POLICY, POWER, AND DISCOURSE: THE STATUS OF OCCUPATIONAL AND GENERAL EDUCATION IN OKLAHOMA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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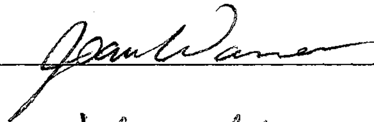

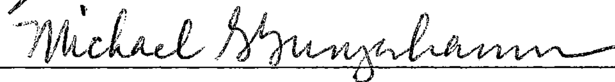

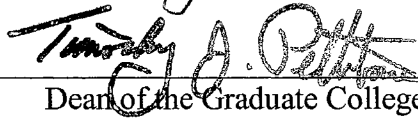

Dean of the Graduate College

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When Dr. David Webster at Oklahoma State University pulled me aside after our Critical Issues in Higher Education class and encouraged me to pursue a doctorate in Higher Education Administration, I was speechless. Rarely do professors who are busy with publications, teaching loads, and their own lives take the time to see potential in students. I was flattered, but it was not the only time in my work at OSU that professors would prompt, push, and lead me to excel in academia.

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After completing a couple of years at Tulsa Junior College, now Tulsa Community College, I dropped out to pursue an illustrious career in retail. In business, I

found that the women I worked with could not get along, their envy and spite about who would get the next promotion kept them vying for managerial attention, pawns in a patriarchal power ploy.

At Oklahoma State, however, I have enjoyed the generosity and leadership of two very different women, Drs. Adrienne Hyle and Kelly Ward, my dissertation advisor. Dr. Hyle and the Education Extension Office have always shown faith in my ability to get a job done. And even when I fall short, Dr. Hyle, you keep giving me opportunities to prove myself. I will always treasure our time together in Thailand, the day in the islands, meetings with Thai university administration, and activities with the cohort. Thank you, Dr. Hyle, for allowing me to join you as an unofficial colleague; your belief in my intelligence and ability amaze me.

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I never would have enrolled in classes at Oklahoma State University if Northern Oklahoma College's President Joe Kinzer hadn't prompted me to do so. His interest in my ambitions and career encouraged me to start asking questions about my own future. These questions became the seeds of many discussions that sprouted in the Language Arts Division at Northern.

Emily Dickinson was once accused of running off her friends by being too intense. My division chair, Dr. Mike Cronin, and my two dear friends Drs. Don and Pam Stinson have never faltered in their love and concern for me. Their patience, care, and incisive minds have seen us all through my exhaustive personality. When trying to decide if I should reenroll in graduate school, I protested that an instructor didn't have to have a doctorate to be a good teacher. Patiently, they listened, but they never relented with me on the point that a good teacher must always be a scholar. They knew what I wanted before I did.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Although some might guess that this study was initiated by my ten years of teaching experience in the liberal arts, particularly in the field of English and the humanities, and what seems an endless career as an English and education graduate student, I believe that this study can be chiefly attributed to two particular events and their mimicry of what I have experienced teaching at an Oklahoma community college. First, an encounter with a prospective student demonstrated to me how little those without college experience know about the logistics of getting into and out of college. Students who have this limited experience must rely on publications for information or on someone who has collegiate experience. The other event came about with my Introduction to Literature class' discussion of *Death of a Salesman* and Miller's portrayal of humanity's tragic struggle for identity by means of a pursuit of the ideal. This pursuit of the ideal mirrored what I had been observing within my institution and community colleges in general, for I saw in them a historical quest of an image that meets the needs of *all* students, pursuits that ironically lead these schools to design tumultuous policies and controversial programs.

Community college instructors are often asked by their administrators to partake in local activities so that their institutions might gain free publicity and their faculty a better understanding of their communities. As a liberal arts instructor for one of Oklahoma's rural community colleges, I am no exception. And it was at one particular event, the Kay County Fair, that I learned how far removed I am from the people that live in the area where I too live and work.

Standing inside the wooden booth, constructed by our physical plant, I met with locals and invited them to take a free calendar, pencil, and semester schedule. It was then that Muriel approached me. In her worn housedress and house shoes, she talked with me about my school, a place she had always wanted to "go at." Trying to remain open-minded and proud that my institution was historically the place for America's masses and the "atypical" college student, I answered Muriel's many questions. She asked if she could indeed get one of "those Master's" at my school. I explained that the two-year institution only offered Associate degrees. She then wanted to know if that followed one of "those backa" degrees. I supplied her with the proper term "baccalaureate" and further explained that a bachelor's degree could be earned after at least four years of college work. Looking into Muriel's expression of exasperation and bewilderment, I realized how little many people know about going to college. I saw how sad it was that certain groups of people are kept in ignorance about furthering their education and possibly changing their lives. And the horrifying factor of my encounter with Muriel is that she is representative of many people who never find their way to or who haphazardly wander into the community college. It was then I recognized the widening gap between those who understand what it means to get a college degree and those who do not.

When teaching my Introduction to Literature course one particular semester, I used Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* to explore the components of classical and modern tragedy. Not too surprisingly, I had a difficult time convincing students that Willy Loman is indeed worthy of empathy and emerges as Miller's definition of a tragic hero. They argued, in turn, that Loman is a weak old man who does grave error by wanting to live up to a superficial social image. They conceded, however that he, in

seeing fulfillment attainable through this image, pursues his identity with great dignity and dedication, drive worthy of a prince. And we all agreed that Willy, caught between what is realistically possible and the promise of great success, is often thoroughly confused. My students pointed out that in his struggle to secure the ideal American Dream, Loman fails to heed the lessons presented to him as he ages, and he fails to communicate truthfully with his family. Of course, they were right. But I countered with this: how likely are any of us to heed our histories so that we can better know ourselves and better anticipate how to shape our futures? I further asked: how willing are we to acknowledge the realities of our identities when we are sold into believing that we can achieve the ideal? And, I asked them, how often do we take the time to converse with others about the reality of our situations, instead relying on best case scenarios to save face? On this note, my students started to appreciate the tragedy within *Death of a Salesman*. I, on another note, started to understand how the community college's mission to be the ideal democratic institution, in its trying to be all things to all people, is historically and presently embedded in an educational paradox. In striving to provide something for everyone, the community college cannot emphasize one type of program over another; it puts itself in a position where it cannot converse honestly with stakeholders.

When I synthesize how these two events have shaped my view of Oklahoma community colleges, their current educational mission, and the need for responsible, objective guidance to students, I realize that the community college student is often unknowledgeable about the requirements of and choices in pursuing college education and the objectives of particular programs. With this realization came a couple of

questions: First, could community colleges be too concerned with achieving their ideal identity in becoming institutions that offer everything and anything needed by communities and businesses and missions? Are community colleges guided by ambiguous educational directives? Second, if students do not understand what it means to have a college degree and if schools cannot agree on their educational missions or do not convey these missions clearly, then could the schools become, not contributors of, but detriments to students' college success?

Significance of Study

Because of the current view that higher education is responsible for the nation's economy and the push for institutions to become more concerned with students' workforce training and less so with their general education, conflict has surfaced. Namely the pursuits of institutions and the possible repercussions for such educational directions have created controversy directed toward higher education in general. Notably, the community college system has been the most affected. Like other higher educational institutions, because of educational missions, community colleges have given spark to criticism. Outsiders criticize community college administrators for making decisions that do not indicate any thought of possible theoretical guidance or considerations of long-term outcomes. Their decisions, critics pose, encourage community college students to pursue terminal degrees, degrees that limit a student's acquisition of a higher education.

Oklahoma Significance

In Oklahoma, the situation is unique and a bit more complex. In most states, community colleges house both academic and occupational facilities, but Oklahoma higher education has established a separate branch of technical or career-technology facilities. Despite this separate tier of Oklahoma higher education, Oklahoma community colleges, like career-technology counterparts, offer occupational programs. Therefore, they compete with other community colleges and career-technology centers for students and for governmental funding. What this overlapping in program offerings suggests, and more importantly, furthers is that the Oklahoma higher education system does not have a clear understanding of what constitutes a college degree, where such programs should be offered, what discrepancies between college programs and occupational programs exist, and how to recognize the completion of occupational programs.

Program Guidelines

In some states, community college students who complete occupational programs are granted certificates as do Oklahoma career-technology students, but in Oklahoma community colleges, students who work in terminal programs are granted either certificates or Applied Associate degrees (AAS) (Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education [OSRHE], 2000, October). The type of reward, be it the certification or the degree, is left up to the discretion of the institution. And in Oklahoma, only eight of the community colleges grant certificates, the others awarding Applied Associate degrees for terminal work. Whether the program is considered a certificate program or an Associate of Applied Science program (AAS) is up to the discretion of the institution. The method of these decisions suggests little consistency within the Oklahoma community college system, inconsistencies that affect statistical reports (OSRHE, *Degrees*, 2000).

Furthermore, if students pursue a terminal degree (AAS), then universities do not view the Applied Associate as college work because of the limited amount of general education and the requirement of courses that are job specific. Students lose a majority of their earned college hours. The way community colleges communicate with students about their college choices is left up to the discretion of the college.

Statement of the Problem

For Oklahoma community colleges, in a state where the two-year system has little educational and political direction, this investigation is vital in supplying a varied view of institutional missions. The state does not differentiate between terminal Applied Associate and transferable Associates of Arts and Science degrees, which indicates it does not perceive any difference. However, universities do not accept terminal degrees as college work because they perceive these programs as work training. Businesses still reward more money and promotional opportunities to students with bachelor degrees. When discrepancies and criticism exist concerning such programs, community colleges should safeguard students from any emphasis on one type of educational program over another.

Research Questions

This research was guided by five questions:

- What is the current status of occupational and transferable education in Oklahoma community colleges?
- How do institutions convey to students the purpose and differences of the various types of programs they offer?

- How could state documents encourage schools to emphasize one type of program more than another?
- What do theoretical perspectives reveal about occupational and liberal arts programs within the community college?
- What do these theoretical dialogues contribute to higher education's pursuit of various programs?

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the current emphasis, indicated by campus and state documents, placed upon occupational and transferable programs offered by Oklahoma community colleges. These documents reflect the dialogue concerning the educational endeavors of the two-year system. To represent the Oklahoma community college system, the publications of three institutions, Tulsa Community College, Northern Oklahoma College, and Seminole State College, are summarized and analyzed. The educational objectives of these institutions are best observed in the discussion of their various programs. The way these schools present material regarding the types of programs, i.e. the discussion of the objectives and philosophies of Applied Science and Associate of Arts and Science programs, requirement changes concerning general education hours, transferability issues concerning the types of programs, and the number of choices in each area offered to students, provide insights to the schools' attitude toward the types of degrees. Furthermore, the number of graduates in the types of programs suggests a current emphasis in Oklahoma community colleges. To determine if schools imply that training students for jobs has increasing significance, an analysis of

these institutions' publications, missions, catalogs, course listings is conducted. If a shift in educational directives is identified in these three schools, this study attempts to find the external voices that may have influenced such an emphasis. Thus, the study summarizes and analyzes state documents and the unfolding dialogue occurring between state and local institutions.

The educational directives of higher education are scrutinized and supported by two theoretical views, human capital and reproduction (bureaucratic) theories, lenses that view education either as a contributor to the economy by its producing trained workers or as an educator of civic leaders. The study examines the points made by these theoretical perspectives and the method of such discourse. This study offers a way of improving such discourse through the practice of feminist discourse.

Feminist discourse, perhaps the most useful approach in examining the current status of educational programs in the community college, is not debating what schools should be providing as educational objectives or slandering schools for oppressing the working class student by succumbing to businesses who want to avoid the cost of training students, but is prompting a consensus about how higher education should discuss the values of occupational and general education. Perhaps institutions should be open about their educational requirements and programs benefits and limitations to students and exercise scholarship that calls into question about the messages we give about education and its value.

Methodology

To address the research questions proposed for this study, in particular, I conducted a qualitative study, a detailed document analysis of school and state publications. Aware

that publications carry with them their own hidden meanings and own complex set of problems (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), I studied documents from three Oklahoma community colleges—Tulsa Community College, Seminole State College, and Northern Oklahoma Community College—and state documents to uncover views regarding occupational and general education programs in these schools. First, the study offers a backdrop of the national trends of community colleges, looking specifically at American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) publications and their suggestions about the directions of the community college. Second, the study explores three institutions' mission statements, program requirements, and catalogs. The collection, analysis, and synthesis of such documentation helped to provide insight about the current state of vocational and general education in Oklahoma's community colleges and what schools are currently offering and changing within those offerings. Third, the investigation focuses on the Oklahoma State Regents' for Higher Education written goals and objectives for Oklahoma higher education and, specifically, the community college. It also reviews budget appeals to state legislators and the governor, school and state statistical reports, and community college state reports published by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) to reveal any favored direction of state leaders. Dividing the inquiry into state and institutional levels helped to determine if the current status of occupational and transferable education in Oklahoma community colleges is a creation of institutions or of organizations on a broader, more powerful level. Viewing these three divisions separately and comparatively allows us to review how they correspond with one another and how they are directing the community college.

In terms of data collection, I gathered and analyzed various Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education publications. These publications have data that led to conclusions regarding the number of each type of program. I focused on material published within the last five years, but had to compare findings with data reported within the last decade. For school catalogs, missions, and programs, the information was taken directly from institutional publications and websites.

In the selection of the three community colleges, I followed the U. S. Department of Education, *A Classification System for Two-Year Postsecondary Institutions* (2001). This recent publication has separated two-year systems into three sectors: public institutions, private not–for-profit institutions, and private for-profit institutions. I selected three schools from the first category, public institutions. Within this classification, three other types of community colleges exist: the Community Development and Career (schools that focus on primarily job and career skills with less than 2,000 students), the Community Connector (schools that confer certifications and transferable degrees 2,000 to 9,999 students), and the Community mega-Connector (urban schools with 10,000 students). In this study, Seminole State College (the Community Developer) represents the first category, Northern Oklahoma College (the Community Connector), the second, and Tulsa Community College (The Mega-Connector), the third. Whereas one can easily argue that three Oklahoma institutions cannot accurately indicate the situation at every public community college in the state, I hope that with carefully selected institutions, representative of the three sizes of institutions recognized by the U. S. Department of education and a selection of the oldest to the largest institution, the reader would allow such transferences of generalization.

The documents supplied by these institutions provide the schools' missions, what programs are encouraged by their administrators and who is involved in the process of determining the institutions' missions. After analyzing this descriptive data procured from three Oklahoma community colleges and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, I turn to a theoretical analysis. The study reviews two types of theory: bureaucratic, which is viewed from the reproduction and human capital premises, and feminist. The first type, bureaucratic, explores what is being said about occupational and transferable education in higher education—the adversaries and advocates of occupational education. The second, feminist discourse, shifts the study's focus onto not *what* is being said, but *who* is the intended and potential audience and *how* should the conversation occur.

Bureaucratic Theoretical Perspectives

Theoretically, higher education's growing emphasis on occupational programs is viewed through the perspectives of social and economic reproduction, and human capital. Whereas none of these theories direct their comments on and about the community college, their lenses can be applied to community colleges. These theories support and criticize occupational education and divide the advocates and adversaries into distinct groups. These frameworks provide insights concerning the direction of education, the various perspectives regarding curriculum decisions, evaluative commentary regarding occupational programs, and discourse that does and should occur.

Reproduction Theory

Reproduction theory is based on the premise that education, a manifestation of the mainstream culture, does not function as the liberator it claims to be, but in two distinct

ways. First, cultural reproduction is the belief that education upholds one culture as the dominant culture and enforces its values, and the other, economic reproduction, is that education is not distributed equally among the masses, limiting the opportunities that come to particular classes of students.

Cultural reproduction explores the role of general education. Whereas most liberal arts advocates agree that general education should be the fundamental or core education of students, the two camps—those in favor of a traditional curriculum and others in favor of a multicultural or diverse curriculum, argue that curriculum. The traditionalists claim that general education has been infiltrated by liberals who have watered down the standards, leaving students wading through multicultural texts and losing any real footing in mainstream cultural literacy (Bloom, 1986; Hirsch, 1988). The multiculturalists argue that the dominant culture has oppressed the voices of minorities and that the curriculum should now encompass those once silenced voices (McGrath & Spear, 1991; Nussbaum, 1995). The reproduction theorists carrying on this debate, argue that general education has become an enforcer of either mainstream/ dominant culture or a product of multiculturalism that ignores the benefits of a classical education.

In addition to the controversy that surrounds general education curriculum, reproduction theorists also argue about education's role in economic matters. Reproduction theorists have used Marx's social reproduction claims to point out "how education is linked to power, race, gender, class, knowledge and moral bases of cultural production and acquisition" (Morrow & Torres, 1995, p. 348). Social reproduction theory has a strong link to Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu, as cited in Aronowitz and Giroux (1993), posits that "education reproduces existing power relations more subtly through

the production and distribution of a dominant culture that tacitly confirms what it means to be educated . . ." and that "by appearing to be an impartial and neutral 'transmitter' of the benefits of a valued culture, schools are able to promote inequality in the name of fairness and objectivity" (p. 75). Reproduction theorists propose that education does not live up to its reputation as liberator but is perceived as another enforcer of *The* Institution. If this is true then, two-year systems, in large part because of their student demographics and their catering programs to the working-class, fall under criticism. For if they emphasize occupational programs, community colleges are criticized for perpetuating class division.

Human Capitalism

Human capital theory, an economic theory first proposed by Becker and Schultz in 1962, poses that educational credentials can predict work productivity (Riley, 1999). Prompted by business' need for skilled labor forces but reluctance to in-house such training, Human capital theorists constantly explore and test correlations between investing in training and returns in profit. Since the cost of training detracts from profit, businesses turn to other sources for the "education" of its employees. And whereas some evidence does support that workers with bachelor degrees (little research deals with AA or AS degrees, and none exists concerning AAS degrees) do fare better at work, there is little understanding or empirical evidence to support that the degree leads workers to perform more effectively. This argument, albeit dubious, is used to justify skill training in higher education. This theoretical lens, on one hand, prompts business to pursue alliances with higher educational institutions so that job training can be conducted at schools and not by the business, thus saving money for the corporation. On the other,

human capital theorists themselves admit that no true correlation can be proven, for the economy is too complex.

Feminist Discourse

Reproduction and human capital theory has been criticized for being too much a part of the system that it works at evaluating. Theorists proximity to such complex issues, their inability to decide upon general education curriculum, and their contradictory conclusions, perceivably make their reform attempts impotent (Ferguson, 1989; Chambers, 1995). Therefore, this study explores feminist dialogue (Welch, 1990; Lather, 1991; Chambers, 1995) as a way for Oklahoma to discuss the role of occupational and transferable education in her community colleges.

So not only does this study explore the descriptive data of community colleges and the state, but also it conducts a theoretical analysis. The study will shift from a descriptive study about what is the current data describing occupational and transferable education in Oklahoma community colleges and how are reproduction and human capital theories dealing with what is being said, to a prescriptive one that uses feminist discourse to illustrate how the discourse should occur.

Situating the Researcher

Like all researchers, I have politics inseparable from myself. With ten years of English teaching experience and with my own educational philosophies saturated with the value of liberal arts and the personal and social liberation that come from the study of rhetoric, literature, and the humanities, I have great difficulty in believing that education best serves our country's capitalistic needs. I must admit, however, that economists have helped place value on education and that this support has led many students to enroll in

college, many of whom never would have. Furthermore, I want to provide data that will lead us to theories that, in turn, help identify the bias and assumptions brought to policymaking and research processes (Morley, 1999). But perhaps this is impossible. For the rooting of my own educational and personal philosophies lies within the belief that education and life are not "all about the money" and that society has no right judging person's value by the type of job he or she has. Neither a person nor an education can be judged by the dollar. But when starting this work, I often found myself encountering such philosophies. After some thought, I admitted that my education was an attempt to secure a particular job. Additionally, I have seen several of my classmates with liberal arts degrees and laden with philosophies unable to find work. Working through my own knee-jerk reactions, I have aimed at making this study more open to various viewpoints and at opening the discussion concerning the current status of educational programs in the community college. So with the help of feminist consciousness, "improving knowledge and removing distortions that lead to distorted practices and outcomes" (Griffth, 1995, p. 223), I wish this dissertation to be the doorway leading into the room where all concerned parties can sit at the table of educational directives, partake in information from various views, and initiate a review and a possible change of their practices, policies, and programs. And when this presentation falls short, as it is sure to do, please be patient; I myself am trying on new ideas.

Summary

To meet the requirements of one of my courses in the Educational Leadership program at Oklahoma State University, I interviewed my school's president, the school's Board of Regents' Chair, and state legislators. All claimed that a primary objective of

higher education was to contribute to the area and state economy. At that year's commencement address, Lt. Governor Mary Fallen congratulated graduates and told them now they were ready to work and to improve the status of living. Also that year, my institution, for the first time in its history, offered fewer numbers of transferable programs and more occupational ones (Associate of Applied Science), degrees that were considered "terminal" and for work-focused students. When I hear that my students' worth is their imminent (and usually expedient) contribution to the state's economy as its educated workforce, I wonder how college education became equated with money. I wonder how will my classroom performance and curriculum become a factor in this equation. I wonder if community colleges are emphasizing occupational programs in attempts to train a workforce and, therefore, have lost the appreciation for general education. Thus, I worry that these are true. Do my students—at times, very much like the misinformed and ignorant Muriel, enroll in programs because they have bought into the current view of higher education as a means to a job, thereby defining themselves as a workforce? I worry that community colleges, in attempts to be on the cutting edge of educational reform and to be all things to all students, have become directed by ambiguous identities and external forces. If so, have schools, in their neglect of academic clarity and theoretical probing, redirected their educational missions without much thought to repercussions and without the dialogue among all involved?

This study examines the present state of Oklahoma community college programs. It attempts to provide a count of occupational and transferable programs in three community colleges. It analyzes state and school documents that relate to the status of occupational programs and the liberal arts in the two-year system. It also explores

theoretical frameworks that discuss higher education's offering of occupational programs and another that encourages a dialogue with all participants.

This chapter has offered a background and introduction to this study. Chapter Two will review literature detailing the situation of corporate curriculum, the historical role of community colleges and the current effect of corporate curriculum on community colleges. It then turns its eye on Oklahoma community colleges. Chapter Three discusses the collection and analysis of data and the use of discourse analysis as a research method, bringing to light weaknesses and strengths of such methodology. Chapter Four focuses on the publications from three community colleges and the State Board of Regents for Higher Education and an analysis of each. Chapter Five deals with theoretical perspectives regarding the possible shifting of educational goals and examines the theoretical quagmire that impedes an effective discourse. Chapter Six responds to the present debate regarding occupational education in community colleges, offers a way to improve discussion. Chapter Seven reviews and concludes the study.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

The questions that surround the role of higher education are compounded by the various types of institutions vying for service markets within the system and society's rising need for a trained workforce. Presently, academicians are posing that certain institutions are beginning to look more like "business-training grounds" and less like places of learning (Belfield, 2000; Shapiro & Purpel, 1998; Wresch, 2001). These scholars pose that higher education, in its clamoring to get governmental and corporate funding, has abandoned the education of the whole student and has begun to focus on skilled labor. This complaint portrays institutions focused on producing a workforce and showing no concern for educating students in life skills. Consequently, a strong disparity between the educational philosophies of higher education surfaces: is the mission of higher education to train workers in specialized areas or to liberate students through a general foundation so that they might be able to understand and lead their societies? And more troublesome, if schools are uncertain as to what their role should be, then how do they guide students, like Muriel, in their understanding and acquisition of a college education?

Current scholarship, examining the influx of economic pressures in higher education and the effect it has on general education and the liberal arts, serves as evidence of these arising controversies in higher education. And despite a limited amount of research dealing with the two-year system, the historical and current educational pursuits of the community college make it a clean target for such controversy and scholarship.

This chapter begins with an overview of community college research and leadership. It examines the main thrusts of existing literature, its discussions of community colleges, and follows this critique of scholarship with a description of community colleges' history and the convoluted missions of the national community college system. This overview focuses on a look at Oklahoma community colleges, the state's system history, literature, leadership, and characteristics. The chapter then explores the tension and crossroads of occupational and general education.

Community College Research

Researching the community college presents some problems. First, the institution, notably a unique component of the higher education system, has few scholarly periodicals dedicated to the issues involving it. Primarily, *New Directions in the Community College*, *Community College Week*, *The Community College Journal*, and the *Community College Review* are the few periodicals. And because so little research originates from those who teach in the community college—their primary role is teaching and research is not encouraged—two significant organizations have been in place, the AACC, American Association of Community College that publishes the *Community College Week*, and the *Community College Review*, and the Community College Research Center (CCRC) out of Columbia University's Teacher's College. CCRC is affiliated with the Columbia Institute on Education and the Economy and also supports many of the studies and publications from Berkeley, California's National Center for Research in Vocational Education and the National Council for Occupational Education and its leading scholar W. Grubb. The Community College Research Center, one of the leading contributors of research for the community college, produces and supports

scholarship on the importance of occupational educational roles within the higher education system.

Because the primary wealth of research originates at institutions outside the community college, the scholarship may be questioned. Research about the community college comes primarily from two sources: administrators of community colleges who write mainly descriptive commentary *and* scholars who have little practical experience within the type of institutions, who come from universities, who conduct research possibly to satisfy grant providers, and who evaluate schools based on the definitions and expectations of four-year institutions. These opposing perspectives possibly explain the discrepancy among publications: Either scholars are strongly in favor of the schools' actions, that published by the former group, or they are strongly critical of them, the latter. Overall, research and publications regarding the community college rest in the hands of two distinct groups, those who view it from outside (research institutions), and those who create the policies (school administrators and state agencies).

History and Objectives of Community Colleges

Historically, the two-year institution's mission has been to meet communities' needs of providing higher education to those students unable to afford the expensive tuition at universities and for students academically unprepared for higher education (Bailey & Averianova, 1998; Phillippe, 2000); thus these schools become the drawbridge over the metaphorical moats supposedly surrounding four-year colleges and universities (Jencks & Riesman, 1977; Dougherty, 1994; Zwerling, 1976). The university, although established as a public institution and, therefore, open to all who wish to enter, has not been accessible to the masses. This historical inaccessibility has not changed, for even

recently, "Eighty percent or more of high schools' graduates cannot qualify for admission to the elite universities and flagship state universities" (Culp & Helfgot, 1998, p. 1). To relieve universities of freshmen and sophomore classes, to accommodate the numbers of students who could not gain entry into universities and who needed preparatory study, and to help adolescents mature before moving on to the universities, the two-year system, envisioned in 1851 by Henry Tappan, president of the University of Michigan, and in 1896 by William Folwell, president of the University of Minnesota in 1896 was endorsed later by University of Chicago's William Harper, and Stanford's president D. S. Jordan (Cohen & Brawer, 1982). But despite efforts to make community colleges institutions for freshmen and sophomore level classes, universities would not do away with these lower levels; thus the community college would struggle to secure its identity in the higher education system.

Uncertain Missions

Neither educators nor community members can agree on what a community-college education should provide. Bailey and Averianova (1998) explain the multiple perspectives surrounding the mission of the community college. Some believe that a college education should provide a breadth of general knowledge, supplied in the general education and liberal arts courses taken in the first two years, followed by two years of a more specialized education in a field of expertise taken at a four-year college or university. Others, though, believe that education should prepare students for their careers, which can be accomplished in two years of specialized coursework. To accommodate both kinds of students, those pursuing bachelor's degrees and those heading to work, community colleges have established mission statements that set up a

dual system. And it is in the split of their missions that community colleges have received the sharpest criticism.

In their book, *The Diverted Dream: Community Colleges and the Promise of Educational Opportunity in America, 1900-1985,* Brint and Karabel (1989) argue that the community college, in its effort to fit into an organized, hierarchical higher educational system, "reflected both the egalitarian promise of the world's first modern democracy and the constraints of its dynamic capitalist economy" (p. 6). In light of this idealistic promise and the reality of the country's constraints, Brint and Karabel acknowledge that the community college's ideology and controversy are rooted in America' s unfaltering promise of opportunity and the reality of the limitations of such opportunities. They tell of the community college's pragmatism: "The aspirations of the masses for upward mobility through education would not be dashed; instead they would re-channeled in more 'realistic' directions. The leaders of the junior college movement embraced the logic of vocationalism" (p. 11).

Transformation of Community College Mission

In their chapter, "The Great Transformation" (1989), Brint and Karabel discuss the national transformation of community colleges in the 1970s. A declining job market for college graduates, The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education and Foundation's restructuring of higher education (Cohen & Brawer, 1982), the Vocational Education Acts and funding from the federal government, and increasing private and corporate support led community colleges to pursue solutions in the offering of occupational programs. The Carnegie Commission proposed that community colleges focus all their programs on "preparation of occupation" and "overcome the unfortunate tendency of

community college students to 'regard occupational curricula as dead-end or inferior" (p. 105).

The situations surrounding the community colleges' transformation in the 1970s is strikingly similar to present issues. The governing board of The Carnegie Commission composed of key corporate leaders and educational administration published *The Open-Door Colleges: Policies for Community Colleges* in June 1970 (Brint & Karabel, 1989). The Commissions' report embodied strategies for converting community colleges into diploma-mills, institutions that would increase the number of college graduates by encouraging students to complete college with a two-year degree as opposed to degrees that required four year to complete (Brint & Karabel, 1989). In doing this, four-year institutions would be relieved of the growing demand for their open access by "divert[ing students] into terminal occupational programs" (p. 104). The similarities between the community college's transitions in the 1970s to today's shifts led scholars to ask if higher education is simply revisiting a former trend.

The transformations of the 1970s did cast the academic legitimacy of community colleges under scrutiny. And whereas the shifts of the 1970s did ease the growing surge of college student enrollments, in the early 1980s community colleges faced a spiraling decline in enrollment, related possibly to declining unemployment rates. Furthermore, because of their emphasis on occupational education, Brint and Karabel (1989) point out, schools had to justify their programs to legislatures that questioned if programs were not considered college work by senior institutions, should the state support them?

As for the current situation in community colleges and their drive to offer more occupational programs, Brint and Karabel (1989)further claim that regardless of the

criticism concerning the influx of community colleges' occupational programs in the 1970s and regardless of the consequences faced by community colleges in 1980s, two-year schools did learn their lesson. Powerful business interests and consumer models have taken over today's community college curriculum and policy. And regardless of the previous criticism and consequence, community colleges pursue occupational programs in hopes of securing a niche for themselves in the overall higher educational system. This pursuit, Brint and Karabel claim, has given the community college a diverging identity one that ironically has re-instigated criticism.

Cohen and Brawer (1996) identify three major issues creating much of the controversy surrounding community colleges and their role within higher education. First, they claim that occupational and collegiate programs have exchanged roles. Whereas the transferable programs were once revered as the more prestigious and a way to make it to the university, occupational programs are selective of students, being exclusive in nature, thus making students commit early to sequential-type programs. Transferable programs were taken, Cohen and Brawer believe, for entertainment purposes or for ways to raise grade point averages so that students could enter more elite terminal programs. Secondly, the national transfer rate of students continuing on at universities has severely declined. Finally, Cohen and Brawer claim that possibly as a result of the transformation of educational programs, academic standards have diminished at the community college. Students' poor preparation and remedial status have often lowered teachers' expectations and course requirements. Because of these three issues, the two scholars predict that the larger question community colleges will face is if they are "in or out of higher education" (p. 26)? Cohen and Brawer conclude

their discussion by pointing out that community colleges contribute to society by teaching students about trades and occupations, a replacement of the archaic apprentice-system and by offering an inexpensive, accessible alternative to the university. Cohen and Brawer offer that the community college is already beginning to function contradictorily to the rest of higher education and, therefore, returns critics to the debate as to how community colleges should be categorized.

Although critics of the community college cannot agree on the effectiveness of the roles chosen by community colleges, all appear to isolate the problems to the split system, the offering of occupational and transferable programs. Therefore, one thing seems certain from the literature: despite the community college's ambiguous mission and its uncertain placement within higher education, the community college has its doors open to all. In 1998, six million, mostly from minority ethnic and female and working-class populations, enrolled in the community college. As reported from the U. S. Department of Education, "About half of all students in postsecondary education are enrolled in two-year institutions" (Phipps, 2001, p. iii). And because these numbers are expected to grow, critics and educators can all agree that the role of the community college will be a prominent one in the overall higher education system.

In their seminal work, Bailey and Averianova (1998) examine how the academic, occupational and remedial programs, and customized training functions of community colleges have made them "unparalleled in opportunity" (p. 7). The two point out that these unparalleled functions have given institutions their "quasi-educational" reputations. Bailey and Averianova further that the occupational and training programs have compromised liberal arts and transfer enrollment numbers, which began to decline in the

1960s. Drawing even more criticism, the certificate or terminal programs cannot be counted towards a four-year degree, hindering any student's aspirations of integrating their community college work in occupational programs into a bachelor's degree.

But despite the compromising of their posturing in higher education and students' inability to transfer such college hours to four-year programs, community colleges, Bailey and Averianova (1998), Leitzel and Clowes (1991), and Grubb (1996) claim, will not do away with occupational, training, and remedial programs in part because of the favored view they receive from politicians and community members. Additionally, there are those that believe the community college just may find its niche in providing a type of education that universities have avoided (i.e. Bailey & Averianova, 1998; Brint & Karabel, 1989; Grubb, 1996; Leitzel & Clowes, 1991).

Specifically, Grubb (1996) claims community colleges are not attempting to be academic institutions. He explains that the two-year institutions are not academic because they open their doors to the American mass, their degrees hold uncertain academic value, and they are not research-centered. So in its efforts to provide a different type of higher education, community colleges define themselves outside the scope of postsecondary institutions. By providing occupational programs, "community colleges are not academic institutions . . . even when many of their students hope to transfer to four-year colleges" (p. 83). Grubb further points out that as controversial as this may be it is the role and future of the community college. Although some scholars may find fault with such educational pursuits, Grubb and other supporters (i.e. Carnevale & Desrochers, 2001; Davis & Botkin, 1994; Dougherty, 2001) of occupational programs in the community college recognize that in offering such programs, community college

are innovatively transforming the face of higher education by meeting a real social need, a trained workforce.

In short, today's community colleges find themselves critiqued by an identity that they have historically vowed to serve: both a transfer and a terminal education provider. Serving the historical visions of Tappan, Folwell, et. al., community colleges have worked toward building alliances with senior institutions so that general education at their institutions has become the first step toward a bachelor's degree. Additionally and problematically, community colleges have historically and are currently pursuing alliances with business and industry to meet workforce needs. In doing so, two-year schools have continued to offer occupational programs. But it is this latter mission that has cast scrutiny on the educational objectives of the community college.

Oklahoma's Situation

The development of Oklahoma community colleges is noteworthy for this study. Although the most recent publication of the state's two-year system is dated, Nutter's (1974) dissertation provides a backdrop for this study. Nutter explains that the Sooner State's community college system developed in four stages: 1881-1939, 1940-1950, 1950-1967, and 1967-1974. The first of these three periods saw the birth and development of two-year schools. Even before the nationally recognized 1901 origin of community colleges, in 1881, Indian University, what would later become Bacone College in 1910, opened its doors in 1881. In this period, community colleges fell into three categories, independent (private institutions), municipal (associated with a housing city), and state-supported (the most permanent and steady in growth). Notably the municipal institutions strongly served the needs of the community by providing an

inexpensive education to citizens and would eventually establish local school districts. The mission of these municipals institutions would be three-fold: to provide a liberal arts curriculum, to be a two-year extension as a high school, and to offer vocational training for local business and industry. In this study, Seminole State College represents the municipal institution and Northern Oklahoma College the state-supported. Both institutions opened during this period.

In the second stage of Oklahoma's community college development, the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education is established, resulting in a strengthening of state-supported institutions. The financial strength of these institutions would cause an increase in enrollment whereas numbers would drop at municipal and independent schools, causing several to close. In 1950, the State System would push for a realized importance of general education; schools would strengthen their liberal arts programs.

In the third stage, 1950-1967, Nutter (1974) claims Oklahoma community colleges experience a time of stability and growth. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education outline basic functions of community colleges. Schools were to provide remedial education for those students ill-prepared for college work, offer the first two years of college credit, and provide adult and occupational education. Foremost, Oklahoma community colleges had a primary responsibility of supplying undergraduate general education that lead to the completion of an Associate degree.

Nutter's dissertation concludes with an explanation of the fourth stage, 1967-1974, in the development of Oklahoma's community colleges. In 1967, the state legislature initiates changes in municipals community colleges: that schools that were "established, open, and accredited for functioning under established standards and

regulations would be eligible for state financial assistance" (p. 51). In 1968, this funding would make way for Tulsa Community College, then Tulsa Junior College. This same year, the State System would offer special funding for those institutions offering "vocational education" (p. 52). In 1974, all existing state community colleges became a part of the Oklahoma State System for Higher Education.

The history of Oklahoma community colleges and the periods in which institutions open lend an idea as to the schools' belief in their educational objectives. If schools such as Seminole State College and Northern Oklahoma College open during a period that appreciates general education, then this would influence their educational philosophies. If schools, such as Tulsa Community College, opened during a time of great occupational education interest, this could influence their curriculum. Additionally, if schools are municipal, they may have an increased desire to meet the city's need. If schools are state-supported, they may perceive their survival dependent on their meeting state needs.

The education system of Oklahoma community colleges is also worthy of study. Foremost, little scholarship addresses the current status of Oklahoma community colleges, leaving Oklahoma to rely on the research that deals with two-year systems that differ from its own. For example, other state institutions house both career-technology facilities that focus on workforce development and liberal arts facilities that work with students aspiring to transfer to four-year institutions. But the Oklahoma higher educational system has attempted to separate the career-oriented facility from the community college by establishing a separate tier of technical centers. Therefore,

Oklahoma's system, a system unique to the national one, relies on the research conducted about institutions unlike itself.

To add to this confusion, Oklahoma community colleges have no organized advocacy or publishing group. The state's organization, OACC, Oklahoma Association of Community College, convenes once annually, but has no designated office or offers no political voice in matters of the state's government. Most community college faculty or administrators do not attend its one conference. A recognizable, unified body of the Oklahoma Community College does not exist. Without leadership and scholarship that provide vision and evaluation, the Oklahoma Community College cannot arrive at an understanding of itself. Therefore, without self-definition, the Oklahoma two-year system leaves them vulnerable when it comes to decisions made at higher levels. For without this leadership and scholarship, the Oklahoma community college can have little voice of its own. This lack of leadership and scholarship leaves Oklahoma's community colleges guided primarily by the wishes of external forces, namely the State Regents for Higher Education, business and civic leaders, career-technological centers, and four-year institutions.

What do Oklahoma community colleges want for themselves? There is no state-level protective body, no recognizable voice, and no publications that serve as a compass for future direction. Oklahoma community colleges are carried by the winds of change but have no captain at the helm. To understand the past, present, and future of its system, the two-year must organize and examine itself otherwise it will splinter into a variety of directions without any true course in mind. If schools are not deciding their educational missions and do not investigate through research the state and future of the community

college, the institutions will be pushed along by the currents and towing of forces that they cannot control and only struggle to appease. This study looks to data for a better sense of what is going on in the dialogue about occupational and general education.

Education and Economics

The controversial mission to mold students into workers has directed higher education toward a specific goal—providing students a gateway into a specific career. Thus, the once perceived role of higher education as a creator of leaders has presently become more of an economic builder (Belfield, 2000; Shapiro & Purpel, 1998; Wresch, 2001). The lineage of higher education and its turbulent relationship with the economy can be traced to the Wisconsin Idea, the Morrill Act of 1862, and the emergence of the German research university (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997). More recently, though, the publication of a *Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) sparked wildfire in the relationship between education and economic forces. The federal government's study, in its criticism of America's failing education, set the precedence that education was directly linked to and responsible for the nation's economy. The premise set forth by the report is that since the nation's economic strategy, at this time Reaganomics, was not working, it had to be the schools' fault (House, 1991). Ever since the report, higher education has found itself answerable to political policies that indicate colleges and universities are responsible for training a skilled workforce and, thereby, are accountable to contributing to the national economy (Cheney, 1991; Finn, 1986). And following institutions' lead, students, encouraged to become consumers and workers, strive to be a part of the workforce as soon as possible so that they can get a job and contribute to the economy. Additionally, this sends messages that the specific career

skills are more important that than students' first two years of college work, typically their general education.

General Education

In contrast to the vocationalizing of higher education, other educators argue that increasing need to meet market demands has led recent educational reforms away from the historical mission of colleges and universities and has compromised institutions' foundation in a classical education. Some authors advocate that the time has arrived when higher education should revisit the importance of general education and the liberal arts curriculum (Menand, 2001), the curriculum that focuses on teaching a broad base of general facts and one that emphasizes the significance of critical, creative thinking and the understanding of humanity.

Many critics lament the slipping status of the liberal arts and the confused curriculum of general education (Aronowitz, 1993, 2000; Brann, 1999; Giroux, 1999; Neely, 1999; Shor 1996). But regardless of the intrusion of economic and political forces into the hallowed halls of higher education and these forces' objectives that students become competitive, all of these educators contend that the liberal arts curriculum, albeit a little too theoretical, too abstract, and at times too removed from real-world experiences (McGrath & Spear, 1991), provides opportunities for intellectual curiosity, creative and critical thinking, self and social discovery, traits necessary to liberate a thoughtful democracy. Additionally in favor of a liberal arts curriculum, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), in their book *How College Affects Students,* present longitudinal data. In this study, the two researchers provide data that support the notion that students learn more than information at college; they grow as well-rounded, well-adjusted, self-actualized

citizens; and they do best when experiencing curriculum that emphasizes ethical and humanitarian concerns and provides a broad general education base.

Also advocating a broad based general education, Cook (1998) cites Murphy, a communications major and senior at San Francisco State, who claims that education should be general enough to offer one choices and not be intended to give "one particular mode of development, such as being prepared for the workplace. It should prepare [students] for having the knowledge and skills to be able to do whatever [they] want to do with [their lives], but it has to do with philosophy, understanding of ethical relations, and other subjects which are not oriented toward working" (p. 14). More well-known than Cook, Giroux (1999) additionally argues in his article "Vocationalizing Higher Education: Schooling and the Politics of Corporate Culture" that higher education is the place to question the logic and power of capitalism and commerce not to endorse it and that if education is a democratic ideal, then, by all means, it should have the funding and strength not to market students as compliant workers. Even Grubb (1996), an advocate of work-training programs, relents that "interests would not be well served in the long run by narrowly constructed occupational programs" (p. xviii).

Even within national organizations, educational leaders are voicing the necessity of providing a liberal education and avoiding too many specialized courses. The Carnegie Foundation is one such example. Currently on their website and published in a article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (2001, September 14) the Foundation is initiating a liberal-arts project. Under the direction of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, this project stems from a concern that higher education has veered too far in the direction of technical skills and career preparation. The Foundation

notes that even business leaders recognize this importance. It cites Paul Brest, President of Hewlett, who states, "One unintended consequence [of job-specific programs] could be to restrict the educational focus of institutions to a point where students lose the strength, insights, and critical spirit that infuses a broad liberal education" (A33). And significant to this study, the website notes that a large part of the responsibility is now falling on the metaphorical shoulders of the community college: "Increasingly, we think community colleges are becoming the unacknowledged liberal-arts-and-sciences educators of a large proportion of the college population. [Students] take [general education] classes at community colleges before enrolling at a four-year university" (A33). And the Foundation acknowledges that the project should investigate these institutions carefully, for "We need to understand what is happening" (A33).

Summary

What happens to most students who have little knowledge about college—perhaps because their parents never attended college or because the students did not receive good high school counseling? They often enroll in community colleges. And it is here in the two-year system—rooted in its historical, ambiguous education mission, in its training of workers for area businesses and communities, and in its educating of students wishing to transfer to four-year school to obtain baccalaureate degrees— that the identity crisis is felt the strongest (Dougherty, 1994; Nora, 2000; Pascarella, 1999; Zwerling, 1976).

The literature indicates that higher education is becoming more accountable to the nation's economy and is viewed as a supplier of skilled workers and that most higher education institutions resist such views. Also indicated is that, as an entity within higher education, community colleges are working toward fulfilling this controversial pressure

to meet market demands and are being both praised and criticized for offering occupational programs that serve market needs.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

To examine what was being said about occupational and general education in Oklahoma community colleges, I conducted a discourse analysis. This chapter first explains what questions led my research, what I was looking for, and next it identifies what specific documents I gathered for analysis. The description of my data collection is then followed by an explanation of the data analysis process. It concludes by discussing the methodology used, its weaknesses, strengths, and my rationale for enlisting this method.

Data Collection

I am very lucky. Throughout my doctoral work, I have been drawn to research dealing with the community college. After completing a master's degree in community college English education, I found reading about the two-year system left me with praise for America's unique institutional form of higher education and concern for and criticism of its haphazard transformation and its uncertain future. These oxymoronic musings would later direct my studies.

In one doctoral class, taught by Dr. David Webster, I read Dougherty's *The Contradictory College* (1994) and my honeymoon with community colleges was over. Dougherty complained that community colleges kept students from rising to their potential by keeping them out of senior institutions and giving them a watered-down, terminal education. As an instructor at a community college, I was troubled by what I read. Could such criticism about *my* institution be justified? The question led to my interest in the educational missions of community colleges.

Guiding Research Questions

For the past several years, I have been collecting data, searching for answers, and arriving at more questions. I am lucky because this study has found its way to me through my own interests, course work in my doctoral program, and my everyday experiences teaching general education in an Oklahoma community college. With Dougherty's criticism in the back of my mind, I questioned if schools were always upfront and clear about their educational obligations to students. I wondered what the current status of transferable programs was in the state's two-year institutions. Were Oklahoma community colleges favoring terminal programs? Did Dougherty's criticism apply to Oklahoma's schools? My wondering led me in this research:

- What is the current status of occupational and transferable education in Oklahoma community colleges?
- How do institutions, in their publication, convey to students the purposes and differences of the various types of programs they offer?
- How could state documents encourage schools to emphasize one type of program more than another?
- What do theoretical perspectives reveal about occupational and liberal arts programs within the community college?
- What do these theoretical dialogues contribute to higher education's pursuit of various programs?

Schema for Gathering Information

To answer these questions, I put in place a schema:

First, I gathered school catalogs, mission statements, and philosophical statements from three community colleges in Oklahoma, Tulsa Community College, Northern Oklahoma College, and Seminole State College.

Second, I used websites and hardcopies of these sites. I downloaded material off of these schools' websites, looking specifically for program offerings and requirements, histories, and information regarding current events. Later, I compiled pamphlets, reports, hard copies of websites, and school catalogs and stacked them in cubicles.

Third, I collected Oklahoma State documents and publications. Focusing primarily on the governing tenet of Oklahoma higher education, I used information published by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

When assembling this material, I first focused on data reported by the three institutions to the state. I was curious as to how many students enrolled in occupational and transferable programs, the number of community college graduates pursued four-year degrees, and how schools worded their appeals to the state for recognition and funding. The documents that helped in this assembly were *Institutional Profiles and Funding Needs for FY 2000* and *FY 2001*, *Degrees Conferred in Oklahoma Institutions and Type of Degrees, 1996* through *2000*, *Student Data Report 2000-2001*, and *Annual Employment Report,* (see Appendix), most of which I found at Northern Oklahoma College's library; the others I downloaded from the State Regents website.

After I finished looking at what the schools' published and reported to the state, I returned to state documents. This time instead of looking at what numbers were reported by the institutions, I examined *how* the state grouped, categorized, and emphasized its findings. For this analysis, I enlisted the use of the same state documents, *Institutional*

Profiles and Funding Needs for FY 2000 and *2001, Degrees Conferred in Oklahoma Institutions, and Type of Degrees, 1996* through *2000, Student Data Report 2000-2001,* and *Annual Employment Outcomes Report.* Once again using Northern Oklahoma College's library, a disorganized closet crammed with intriguing materials, I located other publications that contributed to this study. A report put together by an OSRHE subcommittee, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), studied business needs so that higher education could be more accountable for creating a workforce focus." Also in the library, I found a letter, written by the Chancellor of The State Regents for Higher Education, that introduced the CAEL packet. A most helpful site is the OSRHE website. *Brain Gain 2010* and the Regents' biographies were provided on this site. These additional publications found their placed in cubicles in my office.

Wanting to gather the latest information, I contacted the State Regents for 2002 reports but discovered that the *Student Data* report has not been printed for the last two years and that 2002 copies of *Fiscal Appeals* and *Degrees Conferred* had not been distributed or published yet.

Reports

What follows is a description of each of the state reports used, what the reports examined, and how the data was gathered.

Institutional Profiles and Funding Needs for FY. This report is published by OSRHE in hopes of identifying current operating costs and projecting future needs for Oklahoma colleges and universities. The report includes analyses of income and expenditures for fiscal years and provides institutional projections for future spending.

Degrees Conferred in Oklahoma Institutions, and Type of Degrees. This report lists the numbers of degrees granted in Oklahoma public and private institutions within a particular time frame. Each institution reports the numbers to the OSRHE who, in turn, compiles the data into reports. It consists of two volumes, reports the findings for specific years, and compares these findings with previous years. The report provides a brief executive summary and a full listing of graduating numbers within fields of studies, among minority students, two-year and four-year institutions, public and private.

Student Data Report. The Student Data Report was published for eighteen years but is no being published by OSRHE. The information is derived from student data from the Oklahoma State Regents' Unitized Data System (UDS). The report, like most used in this study, consists of tables and graphs that summarize the involvement of students in higher education, their academic interests, institutional choices, transfer patterns, and enrollment hour numbers.

Annual Employment Outcomes Report. The report uses the social security numbers of Oklahoma secondary and higher education graduates in hopes of identifying how many Oklahoma residents and non-Oklahoma residents who graduate from Oklahoma institutions remain in the state, how the level of education affects salary, and the average salary of Oklahoma graduates in relation to their degree attainment. The data is collected and reported by the OSRHE.

Theoretical Questions

After reading and analyzing the reports and publications—an exploration of descriptive data, I arrived at new questions, ones of theoretical proportion. Furthermore,

I used these questions as the basis for the discourse analysis from theoretical perspectives.

- What do the rising numbers of occupational programs suggest about the direction of Oklahoma community colleges?
- Why are general education requirements diminishing?
- What is the role of general education?
- How do schools view general education?
- How is higher education directly linked to the economy?
- Does a trained workforce guarantee a productive one?

To answer these questions, I turned to theory in hopes of finding thoughtful, evaluative touchstones. When dealing with occupational and general education questions, I found myself gathering literature about reproduction theory. And to explore the relationship between education and the economy, I looked into human capital theory.

What I found during my theoretical exploration is that theorists themselves become bogged down by the same types of dualistic arguments that keep discussants divided into camps and from producing any clear conclusions. I started to question: Perhaps the problem does not lie with what is the best type of educational program, but what is the most effective dialogue about these programs? I needed an analysis of the analysis. My question became, "Not *what* but *how* should we discuss?" For the answer of this question, I turned to a more prescriptive perspective, feminist discourse.

I realized then that this complex scope, one that is descriptive, theoretical—bureaucratic and feminist—and prescriptive, was needed to answer the full range of my research questions:

- What is the current status of occupational and transferable education in Oklahoma community colleges?
- How do institutions convey to students the purpose and differences of the various types of programs they offer?
- Do state documents encourage schools to emphasize one type of program more than another?
- What do theoretical perspectives reveal about occupational and liberal arts programs within the community college?
- What do these theoretical dialogues contribute to higher education's pursuit of various programs?

Data Analysis

This project is based on a discourse analysis, to examine what is being said and to evaluate the tenor and direction of dialogue. The analysis of this data is separated into two distinct types, descriptive and theoretical. The descriptive portion of the analysis occurs in Chapter Four and is the institutional (three Oklahoma community colleges—Tulsa Community College, Northern Oklahoma College, and Seminole State College) and organizational (Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education) document analysis of their publications.

The theoretical analysis of this study is further divided into two categories: bureaucratic and feminist. The former, explored in Chapter Five, is presented through the frameworks of reproduction and human capital theories, defined in this study as bureaucratic perspectives. The latter, provided in Chapter Six, shifts the focus of the

study from *what* is being said about the current trend of occupational education in higher education to *who* is being distanced from and manipulated by the discourse and *how* the discourse is occurring and *how* it might be improved.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse is the means by which information is transferred. The dialogue that takes place statewide among the State Regents for Higher Education and state institutions reveals what higher education is setting out to accomplish. Documents suggest what kind of discourse is taking place between the two. These documents not only guide institutions in their missions, goal statements, and designing of programs, but also they publicly establish and reflect what schools want society to value about them. This value, in turn, becomes the expected role of these institutions—it shapes their identity.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) point out, discourse is a "practice of a system, not because it reproduces other practices" (p. 195). In discourse analysis, an analyst "studies utterances in order to understand how the potential of the linguistic system can be activated when it intersects at its moments of use with a social system" (p. 195). Discourse is something independent of and yet becomes dependent on the social systems in which it occurs. How language occurs, how it is used, and how the audience is shaped by this discourse empower language, at times freeing the reader and at times oppressing him or her. Unfortunately, the audience is often unconscious of the manipulative capabilities of discourse. Therefore, the text becomes an "effect of this audience, and the skill of its producers" (p. 196). Accordingly, "Discourse analysts often find that marginal and abnormal uses of language are highly significant because they reveal, in a way that more normal linguistic usages do not, the extremes of which a system is capable"(p. 196).

Foucault investigated the power of language and concluded that "the multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies is a distribution that we must construct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required for those forbidden, that it comprises" (p. 100).

In *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy,* Ferguson (1984) discusses how discourse, regardless of its evaluative intentions, emerges from a bureaucratic system only to enforce that system. She builds her complaints on the tenets of Foucault's (1980) stress that the "impact of language affects institutions and their practices" (p. xiv). And Ferguson sides with his attempts to "unmask power" (p. xv) for the use of those who suffer from it. But Ferguson admits that those wanting to protest or refuse the institution are confronted with a language that they cannot manipulate; they are unable to engage in the dialogue because of the "linguistic dimensions of depersonalization render[ing] both bureaucrats and clients mute about themselves and their situations, divesting them of the self-articulation that is basic to conceiving and pursuing political opposition" (p. 15-16). Ferguson continues this discussion by examining the systems in which dialogue occurs. She contends that dialogue supposedly occurring in institutions and America's capitalistic systems are a part of a bureaucratic system, thus naming this dialogue bureaucratic discourse. Ferguson claims, "Bureaucratic language is expressive of certain political activities, activities in which the distribution of power is both expressed and hidden within the discourse itself" (p. 59). She furthers that the "speech of those who function within the context of many administrations is embedded with a politically laden field of meaning. Administrative discourse reflects and expresses a particular structure of institutions and practices" (p. 59), a language that upholds a "regimentation and

rationalized manipulation of human life for purposes of rendering it predictable and directing it toward behavior that supports, or at least fails actively to challenge, the established authority systems" (p. 59).

If this is true about discourse, then I hope that this study provides a practical critique of how "discourse operates as a kind of verbal performance, placing people and objects with in the network of social, political, and administrative arrangements" (Ferguson, 1984, p. 60). And I want the analysis to indicate how the rules "governing word-object relations allow one to raise questions about how those social, political, and administrative relationships in a society give rise to rules in accordance" (p. 60). And I want the project to give insight into how the "various kinds of objects emerge as a focus of attention for particular disciplines, professions, and other, similarly, bounded collectivities" (p. 60). Consequently, perhaps the analysis of this study might suggest how bureaucratic discourse has the potential to be paradoxical: allowing both an elucidation of the institutional context that gives rise to the favored disciplines and an enforcement of the political by highlighting the politics from which we reside, uncritical thus supporting the worlds of domination and submission with our understanding of and belief in the dialogue. Additionally, this analysis may then lead this study to question: "Since bureaucracy rests on the assumptions of scientific rationality—namely, that there is a single best solution, to organizational problems—and since it cloaks itself in the myth of administrative neutrality, the very effort to deal with conflict must be disguised even as it goes on" (p. 20). Therefore, how do educators and theorists suggests we deal with the current state of educational missions in community colleges?

In Oklahoma, state documents materialize from the influence of multiple voices, businesses, industry, educators, governmental agencies, legislatures, and governors. These documents become the state demands that institutions clamor to fulfill. In meeting these demands, institutions work at securing fiscal budgets. But in doing this institutions curb their academic goals to meet what others deem as necessary, and this initiates the criticism that schools are no longer providing a service for society, but instead are in a role of servitude. Higher education, and in this case, community colleges specifically, cannot fulfill the role as critic of and guide for its society, attributes of a liberator, when it has become a servant to state-level agencies, a servant both in publication and practice. This oppressed role is then passed onto students who perceive education as a provider of what the state has mandated. The issue has institutional, state, and societal ramifications.

Rationale for Using Discourse Analysis

This study resides on the belief that documents reflect and shape perceptions, educational goals, institutional identities, and the decisions of readers. As Ferguson (1984) describes the necessity to investigate the way language as an investigation of "the actual activities of an institutions [compared to the] "institutions' own accounts of these activities" and an awareness as to the exercise of "modern organizations' power in accounting for their activities in a way that is acceptable to the audience at hand. The official version of reality offered by bureaucracies in their own behalf, or in behalf of other bureaucracies, is a part of the question to be asked, not part of the answer" (p. 37).

To explore the impetus and possibilities of "reshaping both the roles and events to people, and the language commonly used to do so" (p. 37), I examined the institutions' catalogs first, then turned the scope onto state publications, to analyze if schools are

publishing particular catch phrases and semantics initiated by the State Regents. I believe that few students actually talk with counselors one-to-one and instead rely on an institution's catalogs when making educational decisions, thus making their reading of such documents quite significant. Therefore, how community colleges depict the differences in the particular types of programs and general education requirements and how many programs in each types of area, be it transferable or terminal, assist us in determining if schools are attempting to shift their educational focus. Additionally, it is interesting to note if schools are advising students on the improbability of transferring what higher education views as terminal degrees, Associates in Applied Science. The philosophies and views of educational programs, as stated in their catalogs, depict if schools are enforcing their mission statements or if their priorities are shifting.

On one hand, this study may conclude that examining the schools' data either supports what is suggested by their publications or that data reveals, regardless of what is emphasized by others, that community colleges function pretty much the way they always have. On the other, the data could reflect that in a rush to appease external forces, the state and the schools have little understanding as to the different types of programs and the effects these programs will have on students and society.

What is even more interesting is the changing power between educational institutions and its government. Historically, governments and social institutions found themselves answering to higher education, but this power structure has changed. No longer are schools setting social standards, instead schools work at appeasing the government and economic forces (Goodchild, 1997). This study also examines state documents to see how schools are reshaping their publications, identities, and educational

goals not by what educators and students perceive as important but by what the external forces are wanting from higher education.

Sidorkin (1999) explains that discourse allows scholars to frame the problem and to work toward a more thorough agreement. He claims, however, "the education community has fallen into a false belief that policy-making is the way to change education" (p. 2). In creating new policies, however, there is a "lack of theoretical language for understanding educational institutions, thus leading to a conceptual shortfall" (p. 3). The change, Sidorkin posits, lies in the "minds of educators rather than in social reform" (p. 5). Sidorkin also addresses the importance of dialogue. He claims that dialogue makes us "truly human" (p. 11), and that "dialogue, no matter how brief, how elusive, takes precedence over the instrumental relations of 'I' and 'It'" (p. 40). And later he contends that if we want others to recognize us as a part of the community we must allow them to take part in defining what the group is. "The recognition of oppressed groups should involve dialogue with the rest of society, including the oppressors; a monopoly cannot define itself" (p. 40). He cites Bahktin: "If I do not accept and make sense of your existence, there is not a way for me to exist or make sense of my own being. A failure to affirm the being of the other brings myself into non-being" (p. 12). Thus the argument becomes because we cannot exist without the dialogue of others—oppressors too are the oppressed without a full recognition of who they are and what they do; they must have discourse with the other. This lessens the blame on community colleges and institutions, that are not malicious in their intent, just blind to their limited selves. Therefore, when students are kept ignorant of programs academic worth and earning value, they do not become what they aspire to become, and in keeping

students out of the conversation, community colleges are not fulfilling their aspirations. Sidorkin warns:

> In fact, the dialogical person should learn how to remain unfinalized and how to avoid unnecessary choices. A choice always cuts out other options, and therefore makes a life more plain and poor. Actually making a choice can be a sad experience, very often necessary, but never pleasant. I believe teachers should caution students against premature commitments and discourage making unnecessary choices . . .. Schools try to complete human growth when it should un-complete it. (pp. 66-67)

This discourse analysis will work at understanding how newcomers to higher education may interpret school publications. Is the message written so that students can anticipate the benefits and drawbacks of particular programs or does oppressive language surface in documents? These questions guide the analysis of school documents. As for the state publications, the study examines the documents for language that may encourage schools to change programs, practices, and philosophies.

Weaknesses of Research Method

Before providing the specifics regarding the three community colleges, their catalogs, missions, and other publications, and state-level materials, I would like to note the problem of using particular sources for my research. Many problems arise from such limited qualitative research. A discourse analysis rests mainly on the ability of the researcher to critique, analyze, and synthesize messages. As Bernstein (in Apple, 1982) notes in "Codes, Modalities, and the Process of Cultural Reproduction," the positioning devices, the media or the document, reveal the ideology that influences subjects. Codes

are interpreted messages that because of the subjects' experiences and perspectives come to have forms of meaning.

Meaning is not independent of subjects or the dominant group. Therefore society messages have influence on the way the codes are conveyed and the meaning they have for the subjects. All are biased. Therefore, discourse analysis is always a complex process. Just as what students read in community college publications and just as what dominant groups imply in these messages and just as what I, the researcher, read in the data, the analysis and coding of the message are products of what we are taught to see.

Dr. David Webster, in one of my first doctoral classes, encouraged all of us to be "independent minds in the herd of thought," and although these words have taught me to go beyond the typical reaction and interpretation, I cannot help but now realize that my parameters, a bit wider than some perhaps, are still boxed by the fences of my own cognizance. And I suppose my English background enforces the view that reading and interpreting material are the ways in which we make meaning and create identities, but in this vein, I must admit that my reading is my interpretation. My interpretation of such documents may not be how others make meaning of them. But I will work at remaining a fair reader. The descriptions that follow are quite dense, so I urge readers to draw their own conclusions as well as gain insight from mine.

Strengths of Research Method

At the heart of this study is the argument that the shifting role of the community college (if it is indeed attempting to focus on occupational education and answer the call for schools to be economic contributors) is compromising its role as a liberator for working class, minority, and female students by emphasizing terminal degrees. And

because this type of discrimination is veiled in the guise of possibility, the oppression is perceived as subtle or more complex (Bernstein, 1982). This form of oppression is insulated by those in power. Sounding similar to Sharon Welch's (1990) feminist ethic-of-risk description of how the middle class stops short of liberating the lower class to ensure their own power, educators may be giving the façade of offering choices by squeezing students into degrees that offer few future options, the Associate of Applied Science degree. Language becomes a part of this channeling. Bernstein (1982) describes this as "The subject creates, maintains, reproduces, and legitimizes the distribution of power through the development and establishing of the syntax of a generation" (p. 318) and is often handed to the lower class students. This complex social division and unrecognized discrimination strengthen the divide between "an agent and its material base" (p. 310), as in this case of community college students with college publications; students do not understand the subtleties that lie within and beyond the publication. I think of Muriel and her ignorance of college, and her possible confusion when reading college documents, what Bernstein would describe as the more indirect relation between "an agent and its meaning" (p. 310). Bernstein contends that "the realizations, at this level, are not the product of a process of selection and orderings which can be consciously varied; they are unsolicited and gratuitous and take the form of metaphors of new possibilities" (p. 329).

Summary

Discourse analysis may have its limitations and weaknesses, but it is hoped that this project will offer a new perspective in revealing the current status of community college's educational missions, transformations, and conversations. The analysis also

hopes to shed light on the type of discourse encountered by the public, educators, and students. Furthermore, I hope that it will give schools a view of how they project themselves and their educational objectives to the public in written form. I want institutions to question if they are pursuing the identity they have established for themselves, is it a noble pursuit, or is it self-destructive, as Willy Loman's was for him? Therefore, I hope to illustrate the necessity of a conscious, conscientious, and effective discourse.

CHAPTER FOUR

INSTITUTIONAL AND STATE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents an analysis based on publications from three Oklahoma institutions, Tulsa Community College, Northern Oklahoma College, and Seminole State College, as well as State Regents for Higher Education publications. To investigate these institutions' educational objectives, I first provide a summary of the three institutions' catalogs, missions, and program philosophies. These summaries are followed by brief analyses to see what the data suggest about shifting priorities and educational emphasis. The conclusion of this chapter examines state documents for possible glimpses of external demands, a possible explanation if community colleges' publications are suggesting a shift in their primary mission.

Discourse Analysis Questions

When addressing the use of language in publications, I specifically returned to the research questions of this study:

- What is the current status of occupational and transferable education in Oklahoma community colleges?
- How do institutions, in their publication, convey to students the purposes and differences of the various types of programs they offer?
- How could state documents encourage schools to emphasize one type of program more than another?
- What do theoretical perspectives reveal about occupational and liberal arts programs within the community college

As noted earlier in Chapter One, nationwide community colleges have had ambiguous roles. Historically, schools were unsure as to their placement within educational systems. Oklahoma community colleges are no exception. Nutter (1974) notes that educators could not determine if junior college work was a culmination of the secondary system or the beginning of higher education. This uncertainty would become more complex with the onslaught of an expanding market in the post-World War II era, when new curricula were demanded to help train a new workforce. Junior colleges, with their academic flexibility, were the Oklahoma institution best able to meet these demands. Anticipating the possible problems community colleges would have in aligning their educational missions, the State Regents in their Biennial Report, ending in June 30, 1948, note that these "special adult education courses" should not interfere with the "credit course work of the junior college," and furthermore, schools should emphasize that enrolling in such courses would probably "not be accepted for advanced college standing" (Nutter, 1974, p. 38). Oklahoma community colleges, although directed to offer occupational training, were not to lose sight of their transferring students and their educational objectives to provide transferable degrees.

Institutional Publications Analysis Questions

To explore where community colleges are placing their educational emphasis and to evaluate if they are indeed shifting their focuses onto occupational education in response to governmental, industrial, and economic pressures, this study provides a look at recent publications from three institutions, Tulsa Community College, the youngest and largest of the three, Seminole State College, the smallest, and Northern Oklahoma College, the oldest community college in Oklahoma.

When examining the catalogs and websites of these schools, I sought to discover how institutions described their historical missions. This description might indicate a transformation in their educational missions when compared to the number of terminal and transferable programs and a possible increase of one type over another. Institutional missions, educational philosophical objectives, and discussions of these programs would assist me in this search. So, I wanted to know how do the publications indicate that Oklahoma community colleges were shifting the number of transferable or terminal programs and were schools attempting to define themselves differently because of this shift?

Additionally, the discourse analysis was guided by the questions:

- How do Oklahoma community colleges perceive their educational missions —historically and currently?
- How do Oklahoma community colleges disclose information regarding the types of programs they offer? Do they clarify the differences in the two types of programs or do they account for transferability?
- Do schools resort to particular language when discussing the types of educational programs they offer, the number of degrees they award, or when appealing for state funding?

Community College Campus Findings

This study turned to publications of three Oklahoma institutions: Tulsa Community College, Northern Oklahoma College, and Seminole State College, all public two-year institutions. First, the study explored the institution's history, identified the educational missions of each institutions, then examined the catalog descriptions of

Associate of Arts and Science and Applied Science degrees, paying close attention to the discussions of differences between the two types of degrees and the transferability issues. This information is accessible to students, the considered audience for these publications. After looking at house publications, the study researched each institution's reporting to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the data and discussion that occur between institution and the state.

Tulsa Community College

In 1968, Oklahoma's legislature established the "first college as a separate state supported institution of higher education since 1919" (Nutter, 1974, p. 53) and awarded the institution funding available for the state's future two-year institution, Tulsa Junior College. Presently the largest community college in Oklahoma, Tulsa Community College has four satellite campuses, Metro, Northeast, Southeast, and West. In accordance with its size, "65% of Tulsa County students begin their college education at TCC" (Catalog, p. 4). Currently, Tulsa Community College enrolls approximately 20,000 students.

The school dedicates itself to students who are "preparing to transfer to senior college or university, preparing for specific occupational careers, in need of retraining or updating in specific career skills, seeking continuing education opportunities, in need of developmental or remedial programs in basic skills" (p. 4). In the introductory pages of its catalog, TCC lists the seventeen accrediting bodies that support their Applied Associate degrees and certification programs.

In its mission statement, Tulsa Community College commits itself to the following mission:

- Provide general education for *all* students [emphasis mine]
- Provide education in several basic fields of university-parallel study for students who plan to transfer to a senior institution
- Provide one and two-year programs of workforce development education to prepare individuals to enter the labor market, provide programs of remedial and developmental education for those whose previous education may not have prepared them for college
- Provide both formal and informal programs of study especially designed for adults and out-of-school youth in order to serve the community generally with a continuing education opportunity
- Carryout programs of institutional research designed to improve the institution's efficiency and effectiveness of operation
- Participate in programs of economic development with comprehensive or regional universities toward the end that the needs of each institution's geographic service area are met. (Catalog, p. 1)

The catalog primarily focuses on students' concerns and possible questions they might have when enrolling. The book provides information regarding academic procedures and policies, recommended course loads in regards to working hours, and the differences that exist between the two types of degrees, Associate of Arts and Science and the Applied Associate. In this latter section, the book lists the required general education hours, thirty-seven hours, for the Associates of Arts/ Science, mentions that the Applied Associate requires sixty-two credit hours, and notes that the Certificate of Achievement applies to a specified area. Later in the designated section for course

programs, before a listing of the Associate of Arts and Science degrees, the school establishes a preamble to the general education goals. It claims "General education is at the core of the academic curriculum for all degree-seeking students" (p. 59). Furthermore, the preamble provides five goals of all general education: to generate in students the capability to think critically, communicate effectively, to be civically responsible, to be aware of global issues, and to be computer proficient.

Following the section depicting transferable degree requirements and the general education requirements, the catalog includes information regarding the Applied Associate degree. In this section, there is no discussion of the "core goals," instead it notes, "Eighty percent of all job opportunities require education beyond high school but less than a four-year degree" (p. 123). Tulsa Community College also claims that the Applied degree prepares students to "step directly in the fast moving age of technological advancement" (p. 123). This claim of helping students with the technological advancement is confusing when considering that a number of the degrees deal with soft sciences, i.e. child development, applied horticulture, chemical and alcohol dependency counseling, and not technology per se. The catalog also points out that students wanting to transfer to a four-year institution should consult a program instructor, advisor, or instructor, regarding the transferability and transfer requirements of the program. Although the school mentions possible transferability difficulties, TCC does not specify as to why these problems exist. Additionally, the school follows this metaphorical red flag with: "All of TCC's workforce development programs are fully articulated with the corresponding programs at Langston University" (p. 123). Tulsa Community College assists students in their completion of a baccalaureate, but does so with an articulation agreement with an

Historical Black College. Additionally, the Applied programs are designed and monitored by advisory committees composed of "civic leaders," namely representatives of "local businesses, labor, industry, government, professional, health, and public service agencies" (p. 123). The requirement for Associate of Arts and Science is thirty-seven hours whereas Applied degrees vary from eighteen to forty-one hours. Certification programs may be as minimal as nine hours.

Institution's reportings to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

Oklahoma community colleges give their institutional data to the State Regents for Higher Education who in turn put this information into state reports. Within each institution, researchers are assigned the task of collecting, surveying, and assessing statistical data. The State Regents determine how this information will be collated and presented. Institutions then later receive bound copies of these reports.

These state reports are often difficult to decipher. For example, the number of Applied Associate degrees and the number of Associates of Arts and Science are not revealed clearly. The problem rests with the state's failure to note the difference between the occupational, terminal degree and the transferable ones. When the reports are made and conclusions drawn, the numbers reflect the AAS degree and the AA/AS degree as the same type. Therefore, researchers have difficulty deciphering the different graduating numbers. There is no way to determine the difference because the state does not indicate any difference. Attention must be paid to the number of certificates awarded by institutions and the number of the types of degrees offered by the institutions. For example, if a school offers no certification programs, as is the case with two of these institutions, then the influx or decrease of Applied programs will help explain the number

of overall graduates transferring and, thus, imply a particular emphasis. If a school, as TCC does, grants certificates, then the number of graduates in the areas of certificates and Associate degrees may offer some conclusions about the school's educational directives.

Institution's reporting to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

Institutional Profiles and Funding Needs for FY 2000. Goals: "To increase efforts to offer contract training to private companies and governmental agencies in the Tulsa area in order to meet industry needs and to provide classrooms dedicated to corporate and contract training" (p. 33).

Institutional Profiles for FY 2001, published January 2000. Goals: "To incorporate multimedia presentations into classrooms, to offer increased number of contract training to private companies and governmental agencies, to update technology, to continue to expand allied health programs to meet extremely heavy industry demand in Tulsa area" (p. 33).

Degrees Conferred in Oklahoma Higher Education, 1996-97. TCC awarded 111 certificates and 1,528 Associate Degrees.

Degrees Granted in Oklahoma Institutions and Type of Degrees, 1998-1999, published in June 2000. TCC grants 209 certificates, 1415 Associate degrees. It is the top producer in Oklahoma, 49.9% of certificates and 22% of Associate degree. (62.3% of these are women—Associate degrees and 57% women receive certificates). The number of Associate degrees has lowered and the number of certificates increased.

Degrees Granted in Oklahoma Institutions and Type of Degrees, 1999-2000, published in June 2001. 207 Certifications awarded, 1,366 Associate degrees conferred. (p. 117). Tulsa Community College ranks the highest of Oklahoma's community

colleges in its awarding of degrees and certificates. Out of Oklahoma's total of 377 certificates and 6,073 Associate degrees (p. 117), TCC produces 54.2% of its certificates and 21.5% of its Associate degrees (OSRHE, *Degrees,* p. ix). The shift continues: the number of certificates increases from 1996 and 1998 and the number of Associate degrees continues to fall.

Student Data Report, 2000-2001. This research notes that TCC awarded 216 certificates and 1,403 Associates in 2000-2001. The number of certificates is still rising, but the Associate degrees' number has regained some ground, awarding 37 more than the previous year.

Northern Oklahoma College

Northern was the first public junior college in Oklahoma 1901 and was accredited in 1920 (Nutter, 1974). The school opened as University Preparatory School (UPS) and functioned primarily as a liberal arts secondary school since high schools were not in place. In 1921, the school would become a fully-accredited junior college and in 1941 would change its name to Northern Oklahoma Junior College. The passing of the Higher Education Code in 1965 would again change the name to Northern Oklahoma College. Despite the initial goal of UPS to provide students with a strong liberal arts base in the classics in hopes of preparing them for four-year institutions, the school would face many pressures to provide more business-oriented programs (Bradley, 2001). When the school reopened in 1919, after a two-year cessation, its name had an extension of "Oklahoma State Business Academy," given to it by the state's legislature and with this mandate: "all courses of instruction to be vocational to prepare students for industry" (p. 41), both would be largely ignored by local citizens, faculty, and administrators and absent in

curriculum objectives. Furthermore, on June 30, 1921, Governor Robertson recommended, "The functions of UPS be enlarged to take in two years of college work" (p. 44).

Northern Oklahoma College, representative of its rocky history and its goal statement, sets out to provide "comprehensive lower-division programs of higher education by offering general education for all students, comprehensive lower-division programs of higher education in a number of basic fields of academic study for transfer to senior colleges for the bachelor's degree," and "occupational education in a *limited* number of areas for career-oriented students" (Catalog, 2002, p. 1; emphasis mine).

In their catalog and on a sheet listing their programs, Northern Oklahoma College notes that they offer 28 transferable degrees and 36 occupational programs. Although the school professes to offer a limited number in career-oriented areas, the number in AAS (terminal degrees) exceeds that of transferable ones. The school sees itself as a "comprehensive two-year college, providing persons in its service area to an open-door higher educational opportunity to seek cultural enrichment, economic achievements, and/or the associate degree" (p. 1). The catalog provides a variety of general information, anticipating students' questions about their college life at Northern. The curricular organization and philosophy of each is provided as well. The three general areas of study at NOC are the Arts, the Sciences, and the Applied Sciences. The school does not offer certification programs, but it does award degrees in these three areas.

The section also discusses the Applied Associate as an occupational program designed to prepare a student for immediate employment upon completion of his or her course work. Then the book lists the possible degrees. There is no mention of

transferability problems, and students are not prompted to visit with a counselor if they wish to continue on to a senior institution with an applied degree. In fact, in a section separate from the description of the types of programs, the school claims that "all of the courses are college courses and will transfer to other colleges should the student decide to change his or her objective and pursue a baccalaureate program" (p. 6). However, many of the individual courses in the career-oriented programs are specially designed to meet occupational goals. While these courses are transferable, they may be "considered elective courses by the receiving institution" (p. 6). I wonder if this statement is accurate and if so, how many electives would the senior institution accept? Do students anticipate the probability of transferring 30 some odd hours of electives? Would the University of Oklahoma have problems accepting "Customer Premise Installation," a requirement for the Information Technology Applied Associate? The philosophy given for the Arts and Science degrees are as "essential post-high school education needed to better prepare the student to function in society" (p. 30). The philosophy of the terminal, Applied programs is "that of a practical education, in a sense that a student is immediately employable upon completion of his or her course work, and fundamental, in that a student has an understanding of the basic concepts of his or her field, enabling the graduate to grow in the chosen profession" (p. 30). Again there is no mention of transferability issues with the terminal program. The book indicates that the administration sees no problems with transferring Applied degrees.

As mandated by the State Regents, Northern Oklahoma College requires 37 hours in general education for Associate of Arts and Sciences. In the Applied Science areas, the school varies its general education requirements, going at times above and even

below the state mandated 18 hours. For example, the Information Technology program requires 30 hours of liberal arts, and the Registered Nursing requires thirteen with eighteen hours in the area of "Required Core Courses" (p. 89).

Institution's reporting to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

Institutional Profiles and Funding Needs for FY 2000. Goals. Efforts to support economic and industrial development in NOC's service area will include new technical programs targeted to support local industries in Ponca City, Enid, Perry, and Stillwater.

Institutional Profiles and Funding Needs for FY 2001, published Jan. 2000. Goals. "To invest resources into various academic programs that benefit not only students but also the economic development of the state, programs such as Multimedia Design (applied), Process Technology (Applied), Music Business (Applied), and Pre-Athletic Trainer (Associate of Science), to continue supporting and developing new technical programs that promote economic and industrial development in order to support local industries" (p. 37 [parenthetical notes mine],).

Degrees Conferred in Oklahoma Higher Education, 1996-97, published in 2001. NOC offers no certification programs and the number of Associate degrees conferred was 286.

Degrees Granted in Oklahoma Institutions and Type of Degrees, 1998-1999, published in June 2000. NOC 365 grants associate degrees and no certificates. The number of Associate degrees awarded has increased by seventy-nine.

Degrees Granted in Oklahoma Institutions and Type of Degrees, 1999-2000. No certifications are offered at NOC, and the year sees 358 Associate graduates. The number of degrees decreases by six.

Student Data Report, 2000-2001. The number of certificates awarded for 2000-2001 is still 0 because NOC still does not offer certification tracks. The number of Associate graduates is 404. The number of graduates with Associates has reached a new high. But the number of Applied Associates now outnumbers Associates of Arts and Science.

Seminole State College

The Seminole State College's website, 1999-2002 course catalog, and NCA Self-Report and Nutter's (1974) unpublished dissertation all supply a helpful amount of information about the school's history, current mission, and program status. Although today its name "State College" suggests a larger directive, Seminole Junior College, established in 1931, originally focused on serving nearby citizens as an extension of the area high school and is the smallest of the three schools addressed in this study. In 1968, Seminole Junior College, a municipal school, became a state junior college (catalog) and received its accreditation in 1975. Seminole State appears to have a historical connection with its community, not only in its origination but also in its financial survival, for in 1971, the Seminole community passed a self-imposed sales tax to assist the fiscal needs of the school until 1975 when it became fully funded by the state. Under its current name, changed in 1996, Seminole State College is still found in Seminole now with population 7,069 (website) (7,500 according the school's catalog), a town with an economic base in agriculture, ranching, and petroleum and a growing economy in manufacturing and service industries. The school has a dormitory, has re-introduced courses in area communities, has developed cooperative agreements with local career technology centers, has created new programs, and has a student body of less than 2,000.

"In 1997, Dr. James W. Utterback became the fourth president of Seminole State College, and since his arrival, the college has revitalized efforts to serve the educational needs of area business and industries" (Catalog, p. 1). The school declares, with a utopian air: "Seminole State College seeks to be an institution of unparalleled excellence, regarded by both internal and external constituents as a college whose quality is second-to-none, where employees and regents make a continual effort to meet the needs and exceed expectations of our community and clients" (website, p. 1). Seminole State has established its primary mission as a post-secondary educator for residents of Hughes, Lincoln, Okfuskee, Seminole, and Pottawatomie counties in east central Oklahoma. It hopes to enhance the personal development of individuals by providing "quality learning experiences and services that respond to diverse individual and community needs in a changing global society" (website, p. 1). Students can continue their education in programs that extend beyond the "two-year level, train students for careers and other educational opportunities, and make available resources and services designed to benefit students and the community at large" (website, p. 1).

The school's function, which sounds more like a mission statement, directs the school to provide "the following types of learning experiences" (Catalog, p. 3):

- General education and other university-parallel coursework
- Programs of collegiate-level technical-occupational education to prepare individuals to enter the workforce
- Programs of remedial and developmental education
- Formal and informal programs to help serve community needs

- Programs of institutional research to improve the college efficiency and effectiveness
- Programs of economic development, in conjunction with area colleges and universities

This list indicates Seminole State's primary focus is that of general education and transferable programs, typical of most community college mission statements. But in relation to the other listings, the first mention of general education and transferable programs is the only one given. The others turn the school's focus onto assisting community, remedial students, workforce, and economic needs.

The school's class catalog in the General Information section discusses mainly the establishment of the school and the construction of particular buildings; little is mentioned about programs except for the TANF program, a nationwide program to help educate Department of Human Services welfare recipients so that they "find employment" (p. 2). In this general introductory section, the school draws attention to the physical facilities and presidents, giving little indication of its educational goals.

A perusal of the school's catalog, however, reveals a bit about its academic missions. The catalog divides the discussion of programs into two categories: Transferable-Oriented Programs and Occupational Programs. In the transfer section, the book declares that the "College's commitment to general education is obvious" (p. 37). And accordingly, it states that general education is "the central core for all associate degrees. . .and essential in providing students useful skills necessary for careers and life-long learning" (p. 37). And overall transferable programs require a total of 47 hours of general education. When discussing occupational programs, the catalog explains that the

majority of occupational programs are Applied Associate degrees but that some programs grant certificates. At the bottom of the section's first page is an italicized note that reads:

> Students planning to transfer their course work at SSC to a four-year institution to pursue a baccalaureate degree should not follow the occupational guides for an Associate in Applied Science. Such students should consult with an academic counselor or a major field instructor to plan course selection. (p. 53)

Although the book guides students to pursue the program best suited to their academic paths, the book does not explain why students should not consult the Applied Associate section; the book does not explain that the Applied Associate degree may not be considered as college credit. Occupational programs require 18-19 hours of general education. The school offers seven Applied Associate degrees and forty-two Associate of Arts degrees and no certification programs.

Institution's reporting to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

Institutional Profiles and Funding Needs for FY 2000. Goals. To offer quality transfer programs, strengthen TANF workforce development, functions of the business community relations program are being expanded to focus on specialized training for business and industry.

Institutional Profiles for FY 2001, published Jan. 2000. Goals. To increase enrollment.

Degrees Conferred in Oklahoma Higher Education, 1996-97. SCC offers no certification programs and awards 215 Associate degrees.

Degrees Granted in Oklahoma Institutions and Type of Degrees, 1998-1999, published in June 2000. The school grants 238 associate degrees and awards no certificates. The number of Associate degrees awarded rises.

Degrees Granted in Oklahoma Institutions and Type of Degrees, 1999-2000. SCC has no certificate graduates because no certification programs exist at the college and awards 245 Associate degrees. Degrees conferred rises from 238 in 1998-1999 to 245.

Student Data Report, 2000-2001. In this school term, Seminole State College still does not offer certification courses and awards 231 Associates. The number of awarded Associates falls from 245 in 1999-2000 and 238 in 1998-1999 to the low of 231. The school has a minimal—seven—number of Associates in Applied Science degrees.

Summary of Institutional Findings

A table (see Table 1) and brief list of what significant findings found in the institutional discourse analyses follow:

Institutional Historical Missions and Currently Reported Goals	
Tulsa Community College	• Founded 1968, during vocational emphasis in Oklahoma higher education • Provider of general education for all students • Provider of university-parallel study • Provider of workforce development education
	• To increase efforts to offer contract training to private companies and governmental agencies
Northern Oklahoma College	• Founded 1901, pre-secondary system, to serve need of university preparatory • Provider of higher education in a number of lower-division programs for transfer to senior colleges • Provider of occupational education in a limited number of areas
	• To support economic and industrial development in NOC's service area • To increase the number of applied programs, serving economic and industrial development
Seminole State College	• Founded 1931, as an extension of the area's high school • Provider of general education and other university-parallel coursework • Provider of technical-occupational education
	• To offer quality transfer programs • To strengthen TANF workforce development • To increase enrollment

Table 1. Historical Missions and Current Goals

Tulsa Community College

Catalog and Website Analysis, using the discourse analysis questions:

How do Oklahoma community colleges perceive their educational missions — historically and currently ?

The youngest of the three institutions studied details its history as one of service—a provision for the beginning of students' college education. The primary educational mission is to provide all students with general education. TCC lists occupational education as its third education priority. Throughout its growth, however, TCC has worked steadily and consistently with local industry and business, having in place a strong variety of accreditation teams.

How do Oklahoma community colleges disclose information regarding the types of programs they offer? Do they clarify the differences in the two types of programs or do they account for transferability?

The catalog lists the required general education hours, thirty-seven, for Associate of Arts and Science, and mentions that the Applied Associate requires sixty-two hours of credit work. It also provides a defense of general education as being the "core of the academic curriculum for all degree-seeking students" (p. 59), followed by a list of objectives for general education. In the section covering Applied degrees, the catalog does not discuss "core goals" but notes that "eighty percent of all job opportunities require education beyond high school and that Applied degrees prepare students to gain entry into the workforce" (p.123).

When discussing the terminal degrees, the catalog does suggest that all students wanting to transfer to senior institutions should consult a program director, regarding the transferability requirements. There is no specific explanation has to why students should do this. The catalog then

explains that all Applied degrees are articulated with the corresponding programs at Langston University, an institution with a predominant minority enrollment.

Do schools resort to particular language when discussing the types of educational programs they offer, the number of degrees they award, or when appealing for state funding?

When appealing for state funding, TCC comments that it is working at increasing cooperative efforts with private companies and governmental agencies so that it can meet industry needs. In the following year, TCC claims that the school is aiming to increase the number of contract training and to expand health programs to meet industry demand.

Institution's Data reported by the State

1998-1999

The number of Associate degrees has lowered and the number of certificates increased.

1999-2000

The increase of certificate numbers has continued to increase.

2000-2001

The number of certificates is still rising, but the Associate degrees' numbers has regained some ground, awarding 37 more than the previous year.

Northern Oklahoma College

Catalog and Website Analysis, using the discourse analysis questions:

How do Oklahoma community colleges perceive their educational missions — historically and currently?

Historically, Northern Oklahoma College was a university preparatory college, its main goal being to offer a classical education so that students would be prepared to enter senior institutions. Northern, unlike TCC and perhaps in part for its longevity, has struggled with offering either a transferable or terminal education for northern rural Oklahoma.

How do Oklahoma community colleges disclose information regarding the types of programs they offer? Do they clarify the differences in the two types of programs or do they account for transferability?

The institution's catalog discusses the types of degrees it awards: the Applied Associate and the Associate of Arts and Science. It provides the titles of the 28 transferable degrees and the 36 occupational programs it offers. It describes the Applied Associate degree as a program designed to prepare students for immediate employment by providing a practical education. The catalog does not mention any transferability issues for the Applied degree, nor is the student prompted to visit with counselors if he or she wishes to transfer to a four-year institution. The section instead comments that all of the courses are college courses and will transfer to other colleges if the student wishes to transfer. It later comments that these occupational courses may be considered electives by the receiving institution.

Do schools resort to particular language when discussing the types of educational programs they offer, the number of degrees they award, or when appealing for state funding?

When appealing to the state for funding, NOC reported that it wanted to support local economic and industrial development by providing new courses in technical areas. The next year, the school listed that a priority for the upcoming year was to offer academic courses that would benefit not only students but also the state's economic progression; three of these four new programs are Applied degrees.

Institution's Data reported by the State

1998-1999

The number of Associate Degrees awarded has increased by 79; NOC awards no certificates.

1999-2000

The number of degrees granted insignificantly decreases by six, still only Associate degrees awarded.

2000-2001

The number of graduates with Associates has reached a new high. However, there is distinction between Applied and transferable degree graduates. Whereas the school does not offer certificate programs, it now offers more terminal, Applied Associate degree programs, than it does transferable, Associates of Arts and Science programs.

Seminole State College

Catalog and Website Analysis, using the discourse analysis questions:

How do Oklahoma community colleges perceive their educational missions — historically and currently?

Seminole State, originally Seminole Junior College, originated as a extension of the local high school. Like Northern Oklahoma College, Seminole State College, has dormitories and fosters a liberal arts atmosphere. Its primary mission today is to provide transferable college courses and second to provide collegiate-level occupational education. This school, unlike the other two, emphasizes their assisting community and remedial students. Seminole State indicates a strong dedication to its TANF program.

How do Oklahoma community colleges disclose information regarding the types of programs they offer? Do they clarify the differences in the two types of programs or do they account for transferability?

The catalog is divided into categories: transferable and occupational education. The central core for SCC's degrees is general education. When discussing occupational education, the catalog explains that students planning to transfer to a four-year institution should not follow occupational guides for Applied degrees and that such students should consult with counselors. Seminole State College offers seven Applied and forty-two Associate of Arts degrees.

Do schools resort to particular language when discussing the types of educational programs they offer, the number of degrees they award, or when appealing for state funding?

In SCC's appeal to the state for funding, the school mentions the need to strengthen academic programs, TANF workforce development, and business alliances. The next year, Seminole State mentions a need to increase enrollment, but still offers the same number of Applied degrees.

Institution's Data reported by the State

1998-1999

The number of Associate degrees awarded rises. SCC grants no certifications.

1999-2000

Degrees conferred rises from 238 in 1998-1999 to 245. The school still does not offer certificate programs.

2000-2001

The number of Associates granted decreases to 231, lower than the number of degrees conferred in 1998. The school offers only 7 Applied Associate degrees.

The data analysis indicates that schools are publishing vague and misleading information regarding the differences between occupational and transferable education. Institutions do not note the limitations and specific objectives of the types of programs. Instead of explaining the benefits *and* limitations, the wording tends to euphemize the programs.

The following table (see Table 2) also provides a brief review of the degrees conferred as reported by the institutions to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

Institutional Certifications and Degrees Conferred				
	1996-1997	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001
Tulsa Community College				
Certifications	111	209	207	216
Associate Degrees	1,528	1,415	1,366	1,403
Northern Oklahoma College				
Certifications	0	0	0	0
Associate Degrees	286	365	358	404
Seminole State College				
Certifications	0	0	0	0
Associate Degrees	215	238	245	231

Table 2. Certifications and Degrees Conferred

State Document Analysis Questions

When examining the state documents, acquired through Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, I wanted to see institutional data, reported by the Regents, that might imply how students were responding to this information in regard to or despite of this disclosure of information. State documents might also demonstrate if local institutions felt pressure by the state to fulfill certain, larger goals. The guiding questions for state document analysis are as follows:

- Are schools possibly pressured to serve not only the needs of the student but also of the state?

- Did state documents indicate a favored direction for institutions to pursue?
- Were there benefits or consequences institutions would face for not pursuing this direction?
- Were state organizations appeasing other institutions within the bureaucracy, and thus had the entire discussion become saying what schools needed to survive within the system?

Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Documents

To best understand the positioning of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, it is wise to look at Oklahoma politics. Although the seminal text regarding Oklahoma politics and policies is a bit dated, Morgan and England (1991) still provide an insightful view. Overall Morgan and England claim that Oklahoma politics is a many-splintered thing. Because of the state's multi-tiered organization and political bureaucracy, interests groups, agencies, boards, branches of government, all push and pull for political stances and power. For example, in education alone, groups of educators—K-12 education, career technology centers, the deaf and blind student institutions, and higher education—fight among themselves for political positioning. All clamor to acquire from the governing regents and the state legislature power, recognition, and, namely, funding. The allocations of funding further divide the institutions, for within higher education a lump sum is paid, and from this amount various types of institutions must fight for portion of the money. This competition for monies makes collaboration and the ability for institutions to claim one specific role unlikely and possibly dangerous.

To facilitate the political process, Oklahoma has in place a "system of regents, with the constitutionally established Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education at the top (Morgan, England, & Humphreys, 1991). To assist the Regents for Higher Education, comprehensive, regional, and two-year institutions have a system of seventeen additional boards of regents. The political battle cry erupts when one board of regents spars with another board. The governor who has little real power in making educational policy maneuvers his political agenda in position by appointing the "education cabinet secretary, who likewise has little power because of the independence and strength of major education agencies" (p. 110). The political arena for education encompasses these politicians: governor, Oklahoma Board of Education, Secretary of Education, State Board of Regents, the Chancellor, local boards of regents, various interest groups, and other bureaucrats. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education finds itself in the midst of a barraging campaign. Obsequiousness runs amuck.

Morgan, England, and Humphrey (1991) make a resounding comment about Oklahoma politics and its approach to education: "quantity over quality" (p. 13). Because people often equate the worth of one's education with wealth and earning power, in Oklahoma, this belief has compounded the problematic national attitude about education. Historically Oklahoma has never been a state where a college education would make a person wealthy. Morgan and the others pique that for Oklahomans, the skill of drilling a hole in the ground, striking oil, and living in splendor never required college hours. It is this anti-intellectualism that educators confront continuously. It is this attitude that state educators use to justify occupational programs. College degrees can improve the state's economy. In 1991, the two remarked that a recent emergence of

migrants started a changing view of culture and education and liberation, one that conflicts sharply with the values of old-timers who call the others "educated idiots" (p. 19). What the mix of politics has started, fortunately to some degree for Oklahoma, is the state's capability of shifting from an *oil-producin, en farm-raisin,* pre-industrial place to a place that adapts to the birthing millennium. Metropolitan and various areas struggle to transform Oklahoma from its agrarian roots to more technical and twenty-first century metropolitans.

This shift is evident in higher education, in its need for technical and occupational trained workers, in its programs and requirements for students to meet technological advancements, and in its succumbing to economic and political forces that encourage institutions to become more economically accountable. As the salesman's funeral became Willy Loman's marker of success, Oklahoma's State Regents for Higher Education initiated its educational goals with *Brain Gain 2010.*

The fourteen-page document, *Brain Gain 2010* (1999, January 29), has greatly influenced state educational objectives. The document was an attempt to address Oklahoma's "low number of college degree attainment at both the associate degree level and the bachelor degree level" (p. i). OSRHE claims the "ancillary benefits of higher education include an improved state economy and increased capita income" (p. i). This economic rationale runs throughout the document. The Regents cite the Institute for Higher Education Policy and its stress upon the benefits of educational attainment: increased tax revenues to the state, greater worker productivity, increased consumption, increased workforce flexibility, decreased reliance on government support, reduced crime rates, increased charitable giving, and social/cohesion/appreciation of diversity" (p. 2).

But OSRHE emphasizes in its introduction that education will improve the state's social characteristics linked to "lagging economic development and low worker productivity and excessive reliance on governmental transfer payments" (pp. 1-2).

To achieve the goals set up by *Brain Gain 2010*, schools would have to make quick changes. Ten years to increase the number of college graduates presents some problems. When the average graduation rate is approximately three years for an Associate and five years for a bachelor degree, institutions would have to act quickly to implement changes to double their graduating numbers. To guarantee an increase in the state's tax base, the Regents encourage educators to create curriculum that meets the needs of business and industry. Although impossible to prove with empirical evidence at this time, the Regents, in the *2001 Annual Report* (2002) claim that goals of *Brain Gain 2010* were achieved because of the state's effort to build cooperative agreements between K-12, higher education, and industry and business.

Although the perspectives about cooperative efforts and obligations between education and business have evolved, the question if the efforts are giving students a fair and better education may be answered by looking at those in power of changing policy and dialogue. To understand the Regents' positioning in making education more aligned with business needs, one needs to look no further than their own professions. Posted on the Oklahoma Regents' for Higher Education website are the Chancellor's and members' occupations. Chancellor Hans Brisch, has a Ph. D. in political science from University of Kansas, was born in Germany, and become a naturalized American citizen in 1964. His motto is "America does not guarantee jobs or a higher standard of living, but it does guarantee opportunity" (website, p. 2). The Regents consist of nine members who are

appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state Senate. They serve nine-year terms. Chairman Carl Renfro is a banker, Marlin Glass, a business owner, and Secretary Jimmy Harrel, a banker. The remaining officer and members, Assistant Secretary Joe Cappy, is also a businessman, Burgess, Eaton, Hunter, Massey, and Mayer are all bankers, businesspeople, and lawyer, sans Mayer who is a farmer. Comparable to other states, the Regents are comprised mostly of business leaders. It is interesting that their education is not recorded on the website. This suggests that what is best for higher education in Oklahoma is guided by business leaders. And what makes the demographics of the OSRHE more interesting is the ending term of the Chancellor who will be replaced in the near future. The backgrounds of the Regents indicate that people who have political interests in business control the most powerful agency in Oklahoma higher education. It is these business people that determine what policies colleges and universities will mandate and practice and what educational directive they will emphasize. Consequently, the Regents' interests embed them within the bureaucratic system they hope to encourage higher education to critique; they are a manifestation of bureaucracy and bureaucratic discourse.

Besides *Brain Gain 2010*, there are other publications that govern reactions of community colleges. The State Regents for Higher Education (1998) updated its requirements for general education in the two-year system. The document establishes the guideline that the Associates of Arts and Science must require a minimal thirty-seven hours in general education, and technical-occupational education (Associate in Applied Science) requires eighteen hours in general education. There is no humanities course standard. Students pursuing the AAS degree must take six hours in composition and

history with six more hours in general education electives. With businesses asking for a more "culturally-aware" workforce, the requirements appear to fall short here. The standards for transferable degrees are more specific: six hours each in composition, history, science, humanities, and three in math and psychology/ sociology, foreign languages, and other general education courses. (Bachelor's are required to have 40 hours of general education.) The Regents also write in their guidelines for course requirements that "although the program is designed to lead the individual directly to employment in a specific career, some senior institutions have developed upper-division programs to recognize this degree for transfer" (n.p.), thus indicating that the degrees are not always recognized as college course work.

Although not intended for public record, in a June 30, 2000 letter, introducing a survey conducted and assembled by a subcommittee task force of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Chancellor Hans Brisch addresses higher education administrators and the need for a comprehensive plan for serving Oklahoma business and industry. The enclosed packet, put together by Oklahoma business leaders, presents their views on relationships with Oklahoma higher education.

In the introductory letter, the Chancellor writes, "As part of the *Brain Gain 2010* initiative, the survey was conducted in order to help higher education lay the best framework possible for addressing business and industry workforce development and education needs" (p.1). This statement suggests that schools should now adapt their curriculum and programs to meet the needs of Oklahoma business and industry. He comments that although Oklahoma higher education is "moving in the right direction in serving business and industry needs, it must do more" (p. 1). He justifies curriculum

reform as a matter of supplying "employers with a skilled workforce" (p. 1). But the Chancellor does not stop with this thought. He urges institutions to change: "We must be flexible in meeting their needs, ensure that we have no policy barriers to successful partnerships and be creative in creating a resource base that shows our commitment to successful partnership with Oklahoma employers" (p. 1). With this commentary, Chancellor Brisch sounds as if schools should even use creative funding allocations and should maneuver around existing policies to work out cooperative agreements with business. He concludes with the argument that in building such alliances, administrators will find "employers desiring to "devote people, facilities, and financial resources" and the goal-oriented process will give "employers and employees want they desire—a college degree" (p. 1). The Chancellor may be encouraging schools to compromise educational curriculum, policy, and funding for the desires of business, but he is, without doubt, wanting institutions to create expedient pathways to degrees for the success of doubling Oklahoma's graduate numbers, the goal of *Brain Gain 2010.*

The packet itself follows national trends of making education economically accountable and echoes the Chancellor's introduction. Prepared by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), the survey, "Creating a workforce focus for the state's colleges and universities" (2000, June) aligns itself with the initiative of *Brain Gain 2010* to double the number of degree holders and to link education with economic and workforce development and is primarily a summary of questionnaires and surveys given to Oklahoma businesses and industry. The rationale, mirroring the premises in *Brain Gain 2010*, for building such a link is that "a trained workforce will bring in more business" (p. i). The key about bringing in more business and providing a workforce that

can fit immediate needs is that once this population has been trained and new businesses are attracted to the area because of such skilled workers, then these new businesses will want a trained workforce, a workforce that will be trained by institutions that will absorb the costs of training such workers—a never ceasing cycle. And schools, in keeping with their traditions, will award these work degrees, thus increasing the number of college graduates.

According to the surveys and questionnaires, employers want programs that are responsive to the needs and requirements of their employees. A conflicted interest begins to surface. Businesses sound as if they want what is best for their specific workers and have little thought to other aspects of education. But this is not necessarily the case. For the study also reports that according to their questionnaires, businesses want workers who encounter an ideal program, one that has access to a wide variety of classes and increases the general knowledge base of the workforce, increasing job satisfaction and overall performance/productivity" (p. 5). But the reality of such programs becomes questionable when business later states that education needs to occur at a much faster pace.

Education should offer general education and skill-based courses, but the entire programs should be completed in less than four years. Business contends: "In the fast-paced global economy, a quality workforce is in high demand" (CAEL, p. 4). And CAEL adds, "Oklahoma employers, when committing resources to a problem, want results. If they don't see results from external programs in a short-time frame, they are likely to try to solve the problem internally" (p. 6). And educators are implicitly warned that if they do not pursue these resources, then they will lose them. For example, "One employer succinctly states what the need is: Employees need to be able to get credentials

quickly" (p. 8). And the problem arises. Schools must provide the typical bachelor degree, with a solid base in general education, but do so in a limited amount of time. If programs become work-focused, "It is not uncommon for many institutions to perceive partnerships as something divorced from their core missions" (p. 7).

CAEL analyzes the business surveys and recommends:

- Create and fund a team of workforce and economic development professionals with in the Regents staff to serve as a catalyst for negotiations between employers and higher education partners
- Require four-year colleges and universities to develop effective up-to-date articulation agreements with community colleges throughout the state
- Community Colleges are responsible for transfer issues
- Restructure the funding formulas for institutions to provide incentives for them to develop degree programs in a collaboration with employers and industries
- Communicate initiatives of *Brain Gain 2010* (pp. 14-15).

The recommendations of the study then empower the Regents and their own business interests. First, the Regents must fund a team that will enforce the educational philosophy that education must serve business and industry needs. Second, the study proposes that OSRHE should restructure funding so that schools will be either rewarded or punished financially for collaborating with business. Schools must succumb to the workforce development and goal-orientated initiatives of *Brain Gain 2010* or lose its money. Schools are forced to direct their educational objectives and create educational programs that give businesses what they want.

The Systemwide [sic] *Business Programs and Economic Development Review* (2000, April 7), composed by two subcommittees of OSRHE, Business programs and the Economic Development Review teams, surveys the progress and missions of business programs in higher education institutions. The study is looking at ways of aligning roles of the three-tiered higher education system, improving retention and graduation rates with community colleges focusing on transfer rates, and counseling students into the work environment. The report encourages community colleges to become more knowledgeable about students who immediately enter the workforce instead of transferring to four-year institutions and to be held accountable for transfer rates.

In a latter section of the report, institutions give responses to the teams' reports. Institutions explain how their schools are doing what is suggested by the teams and project what funds will be needed to comply with more guidelines. The three schools examined in this chapter reported to the committee in a variety of responses:

Tulsa Community College reports in the *Systemwide* [sic] *Review* that "TCC considers all 15 business programs review team recommendations as being applicable to the institution" (p. 49) and despite its meeting all recommendations requests funding in the sum of $47,000.

Northern Oklahoma College notes that the "System has an internship program in place as an optimal element of the business degree program. Advisory boards are in place for the AAS programs, but not for transfer programs" (p. 47). NOC has no career counseling in place because "job placement is not the primary mission of this two-year transferable Associate degree" (p. 49). So confusingly enough, NOC reports that internship programs, the placement of students in area businesses, exist, but career

counseling does not occur because putting students in jobs is not its mission. NOC requests $442,500.

Seminole State College, the smallest of the study's three institutions, reports that it is "Happy to receive the business program review teams' recommendations for higher education institutions and intends to address the recommendation that applies to it" (p. 49). The school, willing to receive the teams' suggestions, asks for $155,000.

The institutions' responses demonstrate that schools are willing to comply with external organizations in attempts to secure funding. This shows that published compliance is bought.

Summary of State Documents Findings

In response to the questions that guided the analysis of state documents, I found clear indications that the state is indeed pressuring institutions to serve the needs of the student and the state by encouraging institutions to increase the number of college graduates, mainly to fulfill the objectives prescribed in *Brain Gain 2010* and those mentioned by business in the CAEL's *Systemwide* [sic] *Business Programs and Economic Development Review*. The latter document also mentions that schools should become accountable to meeting these needs and that institutions should receive or not receive funding when considering their attempts to do so. This point proves that schools do indeed feel pressured by the state to favor occupational programs and that institutions could face consequences if they did not comply with such directives. Finally, the State Regents for Higher Education, in the makeup of their members, the sources it surveys and questions for educational missions, and the conclusions reached in such studies and reports, suggest that the OSRHE has fallen under the heavy, guiding hand of bureaucratic

entities, those that award funding and maintain political power. Because of these findings, the study does conclude that schools, if political savvy, should appeal to these objectives or suffer the consequences of governing bodies.

Problems of the Overall Findings

Besides some clear indicators about what is being reported, documents used to report the standing of the study's three institutions are not without bias and problems. *The Degrees Conferred by Higher Education* (OSRHE, 2000) provides convoluted data concerning the distribution of these certificates and degrees. Although the numbers indicate that more students have earned certificates between the school term of 1997-1998, 1998-1999 and 1999-2000, no differential treatment between Applied Associate degrees (AAS) and Associates of Arts (AA) and Sciences (AS) is indicated in the data, despite the questionable transferability of the Applied program. Therefore, the number of granted degrees looks remarkably high. This ambiguity is a result of the state's push to double the number of college graduates as stated in the State Regents for Higher Education *Brain Gain 2010* (Patton, 2001).

When examining why some institutions offer certification programs when others do not, investigation uncovered that only eight of the fifteen community college granted certificates in 1998-1999. This data suggests that the other seven community colleges grant Applied Associate Science (AAS) degrees instead of rewarding certificates, thus making what might be considered a certificate program at another community college a degree program at these schools. There appears to be no clear guide as to when a program has the characteristics of an Applied degree or a certification program. Overall,

the data suggests that inconsistencies and incongruities exist within Oklahoma's two-year system.

What is known is that in the recent past fewer community college graduates—the data not distinguishing between those pursuing a transferable or terminal degree— have transferred to four-year Oklahoma institutions (OSRHE, *Student Report*, 2000). The numbers decreased from 36.4 percent in 1990 to 30.6 percent in1994 and only 17.8 percent of the latter received their bachelor's, 2.5 percent lower than in 1990. But what these numbers reveal is also nebulous. Do the numbers reveal that more Oklahoma students are pursuing terminal degrees? Do the numbers reveal that students are waiting longer to return to a senior college? Do the numbers signify that students are incapable or just not compelled to get bachelor degrees? If this is the case, then why have the transfer numbers of students moving from two-year to four-year institutions, increased during the 1997-98 academic year from the 30.6 percent in 1994 to 39 percent, for students in the 1997-98 cohort, at a time when community colleges are claiming their "new hot programs" are those terminal or certificate programs? Are programs that "close the gap between workforce qualifications and business needs" (Patton, 2001, p. 83) insufficiently meeting the needs for today's occupational graduates (OSRHE, *Institutional Profiles and Funding*, 1999)? If students are in fact pursuing more college than in past years, despite the fact that more are completing terminal degrees in the two-year system, is it fair for community colleges to promote occupational programs as a way for students to optimize [publications' wording] their earning power and college education? And is this claim, that students optimize earning power and increase college hours, valid when statistics show that Oklahomans holding bachelor degrees earn 3 to 10

percent more than associate recipients (OSRHE, *Annual Employment*, 2000) and that students with terminal programs have difficulty transferring hours as college work?

Results of Findings

Besides these ambiguities and growing questions, a few situations are emerging. First, the number of occupational programs is increasing in some schools, evidence perhaps to the growing concern that education meet business needs. Second, mission statements incorporate more workforce development objectives, and as is the case with Northern Oklahoma College, more Applied Associates exist, despite its mission that the school offers a "limited number." Furthermore, Tulsa Community College, the largest and perhaps Oklahoma's benchmark institution, offers "76 university-parallel fields of study, 52 technical-occupational programs resulting in an Applied Science degree or certificate of achievement" (OSRHE, *Annual,* p. 105), programs fulfilling their mission. But the school notes that 550 of its courses merit no college credit" (p. 105). Third, funding needs are written so that schools appeal to meet more business and economic needs, demands established by state records that indicate governing boards and agencies are concerned with making education accountable for economic prowess.

Some interesting points of interest, however, have surfaced. For example, first, the number of students pursuing Applied and certificate programs has not risen in relation to the percentage of the increasing number of students enrolling in college. Second, schools, in their publications, still view transfer programs as their primary mission. On one hand vexing and another appealing, the number of required general education courses in Applied programs, although mandated by the state to be a minimal 18 hours, is controlled and monitored by the institution themselves so that some schools require more

than others. Third, and importantly, businesses are still demanding a strong foundation of general education and pay bachelor degree recipients more than Associate holders. So whereas they may want these workers quickly, they consistently reward the four-year-degree holder with higher salaries and better chances of promotion.

Summary

Despite the lack of clear-cut data that prove a shift in transferring numbers and students pursuing occupational degrees, the trend currently suggests, if the reader allows me to generalize the Oklahoma community college current situation on the basis of the three schools studied, that schools are using references to and highlights of occupational programs and job training courses in publications to appeal for funding and to meet the popular demands of businesses, governmental agencies, and other external agencies. One significant point that appears to be missed by many educators and businesses is that if businesses and industry are indeed wanting workers who can think critically, solve problems, communicate, and have a solid base of fundamental skills, then the importance of general education and time required for such courses must be acknowledged and required by the state, institutions, curriculum designers, instructors, and students.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Oklahoma's state and institutional reports, regarding the Associates of Arts and Science and Applied Associate, offer a convoluted description of the state's community colleges. This study turns to theory in hopes of analyzing what higher education should offer to students, how to communicate their objectives, and how each type of program should be valued. The multiple missions of the community colleges and its open-door policy provides calls for this study to examine the multiple perspectives concerning higher education and its educational direction.

Theoretical Perspectives

In this chapter, the study offers an exploration of two theoretical frameworks, reproduction and human capital theories. First, in hopes of demonstrating how educators react differently to the role of general education and the offering of occupational programs, the chapter examines the facets and splintering of reproduction theory. Second, the study explores the theoretical lens of human capital and its premise that education produces a productive workforce and thus a stronger tax base. After the study explores human capital theory's premise, it presents criticism in regard to its validity. What this study reveals is that these frameworks show concern for higher education's educational objectives and future directives.

Theoretical Questions

This chapter addresses two research questions posed by this study:

- What do theoretical perspectives reveal about occupational and liberal arts programs within the community college?

- What do these theoretical dialogues contribute to higher education's pursuit of various programs?

This chapter also explains the relevance of the theoretical questions that emerged while conducting the analysis of institutional and state documents. I use these questions to explore these two theories.

- What do the rising numbers of occupational programs suggest about the direction of Oklahoma community colleges?
- Why are general education requirements diminishing?
- What is the role of general education?
- Are schools no longer valuing general education?
- Is higher education directly linked to the economy?
- Does a trained workforce guarantee a productive one?

Reproduction Theory

Schools are cultural and economic institutions, according to reproduction theorist Apple (1982). Reproduction theorists concur that education serves not as a liberator of the masses but instead functions as an oppressor. This oppression, they perceive, keeps mainstream culture secure and the ruler of what is acceptable, thus shutting the doors on those who cultures are different from white, upper-class America. Theorists support this claim that general education curriculum, by often focusing only on the classics, upholds one culture as the dominant culture and enforces its values. This creates a division among these theorists, those who embrace traditional education and those who argue that general education must change to fit society's many voices.

Another facet of reproduction theory is that education also keeps certain groups of people within certain economic status. These economic reproduction theorists contend that education is not distributed equally among the masses, limiting the opportunities that come to particular classes of students; namely they target programs that are occupational. Their argument though becomes convoluted when they acknowledge that education can be too theoretical. So they slide and admit that an effective education should be theoretical—just not too theoretical—as well as practical—just not too practical.

Cultural Reproduction

The first belief scrutinizes the role of general education. Whereas all embrace the importance of general education as the key to empowering students and believe that general education should be the fundamental or core education of students, one side argues that the curriculum has been infiltrated by liberals who have watered down the standards, leaving students wading through multicultural texts and losing sight of any real footing in cultural literacy. The other side contends that general education is a proliferation of the dominant culture and that curriculum provides only the white upper class perspective. The rest of the chapter explores these distinct voices.

Cultural Reproduction Questions

Additionally, cultural reproduction theory provides possible answers to this study's theoretical questions:

- Why are general education requirements diminishing?
- What is the role of general education?
- Are schools no longer valuing general education?

What follows is an explanation of how the advocates of general education cannot agree upon the role and, therefore, the curriculum of general education. Thus, the advocates themselves have created their own conflict; this conflict makes adversaries of them and thus the role of general education and its defense are lost to those who do not comprehend its value.

General Education as Cultural Cornerstone

Bloom (1987) claims that higher education is guilty of "closing the American mind" by ignoring the classical texts that created democracy and thereby diminishing their worth. He claims that students who do not know these texts cannot function as a literate citizens and lead lives of impoverished souls. Perhaps less hyperbolic but not restrictive, E. D. Hirsch (1987) encourages educators to "develop a consensus about teaching core information" (p. 140) and create tests that monitor students' ability to recall and explain specific allusions. Hirsch, like Bloom, wants general education to have a set curriculum agreed upon by all educators.

More recently, Altschuler and Blumin (2000, November) point out that "Cultural Literacy Depends on Survey Courses" and that "big guns" at Cornell no longer teach survey courses. They argue that those opposing specialized education must face being "condemned politically for, in effect, extinguishing the voices of dissenters, members of ethnic and racial minorities, and women" (B24). They posit that it is time to return to the "hierarchically structured major" and that professors must be constantly reminded of how little students know and the difficulty they have in "understanding, evaluating, and retaining new knowledge in the absence of the well-developed chronological and contextual frameworks" (B24). Within four-year institutions the debate, heard in the

divided voices of reproduction theorists and general educators, resounds in the halls of the humanities.

General Education as Oppressor of Dominant Culture

In the tradition of humanities, some reproduction theorists claim that traditionalists (still reproduction theorists) become guilty of the very crime they accuse of academia—an oppressor of minorities. Instead of believing that students should be literate in one culture, these theorists argue that general education should provide for them leaders and examples of their own diverse cultures. Schaefer (1990) criticizes Bloom and Hirsch for worrying too much about historical references and encourages general education to be concerned with providing a "plan for what our 'cultural literacy' should be in the twenty-first century" (p. 124). The critical issue is that the "general education needs a strong humanistic bias" (p. 129) and less focus on what specific works should be taught.

McGrath and Spear (1991) use this indecision to attack the direction of lower division humanities offered at community colleges. In *The Academic Crisis of the Community College,* the two scholars claim that the "curricular disorder" of general education is found in the humanities and more specifically addressed in the confused agenda of composition courses. McGrath and Spear (1991) spend several chapters addressing the fact that writing programs have moved away from the promises of self and social exploration to improving deficiencies, giving students a more practical approach to learning in writing programs. Likewise, Nussbaum (1997), professor at the University of Chicago and author of *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, argues that general education, rooted in the humanities, should give

students "the necessity of critical examination of oneself and one's tradition" (p. 9), the ability to see themselves as citizens of some local region or group but also and above all, "as human beings bound to others" (p. 10), and "narrative imagination, the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have" (pp. 10-11). Nussbaum, in opposition to the traditionalists, and sounding a bit more liberal, offers that general education should help people identify their various cultures and then reside physically and emotionally beyond that culture.

Cultural Reproduction Summary

Despite their inability to agree upon the curriculum of general education, cultural reproduction theorists should unite to secure the direction of the liberal arts, higher education's main supplier of general education. Whereas the advocates for general education cannot agree among themselves about the curriculum, the objective onlooker might ask if all could agree on the importance of it. Surely, all could agree that work-focused classes should never replace general education. Despite this though, their inability to center their premises and solutions and their divided discussion keep any premise or solution to reach the ears of economic reproduction theorists who despite their recognition that skill-focused courses maintains class stratification claim that a practical education best serves the needs of the lower and middle classes.

And it is in the community college, largely attended by these classes, where the skill-based general education finds most of its support. Some community college scholars such as Cohen and Brawer (1987) reject the notion that general education must

be general at all. They argue that at the community college, these courses should be rooted in practical, work-related applications. Some critics argue that higher education is often based in theory and offers no real-life applications. The division between scholars centers on the debate that general education should be both theoretical and practical. But just how theoretical and how practical become the dividing lines of these segregated in this argument. Consequently, some of these theorists maintain that a practical education that provides a job is better than a theoretical education that offers no way of economically improving a student's life. And others perceive that skill-oriented programs do not offer opportunity but simply supply society with a trained workforce.

Theoretical Analysis

- Why are general education requirements diminishing?
- What is the role of general education?
- Are schools no longer valuing general education?

As indicated by this study's analysis of institutional and state documents, schools, although professing the core of higher education is general education, are lowering the number of required general education credits in their Applied and certification programs. The number of general requirements has become minimal in the majority of the community colleges' programs. Perhaps the inability of general education advocates to agree on the role of general education and its curriculum have led to the devaluing of general education all together.

Economic Reproduction

This chapter will now turn to economic reproduction theory and the premises concerning occupational programs. After a brief history, the chapter discusses how

economic reproduction theorists are divided into two camps: Those who believe that training a workforce is beneficial to students, higher education, and society and the others who contend that to train a student for a specific job limits that student's choices.

The lineage of economic reproduction can be traced from Marx to Engels and from there to Althusser and Gramsci and onto Bowles and Gintis, but by no means is this an exhaustive list. All reproduction theorists think about how social institutions may reproduce the relations of domination and ideological conflicts. And as Apple (1982), an economic reproduction theorist, explains, economic reproduction theorists seek to understand how the economic and culture practices involved in social institutions contribute to the reproduction of these structural relations, to contradictory tendencies within these relations, and to possibilities for organized action upon them. Apple's comment centers the interest of economic reproduction theorists. These theorists recognize that a dominant group maintains its culture over that of subordinate groups, but as to whether this is a good thing or bad is not at the crux of their discussions. The admission that with dominance comes oppression is a given. Williams (1977) notes, "For as one group becomes economically dominant and culture emerges, other groups must be subordinated, socially and economically" (p. 110).

Martin Carnoy (1982) discusses in his chapter, "Education, Economy, and the State," included in Apple's text, how solutions are improbable because "universal rules" are class-based. Tracing the transformation of economic reproduction, Carnoy's comments mirror Marxism. The class-based rules serve the particular interests of the dominant class. The market and the economic systems, far from being consensual, are the product of class domination and class struggle. He continues that the capitalist

class—through its political power—is not only able to exploit the working class (those who own only their labor) but are able to create a way of life which serves their own capitalist interest and leaves workers alienated and oppressed. The only resolution of the inherent conflict in this system of production is its replacement by another in which the working class has the political power to reorganize production and join with others in its creation. Then, Carnoy turns his attention to the "super-structural" institutions. He argues that through school and other institutions, capitalists are able to reproduce the forces of labor and the division of it and the relations of production maintained through the capitalists' maintaining the dominant patterns of ideology and culture. Bridging Marx with Engels, Carnoy explains how the two identified the State as a repressive apparatus of the bourgeoisie: an apparatus to legitimize power, to repress, to enforce the reproduction of the class structure and class relations. Moving on to Gramsci, Carnoy notes how Gramsci developed Marx's concept of superstructures and elevated it to an important position in understanding how societies function (p. 86) and how the concept of an aristocracy of the working class paid off by capitalists divided workers against themselves. Althusser (1971) takes this exception to labor homogeneousness and furthers that reproduction of production and labor division occurs less within industry, in part by the loss of apprenticeships and serfdoms and more so by the capitalist education system and by other institutions that channel particular students into workers to be, teaching them different rules of behavior depending on the type of job they are pursuing. Economic reproduction theory travels from critiquing society in general and finds its footing within the educational system. How schools maintain economic stratification, these theorists derive, is through their curriculum. Different classes of students are

encouraged to pursue different types of programs, schools then functioning to maintain class, race and gender inequalities (Kelly & Nihlen, 1982).

Education as Economic Endorser

Despite their recognition and belief in economic reproduction, some theorists believe that education should provide specific skills so that learning occurs in a practical arena, that a little education is better than none. Sounding very similar to the traditionalists who want to standardize general education curricula, one group of economic reproduction theorists admit that although specialized curriculum pigeonholes students for certain jobs and re-enforces a dominant culture, encountering education that provides a standardized curriculum with testable and tangible outcomes is better than one that leaves students with abstract theories.

Apple (1982) presents the many sides to the complexity of economic reproduction in schools. One way in which the dominant culture infiltrates and maintains social and economical dominance is through packaged curriculum and standardized testing. He summarizes the view that "it is simply good business practice in terms of profit margins to market [packaged] materials, especially since the original purchase of the system or set of modules means increasing purchases over the years" (p. 259). This good business sense means that in publishing and distributing materials, businesses not only enter the market with profitable outcomes, but also maintain profits with product upgrading, and replacement purchasing. Furthermore, in packaging and designing tests, schools then become accountable to capitalist businesses for standards, thus making business the authority of what is important to learn. Business has power and control over the distribution and designing of education. When schools adopt what is important from

these external forces then the notion of "reducing curriculum to a set of skills is only part of the process by which the logic of capital helps build identities and transforms cultural meaning and practices into commodity" (p. 262). Apple maintains that a new ideology is emerging, "shifting from an ideology of individual autonomy, where a person is his or her own boss and controls his or her destiny, to a careerist individualism, a place where individualism is "geared towards organizational mobility and advancement by following technical rules" (p. 263). Those who maintain the importance of training a workforce, although potentially economical limiting for the individual, recognize the necessity of having people who labor. They extend their claim that schools can assist in the training and the retraining of the working classes. Schools comply by offering occupational programs. Apple remarks that because capitalist production has developed unevenly, some of our social institutions and a number of critics will be more resistant than others to the logic of corporate rationalization.

In *The Monster Under the Bed*, Davis and Botkin (1992) claim "If people are not being educated for a job today, they may be out of a job tomorrow" (cover). Davis, a former Harvard business professor, Botkin, a former professor of Education also at Harvard, prompt businesses to stop accepting courses that do not apply to jobs and take over education's job of delivering curriculum. The two contend, "Business too often bemoans the shortage of trained people yet offers incentives to employees through tuition reimbursement programs to take courses that may not be relevant to its needs. Companies know their needs in the labor markets, and schools should follow their lead in directing students toward professions in demand" (p. 130). Despite the fact, that their

views are highly controversial, Davis' and Botkin's voices—coming from the hallowed halls of Harvard—carry weight.

Governing agencies and administrators view community colleges as the most fitting higher education tier for these programs to occur. Although lately starting to shift his views on the specificity of occupational programs, advocating now a more balanced curriculum between a thorough general education and practical courses, Grubb (1995, 1996, 1997, 2001) has made a career defending the occupational role of community colleges and their necessity of training the lower and middle classes of America.

Education as Economic Liberator

For the most part, economic reproduction theorists believe that skill-oriented courses limit a student's economic potential and, therefore, direct complaints about the oppressive power of education to the presence of occupational programs in education. Several critiques exist concerning work-centered programs in higher education. Perhaps the most poignant claim about the education's emphasis on occupational programs is the one positing that such programs further divide social classes. As a reproduction theorist, Bourdieu (1974) also addresses education's role in replicating social class. He examines the question as to why schools, the great democratizing institution, offer occupational programs. He contends:

> Working-class students [the majority of community college students] often find themselves subjected to a school curriculum in which the distinction between high-status and low-status knowledge is organized around the difference between theoretical and practical subjects. Courses that deal with practical subjects,

whether they be industrial arts or culinary arts, are seen as marginal and inferior. (p. 39)

The technical, Applied Associate degrees, Bourdieu might argue, work to keep working-class students within their socioeconomic status. Educators are not liberating people, offering a way to rise in economic stature and encouraging them to pursue life-learning skills, but through the programs they endorse, higher education reinforces the one thing from which higher education should free students—exploitation by others who wish to take economic, political, cultural advantage of them.

An interesting analysis of higher education, its programs, and its connections with discourse and power is made by Aronowitz and Giroux (1991) who propose in *Postmodern Education* that when "educators demanded that theoretical knowledge demonstrate its relevance to practice and build upon the tacit knowledge already possessed by students that education became postmodern" (p. 15). How this shift has affected higher education is the focus of their *Education Still Under Siege* (1993). Although the two scholars trace education's transformation to the turn of the twentieth century, they argue that the force of this change occurred during the conservative reforms of the Reagan/Bush administrations when "the construction of the New World Order in foreign policy was to be matched by the emergence of a New School Order driven the ideology of corporate capitalism" (p. 9). The power of practice and its adoption of meeting capitalist needs has repressed the need for education's liberating capabilities and the means by which students can question and evaluate social dogmas so that they might arrive at a more critical understanding of life and their potential. These theorists oppose education structured to make students workers and human capital.

Reproduction Theory and Community Colleges

Directed at the community college, Clark (1960) who criticized community colleges for "cooling out" students who had lofty ambitions and who were subjected to the community college counseling service who channeled them into "more realistic" occupational programs. Zwerling (1976) takes Clark's attack of the community college and compile with his own in *Second Best: The Crisis of the Community College* and contend the community college student would better benefit going immediately into work. The expenses of tuition, lost wages, and time cause students to lose ground in their eminent low-level career. Zwerling proposes that community colleges, functioning as a social defense mechanism, serve the poor, providing for them training that leads to limited employment opportunities.

Carnevale, vice president of public leadership at the Educational Testing Service, at the American Association of Community College's annual convention in 2001, warned the two-year institutions to be "wary of creating too many programs to provide quick training for specific jobs" (Evelyn, 2001, on-line). Carnevale remarks that "the jobs such programs feed are not the dominant ones in the new economy" (Evelyn, 2001, on-line). Carnevale cited data that showed "workers with higher degrees have longer staying and earning power in the labor market than those with certificates . . .. we know that long-term education and training is what's good for the students, and it's what's good for the economy" (2001, on-line). In his concluding remarks, he urged "community-college leaders not to lose sight of general education" (Evelyn, 2001, on-line).

Reproduction Theory and Discourse Analysis

How schools reinforce the dominant culture and economic stratification, reproduction theorists claim, is in part by their discourse. In the language of policies, philosophies, mission statements, program requirements, and correspondence, higher education has become a part of the Institution and not a critic of it. One interesting study in reproduction theory, that lends itself compellingly to this study, is Bernstein's (1982) "Codes, Modalities and the Process of Cultural Reproduction: A Model." This study examines language and messages and is Bernstein's argument that students are shaped by education's discourse.

Bernstein (1982) demonstrates, "Class relations, generate, distribute, reproduce and legitimize, distinctive forms of communication, which transmit dominating and dominated codes; and that subjects are differentially positioned by these codes in the process of acquisition" (pp. 304-05). He furthers in this study that students coming from different economic backgrounds will read and interpret material differently. He argues that middle-class students will question and search for what is relevant to their experiences and are able to adapt their values accordingly. On the other hand, lower-class students are unable to read selectively. They have a certain set of principles that do not change even when reading material that questions these principles. When making meaning from messages, or decoding, middle-class students are capable of discriminating messages, accepting only what makes sense to them, and the lower class accepts all what is read, but do not adapt reactions.

Bernstein (1982) points out that the "distribution of power depends upon the access to specialized coding orientations" (p. 311). He claims, therefore, the ability to

read material, make meaning of it, and identify its "code," produces a dominant culture. This is Bourdieu's (1974) dominant culture, a culture that is shaped, emphasized, and maintained by those in social power positions—such as educators. These students become cultural capital, those students from middle and upper classes who exhibit a familiarity with the dominant linguistics and social systems that empower them.

Bernstein (1982) continues that students who can read material and find the dominant, universal message, have a higher likelihood of success in society, a process unlikely to occur for lower-class students. Therefore, if students are reading material published by educational agencies and institutions, they are probably reading and interpreting the material according to the economic class. If a student is striving for ambitious ends, he or she would be greatly affected by his or her experience with the material. Specifically, the unlikely college candidate would have a more difficult time comprehending the semantics of material dealing with college life. This leads to what Bernstein calls "insulation maintenance" (p. 314), a way of "de-locating," phases establishing difference—"power relations establishing the order of things, distinct subjects through distinct voices" (p. 315), a manner of insulation, the means of making a culture appear natural.

In his study, Bernstein projects that the "power of an external subject can be traced by the syntax of its generation" (p. 318). And, he continues, syntax transforms only if the subject applies his or her experiences. Only those who are a part of the communication can contribute to change. Bernstein refers to this framing as the regulating principle of communicative practices. With this said, Bernstein supposes that it is the message of the yet to be voiced that hold potential answers to the distribution of

power; the yet to be realized is a potential answer to the principle of control. Although Bernstein's ideas get caught in the mire of his own language, the point is made. Those who do not read text as the dominant group, in his study—the poor, miss the message. Because they fail to decode the message, lower-class students are de-located, removed from power and controlling potential. Bernstein, perhaps a bit arrogantly, posits that in today's advanced capitalistic society, many unequal relations exist, its own context of reproduction, but generating through the "language of [his] paper, a specific voiced message" (p. 338). If Bernstein manages to liberate the silenced has yet to be seen, but the study's point that classification is transmitted and maintained through coding and language is made.

Reproduction Theory Summary

The pen is mighty—but just as it can lead to revolution, so can it limit the potential of the mass. So if dominant groups maintain power and control through messages and communication, one must wonder about the effectiveness of any discussion. Are all publications culturally and economically biased? Regardless as to what side of the discussion reproduction theorists reside, language is used to justify all opinions. So does the discourse aid in understanding the situation or does it contribute confusion?

According to adversaries of occupational courses, limiting general education endorses the very culture it was designed to counter. Students learn not to question the country's capitalistic society, but to work toward entering it. And the complaints against education is that schools do not mediate or seek to change the structures of society or the characteristics of individuals who occupy positions of wealth, status and power. The

schools are static because they are a microcosm of the society, agents of the state, rather than an agent for change as some theorists maintain (Apple, 1982).

As for the situation in Oklahoma community colleges and the arguments for and against occupational programs or skill-specific courses, clear answers, in the quagmire of reproduction theory, are not provided. For even among reproduction theorists, consensus as to what is an effective general education does not exist. Sides are drawn in debate as whether education should work with the individual and his or her cultural concerns or if general education should provide students with an overview of mainstream culture. As for economic reproduction theorists, there is indecision as whether the system should or should not give an education that prepares students for jobs. Is a blue-collar job sufficient for someone who was potentially collarless?

Theoretical Analysis

What do the rising numbers of occupational programs suggest about the direction of Oklahoma community colleges? From the analysis of institutional and state documents, this study reports that the majority of Oklahoma community colleges are increasing the number of occupational programs. If this is the case, using economic reproduction as a lens to view the current direction of the two-year system, this study arrives at a troubling conclusion: community colleges, in the proliferation of their occupational programs, are substantiating working class students as tomorrow's working class. Higher education, which was once viewed as an objective, social critic, is possibly a perpetuator of class division, an enforcer of the dominant culture.

The previous would then demand we ask: Is higher education explicitly linked to the economy? Are the occupational programs offered by community colleges dead-end

opportunities keeping class divisions? The analysis provided by state documents would suggest that although students do earn more when they complete an associate degree, a greater earning increase comes from the attainment of a four-year degree, not a terminal, two-year one. But another side of economic reproduction theory suggests and the state's support of occupational education implies that it is better to train students for blue-collar work than to leave them collarless.

Does a trained workforce guarantee a productive one? If we are to answer this question based on the arising policies and objectives of Oklahoma community colleges and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, then we must believe it does. But, this belief does not come without dissension and debate.

Human Capital Theory

At the core of the arguments concerning education and business needs is that education can supply the type of workers that the economy needs. Presently, there seems to be little question if indeed education is correlated with the status of the market. The premise is if educators are doing their jobs, then no one will be without work and workers will exhibit outstanding performance and productivity. But, these claims, I am afraid, rely on assumption and lack empirical evidence. These claims, although debatable, have become a given in the drive to make school economically accountable.

Theoretical Questions

Human capital theory lends itself to this project's questions:

- Is higher education directly linked to the economy?
- Does a trained workforce guarantee a productive one?

In attempts to explain the fluctuations of the economy and the market, economists turned their attention to the quality as well as to the number of physical and labor capital. Focusing on the differences within worker performance led economists to address what the early classical economists had already noted: human beings were a part of the capital component. Of course, initial looks at human capital were attempts to encourage the preservation of life, to propose a need for compensation for injury or death, and to explore a fair tax systems (Wykstra, 1971). But research quickly noted the difference in education levels of workers and the effects this variable had on the labor market.

The human capital theory, an economic theory first proposed by Becker and Schultz in 1962, poses that educational credentials can predict work productivity (Riley, 1999). It is used to link education with labor markets. But how education is specifically linked is still unclear. Belfield (2000) notes that too much education may actually be detrimental to performance, that the rate of return for education appears to be significantly positive for workers with but questionably so for training, and, most importantly, that "education does not augment human capital but merely serves to signal innately capable workers and thus reduces information costs for firms" (p. 16). The latter two contradictions to human capital affect this study's look at occupational education and the push to make students better fit for employment.

Research is now surfacing that illustrates occupational programs are not fulfilling their roles in supporting community economies. In Pennington, Pittman, and Hurley's (2001) "An Assessment of the Community College's Influence on the Relative Economic Development of a County," the researchers provide statistical proof that "it seems safest to conclude that the mere presence of the community college has not taken struggling

economies and transformed them . . .. Rather the data suggest that the presence of a community college may have a small positive economic influence" (p. 21). What the researchers conclude then is that schools influence the economy by simply being in the county, not necessarily because they "produce" graduates who fit the labor market.

In what sounds like the culmination of the points he made at the American Association of Community College annual conference, warning community colleges of offering too many training-specific courses, Carnevale, with his co-author Desrochers, in their *Help Wanted...Credentials Required: Community Colleges in the Knowledge Economy* (2001), writes that "all [community college leaders] agree on the value of increasing the synergy among work-related preparation that fosters academic education" (p. 93). But, doubtfully "all" agree that this should occur. They admit that in the current economy and under financial restraints, the two-year system is tempted to serve business more than the needs of students. Accordingly, they admit the difficulty for the two-year system in determining its "true" mission. Citing O'Banion (1997), the two writers support that the most obvious growing tension in this new century will be what the overall mission of community college should be. Like O'Banion, economists Carnevale & Desrochers (2001) initially propose that the dual-mission of the community college should be a balanced one. But this balance still appears a bit skewed. They see the "commitment to social equity goals and the needs of communities, employers, and individuals to changing economic and technological realities as the institutional challenge" (p. 10). They foresee the success of the schools relying on the collaboration between educators, business and community leaders, occupational and professional societies and unions in selected business" (p. 11), setting themselves up for conflicts of

interest. Carnevale & Desrochers provide graphs that indicate the education obtainment pays off in skill level and earning power. But they do not admit that results may be reliant on the innate characteristics of the workers and not so much on their education obtainment. However, they do tell schools that they must stay on top of the market and anticipate what kind of workers and training will be required in the near future so that can adjust curriculum. These strategies suggest their economic bias that schools' effectiveness are linked to economic progression.

Carnevale & Desrochers (2001) explain that because of the changing capitalistic high-tech manufacturing economy and growing services economy demand a complex set of performance standards, businesses are looking for conscientious workers who are able to take responsibility for the final product or service—and who have degrees. Employers want workers with skills, but businesses do not want to pay for their training. So they look to the community college to provide it. Schools then design certification programs and non-transferable Applied Associate degrees. The report then demonstrates students who acquire certificate degrees make only a slight margin more in earnings than those with just a high school diploma. The transforming workplace, however, requires workers who are more than skilled, for employers are in search of creative problem-solvers, who are empathetic, have interpersonal skills, and who communicate well. However, with fast-paced certification programs, the guarantee that workers will have these abilities is non-existent.

In recommendations to community colleges, Carnevale & Desrochers (2001) point out that schools should not divorce vocational functions from academic education and doing so would result in problems for the market and be detrimental to the alliances

that schools have established, the solution rests granting more degrees and fewer certificates, the types of programs that are more academic than certifications. But if these programs are truly academic is again rooted in the requirements of the programs. Even the two admit that it is in general education courses where students learn adaptability, and "evidence suggests that general education signals trainability" (p. 69).

What Carnevale and Desrochers (2001) contribute to the discussion is the acknowledgement that problems arise when schools grant too many certifications and ignore the academic obligations of their institutions. And although this is a step in the right direction, the two, a bit naively I propose, believe that in offering degrees instead of certifications that students will encounter an education that will make them better workers. To convey this to business, educators need to communicate with business the necessity of maintaining general education requirements. Carnevale and Desrochers do not acknowledge that schools can alter the courses of programs to be more occupational and less academic. Furthermore, the two economists uphold the view that a degree warrants good worker performance and productivity, but this, too, is debatable.

Besides the questionability of improved performance and productivity in those workers who hold certifications, the question of workers' education as a direct correlation with their productivity and its contribution to the overall status of the nation's economy strengthens the doubts that arise from human capital theory. The argument itself is clumsy and under constant scrutiny by economists who claim that productivity and economics are too complex to be linked directly to education. And Riley, former Secretary of U. S. Department of Education, warns that conclusions built on such a relationship must be "tempered with caution" and that attempts to break the connection

between productivity and education must be considered. Studies show that the market, the overall national economy, the specific individual, unions, etc. all affect results.

Vickers (1995) who claims in his *The Art of Judgment* that viewing situations as simplistic lead to faulty decision-making. He posits, “The idea that in these last all governing relations are subservient to and can therefore be resolved into ‘maximizing profit’ is . . . a myth” (p. 44). Sounding similar to Vickers but with more reserve, Belfield (2000) asserts that whereas these complications do not invalidate human capital markets, they do indicate that such markets are “far more complex than anticipated and conclusions should be held in reserve” (p. 22). A few specific contradictions to the theory include the individual’s risk aversion level may cause or keep workers from pursuing optimal employment paths, the individual’s unpredictability of working throughout his or her life, and the individual’s rate of loss of skill. Additionally, the individual’s level of social intelligence, a quality very difficult to measure, varies.

House (1991) supports Belfield’s claims of complexity blurring the reliability of human capital theory. In his “Big Policy, Little Policy,” House contends that the Reagan decade pushed big educational policy—the national debt and economic policies—onto the shoulders of little educational policy—state and local levels of control. House believes that in “earlier decades other factors seemed more important in determining educational possibilities” (p. 21), desegregation, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War. But with Reagan, contends House, the liberal economic view of education became replaced with conservative complaints that students could not get jobs because they were poorly educated. House, though a decade later, argues with these politics, claiming that the “increasing need for clerical—traditionally jobs sought by women, the withdrawal of

men from the labor market, and a rise of foreign competition" (pp. 23-24) and a redistribution of wealth through tax rate changes, management of the federal budget, deregulation, and debt policy affected the flailing economy, issues far removed from education.

The economy is not simply defined, calculated, or predicted. No one can access the needs of the labor market; it changes too quickly, nothing guarantees what jobs will be available. Not only are the labor market characteristics too complex, but also education does not link to a person's productivity. Unfortunately, those who make educational policy based on economic appeals do not understand the complexity of the multi-structured and multi-faceted economy. Granted educators would like to profess that education is a relatively good investment, but given it is not necessary. Certain kinds of degrees will "pay off," but others will not. In fact, presently the ability to be mobile is more rewarded than education. Work experience is also beneficial. Education may be the entry for certain jobs, but it is not the end all. And for some education may not even be the entry—race and gender discrimination do exist—even for the educated. Education cannot solve the problem because the system is too complex.

Perhaps the problem is that schools see themselves as contributors to the economic progression of a region. But theorists, even some who advocate human capital theory, claim that this is not the reality. Economic structures are too complex for this to be so. What can result: the economy is good but this sector is suffering—education must serve this need. What also can result: the economy is bad and education is to blame. Education becomes the country's and every politician's scapegoat for a sluggish economy. So what occurs, and we see this presently, education attempts to put in place

programs to meet economic needs, but the economy does not necessarily improve. The variables—people entering from other portals, business hiring their own kind, unions contributing workforce and policy--keep schools from anticipating employment needs. Education: Associate of Arts or Sciences or Applied Associate degrees, do not guarantee the job or job performance.

Human Capital Summary

Human capital theorists explore the economic data that demonstrates businesses cannot get a return investment when they themselves train workers. Therefore, they turn to other sources for the education of their employees. Whereas some evidence does support that workers with bachelor degrees do fair better at work, there is little understanding or empirical evidence to suggest if the degree, in fact, leads to better performance. But educational policymakers buy into the belief that education guarantees a job and predicts worker performance, both of which are debated by human capital theorists.

Theoretical Analysis

In response to this study's questions: Is higher education directly linked to the economy and does a trained workforce guarantee a productive one, we can conclude that Oklahoma businesses, as detected in Chapter Four, want higher education to become accountable for and producers of workforce development. The state's businesses claim to have immediate needs but do not want to wait for these workers to acquire bachelor degrees. So, businesses turn to community colleges to educate their workforce. And, as seen in the objectives of *Brain Gain 2010* and the *Statewide* [sic] *System Review*, state policymakers and educators, in need of validation and funding, buy the clumsy argument

that education means good worker productivity and a strong economy and in turn try to sell it to the public and students. This message appears in school's program offerings and in publications. First, the increasing number of occupational programs is a strong implication that schools see themselves responsible for training a workforce. Second, the language used when discussing the philosophy and objectives of Applied programs indicate that schools perceive the programs as direct links to getting a job.

Summary

Nothing is simple. The theoretical lenses show that in both exist validity and contradictions of themselves and the other. Therefore, in the wake of Postmodernism: nothing is certain. Instead, theoretical frameworks face the criticism of becoming a manifestation of the very oppressive bureaucracy they strive to understand, critique, and change. They themselves become entrapped in the form of bureaucratic discourse. As Ferguson (1984) explores, and as Vickers foreshadowed, "The increasing complexity of organizations results in the delegation of tasks to subsystems. This leads to a different type of goal displacement, as the suborganizations develop and pursue their own interests and needs, not of the subjugated other" (p. 21). These goals surface in the theoretical quagmire of theorists when we admit that "Bureaucratic capitalism separates us from others . . .and ties us to roles and rules rather than to people, weighting us with connections that deny community" (p. 147)—and clarity.

The complex interaction among educational missions, the state mandates, institutional practices, and the various theories that guide and critique them are very much a part of the system that guides, analyzes, enforces, and questions the dominant ways of thinking and speaking. In this case, as suggested by this study, this complex

interaction cannot offer change or freedom from the existing system. And the alarming thought arises: If the dominant forces emphasize that education does provides economic improvement for the student and for society, then all will believe. It will become "common knowledge," a "fact" that exists without evidence.

Community colleges have a noble aim—to offer a choice and with this choice comes power. What students want to do with their education is up to them. And historically, community colleges have provided two types of programs. But despite this history, controversy surrounds the educational objectives of the community college. But perhaps scholars are debating a moot point. What's the point in debating about occupational and transferable education if community colleges envision themselves as a provider of both? If scholars cannot agree on what is the right pursuit of education, then perhaps they should examine what is wrong with the process. Instead of doing away with one form or another, possibly the answer is how to modify the conversation. Scholars should ask themselves how schools inform students regarding these programs in their publications and are institutions conscious of these readers in these documents. How accurate is the information given by schools about their programs and how effective are opposing theoretical camps in generating progress when we note that bureaucratic discourse can do nothing but substantiate popular rhetoric and support the existing, capitalistic system?

So then the questions should become—do schools adequately converse with students about these choices? Do state level administrators and the institutions themselves get so caught up in a semantic game of word play, in hopes of drawing in dollars, that they lose sight of schools well-rounded intentions? Are schools open with

students about the limitations and freedoms of the various types of programs? Are schools limiting the students' power by not making them a part of the dialogue? Are students aware of their educational choices and the outcomes that follow? Thus, awareness rests less on what educational program is offered, and more on how the dialogue about the empowerment of education occurs and if one educational program is emphasized more than another. The questions lead us to wonder *who* educational institutions consider is the audience of their publications and *how* their discussion of educational opportunities affects this audience. Awareness rests with an empowerment of agency.

CHAPTER SIX

FEMNIST DISCOURSE

Chapter Six presents feminist discourse theory as an analysis of this study's analysis. The chapter begins with a review of the data findings and bureaucratic theories. This review will then initiate a discussion of feminist discourse. A feminist discourse practical guide to communication follows the theory's introduction. This overview of feminist discourse calls for a re-examination of the dialogue concerning Oklahoma community colleges and their current educational objectives. At this point, the chapter realigns the study. Chapter Six is not a continuing pursuit of *what* is the current situation in Oklahoma community colleges as was described in the previous data and theory, but becomes focused more on *how* does feminist discourse theory contribute to this study and *how* should community colleges and policymakers change their dialogue to better the current discourse. After an analysis of the dialogue occurring in and between Oklahoma's community colleges and the State Regents for Higher Education as viewed through the lens of feminist discourse, the chapter offers criticism directed toward feminist discourse.

Review of Findings

The data collected from three Oklahoma institutions shows that community colleges have increased the number of their terminal programs. Additionally, when writing about the types of programs that they do offer, the data indicates that schools word their catalogs and websites in ways that students may not be aware of the intricacies of various degrees. Furthermore, the data suggests that the semantic games of state

community colleges and governing agencies may be costly for the most important component of higher education: the student.

Additionally, community colleges are implying to the public, through the wording of their documents, that they are placing increasing value on the "practical" education of its students when they increase the number of Applied programs and when they indicate in documents that they perceive no difference in the two types of degrees. This study's data suggests that schools are vague and misleading about the transferability of such programs. Other data indicates that community colleges may be turning to predominantly minority, four-year schools for articulation agreements.

The review of the data findings indicates that schools are focused on numbers—the increasing of graduate numbers and occupational programs. The institutional publications also suggest that schools omit specific explanations about the differences and difficulties encountered with the two types of Associate degrees.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may be functioning from the premise that a college degree is a college degree, but in actuality, not all course work at the community college is perceived as college work. When community colleges follow the premise that a college degree is a college degree, they are not held accountable for this language because they are simply appealing to the discourse encouraged from the top administrative levels, the State Regents. Perhaps, though, they should be thinking more about the Muriels in their student bodies, students who have little idea about the requirements of getting a college degree and have even less an understanding of the various types of Associate degrees. For it is the Muriels within the community college

system who, because of their first-generation status and the lack of accurate information published by institutions, lose sight of the long-term view of education.

Review of Bureaucratic Discourse

Chapter Four illustrates that reproduction and human capital theories do not provide any real consensus as to what higher education should provide for its students. The theories themselves remain bureaucratic. Perhaps too embedded within the system they hope to monitor and guide, these theories cannot lead to any resolution. Cultural reproduction theorists advocate general education, but they cannot agree if general education should follow a classical, mainstream curriculum or be multicultural and diverse. One group of economic reproduction theorists see education as giving way to economic opportunities; the other claims economic oppression. As for human capitalist theorists, the sides cannot determine if education is indeed linked to the market and worker performance. But the lack of empirical evidence and the uncertainty of this theory have not stopped policymakers from making education accountable for economic conditions.

These bureaucratic theories provide to this study explanations as to why community colleges are pursuing what they are. Cultural reproduction theorists divide in their views about general education. Advocates of the liberal arts they have an inability to decide on the curriculum and role of general education, and their indecision causes the rationale for such requirements to be muddled. Educators then become uncertain as to why students need general education; hence, the required number of hours drops. Despite the controversy surrounding economic reproduction and human capital theories, the study's data findings and theoretical explorations imply that business needs a trained

workforce. But this need is not overridden by the complaints that occupational programs oppress students and that no evidence proves education equates with worker performance. Policymakers decide, regardless of the controversy, to make education accountable for the state's economy. The review of the bureaucratic theories and the descriptive analysis findings suggest that the language of Oklahoma community colleges and state agencies is used to mislead students.

Feminist Discourse

The data suggests that schools are indeed shifting their emphasis on occupational education by increasing the numbers of their terminal programs, wording their descriptions of such programs so that students may not comprehend the differences between the degrees, and reporting to the state data and descriptions that make the institutions look more willing to meet the state's mandates for increasing graduate numbers and building a workforce for the state and business. Furthermore, bureaucratic theories do not offer any solution to improving the dialogue about occupational and general education or the dialogue carried out by Oklahoma community colleges and state agencies. Both the data and the bureaucratic theories used in this study describe what is being said about occupational and transferable education in state and institutional publications.

Feminist discourse is a theory about *how* we should communicate. It offers a way to realign conversation so that more participants can become involved and consensus can occur. Feminist discourse is based on the premise that *who* is invited in sharing the knowledge and *how* that conversation takes place become stepping-stones to a better discourse. Specifically, this study shows how feminist discourse can provide a way to

view the findings of the descriptive data, including the institutional and state documents and the bureaucratic theoretical perspectives, how it can propose a more effective way to converse, and how the discourse surrounding the degree programs of Oklahoma community colleges might change from the perspective of feminist discourse theory.

Only students with a sophisticated understanding of college would be able to decipher the discourse present in Oklahoma community college publications. Acknowledged by a variety of theorists, (e.g., reproduction theorists Bernstein, 1982; Bourdieu, 1974; Giroux, 1991) and (feminists Chambers, 1995; Lather, 1991; Welch, 1990), language is one of the tools used against the other, those students like Muriel. In the hierarchical system of higher education and as is suggested by this study, students have become the silenced other. If the woman at the county fair, Muriel, were to encounter the catalogs of Oklahoma community colleges, she would not be able to discern the difference between the Applied Associate degree and the Associate of Arts and Science. Feminist discourse is based on the premise that information should be accurate and clear and that language should be used to empower all.

Ferguson (1984) offers a new way of viewing the institution and guiding the discourse within the institution. Feminist discourse, she proposes, works in opposition to bureaucratic discourse. She claims that the "dominance and pervasiveness of bureaucracy . . . its programs and technology operated upon and through human beings who both succumb and resist, whose identities are both created by the dominant discourse of power and knowledge" (p. 22), is bureaucratic discourse. She envisions feminist discourse as a way to move beyond the dilemma of bureaucratic dialogue and oppression,

as a way to "penetrate the constraints and limitations of" (p. 22), and to seek out the unspoken experiences of the other, those oppressed and silenced by the dominant culture.

Welch (1990) and Lather (1991) point out those who make policies and enforce practice often perceive themselves in the "pursuit of justice" when in actuality they are more concerned with "appearing to do good than to actually be doing it" (Welch, p. 6). As these two scholars propose, I hope that all involved in the dialogue, concerning Oklahoma community colleges, will be willing to "see and correct patterns of acting and thinking that are actually counter to the ends we value" (p. 6).

Perhaps the feminist perspectives, as presented by Welch, Lather, and Ferguson, are benevolent and radical ways of recognizing language error, can encourage ways of recognizing if error exists and, if so, a need for redirecting the dialogue concerning Oklahoma community college and their educational emphases.

The Who *and the* How

The significant questions of *who* and *how* in feminist dialogue is linked to Habermas. Meehan (1995) acknowledges that this may be "rowing against the feminist mainstream" (p. 1), but Habermas' work can be of use in the clarification of the structures of modern life, the "potential for emancipatory forms of life, and market manipulation and domination" (p. 2), traversing the distance between the "personal and political, the public and the private" (p. 2). Pointedly, Meehan supports Habermas' contention that our personal identity comes from social interaction and is dependent on relationships and that identity then comes from communicative functions within these roles. She furthers his claim to include that the significant contributor of these functions is the observer who has surveyed the expectations and is the "generalized other" (p. 2-3).

Habermas posits, according to Meehan, that the other gives way to reflective questioning of the "legitimacy of norms and conventionally justified beliefs and values" (p. 3).

Habermas, as does feminist discourse theory, argues that social action originates in communication. To have effective communication, Habermas remarks that conversers should "assimilate norms that regulate behavior, delineate the obligations of social roles, and stipulate what can be legitimately expected and demanded" (p. 5). Yet, he notes that the potency of political resistance is undermined by the imperatives of the very systems it seeks to check.

Similar to Habermas' claim that an individual is defined by his or her social interaction, Braaten (1995) comments that a culture is defined by its treatment of oppressed peoples and introduces a model of feminist thought she calls "communicative thinking." While "communicative thinking reflects Habermas' notion of communicative rationality it rejects a "univocal axiomatic structure, or a regimented semantics" (p. 144). Braaten suggests that communicative thinking must be evaluated, not in terms of an internal structure, but "in the worth of its ideals for solidarity and community" (p. 149).

So if allowing others into the dialogue grants us a better understanding of who we are, builds solidarity in the community, and establishes our identity for others, why are institutions not doing so? Morley (1999) makes an interesting point concerning this question. Morley believes that academia does not perceive that change is needed. "Academia believes that knowledge is de-contextualized, constructed, and communicated with impartial power and authority" (p. 41). Then, she poses that institutions conceal their power by projecting that their particular way of perceiving as being "common sense" (p. 41). She puts this in the higher education context and notes that "this can be a

challenging concept [empowerment does not work effectively if the dominant group hoards it] for members of marginalized groups whose personal, material and political disempowerment through patriarchy, racism and capitalism influence their potential to participate in higher education" (p. 44). This arrogance keeps others from questioning and dissonance limited, thus keeping certain peoples out of higher education's dialogue. This abuse of power limits the scope of agency, particularly for the typical college student.

A Practical Guide to Feminist Discourse

If problems exist as to how information is disclosed and language used, the opportunity for effective communication becomes more remote when considering how the conversation should take place. Chambers (in Meehan, 1995) provides readers a practical and thorough guide as to how the dialogue should unfold in her discussion of H*andbook for the Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice*. From this text, Chambers presents a practical guide of how to converse. And although her comments might be considered applicable to only verbal dialogue, we can consider that the same guides can assist those in charge of publications and their considerations of audience.

First, she claims that all participants have a right to participate and must be self-disciplined, strategic actors. To foster this participation, Chambers suggests that rules should be limited because they restrict open discussion. Instead, she suggests that participants should adopt "attitudes toward each other" (p. 164), attitudes that convey mutual respect and "ethic of care which accentuates a reaching out to others" (p. 164). For, she argues, in typical situations, political apathy and the formal language of

procedurals keep speakers silenced. A respectful dialogue, she specifies, should be one of diverse speakers exhibiting self-discipline, "one without putdowns or speeches," and one with a "participatory finding of alternative solutions" (p. 168). Furthermore, respect calls for all members to be welcome and to participate without any one speaker monopolizing the conversation, for silence can be just a vital player as talk. Chambers encourages readers to be strategic actors.

Second, competitive, dualistic talk should be avoided. A cooperative conversation asks, in the Carl Rogers'and Habemas' vein, that participants seek out areas of consensus and common ground so that they can become the foundation of the discourse and that competitive, dualistic thinking should be avoided. Chambers is encouraging consensus to guide the discussion. The text, Chambers explains, encourages the "fundamental right of . . . all people to be able to express themselves in their own words and of their own free will ....The fundamental responsibility of consensus is to assure others of their right to speak and be heard. Coercion and trade-offs are replaced with creative alternatives and compromise with synthesis" (p.165). Chamber's hope is that cooperation will lead a discussion that arrives at better solutions, those answers rooted in multiple perspectives and not in the "right/wrong" attitude that prevails in most debates. She poses that this may be difficult because typically conversation is built on an "ethic of justice," which stresses not interfering with others, what she claims is, a limiting of the self.

Third, no participant should be coerced or deceived. An open discourse finds its heritage in the arguments of Habermas: practical discourse is designed to guarantee that all participants have the right to participate and to be fully informed. Chambers reminds

us that Habermas claimed the most important aspects of dialogue involve the rights of every actor, affected by the norm, to enter the discourse, each participant the equal chance to be heard, the necessity of questioning, challenging, and defending every point raised, and the guarantee that no force or deception can be used to sway participants. Under these conditions and motivated by a desire to reach agreement, participants attempt to build a consensus. The consensus legitimizes the norm because in being "immunized in a special way against repression and inequality" (p. 166), the outcome represents all voices.

Fourth, besides laying the ground rules of discourse, Chambers explores the attitudes and sentiments that should exist in discourse. The attitudes and sentiments are responsibility, self-discipline, respect cooperation, and struggle. "Successful discourse involves more than ensuring that people who want to engage in discourse may engage in discourse, for successful dialogue involves fostering the desire to participate; it involves . . .a positive responsibility to engage in the process" (p. 167). Chambers, somewhat reflective of Noddings' caring pedagogy, is proposing that discourse participants should foster a more nurturing precedence.

Chambers recognizes that this cooperative, ethical discourse is not free from trouble. She states, on one hand, "What we see is that discourse requires that participants possess a willingness to get involved, to pursue reasons that appeal to the other's point of view, to treat each with respect, to grow, learn, and change, and finally an interest in reaching an agreement" (p. 169), a learning process for discursive action. She furthers that working toward a rational consensus in an arena of "struggle and disagreement can be a positive learning experience" (p. 169). On the other hand, she counters, "There still

appears to be a questionable and utopian privileging of agreement over disagreement" (p. 170), which calls into scrutiny the actual power of diverse speakers, "pluralism, diversity, and difference within discourse ethics" (p. 170). Chambers continues that criticisms confront the idea that consensual discourse participants, interacting in competitive, market-driven environments, are actually laboring under a false consciousness. Their efforts, she claims, lead to collectivism, to authoritarian, paternalistic implications (p. 171). In doing so, Chambers believes that when more people are given the opportunity to converse more credibility is awarded the dialogue. When more voices are heard, ideally, more perspectives are considered.

Fifth, Chambers explains that the conversation should not be a debate between right and wrong but one that acknowledges complexity and multiple perspectives. Discourse should not occur in an antagonistic forum, but in a dialectical one. The overall objective is to acquire a fuller perspective to issues so that opposing forces can progress. For this to occur, Chambers points out that endurance is key to maintaining dialogue. Discussion in a diverse environment is a "difficult and drawn out process" (p. 173). Chambers faults the critics for evaluating discourse on its goal-oriented potential. For the purpose of feminist discourse is not reach a hard-fast solution, but to work toward a more informed awareness, one that is under continuous growth. Chambers concludes: "I argue that the proper domain of consensual will-formation is cultural reproduction. A consensually steered society is one in which public opinion, rather than public decisions, is reproduced and altered discursively" (p. 164). Feminist discourse encourages subjects to embrace interpretative differences and to measure the success of dialogue in terms of the insights achieved, rather than in terms of the better argument rendered.

Sixth, Chambers contends that participants are brought together to discuss not so that they can be controlled by the dominant culture but so change can occur. Linked to Foucault's (1980) thoughts on power, knowledge, and language, Chambers remarks, very similarly to Ferguson's (1984) thoughts about change, that critics see people brought together for discourse not for the purpose of creating change, but so that they can be controlled. Additionally, the increasing diversity among participants decreases the chance for consensus. Chambers takes to task these points. She contends that an ethical discourse does not present an idealistic, agreeable society nor does it de-emphasize contestation, for "such a world is unattainable and undesirable" (p. 172). Instead, a pluralistic society leads to criticism and criticism gives way to well-founded results.

Feminist Discourse Summary

In attempts to analyze the current discourse of Oklahoma community colleges through feminist discourse, the main points of feminist discourse could be helpful. The following points provide a synopsis of feminist discourse:

- All participants have a right to participate and should be self-disciplined, strategic actors;
- Competitive, dualistic talk should be avoided;
- No force or deception should be used to sway the audience;
- The dialogue should nurture but also house struggle and disagreement;
- The conversation should not be a right/wrong debate but one that acknowledges complexity and multiple perspectives;
- People should be invited to discuss not to be controlled but so change can occur.

If we consider the feminist dialectic a more effective way to communicate, the community college current dialogue and its fusion with feminist discourse must be synthesized.

The Dialogue in Oklahoma

This study indicates that the printed dialogue concerning the emphasis of particular programs, the benefits of those programs, and the educational objectives in offering certain types of programs are misleading to students. Schools contend that they give all students access to higher education, but this study suggests that institutions keep information from students, thus causing students to make uniformed decisions. This study has also shown that state agencies are encouraging institutions to contribute to the state's economy through the education and training of a workforce. For schools to receive funding, this study has also shown, that community colleges have been asked to address these workforce demands. Feminist discourse theory shifts this study's focus, from a descriptive to a prescriptive one, and presents a how-to-guide for a more effective dialogue with students.

Empowering the Discourse

Feminist discourse can help us evaluate the current conversation and provide guides as to how we should communicate. Feminist discourse can specifically instruct Oklahoma educators and administrators about their own dialogue. Taking the tenets of feminist discourse, this study suggests how Oklahoma community colleges can remedy its current dialogue.

- All participants have a right to participate and should be self-disciplined, strategic actors;

The data reflects: Oklahoma educational agencies and institutions are functioning in a bureaucratic, hierarchical system, and decisions are made from the top level. Most actions are initiated at the state and the institutions strive to perform those actions. *Brain Gain 2010* put in place a variety of demands on Oklahoma institutions. The two most influential demands were the increase of college graduate numbers and the development of the state's workforce. The data reflects that community colleges are working toward meeting these demands.

Whereas the study suggests that institutions answer to the state, I wonder if anyone converses with faculty and students. Community colleges and state agencies should allow the voices of all participants to become involved in the direction of higher education. Community college educators should build a strong alliance with one another to guide the direction of their missions. The Oklahoma two-year system needs an organized voice, one that will speak the needs of faculty and students with decision makers.

Educators from various types of programs should verbalize the importance of their fields and students should be aware of the contributions made by the various types of disciplines. Whereas occupational programs appear to be represented on institutional and state-levels, those who teach general education should vocalize the significance of the liberal arts. Although difficult to measure, it is not impossible to show that students are significantly affected by general education (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

Students should also be a part of the dialogue. Although impossible to converse with students who are reading material, publications should guide

students through a series of questions that deal with educational choices. These questions should allow for a variety of answers, but should indicate that knowing what the student wants long term from his or her education can determine the what decisions should be made initially. Furthermore, students, like Muriel, first-generation students, should have a mandatory meeting with counselors or advisors—before they select an educational program. The meeting should cover a terminology and basic aspects of college life and should provide students an opportunity to discuss the possibilities and limitations of their choices.

- Competitive, dualistic talk should be avoided;

The data reflects:

The state and community colleges are currently emphasizing one type of program more than another. By supplying funding in favor of work-related programs, as prompted by the CAEL report, the state creates conflict among the disciplines. When those who teach general education do not receive financial assistance or recognition because they do not tangibly connect with business or industry, educators and students perceive that those receiving funding, occupational courses, are more valuable than the other. Feminist discourse suggests that all sides be represented. Policymakers and institutions should voice education's role in developing career *and* lifelong learning capabilities and should do so with the policies and catalogs that they compose. Granted, community colleges' claim that courses transfer as college credit and that their primary missions are to provide transferable programs rooted in general education suggest that although institutions use particular language when reporting to the state, they

do value general education and the transferability of their programs. Catalogs and the state should reflect the valuing of general education.

- No force or deception should be used to sway the audience;

The data reflects:

Oklahoma community colleges and state agencies often omit specific explanations and word program descriptions in misleading ways. The state does not admit that college degrees are not necessarily Applied Associate degrees, those degrees usually not honored by senior institutions. In their reports, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education does not separate the transferable Associate of Arts and Science degree from the Applied Science degree. The data then reported by the agency is skewed. To say that Oklahoma is increasing the number of its college graduates is not *completely* honest. When business report, as seen in the CAEL report, that it wants people who can think critically and creatively—abilities enhanced with general education, for OSRHE to report that higher education is meeting those needs by increasing the number of occupational programs is not being *completely* honest.

On the institutional level, schools compromise their messages when institutions comply with the state's emphasis on economic development by increasing the number of Applied degrees and certification programs and by wording descriptions of occupational education as a "practical one." Thus, when dialogue does not clearly depict the pathways or outcomes of particular educational programs, Oklahoma community college students may be the ones who pay the price.

Feminist discourse is built on a foundation of cooperation. Cooperation can only be achieved if all participants are a part of the conversation and are well-informed. If Oklahoma state agencies and community colleges keep information from students or if they write information to veil limitations, then students are ill-equipped to make educational decisions. The dialogue itself limits the potential choices and outcomes of students' futures.

- The dialogue should nurture but also house struggle and disagreement;

The data reflects:

Neither Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education nor community colleges discuss the limitations of their educational degrees. Whereas "no education is a wasted one," it is tricky to admit that maybe education can be waste. For if community college students, those typically from middle and lower classes, spend money on an education that does not provide what they want, then perhaps their time and money could have been better spent. The data suggests that neither OSRHE nor institutions are willing to admit that Applied Science degrees are not always perceived as college work. I wonder if they do this primarily to "save face" when there is no reason to avoid discussing the multiple objectives higher education meets. Their silence only makes their behavior questionable. Of course, there is value in education; we must be certain that it is distributed and discussed accurately and fairly. If, however, the state and schools omit or euphemize certain pieces of information, it will only make them look as if they have something hide.

Feminist discourse encourages an appreciation of complexity, complexity that arises from the dissonance that occurs in a participatory dialogue. Feminist discourse would suggest that telling students and the public that occupational programs are primarily intended for those students who have no desire to continue a four-year degree and if pursued students will most likely have to enroll as freshmen would be a more honest dialogue but one that better explains the potential of the two types of programs.

- The conversation should not be a right/wrong debate but one that acknowledges complexity and multiple perspectives;

The data reflects:

The struggle and disagreement discussed in the previous section reveal another possible explanation as to why the state and institutions are reluctant to disclose how the two types of degrees offered by Oklahoma community colleges encounter criticism. Perhaps it is not that the OSRHE and schools do not perceive difference, but that they do. Perhaps they worry about admitting that programs offer a variety of options for students. In doing so, they would have to admit that choices are complex and multiple and that students have a right to pursue a plethora of them. In a field full of data and reports and theory, perhaps to admit that community colleges attempt to fulfill a variety of educational needs would open a positivist's nightmare. To admit this, higher education would have to redefined. So, perhaps the state and community colleges are choosing to ignore the difference, veil the difference to circumvent a more complex question: What is the role of higher education?

If there is a discrepancy in Oklahoma community colleges' educational priorities and the messages they publish, we should be motivated to investigate why this occurring. Feminist discourse, however, would remind us to ask not where to cast the blame, but how best to critique and adjust the dialogue. For if done correctly, language, "specifically feminist discourse, can suggest a reformulation of some of the most central terms of political life: reason, power, community, freedom" (Braaten, 1995, p. 155). The debate then could become appeased with progression—a focus on "an inclusion of diverse needs rather than with the balancing opposing claims" (p. 159). The talk must become inclusive not exclusive. For this to occur, the messages should convey that in today's higher education, many types of students exist, learners with a variety of educational needs. When theory and practice deliver dialogue in a dualistic manner, their shortsightedness only convolutes the situation.

- People should be invited to discuss not to be controlled but so change can occur.

The data reflects:

This study and feminist discourse imply that when students are left out of the conversation, students who function with little clear information and who, because of their backgrounds, have little knowledge about college work, the talk costs them and community colleges dearly.

Morley (1999) posits that in research, scholars should guard against manipulating information, or they too are guilty of oppression. With undisclosed information, state reports and institutional documents keep Oklahoma community

college students from comprehending the complexity of the higher education experience. College should be a student's entry into opportunity, a provider of choices. Education, its policymakers, institutions, educators, students, and documents, should all work toward liberation.

Criticism Facing Feminist Discourse

The question remains, though, will institutions and the state be willing to change its dialogue, if doing so would alter the bureaucratic system it functions with? Ferguson (1984) addresses the changing of a bureaucratic system. Ferguson perceives bureaucratic capitalism as an endorser of division. She claims that bureaucratic discourse keeps "us from others without freeing us, resulting in isolation rather than autonomy; it ties us to roles and rules rather than to people, weighting us with connections that deny community" (p. 157). On the other hand, she posits, "Feminist discourse and practice entail a struggle for individual autonomy that is with others and for community that embraces diversity—that is, for an integration of the individual and the collective in an ongoing process of authentic individuation and genuine connectedness" (p. 157).

She argues that "Change emerges out of people's confrontations with the existing social arrangements; coming up against institutionalized limitations in a personal way, not simply in theory or at a distance, opens the way to resistance" (p. 29). And whereas she does hope that feminist discourse might offer an interjection into the bureaucratic language of capitalist institutions, a way of speaking that is "neither an extension of bureaucratic forms nor a mirror image of them, but rather a genuinely radical voice of opposition" (p. 29), she does admit that feminist discourse has no authentic acting power in institutions, so it must suffice to at least spark an awareness. She points out that

"Consciousness is not an object, but a process, an ongoing interaction with others, with nature, and with the world in which the individual both creates herself and is created through these connections" (p. 178). Ferguson is suggesting that change will be slow, but recognition itself can still be considered success. If this is the case, then Oklahoma community colleges' and the OSRHE's awareness of the controversy explored by this study might be enough to satisfy me.

Summary

Feminist discourse has possibly provided us with a prescription of the analysis. This study forces us to question *who* is involved and outcast from the discussion and *how* is the dialogue unfolding. Rocky conclusions float below a watery surface: Yes, the publications of Oklahoma community colleges and the state agencies indicate that higher education is becoming increasingly accountable to business needs and the economy. The public and students read that institutions value their role as workforce developer, perceive it as an objective of higher education, and, therefore, conclude that going to college means learning how to work. The inability of educators and state policymakers to recognize the complexity of the community college mission—the offering of variety types of degrees, to address the purpose and limitation of each type of degree, to disclose this information at a state and institutional level, and to tackle a redefining of higher education are compromising the reputations of community colleges.

Bureaucratic theorists offer no clear-cut understanding of what colleges should provide. Cultural reproduction theorists cannot determine the ideal curriculum or role of general education: should it be multicultural or classical? Economic reproduction

theorists argue that it is better to train a blue-collar workforce than to let workers go collarless. Human capital theorists cannot prove that education is linked to worker performance, but they do know that training a workforce costs businesses too much money. So the responsibility is shifted to community colleges despite the lack of evidence that occupational education is worthwhile to either the worker or the business.

This study suggests through the lens of feminist discourse that like Narcissus if policymakers and educators spend too much time looking into the reflective water, they will be awed by what they see and end up drowning, becoming self destructive for conclusions that are simply a mirage. Feminist discourse theory and this study asks that Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and Oklahoma community colleges rethink the controversy. The answer does not rest with more bureaucracy, but with another, a better, view of the conversation. State agencies and community colleges must engage students in the discussions about programs, clarify their dialogue about them, and acknowledge the complexities surrounding the types of degrees they offer.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study, a review of the methodology and theoretical perspectives. It also provides implications indicated by the study and gives suggestions for further research.

Summary

This study sought to explore the current emphasis of occupational and transferable education in Oklahoma community colleges as indicated by the discussion set up by their catalogs, mission statements, and philosophical statements. Because students guide their educational objectives by what they read in school catalogs and because schools establish how they should be critiqued by the public in achieving the goals and missions they establish, these publications greatly affect the public's and students' understanding of higher education, and in this case, the role of Oklahoma community colleges. Although the discussion may not be a verbal one, students still listen to the message created by these documents. Consequently, this dialogue does not originate on its own. So the study explored the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's documents as a key in understanding what institutions were being encouraged to pursue as educational and objectives and how these schools were being rewarded.

The portrayal of programs in these documents is often the initial encounter most students have when choosing a degree; therefore, their wording has the potential to influence students significantly. The way institutions write about programs will short

sight students. Schools' one-sided perspectives of programs keep schools from disclosing an accurate account of the information, thus misleading students, perhaps unintentionally limiting their choices and dis-empowering them. Additionally, the study offers two bureaucratic, theoretical perspectives as lenses to view the effects that create and result from the discussion of the types of programs offered, and it proposes a more effective way of conducting such dialogue through the procedure of feminist discourse.

Methodology

The document analysis attempts to answer the research questions of this dissertation:

- What is the current status of occupational and transferable education in Oklahoma community colleges?
- How do institutions convey to students the purpose and differences of the various types of programs they offer?
- How could state documents encourage schools to emphasize one type of program more than another?
- What do theoretical perspectives reveal about occupational and liberal arts programs within the community college?
- What do these theoretical dialogues contribute to higher education's pursuit of various programs?

To answer these questions, I divided the document analysis into two tiers, descriptive and theoretical. The first tier, descriptive involves the analysis of institutional and state documents. Three Oklahoma institutions, Tulsa Community College, Northern Oklahoma College, and Seminole State College were studied in terms of their

publications: school catalogs, mission statements, and websites. A variety of documents provided by Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education were used to portray the state's perceptions of higher education's mission.

These reports were attempts at understanding why and how institutions may be influenced by a more political, powerful level. The documents were an attempt to describe current findings in community colleges and an attempt to identify a political, language that manifests in the higher educational system. To do so, the study used printed discourse to reveal the current dialogue concerning the direction of Oklahoma community colleges. The institutional analysis was an attempt not to provide what institutions believe they promote, but what students and the public actually encounter in print. An analysis of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education helped examine if schools adapted their mission statements and catalogs to respond to the demands set forth by the organization. Additionally, the documents suggest what the State Regents' objectives were and the stakeholders to whom they responded.

Data Collection

I gathered documents at the institutional level primarily to answer this study's research questions. Contacting schools and requesting information, digging through libraries for institutional histories, logging onto websites, I was able to retrieve most of the publications. After I collected them, I turned by attention to the research questions and how the documents might answer them. For example, school catalogs were examined to understand how schools were currently emphasizing occupational and transferable programs and to determine the current status of each. How the schools perceive their histories contributed to this analysis and the determination if institutions

were attempting to change their identities and emphasis of programs. To determine how institutions conveyed to students their educational objectives, I read information regarding the types of programs and the number of programs and how it was discussed, and I analyzed the descriptions of each to determine if schools used misleading language. Additionally, mission statements were compared to the number of types of programs offered. In doing so, I hoped to evaluate if schools were upholding the educational priorities indicated by their missions.

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's *Institutional Profiles and Funding Needs for FY 2000* and *FY 2001, Degrees Conferred in Oklahoma Institutions and Type of Degrees, 1996* through 2000, *Student Data Report 2000-2001, Annual Employment 2000, Brain Gain 2010,* a business report, and letter were used to represent the OSRHE's part in the discussion.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the institutional catalogs, websites, and various reports suggests that institutions and Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education are caught in a language game. The analysis also suggests that local institutions word their publications to fit the needs prescribed by the state; the state is working toward meeting the needs prescribed by industry and business. In turn, students and the public read these materials and then interpret the missions, philosophies, and values of community colleges based on what they read. But, the data suggests that these messages are misleading. For example, local institutions may promote their occupational programs as a practical education aimed at getting students a job, but they do not disclose that businesses want workers who have strong foundations in general education and pay more to workers who acquire bachelor

degrees. Nor do they reveal the transferability difficulties of their terminal programs. Instead, some record that special articulation agreements have been made with regional institutions, and others explain that all hours of terminal degrees will transfer as electives to state institutions. But these schools do not inform readers of the limitations of these special arrangements and of the differences between the types of degrees.

Furthermore, schools appear to be unclear about their objectives or the current data. Institutions still maintain that transferring degrees are their primary priorities, but have increased their number of certification and Applied Science programs. Additionally, when reporting data to the state, schools do not distinguish or seek to distinguish the differences between Associate of Arts and Science degrees and Applied Science degrees. They indicate that they perceive no difference, when in most cases the latter will not be accepted as college work at senior institutions. Therefore, when students consider that the main difference between these two types of degrees is the minimal requirement of general education, they interpret the schools' message that general education is not necessary for college work and that it is a waste of their time.

Schools do not want to emphasize the difference to the state because of the almost certain outcomes: the state could increase the number of general education and core requirements, making them comparable to the required hours of transferable degrees, thus changing the current makeup of community colleges. Oklahoma is encountering the redefinition of its community college and career technology centers. The current governor Keating would like to see career technology centers become community colleges since both appear to offer the same types of programs. If the state increased the required number of general education hours, community colleges would surely lose or

have to modify their Applied Associate degrees. Another outcome, possibly influenced by the increased number of general education requirements, could be occupational programs would diminish in enrollment numbers. Finally, if the state divided Applied and Arts and Science degrees, then businesses and students may begin to perceive a difference in the two. If this were the case, then the state and institutions may be have to redefine what is the role of higher education, a change they may be reluctant to face. Applied degrees may then be perceived as something other than a degree. Consequently, college graduate numbers would decrease and the state would be stuck with the very issue it is fighting with *Brain Gain 2010* and its objective for the state to produce more graduates.

Theoretical Lenses

The bureaucratic theoretical lenses attempted to answer questions posed by this project:

- What do the rising numbers of occupational programs suggest about the direction of Oklahoma community colleges?
- Why are general education requirements diminishing?
- What is the role of general education?
- Are schools no longer valuing general education?
- Is higher education directly linked to the economy?
- Does a trained workforce guarantee a productive one?

Bureaucratic Theory

Although the term, bureaucratic may be disputed among scholars, this study has attempted to illustrate that reproduction and human capital theories offer limited

conclusions about the role of occupational training in higher education. In fact, I used these two perspectives to show that the discussion of what should take place in higher education have become bogged down by politics and that little conclusive understanding was possible from these particular theories. Theorists contradicted one another, and what many educators could use to support their views was contradicted by another; therefore, the theories do not uphold one interpretation of what higher education should offer. These theories emerged as prattle, entangled in the bureaucracy they intended to guide.

Analysis

The conflict among reproduction theorists makes adversaries of them. For those advocates of general education, the debate becomes, "What should general education provide students?" The question erupts into dissension and thus the role of general education and its defending voice become an entangled Sargasso Sea, and no clear understanding or appreciation for general education emerges. Because of the proliferation of occupation programs, general education requirements are diminishing. Any future appreciation for general education and the liberal arts appears bleak. As for the role of occupational education within higher education, theorists cannot agree either. Many of them claim that such programs keep working-class students in the working class, and others argue that to have some training is better than none at all.

As for human capital theory, a dubious debate about the relationship between education and worker performance, no conclusion can be made. Because of the complexity of the market and labor force, no one can prove that the two are decisively linked. However, the documents of institutions and the state prove that policymakers and educators believe that a higher education makes one a better worker, one claim, one

voice, that places value on higher education. But this belief is built on a foundation of quicksand. Bureaucratic theories offer no clear understanding or touchstone for policymakers and educators. Instead, these theories become bogged in a mire of "we-say"-"they-say"; the discussion is built upon divided camps that refuse to concede on any point. And Oklahoma community colleges flail with little sense of the right course of direction.

Feminist Discourse

I present feminist discourse as a way to synthesize the descriptive and theoretical analysis, a synthesis of the analysis. The procedure of feminist discourse attempts to modify the way bureaucracies talk about the issues. Because, feminists argue, institutions are embedded within the structures they hope to reform and because they face losing political ground if they do strive for change, audiences are often manipulated and oppressed by the language used by the dominant forces—including the institutions themselves.

To follow the guides of feminist discourse, Oklahoma policymakers and educators would have to change their methods of conversation. Instead of arguing what is the right education to provide students, the concern should become, "How can we give equal billing to all types of programs? And, how do we reveal all of the necessary information to students and the public?" For this to occur, general education advocates would have to find their voice and begin emphasizing the need and value of strong foundation in the liberal arts. These points would have to be published and known by decision makers—at both institutional and state levels. Next, when institutions write about the types of programs offered to students, a clear distinction between what Applied

or terminal degrees offer students and how they limit them. Furthermore, transferable degrees should be noted as a gateway to senior institutions. Additionally, when state agencies, namely in this study, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, determine objectives for its institutions, they should consider the long-term effects of education, not work only for a short-term fix—more college graduates. The state should become aware and be clear with others about the differences between terminal and transferable degrees in the community college and the difference between a two-year and a four-year degree. Feminist discourse should guide all in a better way of communicating the rewards and limitations of educational programs, information that must be shared and clear to everyone.

Implications of Study

This study has demonstrated that a mixed message about educational programs in Oklahoma community college exists and that schools are possibly publishing such messages in attempts to meet state policymakers' requests. Although this study did not investigate if such messages were detrimental to students' potential, the power of discourse does suggest that such publications will have an impact on the policymaking, the missions of Oklahoma community colleges, and the public's and students' valuing of higher education. To be certain that education is valued fairly, the messages must be accurate. This study implicates several changes. Oklahoma community colleges and state agencies should change their discourse. An appreciation for general education should be revisited. Community colleges and the State Regents should specifically change their discourse about educational programs. This study also suggests that stakeholders should change their roles, responsibilities, and dialogue among one another.

Changing of Discourse

Acknowledging that Oklahoma's two-year system of degree confirmation is complex is a must when discussing the types of educational programs it offers. Accordingly, documents should reflect the difference between the types of degrees and senior institutions' treatment of these programs. State policymakers and community college educators should publish and detail these differences. Furthermore, they should acknowledge the benefits and limitations of pursuing one and not the other.

If students are not advised and are personally unsure about their future educational objectives, then the degrees they pursue should have college merit—just in case students should choose to continue at a senior institution. But most importantly, students should be informed of the difference in degrees. They should be informed through clear published discourse. If they are aware of the future potential and limitations of degrees and if schools are upfront about this information, then students will be empowered by their choices in higher education. And as predicted about most freshmen, if they do not know what they want to pursue educationally, then perhaps Applied Associate degrees should have an increase in the number of general education requirements to improve transferability to alleviate any complications of unforeseen future decisions.

Appreciation for General Education

The core objectives of general education: critical thinking, creative problem solving, effective communication, global awareness and tolerance, should be discussed among business, policymakers, administrators, educators, and students. General education must be recognized as an integral part of any student's and society's educational

objectives. All parties should come to realize that encountering a well-balanced education makes them more fit for work and life—and holders of a degree more likely to transfer as college credit. Perhaps a continued effort in integrating approaches in the occupational and general education classrooms could strengthen students' opportunities. Perhaps efforts to bring together business and education, such as Oklahoma Business and Education Coalition's in the K-12 system and the nationally organized Tech Prep, could improve their dialogue, substantiating the blend of occupational and general education.

As *Brain Gain 2010* mentions communities and students need to be informed about college. Students should be invited within the discourse. And when designing and promoting programs, institutions should not motivate its actions by the needs of businesses but also by the educational objectives of students who may choose to continue learning at a senior university. College work should be a liberating and not a limiting experience.

Discourse of Educational Programs

Oklahoma community colleges, state-level governing bodies, four-year institutions, educators at all levels, and students need to disclose the values of general *and* practical education, design programs that exemplify the pursuit of an effective education, and then consult with external stakeholders so that the schools are first clear as to their own objectives before meeting the needs of others. Then, state and local institutions should carefully word documents that promote a valuing of each type of program, should discuss the limitations of pursuing one over the other, and should distinguish the difference between them—in statistical reports and in public relations documents.

Information should not be privy or misleading; it should be open and shared. Pursuing an identity without a clear sense of what one is chasing is detrimental to the pursuit.

State records should distinguish the differences between Associate of Applied Science degrees and Associate of Arts and Science degrees. The state should distinguish the difference of numbers of students who pursue and complete work-related programs and those who secure what is generally accepted as the first two years of college work.

Businesses and educators want students who have a strong foundation in general education—regardless if for the betterment of the economy or for the strengthening of personal lives. The impetus of education is a strong foundation in curriculum that teaches effective communication, creative problem solving, critical thinking skills, and emphasizes an awareness and understanding of diverse cultures. Aspects that complicate the goals of education are perceptions, perceptions that students can obtain general education in a short amount of time and that awarding degrees is an indicator that students have mastered a fundamental base in general education. Furthermore, the perception that general education can be compromised so that students can have more practical classes propels the changing philosophies of community colleges. These aspects detract from the academic standards of and delineate students' choices and empowerment when community colleges perceive that terminal degrees can require a limited number of general education courses.

Changes for Stakeholders

The implications for stakeholders are multifold. These implications require the active, participatory reactions of state policymakers, business, community college administrators, faculty, and students.

State Policymakers

First, policymakers should begin to examine what they value about higher education and acknowledge that by equating education with economic progression, they may be crediting and blaming higher education for something that is far more complex than institutions' effectiveness in teaching students how to work. Furthermore, if confusion results from the mixed semantics of what a college degree is, then policymakers should draw distinct differences between a transferable associate degree and that which is more occupationally focused. In making these distinctions, perhaps students will know what they are choosing. In addition, business may then be able to anticipate the ability of its college graduates—to know how a four-year graduate may differs from a terminal degree holder. Accordingly, perhaps state organizations will then appreciate the messages that they convey to the public, business, educational institutions, and students and make these messages more compliant with the complexities of the situation and more feminist in discourse. Also, state policymakers should encourage the strengthening articulation agreements between senior and community college institutions and should encourage both to be clear about what will and will not transfer. And if community colleges seek to send their Applied Associate graduates onto four-year institutions, then they should comply with what these colleges and universities require, thus possibly increasing the number of general education requirements in Applied degrees. As noted by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), the continued failure of policymakers to "acknowledge that two-year and four-year colleges do not lead to the same set of educational and economic outcomes and failure to act on this recognition will mean that unequal educational opportunity will continue" (p. 642). Even then, if senior

institutions do not view Applied degrees as college work, then state policymakers should consider renaming these programs something other than degrees and stop reporting them in research as such.

Business

Business should continue to voice its need for critical thinking and creative workers. An educated workforce is not defined as a trained one, and business should embrace and uphold this difference. The need of workforce development, business should recognize, does not fall onto the already weary and financially drained shoulders of higher education. Educators and business should work together first to educate students and then later to train them. And then, educators and business are accountable for communicating these needs to potential students and workers.

Community College Administrators

Community college administrators should revisit their missions. Is the mission of the Oklahoma community college becoming more like those of career-technology centers? Is the community college's future in the area of workforce development? If determined so, then community colleges are responsible for realigning their missions and then communicating its mission clearly. Furthermore, if community colleges wish to pursue their historical multiple mission, then they are ultimately responsible for communicating the differences between the types of programs clearly. And, institutions should give equal billing to both and all types of programs. Students must be involved in the conversation.

Community college administrators, to minimize the confusion surrounding Associate and Applied degrees, have several options: First, they could change the names

of the Applied degree to Certificate of Applied Science and reward certificates and not degrees. Second, they could increase the number of general education requirements in Applied Science areas to stress the importance of a liberal arts educational background, thus making the programs more desirable by four-year institutions. Third, schools should publish material about the degrees in an objective manner. Terminal degrees should be accompanied by clear explanations as to the results of these types of programs and the possible difficulties of transferring such degrees. Additionally, institutions should note that Associate of Arts and Science degrees are more beneficial when completed with the pursuit of a baccalaureate. Also, institutions in alliance with state policymakers and business should promote research in these areas to detect if community college students who pursue occupational programs are guaranteed jobs, perform better at work, wish later to acquire four-year degrees, or if later do their educational program choices support claims that occupational training has been a way of creating a trained workforce for the upper and middle classes.

Oklahoma community colleges must also be held responsible and must admit their responsibility in communicating an accurate description of the types of programs they offer. And even when reporting to the state, institutions must be careful of falling into a semantic language game with state policymakers. Schools must recognize their expertise and voice what must be valued about higher education, without giving preference to one type of program over another. Administrators must acknowledge that research and criticism do exist and that institutions should work more toward a consensual, informed partnership with all stakeholders—and be willing, above all, to sponsor an effective dialogue.

Faculty

Community college instructors, those in the Applied and transferable programs, must become involved in the dialogue. For institutions and state organizations to determine what is important in education is casting away instructors' expertise and their participation in the dialogue. Teachers should communicate with students, administrators, policymakers, and business the importance of higher education. To do so accurately, educators must embrace the importance of various types of programs, must join forces, and must recognize the complexities of students' and Oklahoma's educational needs. This will require Oklahoma community college instructors to research, study, publish, and become politically active. Instructors must initiative state voice and political power through a statewide community college organization.

Community College Students

A bit more problematic than the others, students must find a way to uncover the mysteries of higher education. As difficult as it is to admit, students have an obligation to take care of themselves. They must learn to become resourceful; they must seek information before they recognize the need for it. Another words, students must investigate to find out what type of education they want and how they want their education to work for them, difficult questions when most do not even know what declare as their majors. This is why the dialogue of policymakers, administrators, business, and faculty is quintessential. Students must be guided into asking the right questions, a guide free of bias. Furthermore, students should not be rushed into choosing an educational major. Only after perusal of published information, conversations with various types of

instructors, and personal reflection should institutions expect students to determine what degree they want to pursue. But again, the discourse must be accurate.

Reflection about Implications

What I want is both simple and naive. I want people to play fairly. I want them to be inquisitive and cooperative. I want them to disclose information that may affect the choices of students. If schools are keeping information from students, they should stop. Schools should reveal the potential of programs, to be clear to all involved about the outcomes of particular academic endeavors. Simple, right? Change is never an easy task as Mazzoni (1991) explains: "in arenas, people, interests, and ideals contend for agenda status and policy preference" (p. 118). For educational change to take place, several competing groups with strong biases must come together at the right time to create and initiate viable change. They must stretch beyond their bureaucracies and envision something new. Education reformers need political power, awareness of the issues, patterns, and complexities, a sense of good timing, and most importantly, they need the ability to converse. Policy, programs, and discourse must be even-handed.

Although most critics recognize that feminist discourse theory is used as a critical tool, feminist discourse procedure can be used to reform current conversations. To pursue practical first steps toward a solution, Oklahoma stakeholders should participate in business/educational efforts and the organizations should allow a cooperative, participatory dialogue. Becoming involved in state affairs, re-organizing and substantiating the voice of OACC, Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges, encouraging dialogue between occupational and general education students and faculty across campuses by establishing cooperative boards on campuses to discuss the

transferability and educational objectives of these programs, changing the language of institutional publications, and sending messages to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education not to lose sight of the importance of general education and the transferring functions of community colleges are strong and achievable initial efforts.

Future Research

So much about this study is being left unsaid. Instead, working in the vein of feminist discourse, this study is arriving at a more complex array of questions than one definable answer. Therefore, a plethora of future research emerges:

- Determine if students report that educational choices in community colleges were well-informed, counseled, and explained and if and how they were influenced in their decision making
- Compare the effects of transferable and terminal degrees on students' futures
- Continue to explore the role of general education and how and if it contributes to student success
- Examine if general education offered in two-year schools differs from four-year institutions
- Create dialogue among general education advocates to determine an effective curriculum and to establish a strong voice
- Investigate if students can obtain this foundation in the general education in a compressed amount of time

- Examine if businesses are indeed "getting what they want" from workers who have degrees or certifications in programs that have only eighteen hours of general education
- Determine if students with terminal degrees later return for four-year degrees
- Continued research to determine how higher education affects students' lives
- Question how community colleges assign the writing of their publications
- Evaluate and Pursue alternative courses that fuse occupation and general education

By no means is this an exhaustive list. But as this study has demonstrated, many questions and concerns exist regarding the role of community colleges, their educational missions, their rationales for providing the programs they do, how their instruction and courses differ from senior institutions, and how their system affects the potential of students. And most importantly, as discussed by this study, community colleges have a distinct responsibility in the ways in which it envisions and communicates educational options, so we continue to wonder are schools conscious of how they discuss these options.

Summary

In this study, I hoped to present a fair account of the current situation of occupational and general education in Oklahoma community colleges. It was my intention not to side with one form of education over another. If I have failed, then I, too, have slipped into the same bureaucratic dialogue I had hoped to reveal, and for this, I

apologize. If the reader has managed to muddle through my discourse and arrive at an awareness of what schools say about themselves and how these messages promote the public's perception and understanding of higher education, then the study is somewhat successful. If my audience is now aware of the snowball effect of dialogue—that discourse is often a political maneuver to appease those in power, that others then prescribe values to what we do by what we have said, and that our conversations shape the ideal identities we ourselves then begin to pursue, again the study has been successful. And if my reader now knows that the manipulative power of discourse can cause others and us to lose sight of what we truly value and uphold, then the reader may now be aware that language can be used to distort the meaning of community, freedom, and education.

As a teacher of literature and composition, I know the empowering capability of writing, but I have also seen it take away and represent the loss of one's potential. I hope my reader and educators are now aware that when schools present educational objectives to the public in written form, they project, often unconsciously, how they want to be identified and valued. Therefore, I want institutions and the state to question if they are then prepared to pursue the identity that they have established for themselves. And to be careful.

The verbose, tragic hero, Willy Loman may have shouted the necessity of acquiring the American Dream and his belief that he and his boys would one day have it, but he was nothing more than a silenced someone who bought into a lie, the language of a capitalistic society that made money omnipotent and workers expendable. In the end, Willy Loman knew that talk was cheap. Yes, jobs are important, but his being a

salesman was came up short. Success, Willy realized near the end of his life, came in the form of respect, honesty, and remembrance.

Oklahoma community colleges should be wary of buying into what the state wants of them. They should be responsible for the Muriels in their institutions and avoid becoming Willy Lomans. Schools should be respectful of students who do not understand collegiate talk, should be honest with these students, disclosing information that could affect their choices, and should remember that their language does shape their educational missions and not forget that their primary goal should open doors for America's masses. And we should all note: Talk may be cheap, but it can become costly.

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APPENDIX

Institutional Documents

The following provides how to obtain documents from the institutions covered by this study.

Tulsa Community College

Mailing Address: Metro Campus

909 S. Boston Avenue

Tulsa, OK 74119-2095

Web Address: www.tulsa.cc.ok.us

Documents used:

School catalog, *Tulsa Community College, 2001-2002 Catalog.*

Various documents, program requirements, descriptions of, etc. taken from website

Northern Oklahoma College

Mailing Address: Northern Oklahoma College

P. O. Box 310

Tonkawa, OK 74653-0310

Web Address: www.north-ok.edu

Documents used:

Bradley, M. H. (1976). *From UPS to NOC.* Tonkawa, OK: Northern Oklahoma College Printing Department.

Bradley, M. H. (2001). *Northern Oklahoma college: 100 years of excellence.*

School Catalog: *Northern Oklahoma College, Catalog 2001-2002* (manuscript form, published version not printed yet)

Mission Statement sign

Various documents from the website

Seminole State College

Mailing Address: 2701 Boren Boulevard

Seminole, Oklahoma 74868

Web Address: www.ssc.cc.ok.us

Documents used:

School Catalog: *Seminole State College, 1999-2002 Catalog*

Website—not too helpful for this study

State Documents

The following provides how to contact the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education so that documents might be obtained from it.

Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

Mailing address: 655 Research parkway, Ste. 200

Oklahoma City, OK 873104

Web address: www.okhighered.org

Documents used:

Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. (1998, February). *Student data report, 1996-97.* Oklahoma City, OK: Publications Clearinghouse for Higher Education.

OSHRE. (1999, January). *Brain Gain 2010.* Oklahoma City, OK: Publications Clearinghouse for Higher Education.

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OSRHE. (2002). *2001 annual report: Oklahoma state regents for higher education.* Oklahoma City, OK: Publications Clearinghouse for Higher Education.

OSHRE. (2002). Letter sent to institutions' presidents

What follows is a description of the documents enlisted in this study:

Institutional Profiles and Funding Needs for FY. This report is published by OSRHE in hopes of identifying current operating costs and projecting future needs for Oklahoma colleges and universities. The report includes analyses of income and expenditures for fiscal years and provides institutional projections for future spending.

Degrees Conferred in Oklahoma Institutions, and Type of Degrees. This reports lists the numbers of degrees granted in Oklahoma public and private institutions within a particular time frame. Each institution reports the numbers to the OSRHE that, in turn, compiles the data into reports. It consists of two volumes, reports the findings for specific years, and compares these findings with previous years. The report provides a

brief executive summary and a full listing of graduating numbers within fields of studies, among minority students, two-year and four-year institutions, public and private.

Student Data Report. The Student Data Report was published for eighteen years but is no being published by OSRHE. The information is derived from student data from the Oklahoma State Regents' Unitized Data System (UDS). The report, like most used in this study, consists of tables and graphs that summarize the involvement of students in higher education, their academic interests, institutional choices, transfer patterns, and enrollment hour numbers.

Annual Employment Outcomes Report. The report uses the social security numbers of Oklahoma secondary and higher education graduates in hopes of identifying how many Oklahoma residents and non-Oklahoma residents who graduate from Oklahoma institutions remain in the state, how the level of education affects salary, and the average salary of Oklahoma graduates in relation to their degree attainment. The data is collected and reported by the OSRHE.

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By

Rhonda L. McClellan

December, 2002

VITA

Rhonda L. McClellan

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Doctor of Education

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Professional Memberships: AERA, ASHE, TYCA-SW