" or "doctor"

0866: Boss  Description of code: Respondent nominated a boss as the person to whom they could discuss occupational information

Results:

0860: 2
0861: 11
Table 11. People as Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No-one</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(not parents)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person in Specific Job</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 12 15
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Job (All Nominations)</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Boss</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Enjoy</th>
<th>Find out</th>
<th>Talk</th>
<th>ESL</th>
<th>Student VPI/ANU</th>
<th>Faith</th>
<th>MOTH</th>
<th>Solo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>F/2</td>
<td>#Teacher 011</td>
<td>021</td>
<td>034</td>
<td>041</td>
<td>052</td>
<td>064</td>
<td>072,0761</td>
<td>083</td>
<td>085</td>
<td>S 84.5</td>
<td>E 63</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>#Doctor Author 012</td>
<td>022</td>
<td>031</td>
<td>042</td>
<td>052</td>
<td>062</td>
<td>073,0763</td>
<td>080</td>
<td>085</td>
<td>I 100/63</td>
<td>E 49.9</td>
<td>C 47.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>#Teacher 011</td>
<td>021</td>
<td>030</td>
<td>041</td>
<td>050</td>
<td>065</td>
<td>070,0760</td>
<td>0081</td>
<td>085</td>
<td>✓ S 84.5</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M1</td>
<td>#Lawyer 011</td>
<td>024</td>
<td>032</td>
<td>043</td>
<td>052</td>
<td>062</td>
<td>072,0761</td>
<td>081</td>
<td>085</td>
<td>E 96.0</td>
<td>R 48.5</td>
<td>C 34.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>#Nurse 011</td>
<td>023</td>
<td>032</td>
<td>042</td>
<td>062</td>
<td>071</td>
<td>0762</td>
<td>084</td>
<td>085</td>
<td>S 75.3</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>M1</td>
<td>#Shop Ass 011</td>
<td>022</td>
<td>030</td>
<td>041</td>
<td>052</td>
<td>063</td>
<td>072,0761</td>
<td>082</td>
<td>085</td>
<td>E 27.4</td>
<td>R 41.2</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>#Checkout 011</td>
<td>024</td>
<td>030</td>
<td>040</td>
<td>052</td>
<td>065</td>
<td>070,0760</td>
<td>081</td>
<td>085</td>
<td>✓ E 24.5</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>#Teacher/Journalist Decorator Designer 013</td>
<td>022</td>
<td>033</td>
<td>041</td>
<td>052</td>
<td>061</td>
<td>074,0763</td>
<td>081</td>
<td>085</td>
<td>S/A 84.5</td>
<td>C 78.5</td>
<td>S 84.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>#Pianist/Social Worker 012</td>
<td>021</td>
<td>030</td>
<td>043</td>
<td>051</td>
<td>060</td>
<td>071,0761</td>
<td>082</td>
<td>085</td>
<td>✓ A/S 73.2</td>
<td>R 21</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>M1</td>
<td>#Mechanic 011</td>
<td>022</td>
<td>030</td>
<td>041</td>
<td>051</td>
<td>063</td>
<td>072,0761</td>
<td>081</td>
<td>085</td>
<td>✓ R 33.0</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>M1</td>
<td># Teacher 011</td>
<td>024 028</td>
<td>033 041</td>
<td>051 064</td>
<td>072 0761</td>
<td>082 0851 0852</td>
<td>S 84.5</td>
<td>R 37.3</td>
<td>S 89.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td># Basketballer 011</td>
<td>021 027</td>
<td>033 043</td>
<td>052 064</td>
<td>071 0764</td>
<td>082 0851 ✓</td>
<td>R/S UTC</td>
<td>R 12.4</td>
<td>S 48.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>M1</td>
<td># Building Supr Police/carp 013</td>
<td>024 028</td>
<td>032 041</td>
<td>051 065</td>
<td>072 0762</td>
<td>080 0850</td>
<td>R 52.2</td>
<td>E 56.2</td>
<td>I 83.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td># Office Worker 011</td>
<td>023 028</td>
<td>032 041</td>
<td>051 060</td>
<td>072 0763</td>
<td>081 0851</td>
<td>C 36.1</td>
<td>E 54.6</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>M1</td>
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<td>083 0851 0852 0855</td>
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**Key to Summary Codes:**
- **M:** Male, **F:** Female, **#:** First response given by children, **Job:** Where do you think you will go to work? **Task:** How do you think you'll know what to do? **Boss:** Will someone be telling you what to do? **Person:** Do you know someone else who does this type of work? **Enjoy:** What is it that would make this job enjoyable? **Find Out:** How would you find out about different kinds of jobs? **Talk:** Who would you talk to if you wanted to know about a particular type of work? **ESL:** English as a Second Language **VPI:** Vocational Preference Inventory, **R:** Realistic, **I:** Investigative, **A:** Artistic, **S:** Social, **E:** Enterprise, **C:** Conventional, **UTC:** Unable to Classify, **ANU Australian National University Classification of Occupations, Fath:** Father, **Moth:** Mother, **Solo:** Single Parent.
Appendix E

RESEARCH FIELD NOTES

Notes on Respondents

Subject 1

Female, explained the purpose of the interview. She is very confident and happy to speak. At first sounded like she knew a bit about the subject but the content is thin. I should have tested my questions more I feel like they are not adequate to ascertain the knowledge I expected. I am disappointed in my interviewing performance. I can see I’m jumping too quickly and not waiting long enough for a response. I really feel the pressure of running out of time I might not get all the interviews completed. Some of the questions feel at bit closed with the yes and no response. I’m not sure how much of the general format I can change if I want the questions to be similar for all respondents. For this respondent I feel like I am supplying the answer rather than letting the respondent have her say. I am leading the discussion, giving too much information. I am not as objective as I need to be.

Subject 2

Female, she is a fairly confident child. I could have pursued each of the career options further. Could have reworded would someone be telling you what to do better than I have. It might have been better to reverse the question about the parents/people but I haven’t done it so far. I feel that I am getting too many closed answers. I feel like I need to probe more.

Subject 3

Female, ESI background a very quiet child. I needed to have a bit of a practice listening to her speaking voice because I wasn’t sure that the microphone would pick up her voice. She has very poor articulation. She gas difficulty in understanding the questions. I am trying to reframe the questions to get more relevant response however, I feel I’m doing all the talking I should be saying less. I have forgotten about those silences and have jumped in too often. I have got very little information most of the tape will be me speaking. Interestingly she has nominated all her peers as being ‘experts’. She didn’t choose one adult, they were all classmates. Makes me wonder about those children who parents are unable to
assist them with careers they may have more restricted opportunities than their peers.

Subjeсt 4

Male, he is very confident. Short closed responses. I am consciously trying to be a bit more direct with my questioning and not say so much. Television as a source of knowledge is that a real or unreal source of information. Seemѕ confident and knowledgeable but I still didn’t get the quality of data that I was expecting.

Subjeсt 5

Female, she is selecting nursing. She is a better able to articulate some aspects of the job than others. She uses her journal to record her feelings about different future occupations. Shows she has a good imagination. Still in my opinion, not showing signs of having enough individual details as to what the job is really all about. Do I need to probe more?

Subjeсt 6

Male, he is jumping around a lot from one topic to another. I have tried to pin him down to discuss just one job. Maybe I should have got him to discuss all aspects of the jobs he mentioned that would have given more data to work with. I think I sounded condescending when I said would that be your main job. Probably showed that I was looking for something better instead of just letting him give his opinion. I should not have made that comment I sounded like I was passing judgment on him.

Subjeсt 7

Female she has an ESL background. It is very difficult to get a reasonable response. I feel like I was giving her too much information and getting far too little response from her in return. Probing became restating and not as subjective as I could have been. I kept getting “yep” I think... Even with restating the questions I perceived a lack of understanding or a lack of articulation on their part. I was starting to think I would not get anything much I could use when she showed that she had some knowledge of work experience and she at least knew what she didn’t want. I was hoping to get some information regarding where one found out about particular career aspirations and what I got was a description of
what their aspiration entailed. I feel that I am not helping the ESL students as much as I could. Is it me or do these (ESL) students need a lot more clarification of the questions than I am at present, providing?

**Subject 8**

Female, before the interview when I was developing a rapport with the child and discussing what the expectations were, she was letting me know how apprehensive she was about making the wrong response and asked "If I am not sure about what you mean can I ask questions?" I told her I was happy for her to ask any questions she need to. As soon as we began I was asked what job? What does that mean? After a while she started to settle down. It made me think about what kind of discussion might have pre-empted the interview at home. Some of the ideas put forth as not all were correctly pronounced. It was difficult to know which of the careers given should pursue or whether I should pursue all of them. I have tried to concentrate on the first stated idea as the most important one. This subject certainly brought into focus the idea of significant others as being a valuable source of information. I tend to use the first stated occupation as the most relevant.

**Subject 9**

Female, she has an ESL background. I found it very difficult to get a clear picture of what the actual occupation was that was being discussed. There was a certain sifting of ideas. But I found it difficult to ascertain what it was that the subject was alluding to. I felt that I was doing all the talking with very few meaningful responses being offered by the subject. After I finished the taping I asked what it was exactly that people do when they are helping and found out it was a social worker she was thinking about but her lack of English had made it difficult to express this idea well. I turned the tape back on to pursue this idea further but still without much more response. (I have no idea what her father does for an occupation I must check that occupation) Another ESL child I didn't get much information from.

**Subject 10**

Male, has a fairly good knowledge about career because his father has had some discussions with him. He could speak at length about his father's work. He
sounded at first that he had some depth to his knowledge. But the knowledge was a bit superficial or rather it may have been reported to me without the child having complete understanding. This may be a case of the parent preparing the child for the interview beforehand.

**Subject 11**

Male, has some knowledge about teaching. His mother has the same job so this is a possible source of information. Not very forth coming makes me question my skill as an interviewer. This one will help support the theory that parents’ occupations help decision making.

**Subject 12**

Shy needed coaxing. Female, basketballer was the choice, interesting being a female, I’m not sure where that fits into occupations. I think I read somewhere that it was considered a ‘fantasy’ occupation rather than a real one. I will have to back and do some more reading in this area. Again I feel like I am doing most of the talking, fairly monosyllabic responses. It is interesting that it is a female with a sporting pursuit and a team sport.

**Subject 13**

Male, he is very confident and a very good talker. This subject has lots of ideas about the job but specific information on tasks is very thin. It took me a while to catch onto those unfamiliar names were actually company names. I needed to check those company names again. I found this child very confusing at times. He had some good ideas but they were all jumbled up and not in a clear sequential order. I could have made more out of this interview if I had pinned him down but really he was jumping around a bit.

**Subject 14**

Female, whose first nomination is an office working and secondly another sporting pursuit. There is a direct relationship to her father’s job I think. Not a very articulate subject.
Subject 15

Male, nomination was a place rather than an occupation. He appears a bit unsure about his real prospects. It makes me think about the relevance about self-esteem in the curriculum.

Subject 16

Female, she nominated a doctor but found it difficult to articulate what a doctor does. She was very unclear about specific details in fact was very general. This was surprising as I would have thought visiting the doctor gave all of us a fair indication of the skills that are involved in private practice. She didn’t have a clear understanding of the doctor’s role. Maybe she doesn’t go that often or maybe she really doesn’t have a realistic picture of what doctors do in the real world.

Subject 17

Female, fairly confident, nominated a bookkeeper gave a description of the job as being like a librarian’s and discussed it in terms of storage. Mother may have spoken to her about her own job as a bookkeeper. I get the feeling that there may have been a bit of parent/child pre-discussion before the interview.

Subject 18

Male a good talker had some practical ideas about what was involved in setting up and putting away goods in a greengrocer shop which his father owns. But did not offer any other aspects of the job that he may have thought were relevant. In a way he has this idea maybe been put to him about working with his dad. But he still has only a sketchy idea of what is involved in the business. Obviously he has no idea about where the stock comes from other than in the fridge and out again.

Given the total middle school population of Year Three children a total 18 (8 males and 10 females) is not as many as I would have liked.

Reporting on classroom lessons

Classroom lessons gave me the opportunity to report back the findings to the children and assess their general knowledge about occupations mentioned in the report.
The aim of each lesson across the year three level was to read and discuss the report as a whole class activity and then in groups to take one section of it and explain its content in a sentence or two. Each group then passed on their task to the next group to verify the statements that had been made. I took a small teaching group and worked on the more difficult parts of the report. One group then reported back on each part of the text before the whole class made general comments on what they had learnt about the research.

I really think the format of the lesson was too difficult for some classes. Other classes were able to deal better with the subject matter. I think that the way the children were grouped had most bearing on their performance in the “hot potato” activity. This is a sophisticated concept. When the classroom teacher put the children into mixed ability groups they worked well in the “hot potato” activity. In one class the children were easily able to identify missing important data in the feedback session and offer some critical suggestions to other groups.

I was surprised and pleased at how much knowledge the children exhibited about sex role stereotyping. I know that sex-role stereotyping has been used as part of their reading program in particular with the evaluation of characters in text. Overall the main ideas were understood. I was very pleased with some of the individual responses made during the whole class session.

I probably was a little too ambitious in the amount of detail I presented I could have reduced the content. I had tried to present the report in slightly easier language but at the same time I wanted the children to get the sense of real report writing for a very specific purpose. I felt the time was a big factor and I was pressured to get these lessons completed before the end of the term.

I was very pleased to hear that one of the parents who works as a scientist was coming into the classes to work with the children as part of their science topic. This would be an excellent way of disseminating information about careers if it could be structured within the planning time at the beginning of each topic.
Appendix F

Table 11. Nominated Occupations by Prestige

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