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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS OF CHEYENNE/ARAPAHO WOMEN  
IN RURAL OKLAHOMA

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

By

GLENDAL SMALLEY-CREACH  
Norman, Oklahoma  
1998

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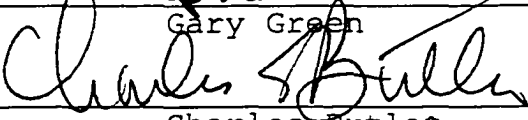
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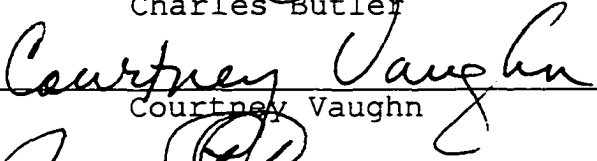
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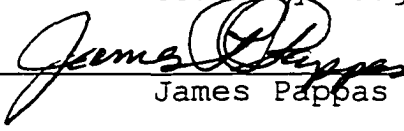
A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

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*Glenda Smalley-Creach, 1998*

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CAREER DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS OF CHEYENNE/ARAPAHO WOMEN  
IN RURAL OKLAHOMA

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The study was designed and implemented to identify Cheyenne/Arapaho women's perceptions of career direction in their lives. Many factors were considered as the women were interviewed; family structure and history, influential factors in the women's lives, traditional and religious practices, educational background, and hopes and dreams for their futures.

Twenty Cheyenne/Arapaho women, ages thirty-five to forty-five, were selected for the study. The majority of the women were interviewed in their homes. The interview schedule was flexible and non-directive and directed by the participants.

The brief histories of the women are woven within the findings of the study. Cheyenne/Arapaho women tell of the encouragers and barriers in their life journeys. The women in the study also offer suggestions for young Cheyenne/Arapaho women today.

The study suggests recommendations and strategies for career counselors and employment personnel to enhance career awareness and development for Native American women.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS OF CHEYENNE/ARAPAHO WOMEN  
IN RURAL OKLAHOMA

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Resources of talent, knowledge, and potential exist in Cheyenne/Arapaho students in rural Oklahoma. Many of these gifts remain undiscovered and therefore undeveloped. Consequently, this particular population in rural Oklahoma, remains an undeveloped resource.

As the metropolitan arenas in Oklahoma continue to add to the states economic growth, rural populations grow smaller and less productive. The rural economy, with unequal social structure, few work opportunities, and declining population, indicate the need for industrial development and an educated and trained work force. An available pool of a Native American workers is documented by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). In 1989, the bureau reported the Native American population of the state of Oklahoma as 231,120. A total of 18,475 Native Americans were unemployed and seeking work (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1989).

Segments of unemployment in rural areas are due to the lack of available employment opportunities and an

untrained work force. A population of Cheyenne/Arapaho men and women reside in these rural sectors. When opportunities are available, often Native Americans are not equipped with career readiness or training and education. The need to gain employable skills may not be a priority to some Native American families in rural areas.

#### BACKGROUND

A comprehensive tribal survey was conducted by the Cheyenne/Arapaho tribes in 1987. One portion dealt with employment. The two *least employed* groups were: 1) female householders, with no husband present and other family members living in the home, and 2) single women, with no other family members present. In both groups the unemployment rate was sixty-eight percent (Cheyenne/Arapaho tribal records, 1987).

Minorities make up a disproportionate number of Oklahoma's rural unemployed. The state unemployment rate in 1990 was reported to be 6.9% (Bureau of Census, 1992). While the state unemployment rate in 1989 was 5.6%, the total minority rate of unemployment was 10% (Oklahoma Security Commission, 1990).

Cheyenne/Arapaho tribal records, 1990, reported a population of 10,197 officially enrolled members; with

3,932 tribal members available for the work force.

Unemployment figures for the tribe were 70.6%

(Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribal Records, 1990).

The U.S. Census, 1990, reports Cheyenne/Arapaho per capita income for 1989 was \$6,012; 41% of the population was below poverty level. The census indicated that 45.4% of individuals ages five through seventeen, were living in families with incomes below the poverty level.

Unemployment affects the economic status of individuals and families. With decreased financial resources, an individual may be consumed with meeting the basic needs for subsistent living which may detract from pursuing his/her fullest vocational potential (O'Connell, 1987, p. 17).

The national median family income was \$14,000 in Native American families. This is \$6,000 less than all other American families. Approximately 40% of all Native American children are living in one-parent families. These figures impact the career development of Native American youth (Nielsen, 1991). The table in Appendix B illustrates the significance of education and income. Socioeconomic status is a strong predictor in career decision making (Herr and Cramer, 1992).

In 1991-92, there was a total of 18,944 Native American students, grades 9-12, enrolled in the public schools in Oklahoma. The dropout rate was 3.6%. The 1990-91 dropout rate in Oklahoma schools was 3.4%. The dropout rate for minority students was 1,032 for Native Americans, 963 for black students, 265 for Hispanics, and 47 for Asian students. The major reasons for students leaving school were reported as being a general dislike for school, expulsions, and low achievement or scholastic difficulty (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1992).

#### SIGNIFICANCE and SCOPE

Native American talent is an available pool of human resource for Oklahoma's work force. Various training programs, vocational/technical schools and higher education institutions are accessible and available to rural Oklahoma students. Through 1985-1990, Cheyenne/Arapaho tribal records indicate 205 persons were enrolled in area vocational/technical schools. A total of 71 enrollees were female, 34.6% (Cheyenne/Arapaho tribal records, 1990). The reported statistics indicated the need to enhance Native

American women's career development. Career education including career assessment, career decision making skills, career exploration, and knowledge of training and/or educational opportunities would be considered major interventions for the accomplishment of successful career development.

A rural school or setting in the study is defined as a school district which enrolls fewer than 2,500 students in grades K-12. The location of the school is at least 25 miles outside an urban center with a population of 50,000 or more (Stephens & Turner, 1988).

The purpose of the qualitative study is to discover career development patterns of Cheyenne/Arapaho women who spent their early childhood and attended school in rural Oklahoma. A number of variables were expected to emerge; influence of family, school, culture, and vocational readiness. *What are the world views of Native American women that affect vocational readiness and career efficacy? How do the women's internal and external perceptions influence education and career development? What similarities and/or differences exist among the women?* The answers



to these questions may or may not be revealed in the study, but the women's career journeys and views of their worlds will emerge.

The study included a small sampling of twenty (20) Cheyenne/Arapaho women, with an age range from 35 to 45 years old. Therefore the findings were tribal, age, and gender specific. The researcher makes no assumptions that women having other tribal affiliations or in other age ranges would be similar. The women had all received their early years of schooling in rural areas in Oklahoma. Women who were educated in urban and metropolitan settings would likely hold a more diverse knowledge of the world of work and tend to exhibit different career development patterns. The Oklahoma Cheyenne/Arapaho population does not live on reservations nor attend reservation schools. These factors would also be expected to influence the career development patterns of the women in the study.

#### RESEARCHER'S BACKGROUND

Twenty-three (23) years of the researcher's professional experience was in a rural school setting with the student population being, approximately, one-

third of Cheyenne/Arapaho heritage. During these years the researcher was a classroom teacher, special education teacher, and school counselor, as well as Administrative Assistant/Consultant to the school superintendent. Although the researcher is not of Native American heritage she and her husband, a school principal, had many opportunities to teach, work, and share friendships with Cheyenne/Arapaho families and their children. Many of the children were students in the regular classroom and special education learning lab. Regular contact was made with all of her students' families both inside and outside of the classroom setting. Sometimes there was an emergency medical need in a Native American family and the researcher and her husband would provide transportation for a child or adult to the nearest Native American health facility. There were times when Native American families would be without food or money and food would be shared with these families in order for the children to have something to eat. Even after moving to another community, the researcher has continued to stay in contact with her Native American friends, sometimes

serving as their initial advisor in a higher education setting.

The years of contact directed the researcher to develop a great interest in the career direction of the Native American population. She had observed many students dropping out of school, young women giving birth to their first child at the age of thirteen or fourteen and having little hope for further education and productive employment.

#### SUCCESSFUL CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The history of the Native American population from rural communities tells of the Indian children walking from lodgings near the river to attend school. There are success stories of Cheyenne/Arapaho men and women from the area; a decorated Navy pilot, also a tribal chief; women earning advanced degrees and serving as mentors for the tribe, and both men and women working in the rural school as teachers, aides and custodians. The closeness of ethnic and family ties has been observed throughout the years. The majority of the Cheyenne/Arapaho citizens continue to be involved in

traditional ceremonies and many have a part in directing tribal affairs.

The researcher's network for the study was developed through initial contact with Cheyenne/Arapaho families.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN

The history of Native American women, including Cheyenne/Arapaho women, is rich with culture, strength, and courage; qualities still often found in the women's present paths. The Indian woman's place in the tribe was set and unchanging. As a young woman, she was generally found by her mother's side learning the skills of the adult Indian woman. She understood that part of her role was to be subordinate to the men of the tribe; yet she maintained dignity and self-esteem and valued herself as a person; not as property. Her spiritual values and wisdom came from her grandmother. The Indian woman's task would often vary from tribe to tribe; sometimes assisting in the selection of tribal leaders, serving in the role of medicine woman, and on occasion serving as a warrior. She was aware that in her later years she would bear the title *Grandmother*, and be respected for her accomplishments and wisdom (Bennett, 1989). Through the role models that guided her growth and maturation, the Indian woman easily accepted diversity and adaptation.

## BARRIERS

The Indian women of today, as with their counterpart, non-Indian women, continue to find it necessary to adapt and change. The transition from the teepee to the rural and/or metropolitan setting finds them seeking education, training, career information, and productive directions for their lives. It is not unusual, in present family structure, for a family to be headed by a single parent; male or female. It is a concern of today's Indian women that they be economically productive, live in the mainstream of society, and yet pass on and relate the rich cultural heritage to children and grandchildren. Native American women find it challenging to maintain cultural values and traditions and at the same time function in the mainstream of modern society while often coping with stereotypical views. The Indian and non-Indian women were pioneers of the prairie (Bennett, 1989). Today they are sister-pioneers seeking productive places in a modern, diverse society.

Herring (1990) proposes that a barrier for Native American youth are career myths and irrational

attitudes about the career development process. There is minimal literature available regarding the developmental, psychological, philosophical, and career needs of non-reservation Native Americans. The majority of the research available has been conducted with reservation Native Americans (Mc Diarmid & Kleinfel, 1986; Epperson & Hammon, 1981; Gade, Fuqua, & Hurlburt, 1984). Consequently, these findings may not be congruent to non-reservation Native American women.

Previous efforts in education and training have not provided strong indicators of success for rural Native American women. National statistical information, 1989, indicates that Native Americans currently graduate from institutions of higher education at a rate of nine (9)14 percent higher than 1970. Yet enrollment in higher education has remained constant since 1976. Only one of twelve American Indians enrolled in college graduates in four years (Applegate & Hennigher (1989). An increase in the rate of graduation is promising, but college participation and completion remains a need.

Another barrier suggested is the continuation of Native American stereotypes. Many negative images are portrayed by the media and educational systems

sometimes tend to stereotype students (Herring, 1990). The researcher observes that the portrayal of the savage, inebriated Indian continues in the minds of many citizens in the state of Oklahoma.

A third barrier Herring (1990) mentions is that many Native American youth do not possess broad career awareness and little understanding of the educational requirements and necessary job skills to be productive in the world of work. They may also receive less assistance and counseling at an early age and when making job choices and career decisions (Richmond, Johnson, Downs, and Ellinghaus, 1983).

When achievement expectations are present, and academic success is accomplished; successful career paths are more likely. The drop-out rate of Native American students in Oklahoma does not indicate successful career education and development. Even when success is present, little reinforcement for continuation of achievement is observed (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1992). Career decision making and career direction, to fulfill educational goals, is somewhat elusive in many Native American women's experiences.



Based on experience and observation, possible negative influences are school culture, and minimal expectations of parents and educators. A higher than expected portion of Native American students may be found in *special needs* programs in public schools. Lower achievement test scores are evident in some Cheyenne/Arapaho rural student populations (personal experience). Inconsistent school attendance or frequent re-location of families rather than below-normal intelligence or specific learning difficulties may be factors when low achievement scores and placement in programs of a remedial nature. The students in special needs programs have relatively brief encounters and interactions with mainstreamed or gifted/talented students. Minimal possibilities exist to develop academic, educational, and career goals when the student is not experiencing continuity in school attendance. Expectations of achievement in the classroom and extracurricular activities, which include Native American traditions, may not often be part of many Native American student's school experience (data

from informal personal interview with Native American colleague, 1994).

When Native American students achieve academic success; some experience ridicule and are rejected by their peers. A remembered experience, by the researcher, relates to a Native American, junior high school student. She earned academic achievement and was in the National Honor Society; the upper ten percent of the junior high school. The names of the National Honor Society students were posted. Upon viewing the list, the young Native American girl went to her home and did not attend school for a week. When inquiry was made about her absence, she told the principal that she did not want to come to school because her friends were, "making fun of her". Minimal possibilities exist to develop academic, educational, and career goals when the student is not experiencing continuity in school attendance. This is not an isolated incident in rural schools. The question of many Native American students is, "Where do I fit?". It is difficult to integrate culture, self-efficacy, academic and career success when also searching for

self-identity. Students will generally fall behind when inconsistent patterns of attendance and negative peer pressure occur.

Erratic school attendance of student tends to lower student expectations of educators. "What can you expect; he/she rarely attends school!"; a remark spoken by some educators. Students rarely surpass *other imposed* expectations. Lowered expectations of parents, teachers, and communities tend to direct students' paths to lower academic achievement. The statement is reinforced in available literature such as the story of Tavon; a young boy who had few self or teacher expectations for academic success (Madden, Slavin, Kareweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1991).

Smith (1983) reviewed several studies that support the idea that racial and ethnic minorities, particularly Black Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans, have less occupational information than majority Americans. When youth and adults are not provided opportunities to explore career directions; they are limited in their career choices.

Otto(1996) administered a career survey to 7,000 young men and women when they were juniors in high school. A follow-up survey with the same individuals, when thirty years old, asked what would have helped them, as young people, prepare for the future. Two-thirds of those surveyed cited difficulty in establishing first careers and lack of career preparation. A later study, with juniors in a North Carolina high school, asked; "As you think ahead to the future, what is your biggest concern?".

Seventy-four percent expressed concerns about their careers--figuring out what to do, finding a job, worrying about money for college, being uncertain about the line of work they hoped to follow, being uneasy about what to do with their lives (Otto, 1996, p.2).

The same concerns indicated from Otto's study are concerns of today's student, regardless of race or gender.

Literature suggest that the average minority student displays differences from the average non-Native American, middle-class student. These differences are seen in background experiences, values and orientations (William's, 1979). Because of these

differences, the minority student may not be aware of available careers or of necessary skills for employment in various career areas (Burris, 1983).

Poverty and prolonged unemployment, combined with substandard housing, malnutrition, inadequate health care, shortened life expectancy, and high suicide rates, target the rural Native American population. These factors affect and limit opportunities for educational attainment and employment. The average formal education of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, 25 years and older, is reported as 9.6 years as contrasted to the national mean of 10.9 years. Native Americans have the lowest educational mean of any major ethnic group in the United States (Brod & McQuiston, 1983). Price 1981, reported nearly one-third of all American Indian adults are classified as illiterate, and only one in five men has a high school education.

Parental influence and involvement would seem to be a factor in adolescent attitudes, perceptions and behaviors. These factors are related to career development and success. Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller

(1995) conducted a study reporting how parental involvement in high school students' education and career development appears to be related to academic achievement, behavior and attitudes. It was reported that home based parental involvement was positively correlated to grades, whereas school-type involvement was not. Hickman and colleagues quantified home-based involvement through assessing levels of parent's participation in student's homework, class selection and college or work plans. They found parent's involvement to be related to gender, with parents being more involved with female teens. They also reported little relationship between involvement and socioeconomic status. (Hickman, Greenwood, & Miller, 1995).

Socioeconomic and employment status, parental school involvement, single parent families, and lack of career information and direction, in rural Native American families, are barriers to present and future attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of children's future career choices. Managing finances, living

arrangements and maintaining basic survival tasks can also be barriers to parental involvement.

#### WOMEN, MINORITIES AND WORK

Neff's (1985) statement emphasizes the need for further research and continued investigation into the area of career development for women and minorities.

As is the case of women, a major phenomenon of the present decade is the strength and power of the struggle by minorities to achieve full access to the work opportunity structure. Like the women's movements, the minority movements have won some measure of public recognition and governmental support, but there is a long way to go. Both movements face entrenched social barriers that reflect strongly held biases and stereotypes. Both groups contend with the widespread popular belief that they are physically or mentally inferior to their more successful competitors (Neff, 1985, p. 280).

The National Career Development Association (NCDA), collaborated with the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC), in commissioning the Gallup organization to conduct a national survey and focus on the career preparations of adults, aged 18 and older (Hoyt & Lester, 1995). Gender equity, in American society, has long been a concern of NOICC;

1. Almost all occupational tasks today can be performed by both women and by men.
2. Most of today's K-12 pupils--both male and female--are expected to participate actively in the occupational society as adults.
3. The presence of the dual career/occupation family is rapidly becoming an important part of American society is a challenge to career development professionals.
4. The presence of sexism in America's occupational society has drastically hindered the career development of many women. It must be eliminated.
5. Equity, not just equality, of career development opportunities should be provided to all persons--women as well as men (Hoyt & Lester, 1995, p. 55).

Socioeconomic status, lack of availability of role models, parental influence, lack of career information, gender and ethnicity barriers often stand in the way of Native American women achieving meaningful and productive career status. The struggle continues for young minority women to find their place in the world of work.

#### CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORIES

Research demonstrates that traditional career theorists such as Holland, Super, and Roe did not include gender or ethnicity in their analyses (June &



Pringle, 1977). Traditional career development theories have been mapped around research conducted with Caucasian, middle-class males. The traditional career development theories are divided into two major classes; structural and developmental.

The structural theories focus on individual characteristics and differences among and between person. Parson's 1909, Trait and Factor theory stated that the best way to choose a vocation was to know one's self and the world of work and then make a connection between the two sets of knowledge:

First, a clear understanding of yourself; aptitudes, abilities, interests, resources, limitations, and other qualities.

Second, a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensations, opportunities, and prospects in different lines work.

Third, true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts (Parsons, 1909, p.5).

Parsons offered a conceptual framework for career development; which in many instances is currently utilized in career selection. The Trait and Factor theory assumes that individual and job traits can be matched, and that close matches are positively correlated with job success and satisfaction. The

theory assumes that an individual possesses the self-knowledge and occupational information to reach a career decision. Parsons did not address cultural or gender context of the individual.

John Holland's (1966, 1973 & 1985) theory of Vocational Personalities and Environments suggests that people's occupations are extensions of their personalities. Holland's theory is categorized into six personality and work environments; Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional. Holland proposed that people can function and develop best and find job satisfaction in work environments that are compatible with their personalities. Two widely used career assessment instruments, the *Self-Directed Search(SDS)* and *DISCOVER*, a computerized career decision making inventory, were both developed from Holland's theory. The SDS, for many years, was the career assessment instrument utilized by the Oklahoma Employment Services. The SDS instrument was questioned concerning possible gender bias. The employment service no longer

uses the SDS instrument, but the *DISCOVER* program is utilized in many higher education institutions.

The socioeconomic theories provided by sociologists and economists, offer detailed explanations and descriptions of how one's culture, family background, social and economic conditions and other factors outside an individual's control, strongly influence one's identity, values, and overall human and career development. This approach also suggests that many persons follow the path of least resistance in the career development process by falling into whatever work opportunities that happen to come their way.

The developmental career theories focus on interpersonal differences across the entire life span of an individual. Donald Super's (1957) early career theory gives attention to the interrelatedness among and between life stages and life roles, such as child, spouse and parent. Super (1963) later suggested the life stages as being; Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Decline. Within each of the stages are tasks relative to career development stages. Super (1957) however, did address career

development patterns of women. The categories he suggested were: 1) Stable homemaking; 2) Unconventional; 3) Stable working; 4) Double track; 5) Interrupted; 6) Unstable; and 7) Multiple trial. Conflicts between homemaking and career concerns remain a challenge to be dealt with by today's women (Farmer, 1971, Matthews & Tiedeman, 1964).

According to Sanguliano (1978) forming a self-identity is one of the fundamental differences between the developmental patterns of men and women. The formulation of women's self identity is significantly delayed due to conflicting expectations of feminine and masculine identities. Spencer (1982) contended that feminine developmental tasks are unlike masculine tasks and that women follow unique patterns of development. She also contended that separating from the parental home is more difficult for young women than young men. Women often receive less encouragement and experience less social pressure to become independent. Women's difficulty with career decision making is closely associated with role confusion, the lack of role models and support systems.

Krumboltz's (1984) Social Learning Theory is also considered to be developmental. The theory posits that career decision and development are based on social learning, or environmental conditions and events, genetic influences and learning experiences. Certain behaviors are modeled, rewarded and reinforced (Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1979).

A third type of developmental theory is appropriately labeled Decision Making theories. These theories suggest that there are critical points in person's lives, when choices that are made, influence the direction of career development. The Decision Making theories also contend that lack of information and awareness of choice possibilities can restrict the kind of choices and consequently career direction.

Herr and Cramer (1992) submit that career development theory is, as yet, relatively fragmented and incomplete, particularly when addressing women and the socially and economically disadvantaged members of society. Osipow 1983, observed that;

...few special explanations or concepts  
have been devised to deal with the special  
problems of the career development of women  
...most of the masculine-based tests and

theories fail to provide a useful vehicle for understanding of career development of women (p. 187).

Inadequate research has been conducted that attempts to identify factors and document how male and female career behaviors differ (Gilligan, 1983). Previous studies have not looked at unique influences of each, the effects of stereotyping, organizational discrimination, and socialization and the effects on male and female career development. Gilligan suggests that previous research has not resulted in theoretical conceptualization necessary to guide future research and intervention.

The emergence of such work by Sue (1987a, 1987b, 1981a, 1981b, and 1982); Astin (1984); and Atkinson, (1983), et. al.) offered data from minority and gender related studies. Atkinson, Morton and Sue (1993) present a model of Minority Identity Development (MID), (Appendix D). The model includes five constructs of minority identity and the progression through the stages. The model begins with the aspect that minority individuals prefer the cultural values of the majority culture over their own. Stage five, the final stage,

represents the individual as they resolve conflicts of his/her minority culture in relation to the majority culture. The recurrent theme of the model is one of oppression and working through the stages to finally view his/herself as an individual in society, comfortable with their identity and heritage.

Astin's (1984) work focuses on gender differences in career development. Astin has attempted to move toward a theory of career development that encompasses the possibility of gender differences in degree rather than kind. Her model includes four constructs dealing with; 1) motivation, 2) sex role socialization, 3) structure of opportunity, and 4) work expectation. Astin's model has drawn criticism because of the suggestion that it is a fully developed theory. Critics do not view her model in this manner.

A research study conducted by C.C. Lee (1984) would lend itself to careful thought in view of the current study. Lee surveyed over 500 tenth-grade students in the Southeast. The group included Black, Native American and Caucasian males and females. The participants used the Career Maturity Inventory and the

Tennessee Self-Concept Inventory. Findings indicated there may be differences between Native Americans and the majority culture, but also there may be differences between Native American's career needs and those of other minorities. In addition, the study found that minority parents appeared to have a greater impact on the career choices of their children than did Caucasian parents.

The development of most career theories has historically been concerned with; ways to understand the interdependence of decisions, risk-taking behavior, time perspectives, and the interaction of personal self-referants and choice strategies (Herr & Cramer, 1992). The developmental career theories are process oriented and address the self-concept of individuals and the longitudinal involvement of careers. Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma 1951, provide interdisciplinary perspectives as an economist, psychiatrist, sociologist and psychologist.

Occupational choice is a developmental process; it is not a single decision, but a series of decisions made over a period of years. Each step in the process has a meaningful relation to those which precede and follow it (Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad,



and Herma, 1951, p. 185).

Ginzberg and colleagues (1951) suggested that career development is influenced by the early life of the child and that future developmental patterns accumulate and build as individuals become more reality oriented throughout the life span. Ginzberg's group initially suggested that by the age of twenty, career decisions are imbedded within the life process. However, further research conducted provided a reformulation of the theory;

Occupational choice is a lifelong process of decision making for those who seek major satisfactions from their work. This leads them to reassess repeatedly how they can improve the fit between their changing career goals and the realities of the world of work (Ginzberg, Ginsberg, Axelrad and Herma, 1984, p. 180).

The theoretical perspective of Anne Roe (1956) also provided insight from personality theories and vocational behavior areas. The focus is seen in three particular aspects in child-rearing practices and parental attitudes; "1) the emotional concentration on the child, 2) the avoidance of the child, and 3) the acceptance of the child" (Roe & Lunneborg, 1984,

p. 156). Roe suggested that the manner in which a parent and child react and interact have lasting implications on adult behavior in vocational and career satisfaction. Literature suggests that Roe's work may provide insight to be incorporated into career counseling. Roe suggested that data be gathered from individual clients with the hope of discovering how early influences direct career pathways.

More than thirty years ago Lipsett (1962) suggested understanding the many social factors that interact and have implications in career development patterns. The factors are characteristics in the lives of all individuals. The factors suggested were: 1. social class membership; 2. home influences; 3. school; 4. community; 5. pressure groups; and 6. role perception. Individuals cannot be separated from these factors that, directly or indirectly and in varying degrees, influence adult career development.

Similar sociological influences were noted by Blau, Gustad, Jessor, Parnes and Wilcock (1956). The following paradigm illustrates the effects of social structure on career choice;

The social structure--the more

or less institutionalized patterns of activities, interactions, and ideas among various groups--has a dual significance for occupation choice. On the other hand, it influences the personality development of the choosers; on the other, it defines the socioeconomic conditions in which selection takes place. These two efforts, however, do not occur simultaneously. At any choice point in their careers, the interests and skills in terms of which individuals make their decisions have been affected by the past social structure, whereas occupational opportunities and requirements for entry are determined by the present structure. (Blau, Gustad, Jessor, Parnes and Wilcock, 1956, p. 539).

Literature advocates the need for continued and additional research in the area of ethnicity and gender in career development. It is the hope of any researcher that new and relevant paradigms can be discovered through future research.

CHAPTER 3:  
METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Need for Study

The need to develop employability skills for rural Cheyenne/Arapaho women, many who are single parents, presents a challenge to all concerned. One has only to review Cheyenne/Arapaho tribal surveys, educational findings, rural unemployment statistics, and demographics regarding the numbers of families headed by single parents. Personal income levels of rural Oklahoma Native Americans point to the severity of the problems faced by this population.

Although there are varied indicators of the barriers faced by these women, there is no known study which explores the career development issues of Cheyenne/Arapaho women from their personal perspectives. Through these women's personal stories, this study will provide a fuller understanding of their career development views and needs. Hopefully, the research study will affect program development which will ultimately enhance the overall career success and

productivity of the Cheyenne/Arapaho women of rural Oklahoma.

### Design of the Study

This study is designed to discover the personal views of twenty Cheyenne/Arapaho women of rural Oklahoma regarding their career journeys. Their individual stories are recounted in their own words, through personal interviews, as they each share their life and career stories. In keeping with the purpose of the study, naturalistic, phenomenological methodology was employed. Individual perspectives can initially be secured through naturalistic inquiry. Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer fourteen characteristics of the naturalistic paradigm; 1. natural setting; 2. human instrument; 3. utilization of tacit knowledge; 4. qualitative methods; 5. purposive sampling; 6. inductive data analysis; 7. grounded theory; 8. emergent design; 9. negotiated outcomes; 10. case study reporting mode; 11. idiographic interpretation; 12. tentative application; 13. focus-determined boundaries; and, 14. special criteria of trustworthiness.

The intent of the naturalistic researcher is to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations. The naturalistic, phenomenological researcher cannot assume they know what things mean to people they are studying, but it is a way to learn the meaning of a person's experiences as they interpret them. "Reality, consequently, is [socially constructed] (Berger & Luckmann, 1973). The women in the study reconstructed their own reality as the researcher sought to understand the subjects from their point of view.

Qualitative researchers believe that approaching people with a goal of trying to understand their point of view, while not perfect, distorts the subjects' experience the least (Bogden, R., & Taylor, S.J., 1975, p. 79).

Phenomenological methodology is process-oriented in that it can examine, in depth, the behavior and happenings experienced by the participants (Ambert, et al., 1995). Although a number of methodologies are available to the naturalistic researcher, the primary goal for the study is; "...to understand the meaning of

events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations" (Bogdan & Biklin, 1992, p. 34).

New ways of viewing are referred to as a paradigm; as described by Guba and Lincoln (1982):

...a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or firsts. It represents a world view that defines, for its holder, the nature of the 'world', the individual's place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts... (p.233).

An example from literature within the phenomenology research design is the 1983 study conducted by Rudine Sims, University of Massachusetts. The story of Osula, almost eleven years old, states she was an avid reader. Osula's reading interests were ever-changing from science fiction to books about "...Black girls like herself".

Sims saw the opportunity to study Black childrens' views of literature. The research was conducted using the personal interview method. This provided Sims with the opportunity to hear, from the child, the view of reading choices. The findings in Sim's study were derived from the point-of-view of the child. Another

naturalistic phenomenological study was conducted by Robinson-Hornbuckle (1991) "Female Administrators In Rural Schools: Who Are They? What Are Their Leadership Styles?", using the phenomenological approach to interpret the life stories of women school administrators.

The design of phenomenological research cautions the researcher to make no priori assumptions when beginning the study. As much as possible, the researcher must enter the world of the subjects *with a blank slate* setting aside her own experiences and knowledge. Although I am not Native American, close links were formed during my years of experience. So in reality it is impossible to address this study with an entirely *blank slate*. I have remained as objective as possible. The hope of discovering natural patterns in the Native American women's lives was an objective of the research study. The direction of the study was defined by the participants and how the women chose to tell their stories. Due to the nature of phenomenology, specific questions for discovery are not predetermined at the beginning of the study. The



researcher chooses to rather offer possibility question areas that may be discovered. Data relevant to the following questions were heard as each woman told her story. *What is the participant's view and understanding of her present real world? What is the participant's view of her career journey? What present influences continue to direct the participant's life career journey? What early life factors were viewed as encouragers or barriers in personal career development?*

Phenomenological research is fitting to my background, education, and experience. My initial Baccalaureate and Master's Degree were in Elementary Education with my early professional experience being in an elementary classroom in rural Oklahoma. The school's population, at the time, was approximately one-third Cheyenne/Arapaho students. Much experience was gained by working with the students, parents and grandparents in the community. Later I gained state teacher certification in the areas of Special Education, School Counseling and Elementary Administration. A career change was made into higher education as a supervisor for student teachers, first

year teachers and as faculty in the Graduate School of Education. I presently serve as faculty; teaching counseling classes and conducting trainings relevant to career education and development. Several years of training experience were gained through the Oklahoma Department of Vocational/Technical Education and the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) conducting "Improved Career Decision Making" trainings. During these years I fulfilled the State Department of Health's requirements as a Licensed Professional Counselor.

#### Sample and Criteria

The selection criteria for the participants were: 1) ranged in age from thirty-five to forty-five years old, 2) have experienced steady employment for at least three years and, 3) have earned a yearly salary above the per capita median income, \$6,012, of the Cheyenne/Arapaho population, and 4) will have participated in additional education or training beyond high school. The 20 women, selected for the study, all met the criteria I had set.

I selected participants through a networking process; beginning with three Cheyenne women who were acquaintances. From the initial group of women and their suggestions for additional participants; the final group of twenty women was selected, told of the study, met the criteria and consented to be a part of the study. The women were furnished copies of a description of the study (Appendix B) and each provided written permission for the interview process. Each subject was provided a copy of the signed permission document.

### Data Analysis

The initial analysis of the study began in the field as the semi-structured interview (Appendix A) was in progress. The semi-structured interview schedule is suggested by Bogden and Biklen (1992) and is fitting for a naturalistic study. The interview schedule was used as a guide; the women actually directed the interview process. The participants were interviewed in their homes, work settings or in my office at the university. As the interviews progressed I ask

additional related questions to add to my understanding of the women's views. Patterns of commonalities and differences were noted as the interviews were audio-recorded. I also made notes on points relevant to each participant's career story. The interviews were transcribed verbatim for later analysis. The complete transcription of each interview was reviewed several times and read by each participant. Additional data categories were developed during the analysis. The categories began forming as "...certain words, phrases, subject's ways of thinking, and events repeat and stand out" (Bogden, & Biklen, 1992, p. 166). Some categories noted during the data analysis were; degree of cultural assimilation, the subject's perceived personal, educational and career barriers, and encouragers from the personal histories of the subjects.

During the writing process I also noted that, repeated, continued analysis was occurring. Consistent with the naturalistic design; there is no concrete point of conclusion. Yet a decision point must be reached to discontinue further analysis.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The data from the study was initially analyzed using the framework of the interview schedule; personal data, family background, cultural/religious data, education/training data, and work experience. But as is customary in a qualitative, phenomenological study, the participants comments actually directed the interview process. The median age for the women was 40.35 years. Comments from several women suggested that they thought, "...they would be more settled by this time in their life and would not have to be struggling so hard to make life work." Some close similarities will be noted with four of the women. Two sets of sisters were interviewed, so much of their early years data were from the same family background.

Super's (1990) theory of career development describes the age of career establishment as occurring between the ages of 25 and 45 years old. The struggle described by the women may be indicators of delayed career maturity. Super (1990) defines career maturity as;

... the individual's readiness to cope with developmental tasks with which he or she is confronted because of his or her biological and social development and because of society's expectations of people who have reached that stage of development. This readiness is both affective and cognitive (p. 213).

#### CATHY

Cathy is a thirty-six year old Native American woman on the Cheyenne tribal rolls. She was born in a small rural community in western Oklahoma. All of her education, through high school, was obtained in the community of her birth. Because of her parent's educational aspirations for themselves, Cathy always knew she would graduate and go on to higher education opportunities. Indeed she did this by earning her Juris Doctorate degree. Cathy's family lived "...in the country", so nature and her environment were an integral part of her life. Her friends were the children of the family living on a farm nearest to her family. She talked of making *mud-pies* and decorating

them with small stones and wild flowers that she and her younger brother and sister had gathered.

Cathy's parents exposed all of their children to the fine arts, and she was a competent pianist and a member of the high school band. Her father was a Cheyenne chief and did a lot of traveling (Washington D.C., Colorado in the Summer, New York, etc.); often taking the entire family with him.

Cathy spoke, with fondness, of her high school friends. She talked of school always being easy for her; advanced classes available were a part of her curriculum. Her closest friends were white; the Native American students often shunned her. Cathy, below, told of the drinking, paint-sniffing, and lack of academic achievement of many Native American students in some of her classes in junior high school.

The '*in thing*' back then was to sniff paint...back of the school campus and so that's where a lot of the students go either before school or during lunch and sniff or smoke. I remember that I would get pressure to do that or to go over there....I just thought that was the most stupid thing, because they would have this spray paint around their lips and their fingers; the gold and silver glitter...I remember really being harassed because I wouldn't

do that...the majority of them that I can remember are dead from...probably alcohol related deaths...

With regard to career choices, Cathy, as did many of the study participants, spoke of *giving something back to her people* (Cheyenne), and how fortunate she felt to have the parents, education, and opportunities in her life. She spoke of her first child, to be born in a few months, and how she would balance her profession and her family.

**SUMMARY THEME, CATHY:** Education in Cathy's family was a high priority. This value of education and *giving something back to her people* stand out in Cathy's story.

#### CARRA

Carra, twenty-seven years old and unmarried, was Cathy's sister, but Carra had different career interests than Cathy. Carra views herself as always being athletic:

I was really focused on athletics. I was in track...didn't do too well in English. ...English was always something I disliked as far as just the language skill...I think I was always focused on athletic events in junior high. I wasn't a serious dancer yet.



Carra's first Bachelors Degree was earned from a comprehensive university in the area of fine arts. Carra danced as a ballerina with companies in several places. She spoke how her engagements to dance were erratic and did not provide regular hours or salary. Carra would often return home between engagements. At the time of the interview, Carra has just completed another degree in the health services area. She feels good about this because it will provide more continuity and stability in her life. As her older sister mentioned; she also plans to work at least for two years with the Indian Health Service.

**SUMMARY THEME; CARRA** Plans to use her learned skills to assist her people. Although a different career area than her sister, Cathy; Carra shares the common commitment to an identification with other American Indians.

#### LOUISE

Louise was forty-five years old and was next to the youngest child in her family. She had a son, twenty-five and a daughter, twenty-one. Louise shared about her father always talking to the children about finishing high school. She spoke also of her father

having the greatest influence in her life and when Louise was asked to tell about her family, she offered:

We were a family that was looked up to in the community because my dad was always involved with tribal affairs. People would come to the family...we were always involved in our community. As far as us always having everything we needed, we always had the basics. I remember my dad was always traveling a lot and not home much. My older brother kinda' took my father's place as far as discipline and what needed to be done. My dad passed away when I was a junior in high school.

Louise was asked about feelings of experiencing discrimination during her public school days. She spoke of not sensing discrimination until she was in junior high school and couples started pairing off. Louis said there were no *black* people in her community and she had both Indian and White friends. "I do remember, I never dated a White boy. I think that's so strange." Apparently, at that point in her life, Louise was beginning to witness discrimination, but did not understand the circumstances.

Louise spoke about a trip to a metropolitan center and that her father was taking them to a restaurant so they would learn how to behave in a public setting.

My dad took us around; even if it was to take us to a nice restaurant...so would know how to order, eat properly, and behave. He would take us to big stores and he would help us pick out our clothes. We would stay in a hotel. In the big department stores we would get confused over which bathroom to use or which water fountain to drink from. There would be a sign that would say [Whites Only].

Louise discussed her early marriage; before she had finished high school. After her father's death, she and her mother were not close, and she wanted to marry when she was a junior in high school. Louis thought her mother only gave her permission so she would have someone to take care of her. Louise stated the expectations of her husband made it impossible for her to consider additional education or training.

I had always, always wanted to go to college. The guy that I was married to...never going to accept me for wanting to grow. He's never going to want me to be anything. He's always going to want me to sit at home and do nothing. That was when I decided...made me realize that if I'm ever going to have any kind of independence, I'm going to have to get away from this guy and do it. I wanted to finish high school. He wouldn't allow it. He was so jealous and narrow minded...was a problem.

The expectations and restrictions her husband placed on Louise and his lack of personal motivation influenced her decision to obtain an education and focus on career direction, and personal goals. She and her first husband were together until the children were grown. After she and her husband separated, Louise worked at becoming more independent and self-sufficient.

**SUMMARY THEME; LOUISE** The realization that to have a career and additional education; it would be necessary to become more self actualized. In this process, Louise continued to maintain close ties with her tribe and people.

#### JACKIE

Jackie was a forty-five year old Cheyenne woman working in a health service area. She felt that her grandmother was a major influence in her life. Jackie, like many Cheyenne/Arapaho families, lived in the same home setting with the extended family. They lived on tribal allotted land until the children started school. Jackie shared about an incident she remembers from junior high.

...Indian guy in class in seventh

grade. I think he sassied back at the teacher. They took him down to the basement and tied his hands up and whipped him. They brought him back and he was crying. He had cut-marks on his arms where they tied him. They whipped him and that just really...I sat there and I cried with him.

Fortunately, this type of discipline is no longer allowed in the public schools. But I continue to observe that sometimes small differences are made in treatment, acceptance, and support of minority students.

When Jackie had completed junior high school, she transferred to Haskell Indian School Institute in Kansas, for her high school years. She was in the last high school class to graduate from Haskell. Jackie enrolled in the secretarial training program. Her mother, aunt, and other family members had also attended Haskell. Jackie has completed a Bachelor's Degree and has work toward her Master's Degree. She spoke of continuing school when her children were grown.

When asked about her career expectations during high school, Jackie stated:

I knew there was more out there. I first started out going into nursing ...changed my mind; went into banking... changed my mind...went into research. Now I'm a secretary, administrative assistant, but it's still a secretary.

A goal she continues to seek is to have a business of her own.

During the interview I asked Jackie about peer pressure when she attended school. Her response was:

...pressure with the other Indian kids around here...pressure. Well, they were into drinking and smoking and riding around... going with the boys from the Air Force base. I didn't want to do the same thing that they did. They put pressure on the ones that didn't want to do it. So, I found another friend that was more my speed. We both went to boarding school. I think we went about the same time. She went to Chilocco. I enjoyed going to boarding school. I enjoyed every minute...I made a lot of friends. ...did a lot of things that I wouldn't have done if I had stayed here. When I was in high school I was on the track team. I came in third, but there were only three of us (laughing). I enjoyed sports, volleyball and basketball...was a cheerleader up at Haskell...enjoyed doing that.

In reviewing the transcript of Jackie's interview, I noted how Jacky had difficulty "fitting in" while attending a public school. The peer pressure was difficult and to avoid this Jackie tended to isolate

herself. After transferring to Haskell, she became an active participant in many extracurricular activities. During the interview her *love for learning* was evident.

**SUMMARY THEME; JACKIE** Jackie had always enjoyed school and had witnessed what she saw as discrimination. As an adult, she chose to associate with Native American women.

#### CATHERINE

Catherine told of growing up in a metropolitan area, but going back and forth to rural Oklahoma to visit her grandmother who was a missionary among the Cheyenne/Arapaho people. She spoke of her grandmother being the greatest influence in her life.

She [her grandmother] had real strong family and moral values. [Catherine's grandmother said,] '...this is how we are supposed to be. This is how we are supposed to treat people.'

Catherine said that her grandmother completed a Bachelor's Degree.

Right before she died, they [the college] gave her [grandmother] an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters. The college she graduated from in New York gave her that honor.

Catherine received her earlier schooling in a metropolitan area, but completed high school in rural Oklahoma. Catherine is the oldest child in her family and she spoke of her many responsibilities when both her mother and father were working. She did not resent the responsibility, it was *just what she did*.

Being the oldest in my family...  
mom and dad both worked. The  
responsibilities in caring for the  
younger children was just something  
we did. My sister and I never  
questioned it.

Catherine completed a Bachelors Degree in Education. The first major she decided on was Nursing; "...it just didn't seem to work". She has also completed some hours toward her Master of Education degree. Catherine is presently employed as a School Counselor; working primarily with Native American students and their parents. She also works at another job, doing accounting for a small business. Her work days consist of fourteen or fifteen hours. When asked about present friendships, she laughed and explained, "I have no friends at all!" The number of hours she works would leave little time for social connections.



Catherine was one of the two participants in the study that had never married.

Catherine's mother completed a Bachelor's Degree and her father enlisted in the Air Force after completing high school. She spoke about how many of the Indian people do not consider her family as *Indian*;

...because we worked, we have gone to school, we have tried...you know we've worked hard at our jobs and they think that we are trying to be something that we are not.

Catherine had experienced many transitions during her life. She talked about her grandmother's death four years earlier, about the poor health of both of her parents, and about her younger, unmarried sister having a child.

Catherine was asked to project what she sees in her future plans. She talked of wanting to be married and having children, but she stated,

There's nobody that I know or that I have met, whether in the past or just as recently as last week, that fit the standards that I have... I expect the best...they are not going to be perfect, but you know he comes along, I'll know, because he'll be everything that I've put down. I've even got a list. (laughter)

The strong family ties were evident throughout the entire interview process with Catherine.

**SUMMARY THEME; CATHERINE** Catherine viewed herself as a major care-taker for her family and the students she assists in her job. Her personality and sense of responsibility have led her to a logical career decision. Catherine's family remains her first priority.

#### MINNIE

Minnie is thirty-six years old and has Cheyenne/Arapaho tribal affiliation. She is a high school graduate and was enrolled in a junior college; majoring in liberal arts and computer science. Neither of her parents graduated from high school. Minnie shared with the researcher that her father is an alcoholic and her mother receives Social Security benefits. She is the middle child in her family; one of seven children. Minnie and her sister are the only children in the family that completed high school. She was asked why she made the decision to continue her education. Minnie's reply was,

I have three boys and I didn't want

to be on welfare. The jobs that I had...I wasn't happy. I didn't want to do that for the rest of my life. I'm a single parent and there would never be enough money to raise my boys like I want to. Their dads don't really care and I told myself I was the one that was going to have to raise them. I really don't want a man to take care of me.

As can be noted from Minnie's comments; she is quite independent.

Minnie was asked if she took part in traditional tribal practices. She replied,

No, my mom raised me and she didn't have any [traditions] and so I don't. My mom is half white and we were raised the White way.

**SUMMARY THEME; MINNIE** Minnie was raised by her mother who was non-Indian. She follows non Native American traditions, is very independent, and is raising her children *the White way*.

#### LAURA

Laura's tribal affiliation is Cheyenne/Arapaho. She is forty-three years old and has five sisters and two brothers. During her childhood she lived with both her mother and father. Laura and her family lived in

the country; close to her grandparents. Laura's older sister had the greatest influence in her life. She has been divorced for four years. The comment Laura made about her marriage; "We grew apart." Her friends during her childhood were also her brothers, sisters, and cousins. She attended school at the Ft. Sill Boarding School, near Lawton, and also attended the Upward Bound Program. She then attended a near-by college for a while. Laura was enrolled at a vocational school, taking courses in the computer and business areas.

Laura spoke of there now being only two persons in her household, she and her son. When Laura was asked about future plans, she commented,

Career wise I needed to go back  
to school. I'm still learning  
how to cope with life, finances,  
and education...the fact that I  
did not want to live on welfare...  
I knew I could do it!

Laura talked about her religious and Native American traditions. Her grandparents were Mennonite, but her father was affiliated with the Native American Church. Laura remembered dancing in the pow-wows every summer and spoke of all of them trading and sharing

costumes. Her time was very limited while working, attending school, and caring for her son.

Laura had established herself, in her own mind, as an individual with capabilities, goals and confidence. This is a portrait of the majority of the women; when they learned to *know themselves as individuals*, they were able to pursue goals and maintain a vision for their futures.

**SUMMARY THEME; LAURA** Laura's older sister was the greatest influence in her life. She has high self-confidence and realizes the importance of continuing her education.

#### CARLA

Carla is a thirty-five year old woman with Cheyenne/Arapaho affiliation. There were ten children in her family, five boys and five girls. Carla spoke of her mother as being very independent and demonstrating to her children that you cannot rely on other people. Carla's father died when she was thirteen years old. She commented; "My mother raised all the kids herself, but my grandmother helped her." Carla was working toward a degree in sociology at a major university.

She shared that; "I always knew I would go on to school."

Carla married when she was twenty-one years old; had two daughters. She and her husband were later divorced. Carla spoke of her marriage,

When I was married my husband  
didn't want me to do anything.  
I was going to school when we  
got married. I finished the  
semester and didn't go back.  
When we go a divorce... that's  
when I went back to school.

Carla said most of her teachers in elementary school and junior high school were very encouraging. She participated in extracurricular activities, even though many of her friends and cousins did not. Again, independence was noted by Carla's determination, even at a younger age.

When asked about traditional values, she told of always going to the Indian Baptist Church, but she no longer attends regularly. Carla and her girls attend pow-wows and her girls take part in the dances.

When future plans were discussed, Carla spoke of not planning to marry again. "I've been by myself for a number of years and it's comfortable that way."

**SUMMARY THEME; CARLA** Carla is independent and she and her daughters continue to participate in traditional Native American ceremonies.

#### WILLA

A unique experience for the researcher was conducting an interview with a young woman that had been one of her sixth-grade students. Willa is forty-three years old and lived primarily with her mother until she was thirteen. At this time she began living with her sister. One of the first topics discussed was her sense of discrimination. Willa said that when she moved from the community where she was born and relocated in a larger town that she felt a lot of discrimination. "It was really bad!" At that time she went to a boarding school in Tahlequah.

Willa was married to her first husband for fifteen years.

He just didn't want to do anything.  
He didn't want to work. My last  
husband (second husband) had a  
drinking problem.

As a child, Willa and her family, attended the Baptist Church every Sunday. Willa used to dance (in the pow-wows). Her children are now active in the Sundance.

Willa talked about how she did in school;

I think I could have done better.  
I never learned good study habits. Going to college now, I still don't have good study habit, I'm doing okay in college though.

When she discussed her hopes and dreams; Carla said that she wants to get her degree. Her present yearly income is \$10,000 and she feels a degree will help her earn more. A dream she shared; "I'd like to live out of state and see the world".

**SUMMARY THEME; WILLA** Although school is not easy for Willa, she plans to continue working full-time but continue taking some classes at a junior college.

#### JANA

Jana is full-blood Cheyenne and has worked at tribal headquarters for eight years. Jana is a middle child; having three sisters and three brothers. She



spoke of her grandfather having the greatest influence in her life.

He was retired from the Civil Service and he was a veteran. He was always reading to us, mostly the Bible. He was always talking with us. A lot of the things he told me as a child really came around. He taught us morals and its very hard to get away from those teachings.

When Jana was born her mother had scarlet fever and was in the hospital and her grandfather worked at the hospital and took her home. Her grandparents cared for her, but all of her other brothers and sisters remained with their parents. Her parents would come to visit and Jana spoke of her sadness when they would leave. She later viewed this experience as a blessing, because she was able to finish high school and go on to boarding school. Jana shared about being so lonely in boarding school that she cried a lot and would actually get sick. Her grandparents had no transportation, but when her grandfather would come to see her he always told her how smart she was.

When talking about her marriage she said that it was a marriage of convenience.

My grandfather said that this was a real nice boy, he was in the service,

he knows what he wants to do and you should marry him. We had our first child year later.

Jana has five children, three girls and two boys.

Jana's father was a ceremonial, Sun Dance, and had earlier connections with the Native American Church. Willa is presently an Ethnic Minority Clergy Woman, with the United Methodist Church.

**SUMMARY THEME; JANA** Jana was raised by her grandparents and feels a strong bond to her religious affiliations.

#### EMMA

Emma, a forty-five year old respondent felt major influence from her older sister. Her sister is eleven years older than Emma and she told of her having the same job for thirty-eight years, makes good money, well established, and able to care for her family. Emma's description; "She's a real solid, steady person". Emma was asked to describe her younger days when she lived with her family.

We lived out in the country in a house. We lived on the original allotment that my grandfather got from the government. The government said if all the men would help each other build houses,

'we'll' build them for you. That's how we got the house we live in now. I still live in that same house. My grandfather had been a farmer but he was blind in one eye and he made bows and arrows from bodark wood and then sold them. My mother did beadwork. That was the income we had except from pasture and grazing leases. We were poor but never went without a meal. My mother worked occasionally as a maid, but transportation was a problem. My dad, (a construction worker) when he was there, had a good income. I can remember plaster falling off the wall. We were poor.

The participant talked about any feelings of discrimination she remembers;

Actually. I didn't realize it (discrimination), until I went to school. I was very strong minded and very proud. My parents had accomplished a lot more than many people who had a different colored skin and I had a lot of pride. There were times, because of other people, that I felt ashamed to be Indian because you're just totally categorized. It was automatically said, 'Oh, he's just a drunk Indian'. I was very defensive and there were times I would think to myself, Oh God! I wish I wasn't Indian today or I wish I didn't know that person. I think I probably went through a lot of that all through school. There was a part of me that was so proud and a part of me that get embarrassed.

This is a lot of confusion for a young woman to endure.

Emma's mother was full-blood Cheyenne and father full-blood Arapaho, talked about her parents, family and her recent experience of completing a college degree in Business Administration. She stated that she was the youngest child in her; with two brothers and one sister. Her father went through the eighth grade and her mother the ninth grade.

I remember plaster falling off the walls. We were poor. We just didn't realize we were poor. We were as happy as could be.

When questioned about her life changes in the past five years, she talked of graduating from college and having two grand-children. A temporary change was when her son went to Desert Storm. That was a big change for her.

In speaking of her religious and cultural experiences;

My grandfather and my mother and father are all of the Native American Church; my son and I both are and my big sister. My two brothers have not been a part of the Native American Church, but they still believe in the practices of the same beliefs. They have prayer meetings all night. The next day they have lunch or a big dinner. It has to have been part of you life as you were growing up and we didn't go when we were little. None of us go to the pow-wows.

Her peer group during high school did not seem to have a major influence during her adolescence.

When you're fifteen or sixteen years old the Indians thought it was a big deal to go out and get drunk. I never had any desire at all to do that. My family never did drink. As an adult, I have better things to spend my money on....

She missed graduating from high school because, she had failed to complete an oral report;

I was the only Indian in the class and didn't finish the third oral report. Up until the last week of school... and the teacher said she would have to give me an incomplete. Up until the very last day of school I didn't think she would do it. She did. So I didn't graduate.

Later she wanted to go to business school but found she could not without having graduated from high school. She went to the Indian Agency and talked to someone. They told her, *If you haven't graduated from high school you can take this test.* The test was to last two days. She didn't have gas to come back the second day and ask if she could take all of the test in one day? She took it in one day and passed it.

I didn't go on to school though. I worked as a maid, waitress and anything I could get. Then our neighbor lady worked at the employment office and she ask me

if I wanted to go to school; that I could get help through welfare. I didn't know that. If you want to go to school we'll send you to the vo-tech. I went. It was mostly single mothers. At the end of the course in August they said they were going to award a scholarship to go to college. The one with the highest grade will get to go. So I was not the highest, but I was the second highest. That girl decided she was going to get married so they ask me if I wanted to go. I had no idea what I was going to major in. The instructor enrolled me in 17 hours the first semester and I went all day and did good. I had to drop out because I ran out money. I never went back until 1988.

The participants attitude about school was very positive. She said school was easy for her. You know you had to go and you went. Anything they taught was easy. She said it was just no problem and did well. Emma quit when she ran out of money and didn't go back to school(college) until fifteen years later. Her son was going and others were too, so she decided to return to school. Emma shared that all of her schooling was easy until the very end.

I asked Emma if she felt a sense of pride in completing her degree. She simply stated that it was something else she just did.

Her future plans are to work as office manager for the doctor that was Clinical Director at the Indian hospital when she was going into private practice. As to personal goals; Emma said that maybe some day she would marry again but for now she felt a strong need to help my children".

The theme of realizing she could learn and was a capable person emerged because of discontent in her present life. She saw better possibilities for herself and her son. The sense of accomplishment did not necessarily generate a feeling of pride, but a way she could better help her children. The strong sense of family runs throughout her life.

**SUMMARY THEME; EMMA** Emma has completed her college degree. She feels a strong need to continue to help her grown children complete their educations.

#### ROWENA

A major topic that Rowena told of was her time in public schools. Her parents did seasonal work and they moved a lot. "I'd get into a school and start to get

settled down and have to move again". Rowena was able to complete high school.

Rowena is forty-three years old, divorced and has four children; ages twenty-six, twenty-four, twenty-three and twenty. None of her children have attended college and only the youngest earned his high school diploma.

Rowena talked about some of her responsibilities as she was growing up.

I was from a large family. I don't know where my folks used to go. They were gone a lot. I used to stay home (from school) and take care of the younger children. When I was in the tenth grade I told mother that I don't want to go to school any more. She said, 'Why?' Well, I'm getting too far behind. She told me to go back to school and 'you don't have to watch the children'.

When I inquired about Rowena's religious and traditional practices she said that her parents were *more to the Indian religion*. My dad conducted a lot of the Peyote meetings. I was around that quite a bit. Her dad was active in the Sun Dance ceremonies. Rowena talked of her affiliation with the Baptist and Methodist churches. "I kinda' have to balance them both out", she said. The interview concluded with



Rowena making a comment about wanting to be independent and liking it.

**SUMMARY THEME; ROWENA** Rowena was the only member of her immediate family to complete high school. She continues to practice many Native American traditions.

#### ROSALEE

Rosalee is thirty-eight years old and is currently working on a degree in business administration. During Rosalee's younger years she lived primarily with her mother. Her mother taught her traditional ways, but later she realized that although traditional ways were important she also needed additional education.

Rosalee felt no sense of discrimination during her younger years. When talking about her decision to go to college, she replied "My mother told me I couldn't be a waitress all my life and to get a good job I would have to go to school." Rosalee shared about receiving encouragement from a committee specifically developed to provide support and encouragement for Cheyenne youth.

**SUMMARY THEME;** The support Rosalee received from the Committee of Concern helped her make the decision to attend college.

## IRIS

Iris talked of her grandfather and her Cheyenne heritage. Iris remembers her grandfather always playing with the children. She related the difficulties of her mother from alcohol abuse. Iris was eventually placed in foster care and later adopted. Her adoptive parents lived on a farm and she was provided for and taken care of quite well.

Iris was a good student when she would decide to come to school. She said that she liked school but it never gave her much challenge and she was bored with the entire experience. Iris and her aunt simply chose not to attend school very frequently. Even when she lived with her adoptive parents it became necessary for her to be placed back in foster care for awhile.

She attended a major university for a while, got married, and had a child. Both Iris and her husband

were into drugs. The entire senerio developed into the couple separating and Iris going back to her adoptive parents for a time.

Iris also has a drinking problem and has been in treatment for the difficulty. "I kept getting into trouble; I just couldn't stay out of trouble with it (alcohol)." At the time of the interview, Iris was living back in the community where she was born. She and her present husband were trying a business venture dealing with Native American memorabilia. The last time I was in the community their shop had closed.

#### CELIA

Another of the participants, Celia, forty-three years old, talked of a grade-school experience.

We had a large class. There were 40-some in the first grade. I had braids. I didn't cut my hair until I got out of sixth grade. I remember those boys pulling our hair!. The white boys, would come up and tease us. It was all right because we would just hang with out little group. But we always got invited to birthday parties and things.

When asked about remembering something she didn't like to do in school she commented,

...get up and talk in front of the class...you know I remember something from every grade except for the second grade. I have no recollection of that. Something happened. I don't remember anything about it or anything she was trying to teach us. When we were in sixth grade, my cousin and I...the teacher was a single lady, we were her pets. So I liked that grade!

She talked of going to Haskell and that her parents encouraged her to get an education. Celia took business courses after high school. This direction was determined from aptitude tests. She said that she always liked English and spelling. She had thought for a while about becoming a nurse, but when she got into biology and more difficult classes, she changed her mind.

I asked Celia about any memories about discrimination and she told of a comment her mother would make, "Those damn white people." Celia said she just didn't believe in that and had always taught her children that it doesn't make any difference what color a person's skin is. Celia and her adult children continue to participate in traditional ceremonies.

Celia was working in a nursing home at the time of the interview. She often assists other Indian families

by helping them prepare their income tax returns. She plans to remain in the community where she was living.

**SUMMARY THEME; CELIA** Celia seemed very content to remain in the rural community. She used some of the skills she gained from her education to assist other Indian people in the community.

#### JUDY

Judy spoke of discrimination she experienced during grade school. She told the story of being on the playground after school when another student was teasing her and her friends; calling them names and making fun of Indians. In her words,

You know what we did? We just went over and slapped him around. He finally got where he left us alone. Nobody really talked about it, but the divisions just happened.

Judy talked of her life and the changes she had experienced. She indicated she had changed a lot and was probably more independent because she wanted that.

A woman just reaches a certain age, a certain maturity, and she wants to find out how much she can do on her own and what experiences there are out there for one person. It's not always great and there's lots of hard times. My children are married and have their families...so not wanting to

be involved so much in my children's lives like I used to. I don't see them as often. Now I think, I'm by myself. I've already filled out my applications to go back to school.

She plans to major in business administration, although she had considered a health field because she had worked for the Indian Health Service and also the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). While in those positions, Judy worked in law enforcement and with their Executive Management Program. She worked there for six and one-half (6 1/2) years. I asked Judy about opportunities for women in her tribe, she responded,

You pretty much have to make it happen. You have to know the people that are in charge of programs and be on good terms with them. The door is still shut for a lot of them.

When asked what she would tell a group of young Cheyenne/Arapaho girls and what hints she would give them. Her answers were revealing.

I think I would like to tell them to find out about themselves, who they are, is to know that...to know who they are.

The second thing would be to try to vary some experience so they can look at some things they might want to do.

Thirdly, is to go to school and get

their education, because at some point they are going to want to be independent. They need to start thinking like they're living in today's world.

In closing the interview the participant talked of not having to drop the Cheyenne/Arapaho culture and traditions. Judy shared that from her experience a person can really live in both worlds. It is possible to retain her cultural heritage and be respected by other tribal members. Judy again emphasized the importance of living in today's world a gaining a variety of experiences. She also talked about what she views as barriers.

You know what I really believe is that our women have more initiative than the men and the men feel insecure. It's not wrong to have initiative. It's not wrong to want nice things. The men are really clannish.

The interview ended.

**SUMMARY THEME; JUDY** Judy felt it was possible to live in two worlds; the traditional and mainstream culture.

#### RHONDA

A participant, full-blood Cheyenne, told about her family. Her parents were thirty-eight years old when she was born. She was the youngest of four children in her family. The participant related the influence her older sister had on her life. "I wanted to do

something, get a job, be ambitious..." Through the age of thirteen she lived with her mother who began having problems because of her drinking. At that time she went to live with her sister. The participant talked about some of her friends. "I had a good time. We had horses and some of my friends would come over and we would go riding."

When asked about feeling a sense of discrimination she talked of one of the schools she attended. "It was really bad. I left and went to boarding school in Tahlequah."

When I asked Rhonda about what changes had occurred in the last five years, she stated,

I've been married and divorced. I was with my first husband for fifteen years. We have been separated for five years. He just didn't want to do anything. He didn't want to work.

The traditional practices that she remembers from childhood were the weekend peyote meetings. "They would go into tepees and pray all night. Next day they would have a big meal.". She also mentioned that they went to a Baptist church every Sunday. "I still go to pow wows. I used to dance. Now my children are active in the Sundance."



Rhonda related that her mother went to the sixth grade. There was no mention of her father. The work that her mother did, outside the home, was pick cotton. She talked of going to school.

I liked school. I remember when I was in the first grade I was afraid to go. I think I could have did (done) better. I never learned good study habits.

Rhonda talked about presently attending college and said that she is doing well. Rhonda said that when she was in high school she never thought about going to college, it didn't seem like a possibility. At the time of the interview Rhonda was working for the tribe, making \$10,000 a year.

Rhonda also spoke of some hopes about her future. "I'd like to live out of state and see the world." I asked her what advice she would give young Cheyenne women.

I would probably talk to them about birth control and not having children at a young age. Let them know there are so many things out there they can do.

**SUMMARY THEME; RHONDA** From personal experience, Rhonda knew there were opportunities for young Indian women if they chose not to have children early.

## BONNIE

Bonnie remembers that both her grandmothers spoke Arapaho. "Me and my sister used to sit around and think it was funny. Now I wish we had paid attention. My dad speaks Arapaho".

I asked Bonnie about her traditional and cultural background. She said;

I don't really have any. I was asking my dad why we never did any of that, why they have chiefs...my dad said that his grandfather was a chief. I just now found that out.

Her school years do not evoke good feelings. Bonnie started getting into trouble during her junior high school years and started skipping school. She felt that she was hanging around the wrong people. She dropped out after finishing junior high school, but later completed her General Equivalency Diploma (GED). After receiving a promotion where she worked she decided to attend college. She was currently taking some classes.

Bonnie was asked what made her decide go to college. Her answer was revealing about herself. Bonnie shared,

I think it's something that's inside

a person, whether you're motivated enough.  
...because I'm a role model for my kids.  
I want them to do good...money... I could  
be a grandmother in a few years. I'll  
probably still be unmarried.

Our time to visit had ended.

**SUMMARY THEME; BONNIE** Being a role model for her  
children became important to Bonnie as she matured and  
made more productive decisions.

#### DORA

Dora, one of the younger women, thirty-six, told  
of graduating from high school. At the time of the  
interview she was attending Redlands Community College.  
Neither parent graduated from high school. Her mother  
was twenty-five and father twenty-six when she was  
born. Her mother was receiving Social Security  
assistance and her father was an alcoholic. There were  
seven children in her family. Dora is the middle  
child, between three brothers and three sisters. Dora  
and her older sister are the only two in her family  
that completed high school. When queried as to why she  
thought the others didn't finish she responded,

My mom was never active in our

education. She never really pushed us. There wasn't much encouragement. I never had a teacher that encouraged me to go on to school. I have three boys and I didn't want to be on welfare. The jobs that I had...wasn't happy... didn't want to do them for the rest of my life. I'm a single parent and there would never be enough to raise my boys like I want to. Their dads don't really care and I told myself I was the one that was to have to raise them. I really don't want a man to take care of me.

Dora is Cheyenne/Arapaho; her mother is one-half white, "We were raised in the white way." No Native American religious or traditional practices have been a part of her life. Five years before the interview Dora had gotten a divorce, had her first child and moved back to Oklahoma. She did not say where she had been living. I asked Dora if she felt independent following the divorce. "Yes, once I got a divorce I got really outspoken. It really woke me up to what the world is like". Dora was in the service (armed services), for five and one half years. She said that helped her a lot.

**SUMMARY THEME; DORA** Dora gained a sense of independence and realized she was capable, on her own, of taking care of her family.

## AUDREY

Audrey is forty-three years old and had completed some business classes at an area vocational/technical school. She talked of needing to obtain more education; "I know I need to learn more". Most of the interview time was filled with talk about her family and younger days.

My folks did mostly seasonal work and we moved a lot. I didn't like it. I'd get into a school and start to get settled down and have to move again. I can remember when I was in the first or second grade; it was a rural school and there were quite a few Indians there. I think at that time I didn't know what discrimination was. I knew we were different, but I learned...it was kinda' hard. I remember one Christmas, my family didn't have very much. You know how you take gifts to school; so I told my folks I had to take something and they got comic books. They wrapped them up and I gave them to this boy. He gave me those books back.

Her early years in school were filled with discontinuity; until she got into the sixth grade. Things began to improve. Audrey said; "That's when things settled down." But it wasn't smooth sailing

after that. Audrey got along well with her teachers and thought they were nice.

In high school I was kinda' quiet; I stayed in my own littler corner. We had a basketball coronation and we had a black family. They had their queen coronation and the boy was supposed to walk with a white girl and the white girl's parents wouldn't let her so they came and ask me if I would walk with him. I don't know if I was just ignorant or what. I said I would; I was in the queen coronation. I wanted to be in it. But this showed me discrimination.

When asked if her teachers were encouraging, she replied;

Yes, they sure were. I had one; she was a principal, she was my geometry teacher. She helped me so I could graduate.

Audrey spoke of a girl, she viewed as a role model, and told of her friend becoming an Licensed Practical Nurse(LPN) and she was sure that was what she wanted to be. She found out that she didn't qualify; so she knew she had to find something else.

Her traditional and cultural experiences were voiced;

When we were growing up we always went to church; to the Indian Baptist Church. Right now I don't go to church. We always go to pow wows. My girls dance now.

Audrey talked about the important areas of her life;

I've always tried to make a stable life for my girls. I've lived in El Reno for the last seven years.

We talked of what she sees in her future, professionally and personally;

I want to finish school and try and look for a better job in the field of Sociology, if not, continuing on with my education. I think the more education you have, the more money that you're going to make and that's what I'm striving for, then I can provide for my children. I was twenty-one years old when I had my first daughter. I had another in 1987. Then I was divorced. When I was married my husband didn't want me to do anything. I was going to school when we got married. I finished the semester and didn't go back. When we got a divorce; that's when I went back to school.

Audrey spoke of her main goal as being; taking care of her girls. Regarding her personal life; she is not presently married and doesn't plan to get married. She has been by herself for a number of years and feels more comfortable that way.

When Audrey was asked what she would say to a group of young Indian women she responded;

I would draw on my experience as far as

overcoming certain hardships in your life. I would encourage them to be more involved in their school activities. I think there needs to be more activities as far as parents with their children. I think if parents took a bit more interest in their students lives they could grow up to be good individuals.

The participant was asked if she thought it was hard to get the Indian Parents involved at school.

Yes, my job right now is with the Johnson O'Malley Program and we work with trying to help parents. It's real hard to get parents to meetings. One area has about two hundred fifty students and they can only get fifteen to twenty parents to a meeting. There's just no parental involvement; or not enough.

The interview closed with the participant's comment; "I want to feel the independence I have".

**SUMMARY THEME; AUDREY** Remaining independent and taking care of her family were Audrey's major concerns.



## SANDY

Sandy's story presented a contrast to the other respondent's experiences. Her childhood and early education were in Gallop, New Mexico. Sandy was thirty-eight years old at the time of the interview. She has a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Oklahoma. Her family consisted of three brothers and four sisters. Sandy is the middle child. She spent little time with her mother and was raised primarily by her grandparents on a reservation outside Tohache, New Mexico. The children were given a great deal of responsibility.

My grandfather was pretty strict and very traditional. We weren't disciplined but we learned how to do things at an early age. They (grandparents) made you do your chores. We didn't have a lot but we managed to make a living. The grandmother was a weaver of rugs, and was able to make clothing for us. When I was old enough to go to school I was put in a boarding school. That was one of the government requirements. I spent about four months out of the year with my grandparents and the rest of the year in the boarding school. What I remember most was being lonely; being away from the folks and it was pretty hard. The living environment...I had to get used to it. We were told not to speak our language and things like that. I really believe we had different learning styles. I had

a problem with the way teachers taught,  
and I think it could have been handled  
better.

At fourteen she enrolled in the public school in  
Gallop and graduated from high school there. The  
friends she had were Navajo, Hispanic and White.

I had a lot of friends; a few  
favorites that were close friends. By  
the time when I went to public school I  
had pretty good friends there and we did  
stick together.

Contact is still maintained with some of those early  
friends. The extracurricular activities were the ones  
a family could afford.

Sandy played basketball during junior high school. When  
talking about how she did in school, academically; "I  
think I was average, it wasn't too hard. I think I  
could have done better".

The participant attended college at Bacone, in  
Northeastern Oklahoma. She finished there in 1978.

I think I knew I wanted to go to  
college; my brother and grandparents  
really stressed going. I kinda'  
wanted to be a nurse or an investigative  
journalist. The standards were very  
high.

When Sandy was asked about her Master's Degree;

I received my Bachelor's Degree  
in 1990. I had stayed out of

school for seven years and  
then went back.

Her future career plans are to recieve her licensure  
in Social Work and continue counseling and get away  
from Child Welfare.

I have about ninety-five cases  
that I'm monitoring across the state.  
I travel a lot and sometimes go out  
of state on transfer cases to pick  
up kids.

The participant was questioned about perceived  
feelings of discrimination;

...from my white classmates, the ones  
that lived in the rural area and the  
teachers...could hear them talking  
about 'how Indians are, can't  
expect much from them'. We had an  
Indian teacher that was trying to  
change that but she couldn't get  
any where. She was very frustrated.  
The White teachers did not have high  
expectations for the Indian children.  
...the way they ask questions, mainly  
in English classes...they stressed  
your own answers. The answer was how  
you interpreted it. Kinda' hard for  
an Indian to do.

Sandy's religious practices were very  
traditional. Her grandfather was a Navajo Medicine  
Man; therefore Navajo teachings were followed in the  
family. Sandy spoke of her puberty ceremony;

As a youngster we went to the different  
social gatherings. For myself, we had

the puberty ceremony that I want through when I was twelve. You had to leave things behind as a child and start learning other things and start being an adult.

Sandy had been divorced for four years. Some of the practices that the participant continues to maintain are the manners, how you address people, self-discipline and physical endurance. She feels physical endurance is important and she tries to get her children to be more physical.

When asked if she would like to go back and work in a reservation setting;

Yeah, I plan to go back. I would like to get my licensure first, but Child Welfare is not considered mental health and I have to justify that. You know my parents never went to school. I heard my grandfather went to third grade. My grandmother didn't have any schooling.

The participant offered what she thought was an important factor in young Native Americans being successful in life; both personally and in career direction;

They need to know who they are and where they came from. That will determine their success in life.

**SUMMARY THEME; SANDY** Respect for other people and certainly her elders remains important to Sandy.

#### EMERGENT THEMES

As analysis of the scripts progressed a number of themes emerged from the voices of Cheyenne/Arapaho women. Each of their lives had differences; yet there were many similarities. It is impossible to view these women without acknowledging their world views.

One of the most prominent themes was how the majority of the women had grown more independent and self-sufficient. They felt they had control over their own lives; that they were responsible for being economically productive. Much of this independence was formed as the women matured and had children. The women felt a strong sense of responsibility to help their children have *good lives*.

All of the participants had knowledge of the traditions and ceremonies from the Native American culture. Many of the women had taken part in the ceremonial traditions in the role of Native American women; preparing food, serving the elders of the tribe

and taking part in the dancing. Only one participant stated that she and her family did not practice any of the traditional ways. This was because of her grandmother, a Christian missionary. As stated in her narrative, "...there is a better way than the Indian way". All other participants are considered fully assimilated into the mainstream culture but continue to appreciate and respect the traditional ways. Some of the children of the women now participate in traditional ceremonial dances.

Few of the participants voiced negative experiences during their school experiences. They did however note that during their younger years they can remember sensing or observing examples of discrimination.

Only two of the women had never married and stated that was not a priority in their lives. The majority of the women had married and been divorced or separated from their husbands.

Another theme that surfaced throughout the study was the wish that they had paid more attention to learning the traditional ways, either from their

parents or grandparents. One of the women spoke of her grandparents speaking the Arapaho language. The participant said she thought it was *funny* when she was younger. She now regrets not learning more of the language. Few of the women had much knowledge of the Cheyenne language.

In the category of worship and religion the women spoke of participating in both the Native American church and a mainstream Christian denomination. One of the participants talked of *balancing* her religious practices.

Out of the 20 participants only one talked of her personal difficulty with alcohol or drugs. Some of the women who had divorced or separated from their husbands told of alcohol abuse as being a major problem in the marriage. As children and young adults there were dysfunctions in some of the women's lives due to the alcohol abuse exhibited by a parent or parents.

The table on the following page is a summary of the themes and patterns discovered in the study. They have shaped the career patterns and paths of the present lives of 20 Cheyenne/Arapaho women.

# SUMMARY OF CHEYENNE/ARAPAHO WOMEN'S WORLD VIEWS

PARENTAL FIGURES	<u>SINGLE PARENT</u>	<u>BOTH PARENTS</u>	<u>GRANDPARENTS</u>	<u>ADOPTIVE PARENTS</u>		
	7	3	9	1		
EARLY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE	<u>PRODUCTIVE</u>	<u>UNPRODUCTIVE</u>	<u>PLEASANT</u>	<u>UNPLEASANT</u>		
	9	11	17	3		
MARITAL STATUS	<u>NEVER MARRIED</u>	<u>PRESENTLY MARRIED</u>	<u>DIVORCED</u>			
	2	0	18			
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	<u>GED</u>	<u>HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE</u>	<u>SOME COLLEGE</u>	<u>ASSOCIATE DEGREE</u>	<u>BACHELOR'S DEGREE</u>	<u>GRADUATE DEGREE</u>
	3	5	4	3	4	1
PRESENT PRIORITIES	<u>FAMILY &amp; CHILDREN</u>	<u>FINANCIAL STATUS</u>	<u>EDUCATION</u>	<u>CAREER</u>		
	17	0	0	3		
CULTURAL IDENTITY	<u>CONFORMITY</u>	<u>DISSONANCE</u>	<u>RESISTANCE &amp; IMMERSION</u>	<u>INTROSPECTION</u>	<u>SYNERGETIC ARTICULATION &amp; AWARENESS</u>	
	0	1	1	0	18	
SELF-PERCEIVED STRENGTHS	<u>DEPENDENT ON SIGNIFICANT OTHER</u>	<u>DEPENDENT ON FAMILY</u>	<u>SELF-SUFFICIENT</u>			
	0	0	20			



## CHAPTER 5:

### CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The process of bringing a particular phenomenological study to a conclusion is the decision of the researcher. Through the interviews with the participants in the study I understood more clearly that there is no specific point to conclude a phenomenological study. The question I ask was; "What have I discovered that was not previously known about Cheyenne/Arapaho women and their lives and career journeys?" Langenbach, Vaughn, & Aagaard (1994) directed my search in answering the above question.

Granted, you might say, that this kind of reflection would produce greater insight into our experiences; but what good would it do us? What would we gain? The phenomenologist's answer is: a better understanding of the meaning an experience has for others (and also for ourselves) (p. 145).

Even though I had worked and lived in a community where Cheyenne/Arapaho women and children attended school and made their homes, I realized there were areas in their lives where I had little understanding. The study has provided me with additional insight of a

segment of the Cheyenne/Arapaho culture, their lives and their way of living and surviving. Rather than seeking cause and effect, numbers for answers, or arriving at a theory, this phenomenological study broadened my understanding of a particular segment of rural Oklahoma's population. Langenbach, et. al. offered, "...the researcher's aim...is to uncover the inherent logic of the experience or phenomenon, the way it makes sense to its subjects (p.145)."

The group of 20 Cheyenne/Arapaho participants in the study told their stories, described personal world views, and talked of the directions of their career journeys. Similar and also different experiences were noted. Each woman in the study had the opportunity to tell her story as she remembered it. The themes that run through the women's lives provide indicators of possibilities to support Native American women of Cheyenne/Arapaho heritage, during the career development process.

The Native American population, federal government, and educational institutions, have invested time, effort and moneys in supporting Native American

students relative to educational achievement, training, and career development. Programs, scholarships, grants, and training seminars have been made available in the hope of finding intervention processes to enhance career development. In many cases, the results of the endeavors have proven ineffective. Literature is not available regarding career development patterns or instances of career success in the multiplicity of Cheyenne/Arapaho populations.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS:

The results of the study point to possibilities for developing methods of support to assist Native American, Cheyenne/Arapaho women in career endeavors. The women told of uncertainties about education and what career directions to follow. Assisting Cheyenne/Arapaho adolescents by providing early career education information and career assessment strategies can create greater career awareness. Another benefit from the study points to the influence of role models in the women's lives. Developing career mentoring programs for Cheyenne/Arapaho women and providing one-on-one support can enhance career development skills.

Mentors, while assisting young women, can teach factors important in making career decisions.

Career and public school counselors can gain understanding for the need to infuse career education into curriculum and counseling. Community, junior colleges, and comprehensive universities should find the information from the study helpful in areas of recruitment, pre-employment training, and career efficacy enhancement for Native American women.

#### OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION:

Through observation and experience in career counseling, I have discovered that often the individual person their ethnicity, gender, family background experiences, and future visions are not considerations in the counseling process. Yet what may be considered a barrier by career counselors, educators, or employment specialists, may not be perceived in the same manner by the Native American woman or client. The differences in understanding and point of view can create a climate of misunderstanding.

The findings from the study and the women's present job/career directions create an interesting

pattern. The majority of the women's career choices are in service oriented occupational categories; health services, education, and social services. Only thirty-percent of the women chose careers in the field of business. The following chart specifies the occupational areas of the women.

<b>WOMEN'S OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES</b>	
	<i>Percent in area</i>
<b>HEALTH SERVICES:</b>	<b>20%</b>
Nursing Home	10%
Physical Therapist	5%
Rehabilitation	5%
<b>EDUCATION:</b>	<b>30%</b>
Teacher/Counselor	10%
Educational Services	20%
<b>SOCIAL SERVICES:</b>	<b>20%</b>
Child Welfare	10%
Sociology	5%
Law	5%
<b>BUSINESS:</b>	<b>30%</b>
Owner	5%
Management	5%
Secretarial	20%

The findings from the study illustrate the tapestry of Cheyenne/Arapaho women's lives. Similarities are present in the lives of the women; yet as themes were identified, each of the women exhibited independence and individualism.

#### MINORITY IDENTITY:

In reviewing the Summary of Minority Identity Development Model (Appendix D), none of the twenty women would be identified in the Traditional, Transitional or Marginal categories. The majority of the women in the study possess knowledge of Cheyenne/Arapaho cultural traditions. None of the women speak their native language in the home. Several of the women commented that they wish they had been more directive in passing on traditions and culture to their children. Only one of the twenty women stated that because of her grandmother's influence, she and her family never practice or follow traditional Native American ways. The participant stated, "When I was very young she (grandmother) didn't really preach against the Native American traditions, but she showed us there was a different way...how it is supposed to be....." When I

asked the participant if she felt she had missed out on aspects of her heritage she responded that she really didn't feel she had. According to Ryan and Ryan (1982) this participant would be considered fully assimilated into the mainstream culture. She accepts and has been accepted into the dominant culture and society, but at the same time has rejected the culture and values of her Native American heritage.

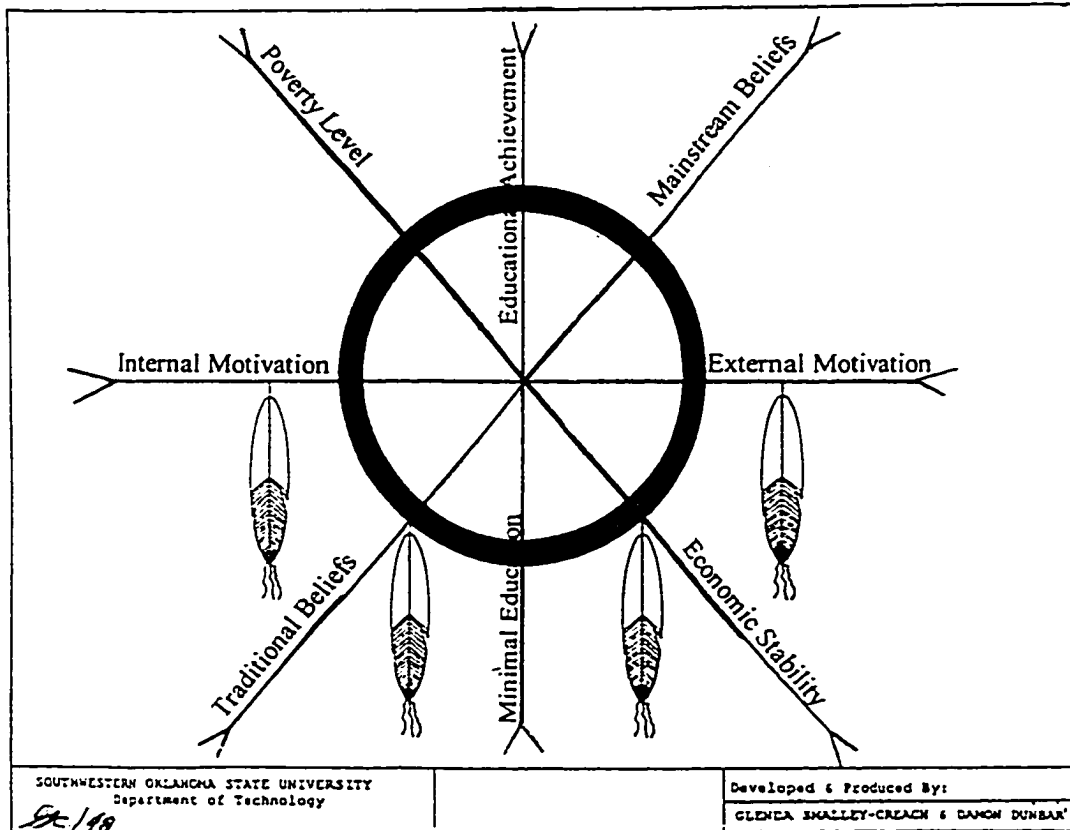
The other women in the study would be considered bicultural, having accepted the dominant culture and working within that culture, but also continuing to practice some of their tribal rituals and traditions. Some of the participants continue to play a role in the Sundance ceremony; preparing food and seeing to the needs of the chiefs, elders and dancers; a primary responsibility of the women. One of the participants stated, "I've always participated in the pow wows. I've danced ever since I was very young...my kids...my oldest boy, dances some."

A possible paradigm for Native American, Cheyenne/Arapaho women is suggested when considering encouragers and barriers, past and presently in the

lives of the subjects. A visual model on the following page addresses life factors and provides a guide to identify the strengths or weaknesses, Encouragers and Barriers, present in the lives Native American Cheyenne/Arapaho. Points along each continuum can be identified by the client when seeking career or employment assistance. The exercise would provide a career counselor or employment specialist information concerning the world view of the Native American client.



## ENCOURAGERS & BARRIERS CONTINUUM



The ENCOURAGERS & BARRIERS CONTINUUM can be used to identify self-perceived strengths and weaknesses of a Native American, Cheyenne/Arapaho women. This allows a counselor to better understand the woman's view.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The findings from the study include data from Native American, Cheyenne/Arapaho women that offer a resource for career and employment counselors when working with Native American women. The following recommendations to be considered from the study are:

1. View the Native American woman as an individual in her present cultural, ethnic and gender role,
2. Allow time in the career counseling process to hear the voice of the woman,
3. Realize and accept the woman's view of needs, hopes, and self-perceived strengths and weaknesses,
4. Consider how the woman's view of career direction carries implications for significant others in her life, and
5. Assist the Native American woman by affirming her sense of career direction and offer additional possibilities for consideration.

### IMPLICATIONS:

I do not assume that data and recommendations from the study can be applied to other populations of women in other settings. The recommendations are considered relevant to the women of Native American, Cheyenne/Arapaho heritage in rural Oklahoma.

Henrietta Mann, PhD, professor of Native American Studies at the University of Montana grew up and attended school in an Oklahoma rural community. In her book, CHEYENNE-ARAPAHO EDUCATION, 1871-1982, she speaks of *The People*;

In spite of the good, strong ways of The People, the white man was slowly changing some of the young people. This saddened White Buffalo Woman, but she knew that The People's road of life had to be flexible and provide for adjustments. The People's road of life had to be flexible and provide for adjustments. The People had adjusted to mission schools, and those schools had already disappeared, while the ways of The People persisted just as they always had. Cheyenne and Arapaho traditional spiritual ways are deeply rooted in the sacred earth and will endure, though other religions and philosophies appear and disappear. They already have withstood the test of time (Mann, 1997,p. 84).

Additional research is needed to determine strategies for enhancing supportive processes for Cheyenne/Arapaho, Native American women. The use of human resources from this population can direct the women and their children to more satisfying and productive lives.

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## APPENDIX A

### PERSONAL DATA:

Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_ Present level of education \_\_\_\_\_

Name of participant \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Current address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Tribal affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Parents: Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Father \_\_\_\_\_

Age of parents at time of your birth: Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Father \_\_\_\_\_

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

What is your birth order in your family?

What family member has had the greatest influence in your life?

As a child, did you live primarily with your parents or with extended family members?

Describe your living situation as a young person and presently.

Describe your friendships as a youth and presently.

As a child, did you experience feelings of discrimination?

Are feelings of discrimination experienced currently?. Describe.

What are some stresses in your life today? How do you deal with the stress?

Describe any life changes you have experienced during the last five years.

CULTURE/RELIGION:

What religious practices or affiliations were experienced in your family of origin and presently?

What traditional cultural experiences do you remember as a young person?

What cultural experiences are currently practiced?

EDUCATION/TRAINING:

What was the educational level attained by your parents?

Describe your elementary school years; likes/dislikes, teachers, regularity of attendance, and locale.

Describe your junior high and high school years. What are some thing that stand out in your mind; either as a positive or negative experience?

Describe some of your school friendships as a youth and any extracurricular activities experienced.

Do you remember the approximate age/stage you decided to continue your education/training experience? Describe.

What are the reasons you chose a particular direction in education or training?

Were there role models that influenced your career choice?

What were the major influences that prompted your decision to continue education/training?

Why did you select the particular area of education or training?



WORK EXPERINCE:

Were your parents or adult family members employed? If so, what was the type of employment?

What was your approximate yearly income for 1992?

Describe what you see in your career; one year, five years and ten years from now.

## APPENDIX B

A dissertation study is being conducted by Glenda Smalley Creach, doctoral candidate at the University of Oklahoma. The topic of the study is; "CAREER DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS OF CHEYENNE/ARAPAHO WOMEN IN RURAL OKLAHOMA".

The information collected during the interview process is considered confidential. Any names used in reporting the study will be fictitious. No information from the interviews will be identifiable or used for other purposes.

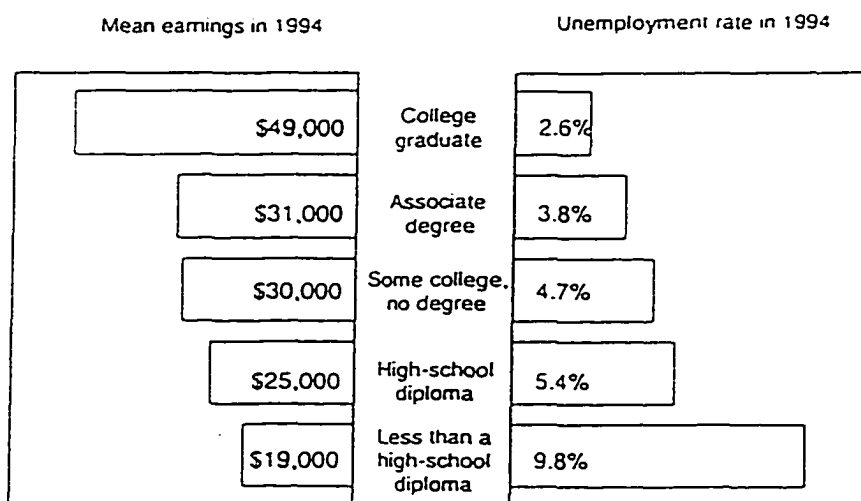
I, \_\_\_\_\_ give consent for the audio-taped interview with the researcher, \_\_\_\_\_ .

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

### Employment Outlook: 1994-2005

#### Education pays....



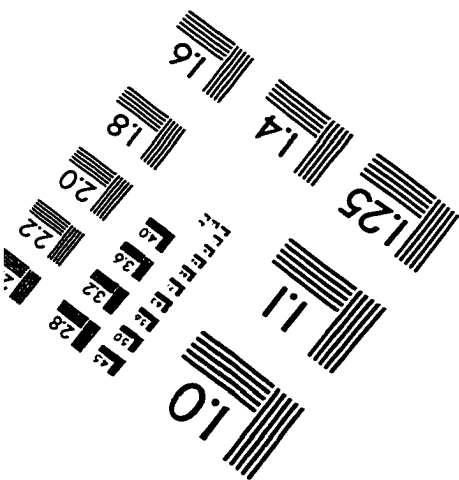
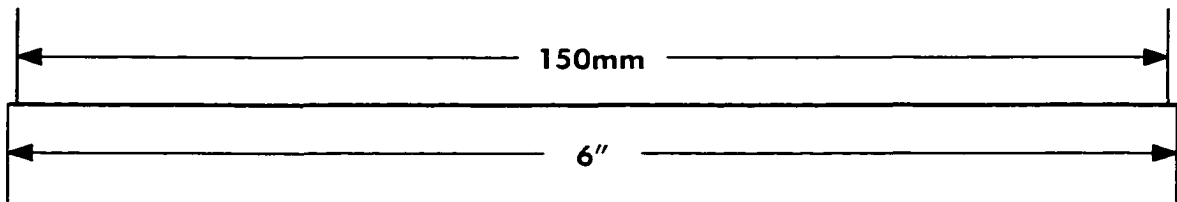
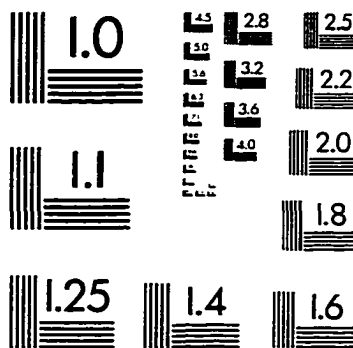
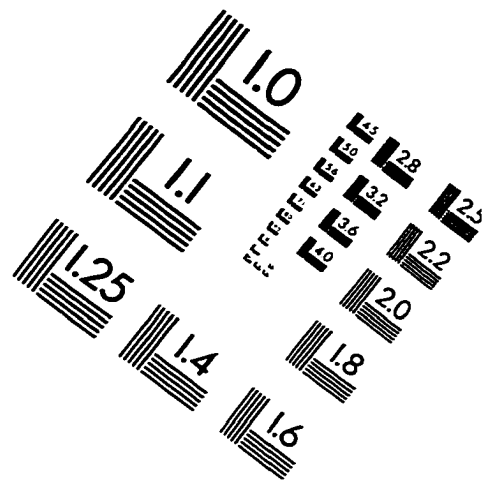
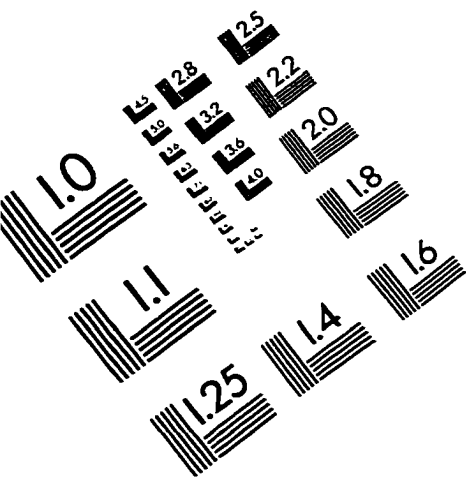
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## APPENDIX D

### Summary of Minority Identity Development Model

<u>Stages of Minority Development Model</u>	<u>Attitude Toward Self</u>	<u>Attitude Toward Others of the Same Minority</u>	<u>Attitude Toward Others of Different Minority</u>	<u>Attitude Toward Dominant Group</u>
Stage 1- Conformity	Self-deprecation	Group depreciation	Discrimination	Group appreciation
Stage 2- Dissonance	Conflict between self-depreciation and appreciation	Conflict between group depreciation and group appreciation	Conflict between dominant views of minority hierarchy and feelings of shared experience	Conflict between group appreciation and group depreciation
Stage 3- Resistance and Immersion	Self-appreciation	Group appreciation	Conflict between feelings of empathy or other minority experiences and feelings of culturocentrism	Group depreciation
Stage 4- Introspection	Concern with basis of Self- appreciation	Concern with nature of of unequivocal appreciation	Concern with ethnocentric basis for judging others	Concern with the basis of group depreciation
Stage 5- Synergetic Articulation and Awareness	Self appreciation	Group appreciation	Group appreciation	Selective appreciation

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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