unit 2 Leaving Home

UNIT EXPECTATIONS

While reading this unit, you will:

- analyze decisions and behaviours related to individual role expectations
- analyze theories and research on the subject of individual development, and summarize your findings
- analyze current issues and trends relevant to individual development, and speculate on future directions
- analyze issues and data from the perspectives associated with key theories in the disciplines of anthropology, psychology, and sociology
- communicate the results of your inquiries

Although legally you are an adult at the age of 18, leaving home and becoming financially independent are signs that you are acquiring an adult role in Canadian society.

OVERVIEW

This unit looks at the transition into adulthood for young Canadians at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Perhaps because people are living longer and because our society is more complex than it used to be, becoming independent individuals takes longer than it did for previous generations. In this unit, research will be examined to determine when and how Canadians are leaving home to live independently, finishing their education, finding jobs, and forming adult relationships. The psychological and developmental factors that influence how each young adult manages the transition, and how relationships within the family and with others support this transition, will also be explored. Finally, some of the issues that are currently affecting how your generation will become adults will be investigated.

chapter 3

Early Adulthood

CHAPTER EXPECTATIONS

While reading this chapter, you will:

- describe the diversity in personal and family roles of individuals in various cultures and historical periods
- analyze male and female roles in various societies and historical periods, taking into consideration societal norms and ideals, individuals' perceptions of roles, and actual behaviours
- describe the various roles of individuals in society and the potential for conflict between individual and family roles
- summarize the factors that influence decisions about individual lifestyle in early adulthood, drawing on traditional and current research and theory
- summarize the factors that influence decisions about educational and occupational choices
- select and access secondary sources reflecting a variety of viewpoints
- identify and respond to the theoretical viewpoints, the thesis, and the supporting arguments of materials found in a variety of secondary sources

KEY TERMS

abstract
adolescence
adulthood
age of majority
credentialism
education inflation
mentor
transition

RESEARCH SKILLS

- designing questionnaires
- using secondary analysis
- using abstracts

Families help young adults become independent by permitting them to relate to their families as adults and by supporting them in their decisions.

CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

The transition to adulthood is the next step in your life. Some students might consider themselves to be adults already, but most will be focusing on the changes that will occur in the next few years. What are the criteria for defining someone as an adult? Will the transition to adulthood be the same for this generation as it was for your parents' generation or for that of your grandparents? In this chapter, the experiences of earlier generations in completing the transition to adulthood will be examined. When and how the majority of young people separate from their parents to form an independent household will be determined. The changes in educational achievement and employment that enable youth to become financially independent will also be explored. In addition, the important relationships young people need to develop, which provide support for them as they become adults, will be studied.

The Role of Adults in Canada

Adulthood is that period of life that follows childhood and **adolescence** and lasts until death. Therefore, the time that adulthood begins depends on when adolescence ends—a passage that is not clearly defined in Western society. In common use, terms identifying the stages of life are used quite casually. For example, a newspaper item described the death of a Hamilton, Ontario, teenager, aged 18, in a drowning accident, but the headline stated "Police identify Hamilton man." Was the drowning victim an adolescent or an adult? In this textbook it is assumed that you are adolescents until the end of high school. In Canada, you achieve the **age of majority** and become an adult, by law, at 18 years of age. In this chapter, youth, a **transition** that begins during adolescence and continues into early adulthood, will be examined. In research, the boundaries of youth are widely accepted as 15–34 years of age (Meunier, Bernard, & Boisjoly, 1998), but many Canadians feel they are fully adult by their late twenties.

When individuals achieve adult status, they are expected to take on appropriate adult roles in society. In North America, the popular assumption, shared by many researchers, is that to become an adult is to become a self-reliant person. That means that a young adult has formed an identity as an

web connection

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To learn about young people's legal rights, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

Expectations of Teenagers

Do you expect to . . .	Percent indicating "Yes"		
	Nationally	Males	Females
Pursue a career	95%	93%	96%
Get the job you want when you graduate	86	86	86
Stay with the same career for life	62	61	62
Get married	88	87	89
Stay with the same partner for life	88	87	89
Eventually stay home and raise your children	45	47	43
Own your own home	96	97	96
Be more financially comfortable than your parents	79	81	77
Have to work overtime in order to get ahead	44	48	41
Travel extensively outside Canada	72	68	77
Be involved in your community	65	62	68
See the national debt paid off in your lifetime	49	51	47

Source: "Table 4.2: Expectations of Teenagers" from *Canada's Teens: Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow*. Copyright © 2001 by Reginald W. Bibby. Reproduced by permission of Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited.

legal matters | Young People's Rights

There is no single age at which young people are given the rights we normally associate with being an adult. People gain more rights as they grow up, and some rights do not exist until well after legal "adulthood" at age 18. The following is a list of some of some rights that young people acquire at ages ranging from 7 to 19. Some do not come at a specific age, but vary from person to person, depending on the circumstances.

7 and Over

- Consent to be adopted required.

12 and Over

- Can be prosecuted for provincial offences, such as truancy.
- Can be charged with a criminal offence.
- Can consent on one's own to counselling by service provider.
- Consent is required to change name.

14 and Over

- Can reside with a third party or non-custodial parent without criminal repercussion to the parent or third party.
- Can see Adult entertainment movies if with a person 18 years or older.
- Can consent to sexual activity except with a person in a position of authority or trust.

15

- If fifteenth birthday is between first day of school and December 31, can quit school at the end of that school year.

16 and Over

- Is considered an adult under the Provincial Offences Act.
- If sixteenth birthday is between January 1 and the end of August, can quit school on sixteenth birthday.
- Can work during school hours.
- Is entitled to participate in a decision identifying whether one is a special needs student and subsequent placement.
- Can voluntarily withdraw from parental control, but may lose right to parents' financial support.
- Can no longer be apprehended by the Children's Aid Society.
- Can refuse emergency treatment.
- Can be or appoint a substitute decision maker in medical treatment and personal care matters.
- If single, is entitled to social assistance in special circumstances.
- Is protected from discrimination based on age respecting housing.
- Is eligible for novice driver's licence in graduated licensing scheme.
- Has the right to privacy of, and access to, personal information on own behalf.

Under 18

- May be sued on contracts for necessities (such as housing). May be sued on contracts for non-necessities if beneficial to the minor.

18 and Over

- Age of majority—ceases to be a minor.
- Is eligible to vote.
- Adult for the purposes of the Education Act, but if appealing a suspension, parents will still be notified.
- Is protected from age discrimination.
- Can no longer be the subject of custody or access orders.
- Parents' obligation to provide financial support ceases, unless in school full time.
- Is eligible for social assistance, if in need.
- Is entitled to earn full minimum wage.
- Can enter into contracts.

- Can make a will.
- Can change name.
- Can see a restricted movie.
- Can marry without permission.

19 and Over

- Can consume alcohol.
- Can purchase tobacco.

Non Age-Based Milestones

- Pupils of any age can see their school records.
- Consent to medical treatment depends on mental capacity, not age.
- Federal Human Rights Code and Charter protect all ages from age discrimination.
- Single parents of any age are eligible for social assistance, if needed.
- Civil liability of minors depends on maturity, not age (no known case ascribing liability to a child of "tender years," i.e., under 6 years). ■

Source: Justice for Children and Youth

individual, has separated from his or her family of orientation, has started a career, has left the home of origin, and has formed supportive relationships (Bateson, 2000; Côté & Allahar, 1994; Mead, 1935; Shanahan, 2000). Betty Carter and Monica McGoldrick (1989) describe young, single adulthood as the first stage of the family life cycle, since the young adult leaves one family to prepare for the formation of another. Since the transition has changed so much over the last two generations, North Americans question whether adolescents are adequately being prepared for the challenges of adulthood (Bateson, 2000).

In North America, the common assumption is that you will be an adult when you are a self-reliant person.

Adolescents in Canada are optimistic about their futures as adults. In a study of the attitudes and values of teens aged 15 to 19, Reginald Bibby (2001) found that the majority expect to graduate from school, pursue a career, marry, and be better off than their parents.

This optimism was also found in the answers given by American students in the 1990s (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000). However, young people experience some anxiety about making the right decisions and plans to achieve their expectations (Bateson, 2000). Becoming an adult is an important transition in all societies, but the diversity of adult roles available in the twenty-first century makes the nature of this transition more difficult to predict.

The Transition to Adulthood in Earlier Times

In the twentieth century, historians started to piece together a *social history*. This section describes the social history of youth in Canada and in Europe.

Later, you will read some observations of this stage in non-Western cultures to remind you that human social behaviours, being inventions and not natural facts, can be very diverse. Social historians, like cultural anthropologists, are limited in their understanding. They tend to examine the observations of other societies to look for examples that are representative. For instance, the common image of youth in the 1960s is the "hippie era of psychedelic drugs and free love." In fact, this behaviour was more prevalent in the early 1970s and was limited to a small segment of the youth population. Therefore, just as you might observe many individual variations in behaviour now, so the conduct of people varies in other societies (Bateson, 2000).

Social historians rely on surviving accounts from the past as their primary sources. Official papers contain information about laws, regulations, and court decisions affecting individual and family matters. Essays advising others about the conduct of people's lives present the ideals of outspoken members of society. Poems and, more recently, novels, reflect the perceptions of their authors. Content analysis of personal papers reveals details of people's lives, including the thoughts and feelings they choose to express. Newspapers document both facts and opinions about day-to-day issues. When analyzing the descriptions of Canadian and other societies, it is useful to consider whether they reflect what actually happened, the opinions of critics, or the ideals of those in power.

The Impact of Industrialization

In pre-industrial societies, there was no adolescence as people know it today. Children were infants until aged seven or eight, when they were considered to be old enough to take on some kind of work. After this age they were called **youth** until they married and lived independently, usually in their mid- to late twenties. Working-class youth often left their families to live in other households in a state of semi-dependence. Their role in that new household depended on their social class. Lower-class children became domestic servants if they were girls and labourers or apprentices learning a trade if they were boys. Upper-class children were educated at home. The father as *pater familias*, father of the household, was expected to treat all who lived in his household—wife, children, servants, apprentices—as family and to be loved by them (Gillis, 1974), but he exerted strict discipline over them regardless of their age.

Functionalists explain that the separation of youth from their parents was a practical solution in pre-industrial societies. The high rates of infant mortality and childhood illnesses resulted in half the children dying before the age of 20.

Families produced many children to improve their chances of having a male heir survive to support them in their old age. Poorer families could not provide enough work for all their children, so they sent them to work for wealthier families until they were old enough to marry. The prevailing advice to parents, to avoid becoming attached to their children, was based more on the fear that their children would probably die soon than on the value of independence (Gillis, 1974). Sending children away achieved the recommended separation of parent and child and also provided youth with some opportunity for social mobility and a choice of occupation.

Industrialization changed all of this. In the nineteenth century, as production moved from the home to the factory, and families migrated to cities to work, it became possible for youth to earn an income without leaving home. Instead of sending them away, fathers took their young sons and daughters to work in factories, where they retained their authority over them and even collected their children's wages until they turned 17. After this age, young people earned an income and became boarders in their parents' homes, still contributing income to the family (Gillis, 1974). The daughters of the new middle class, the factory owners, were educated at home, while the sons were sent away to school. Young men and women with an income enjoyed more freedom when they were finished the long work day, and participated in organized social activities. Although half of them stayed home until they were 24 or older, it is not surprising that they married and left home at a younger age than previous generations did.

In the early twentieth century, middle-class children attended school, but working-class children, such as these newsboys, left school at age 14 or earlier to earn money to help support their families.

The twentieth century was a period of change for the family, as it was for many other institutions. The mechanization of production had reduced the need for labour. Although many parents resisted the change because they felt that they had a right to have their children work (Gillis, 1974), child labour had been abolished, and schooling had been introduced to occupy the children. Early in the century, the age for leaving school was 14, but it was soon raised to 16 as the number of jobs available for young adolescents declined. In 1904, G. Stanley Hall used an old term from the middle ages, *adolescence*, to identify children who had reached puberty but who were still not in the workforce (Allahar & Côté, 1994). With the extension of schooling, adolescence became a time of learning and leisure for the children of the growing

middle class. But in the working class, young people continued to leave school to work at menial jobs to help support their families. Those living in urban centres of Canada were able to live at home until they married. Those from rural areas and in regions with depressed economies had to migrate to cities and board with other families as they searched for work there (Brookes, 1982).

Coming of Age in the Twenty-First Century

The major changes in Canadian society that marked the last century have continued into the twenty-first century. Some researchers suggest that the transition from childhood to adulthood has become an extended period of adolescence (Sheehy, 1995). By this they mean that individuals remain emotionally and financially dependent on their parents until their late twenties or later. Youth seem to be leaving school and starting work, leaving home, getting married, and even becoming parents in a more compressed time frame than was the case a hundred years ago (Shanahan, 2000). Young people now spend more years in school but have fewer job opportunities when they leave because there has been another major shift in the economy that has reduced the work available. James Allahar and Anton Côté (1994) argue in their book *Generation on Hold* that youth have lost their voice in adult society because they are held back as consumers of a youth culture rather than allowed to become productive members of society in responsible adult roles.

Do the conditions in Canada make it easy for youth to make a successful transition to adulthood? Allahar and Côté quote Margaret Mead's opinion, based on her observations of the change in various South Sea island cultures, that society should provide two things:

- a set of consistent beliefs about the behaviour of adults
- opportunities for young people to participate in clear adult roles

In Canada, the diversity of roles available for adults presents the challenge of choosing which path to take. Many adult roles are not accessible to youth if, like most, they do not have a stable income, so many young Canadians today do not take on these roles until later than previous generations did. Functionalists explain that delaying the transition into adulthood is necessary to protect young people who are not yet fully socialized for adulthood in our advanced society. On the other hand, conflict theorists such as Côté and Allahar could argue that youth are exploited by a society that does not allow their full participation in the workplace and, therefore, prevents them from achieving independence from their families.

in focus | Boomers and Other Cohorts

Each of us is a member of a cohort, a grouping of people in society based on age. Cohorts do not correspond exactly to generations but, rather, to fertility patterns. For example, the *baby-boom* cohort was born during a 20-year span from 1947 until 1966, including those who were born in other countries. That 20-year period was marked by a sustained high birth rate in Canada, when women were having an average of just over four children. The Canadian economy was very prosperous in the 1950s and 1960s. Canadians knew they could afford large families because the future appeared very promising. Other cohorts in Canada span shorter periods of time.

Baby boomers are characterized as a special group by the media, particularly because of their influence on Canadian society. This has been the case since they were young adults, has continued to this day, and will continue until most of their cohort has died. There is one simple reason for this: they represent the largest cohort by far—one-third of the Canadian population in 1998. So their influence in Canada, both socially and economically, is tremendous. For instance, when the oldest segment of the baby-boomer cohort reached their thirties in the late 1970s, they were just starting their families and beginning to think about purchasing a house. Consequently, the price of houses increased rapidly because there were far more potential buyers than sellers. This trend continued until the beginning of the 1990s, when demand for homes declined as the last of the baby boomers, known as *Generation X*, reached the house-buying age. The cohort following the baby boomers, called the *baby bust*, is a very small one. It spans only 12 years, from 1967 until 1979, a period of declining fertility in Canada, when women were averaging only 1.7 children each. So you can see why the baby boomers are so influential.

Members of the baby boom echo cohort are the children of the baby boomers.

Your demographic cohort, known as the *baby-boom echo*, was born between 1980 and 1995. You are the children of the baby boomers, who created a mini-boom of their own. Since they started to reproduce late, baby boomers were not as prolific as their parents, averaging just under two children per family. However, the baby-boom echo is still a large cohort because there were 6.5 million by 1998, over 20 percent of the Canadian population. That is why you experienced crowded schools, or why your parents had to line up for hours to sign you up for swimming lessons when you were younger. The size of your cohort explains the success of television programming like MuchMusic or *The Simpsons* and why the minivan was such a success for the North American auto industry—it was built so that this very large cohort could be driven to swimming lessons or hockey practice! The size of the baby-boom echo cohort could mean that you will continue to compete for opportunities throughout your lifetimes. ■

Source: Adapted from Foot, D.K., & Stoffman, D. (1998), *Boom, bust & echo 2000*. Rev. ed. Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, pp. 24-30.

1. What jobs should be plentiful in the future for your cohort as the baby-boom generation begins to reach retirement age?
2. Why would members of Generation X have found it more difficult to find well-paying jobs that lead to promotion than their parents' generation did, even though they were often better trained and educated?

Leaving Home

In the television program *Friends*, which was popular during the 1990s, six young adults in their mid-twenties lived in several apartments near one another in New York City. They had finished their education and had started to work at their careers, with varying degrees of success. Although they were all sexually active, none of them lived as a married or cohabiting couple until the seventh year of the series. The program was applauded for presenting a realistic image of young adult life. Living independently, either alone or with other non-related people, now seems to be the major event that signals successful transition into adulthood in North America (Vinovskis, 2001).

You will make many decisions as you become an adult. Will you pursue education? Where will you work? Where will you live? With whom will you live?

developing your research skills | Using Questionnaires

Using *questionnaires*, you can ask a large sample group of people questions and record their answers. Usually, the questions are *closed*, meaning that the subject must select from the answers provided.

Leaving Home Questionnaire

1. Design a questionnaire to determine whether the adolescents in your school community and their parents have similar expectations concerning adult children leaving home.
   a) Develop a hypothesis stating what you think might be the answer.
   b) Introduce and state the nature of your study.
   c) Include multiple-choice questions to elicit the information needed to test your hypothesis:
      - whether the subject is an adolescent or parent
      - age at which subject expects an adult child to leave home
      - anticipated reason for leaving home (e.g., marriage, work, or to attend school in another location)
   d) Put the results in chart form, using numbers and percentages, and analyze them to formulate conclusions concerning your hypothesis. ■

In other species, the young are expected to leave when they become sexually mature. Anthropologist Robert Sapolsky (1997) describes how male chimpanzees must leave the tribe in which they were raised and join another tribe. To accomplish this, they must survive a fight with an older male of the new tribe. Some human societies have also expected their young to leave the family home early. Among the BaMbuti people of East Africa, adolescent boys leave

FYI

Campus Life: Semi-Independence at Last!

For many of you, the first major step on the road to independence from your family of origin will be going off to college or university. For many young adults, this is often the first opportunity to live away from their parents. How you manage living with your roommate and floor mates will have a tremendous influence on your success and happiness during your first year at college or university and in subsequent years. So how do student-housing officials ensure that most roommates and floor mates get along? The answer to this is a compatibility questionnaire and, of course, a lot of luck! After you complete the questionnaire, the results will be tallied and compatible people will be matched up. Questions deal with such issues as study habits, preferred bedtimes, attitudes toward smoking and alcohol, and standards of cleanliness. It's better to be honest than idealistic.

Your ability to adjust to the living habits of others could make your year in residence one of the most memorable experiences of your post-secondary years. Few Ontario colleges or universities have the space in residence for students beyond their first year. You will probably choose from among the people you meet during the first few weeks those with whom you will share the second step of semi-independence—sharing an apartment or house.

their families for *nkumbi*, a challenging initiation that takes place in a small village built specifically for this rite. When the *nkumbi* is finished, the village is burned and the young men return to their original village, but to build their own homes, where they will live until they marry several years later (Turnbull, 1985). In the nineteenth century, puberty occurred at the age of 16 for girls and 18 for boys, and the development of adult size and strength occurred a few years later. Therefore, marriage and leaving home would occur within a few years of physical maturity (Gillis, 1974). Now that improved nutrition has lowered puberty to as early as 10 years of age, sexual maturity occurs five to eight years before individuals achieve their full adult size and strength. In Canadian society, sexual maturity is no longer an appropriate indication that an individual is ready to leave home.

North Americans expect that young adults will leave home before they marry, but it is usually a gradual process rather than an event. Many students have to leave home to attend college or university, where they live in student housing. In some countries, young people leave home for military service and live in communal barracks. For example, in Israel, two years of military service are required of all high school graduates. Young Mormons are expected to perform missionary service away from home for two years. These living

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To learn about a service that allows students to exchange homes to reduce the cost of post-secondary education, and a guide to all aspects of post-secondary education, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

arrangements are called *semi-dependent* because it is assumed that parents are still supporting the young adult to some extent and that they will return home frequently. For example, Bateson (2000) tells the story that in Israel they joke that the army doesn't need washing machines—the soldiers take their uniforms home for their mothers to wash! Living independently requires individuals to accept the responsibility for meeting their own needs for food, clothing, shelter, and companionship.

When Adults Leave Home

For many young Canadians, living independently happens later than it used to. The majority are still living at home at 24 years of age (Boyd & Norris, 1999). So are the majority of 24-year-olds in southern Europe, western Europe, and the United States. In their book *Next: Predicting the Near Future*, Ira Matathia and Marian Slazman have dubbed this trend *the Permakid* (1999). They suggest that the family of the near future will have to change to accommodate adult children. Several research questions arise concerning this topic:

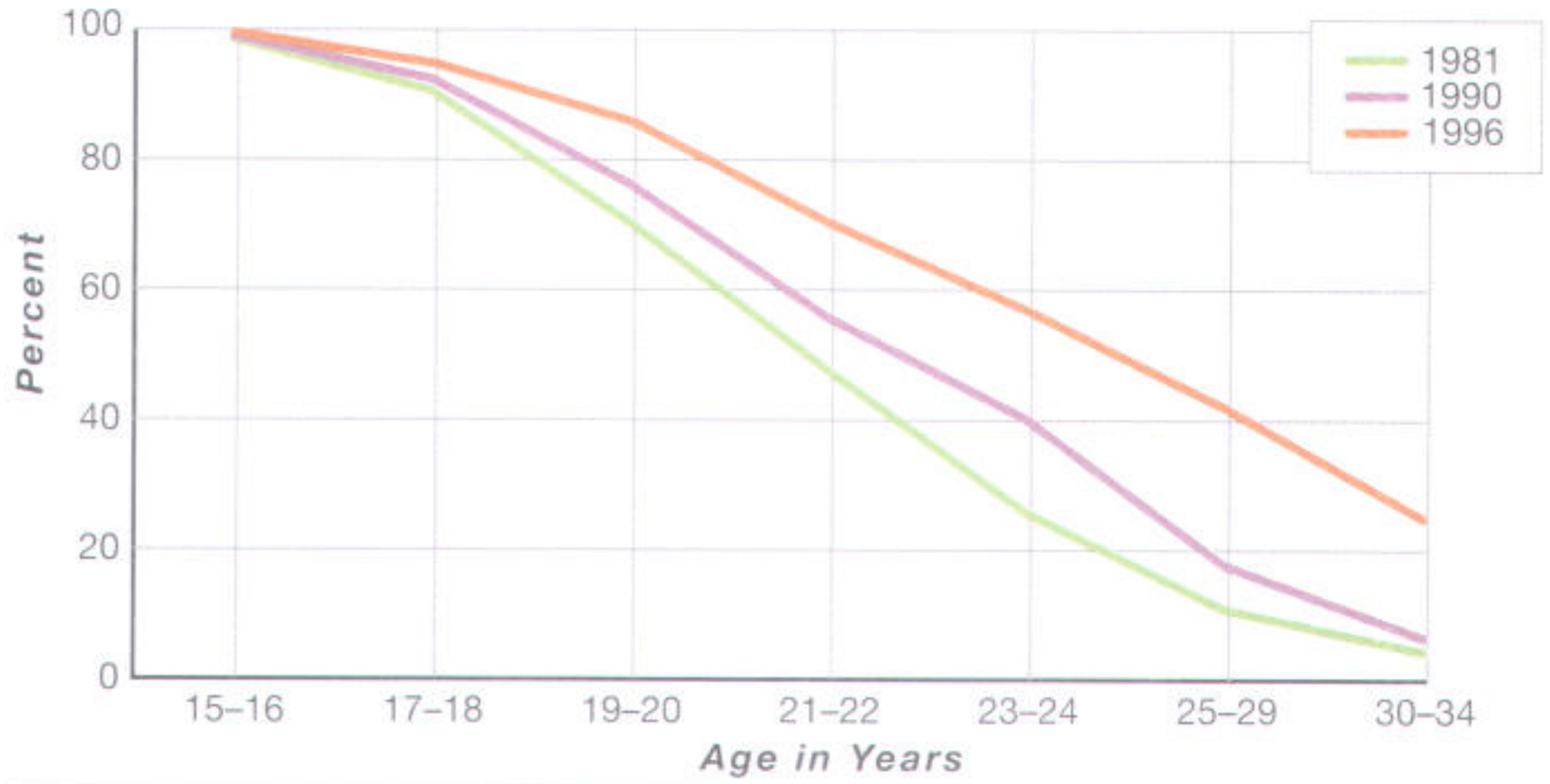
- When do young Canadians leave home, and how does the timing compare with earlier generations?
- How do families influence the decision?
- How is the decision to leave home affected by education, employment, and relationships with others?

The American study "High School and Beyond" found that 7 out of 10 high school graduates and 6 out of 10 of their parents expected that they would be living independently by the age of 24 (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993). Therefore, since the average age for marriage is now over 30, both parents and adult children expect that young adults will leave home before marriage. The decision to leave home can be analyzed using the social exchange theory. Young adults have to consider the costs and benefits of staying at home compared with those of leaving. They must weigh a desire for privacy from parental supervision and independence to live a different lifestyle from that of their parents, against the companionship and the financial and emotional support they receive from them. Staying at home allows individuals to invest in further education and to find a good job before having to find affordable housing and pay rent (Boyd & Norris, 1995). Financial costs may tip the balance, but parental expectations concerning the appropriate time are an important factor in determining when adult children will leave home (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993).

"The primary purpose of raising a child is to help that child get out of your life and into a life of its own."

— John Rosemond

Percentage of Unmarried Adults Living With Parents



Source: Adapted from the Statistics Canada publication, *Canadian Social Trends – Spring 1999*, Catalogue 11-008, Issue No. 52, feature "The Crowded Nest: Young Adults at Home," page 3.

The age at which young people choose to live independently of their parents is gradually increasing. The Eternal Youth study found that, by 1990, living with parents continued to be almost universal at the ages of 15 and 16 and very rare at the age of 34. Between those ages, however, young people were staying home longer than before. Young women continued to leave home earlier than young men did (Meunier, Bernard, & Boisjoly, 1998). Staying home until older is a trend that has continued. By 1996, 7 out of 10 unmarried adults were living with their parents at the age of 24, and 1 in 4 were still at home between the ages of 30 to 34 (Boyd & Norris, 1999). In a social phenomenon that appears to have spread across the Western world, young adults are choosing to live with their parents longer.

For Better or For Worse®

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research study | Eternal Youth? Changes in the Living Arrangements of Young People

RESEARCH QUESTION

When do young Canadians leave home, and how does the timing compare with that of earlier generations?

HYPOTHESES

- It is possible that young people now leave the parental home later.
- All forms of cohabitation, other than forming a couple, may be relatively more frequent.
- Gender differences are becoming less of a factor.

RESEARCH METHOD

Using *secondary analysis*, the researchers analyzed data from Statistics Canada's Survey of Consumer Finances on living arrangements and participation in education and employment, sorted by age and gender for 1981 and 1990.

RESULTS

- Between the ages of 15 and 34, young people were leaving home later in 1990 than they were in 1981.
- Although fewer were living as couples in 1990 than in 1981, by the age of 24, more than half of those who had left home were living as couples. Living alone or with a roommate was more common in 1990; however, at the age of 24, it was still in third place behind living with parents or living as a couple.
- Men continue to leave home later than women do at all ages, but the gap was less for those under the age of 20 and greater for those over 20.

CONCLUSION

All of their hypotheses were supported by their investigation. ■

Source: Adapted from Meunier, D., Bernard, P., & Boisjoly, J. (1998). Eternal youth? Changes in the living arragements of young people. In M. Corak (Ed.), *Labour markets, social institutions, and the future of Canada's children*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

The Decision to Leave Home

The factors that influence the decision to leave home are complex. It is clear that young adults leave home later than they thought they would, but also later than their parents thought they would (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993). In The Nesting Phenomena Survey, an American study conducted in 1996, many young adults who were living with their parents commented that they enjoyed the security of living at home while they finished their education and were looking for work (Wiener, 1997). On the other hand, some young adults stay because they are responsible for the care of a parent. Parents enjoy the companionship of their adult children if they are able to establish an adult relationship with them (Boyd & Norris, 1995; Wiener, 1997). A comfortable family environment seems to encourage young adults to stay at home.

Leaving home occurs earlier when there is conflict in the family. When young adults feel that their parents demand too much from them without granting them adult status in the family, they may leave home to assert their

Living by yourself requires that you accept responsibility for all the bills and all the housework.

independence (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1997). Children of divorced parents are more likely to leave home, especially if one or both parents have remarried. Those who live with a stepparent are most likely to leave home if they feel that it is no longer their home and if they receive less parental support from a stepparent (Boyd & Norris, 1995; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1997).

The economics of leaving home is also an important factor. Living at home is usually cheaper than living alone or with roommates. However, some parents are willing to continue to support unmarried children even when they leave home. Choosing to stay at home can be more economical, since most youth pay little or no room and board and continue to do the few chores they took on as adolescents (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1997; Allahar & Côté, 1998). There is currently a shortage of housing in many parts of Canada, which results in higher rents and fewer affordable apartments. Young adults with a low personal income, either because they are unemployed or unable to find full-time work or because they are still attending school, are more likely to stay home. The adult children of more affluent parents might be used to a more comfortable lifestyle and more privacy in their parents' home. Therefore, it is not surprising that children of parents with limited incomes are more likely to leave and support themselves, whereas children of higher-income families decide to leave home later (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1997; Wiener, 1997).

Women usually decide to leave home earlier than men do. In Canada, the gap between the age when women leave and when men leave is getting narrower for those under 23, but the gap is widening for those over 24 (Meunier, Bernard, & Boisjoly, 1998). The difference might be explained by the rate at which women form couples. Traditionally, women married and left home at an earlier age than men did because they tended to marry men who were two years older. This continues to be the pattern, although marriage is delayed until the late twenties. Perhaps some of the unmarried women who have left home are cohabiting in couple relationships with older men. Another possible reason is that since young women receive more experience in housework as adolescents (Devereaux, 1993; Wiener, 1997), they might be more willing to accept the responsibilities of maintaining a separate household to gain their

case study | Going Home!

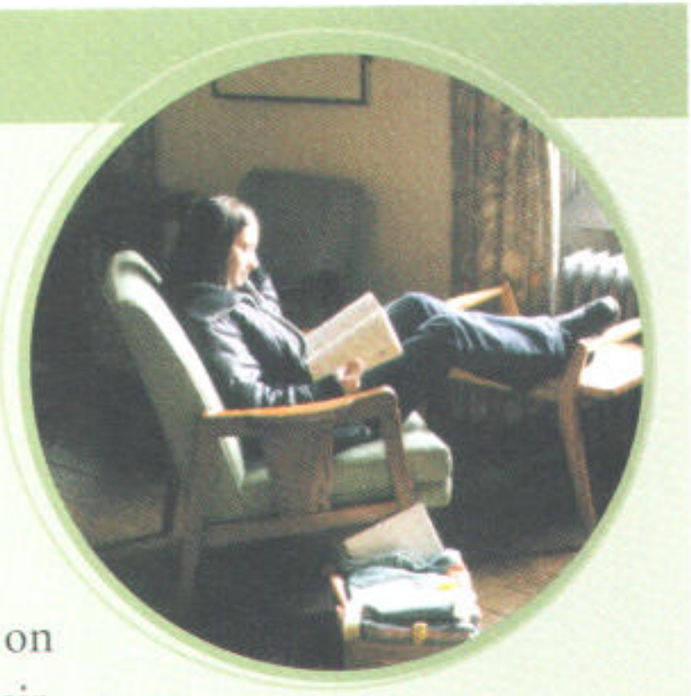
Colleen Johnson is a 23-year-old graduate from Trent University who has recently completed her B.A. in Honours History and International Politics. She moved back to Toronto to attend the teacher education program at the University of Toronto. Both of Colleen's parents are high school teachers. Colleen has resisted becoming a teacher, even though it is a career that fits into her life goals, because she doesn't want "to become her parents" and would prefer to do things her own way. This has created a conflict between Colleen and her parents.

Colleen's decision to move back home was necessitated by the fact that she spent her summer travelling in India and Nepal, and because rents in Toronto, even for student accommodations, are very high. She plans to use her qualifications to work as a teacher abroad so that she can continue to travel.

Colleen's transition to living at home again has been very difficult. She has been relatively independent for the past four years at university and has not had to account for herself to others. Her summers have been spent in northern Ontario working as a canoe instructor at a children's camp.

Colleen's older sister, Emma, has recently married and is living in the basement apartment in her parents' house with her husband, Sanjay. Emma is finishing her Ph.D. in International Relations, and Sanjay is working as an economist for an investment firm. Colleen's younger brother, Andy, is a high school student who lives at home, but his part-time job at the local supermarket keeps him busy Friday nights and all day Saturday.

Colleen's parents have enjoyed having her around, but have had to make adjustments to having their middle child living with them again. They had been used to being alone on the third floor of their house and had been using Colleen's bedroom as a study and sewing room.



Colleen's move back to her parents' home has been difficult after being independent while living on her own throughout university.

Sometimes Colleen wonders whether her parents realize that she has grown up in the past four years. To her, they seem unhappy when she goes out at night and want to know where she is going, whom she is with, and when she will return home. At the age of 23, Colleen feels that they should trust her judgment. Colleen's parents also have asked her to cook the occasional meal and to help tidy up when needed, but because she is busy with her studies, she often does not get around to doing these things even though she intends to. ■

1. What difficulties is Colleen experiencing living in her parents' home again? Why?
2. Are Colleen's difficulties related only to her living arrangement? Explain.
3. What potential conflicts do you think Colleen and her parents may have? Why?
4. Using the social exchange theory, assess the costs and benefits of Colleen's return home for Colleen and for her parents.
5. Systems theory suggests that each household member would have to make adjustments to Colleen's return to the family home. How do you think Colleen's return would affect Emma, Andy, and Sanjay?

independence from protective parents. However, it is possible that the shrinking gap between men and women is a cohort effect that will continue as the baby-bust generation ages, but is not necessarily a change that will continue in future generations.

Although the trend for young adults to leave home later than previous generations did has continued for two decades, it is not known whether it will continue for your generation. There are conflicting viewpoints on the consequences of the current trend. Some suggest that individuals who stay home longer are more likely to acquire the values and behaviour of their parents (Boyd & Pryor, 1990; Meunier, Bernard, & Boisjoly, 1998). Others consider staying at home into the late twenties to be a symptom of immaturity, either in adult children who cannot separate from their parents, or in parents who are unable to let go of their adult children (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1997). Valerie Wiener (1997) suggests that Canadians could be observing a gradual redefinition of the family to better meet our needs. When your generation chooses to leave home will reflect the social and economic influences over the next decade.

Completing an Education

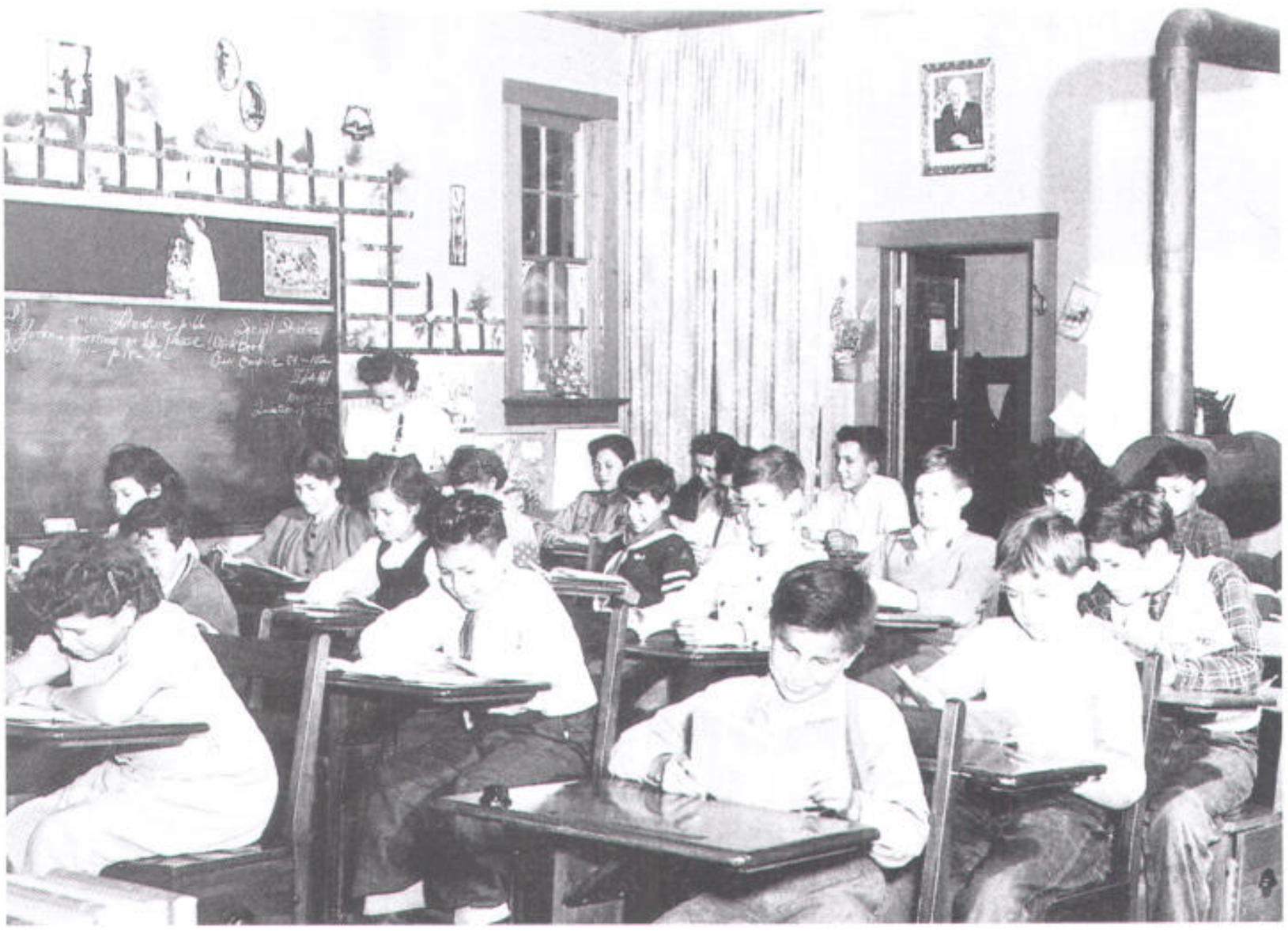
The Development of Education

Education is a recent development in human society. In non-literate societies, news and knowledge was spread through storytelling, so young people could begin to know as much as their elders. Youth followed in the footsteps of their parents—girls became mothers, and boys continued the labour or craft of their fathers. Children knew what to do and could work alongside adults, but lacked the experience and, of course, the physical strength to take on adult responsibility (Postman, 1982). By the Middle Ages, wealthy boys were sent to "Latin Schools" to remove them from the company of women. The term *adolescent*, derived from the Latin word *adolescere*, which means *to grow up*, was used briefly by church schools in the fifteenth century to refer to their students. Letters from that time suggest that very little education actually took place, because the boys were undisciplined (Gillis, 1974). Whether the boys and girls were rich or poor, the long period of youth was devoted to maturing and practising the skills needed for their adult roles.

Education for most people became feasible when the development of the printing press in the fifteenth century made it possible to publish written works for a mass audience. Reading gave people access to knowledge that

previously had been available only to a few "scribes." Since reading is a solitary activity, it enabled individuals to make their own meaning of the information and to discuss ideas with others. Adults became more knowledgeable than children because reading is a skill that takes time to develop. According to communications theorist Neil Postman, literacy created a division between childhood and adulthood based on access to knowledge (1982). Until the nineteenth century, education for the youth of wealthy families emphasized the classics, Latin, Greek, mathematics, and literature, not job training, but little education was available for the majority of children.

In the late nineteenth century, primary schools were established to educate all children. Since working-class parents knew their children already had the skills required for manual labour, there was widespread resistance to schooling. It was not until the twentieth century that the concept of education for all was widely accepted. Even then, in the first 30 years, most boys and girls left school at the age of 14 to work, and some children from poorer families did not attend school regularly even when they were legally obliged to (Clark, 2000). The assumption was that starting work early was more valuable because they would learn the specific skills required on the job (Côté & Allahar, 1994).



In the 1950s, Canadians believed that providing opportunities for all young people to get a good education would contribute to economic equality.

When the government of Nigeria, West Africa, introduced universal primary education in 1974, rural parents also resisted sending their children to school instead of the fields because they saw no economic advantage to schooling. Although today people accept that education is essential for success in life, there are still many parts of the world where parents do not send their children to school.

In the 50 years since World War II, Canada and other Western countries have continually evaluated whether their education systems were preparing youth adequately. In 1947, fewer than half of students graduated from high school, prompting the Canadian Education Association to call for "the type of training which will enable these young people to assume the full responsibilities of citizenship" (Gaskell, 1993, p. xii). The prosperity of the 1950s led to a new philosophy of education that has continued more or less as policy in Canadian provinces. It was believed that education would contribute to economic growth, as Canadian workers would be more productive. However, it was also believed that education would contribute to economic equality by providing opportunities for all youth to acquire skills that would qualify them for well-paying jobs (Clark, 2000). By the 1960s and 1970s, several "streams" were introduced to high schools so that all students could be educated, regardless of ability. Post-secondary education became more accessible in the 1960s and 1970s, as new universities were built to accommodate the baby-boom children, and community colleges were opened to provide technical and vocational training. In the 1980s, the goal of education was to provide students with the skills that would be required in a changing workplace, but there was also an effort to counsel students to choose an education suited to their interests and abilities (Gaskell, 1993).

Percentage of Young Men and Women Attending School, 1921–1991

Years	Ages 15–19		Ages 20–24	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1921	23%	27%	3%	2%
1931	32	35	4	2
1941	34	37	5	3
1951	41	40	7	3
1961	62	56	12	5
1971	74	56	12	5
1981	66	66	21	16
1991	79	80	32	33

Source: Allahar, A. & Côté, J. (1998). *Richer and poorer: the structure of inequality in Canada*. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., Publishers, p. 134.

By the end of the twentieth century, education was viewed as the key to success in life. Assuming that "anyone can get ahead if they do well at school" (Gaskell, 1991), families, schools, and employers encouraged young people to stay in school and to attend post-secondary education to avoid unemployment, get better jobs, and earn a higher income. Youth aspired to high educational goals. In 2000, 62 percent of young people aged 15 to 19 expected to graduate from university, 18 percent expected to graduate from college, and less than 1 percent thought they would not finish high school (Bibby, 2001). Youth talked about having a "career," not a job, and expected to be better off than their parents.

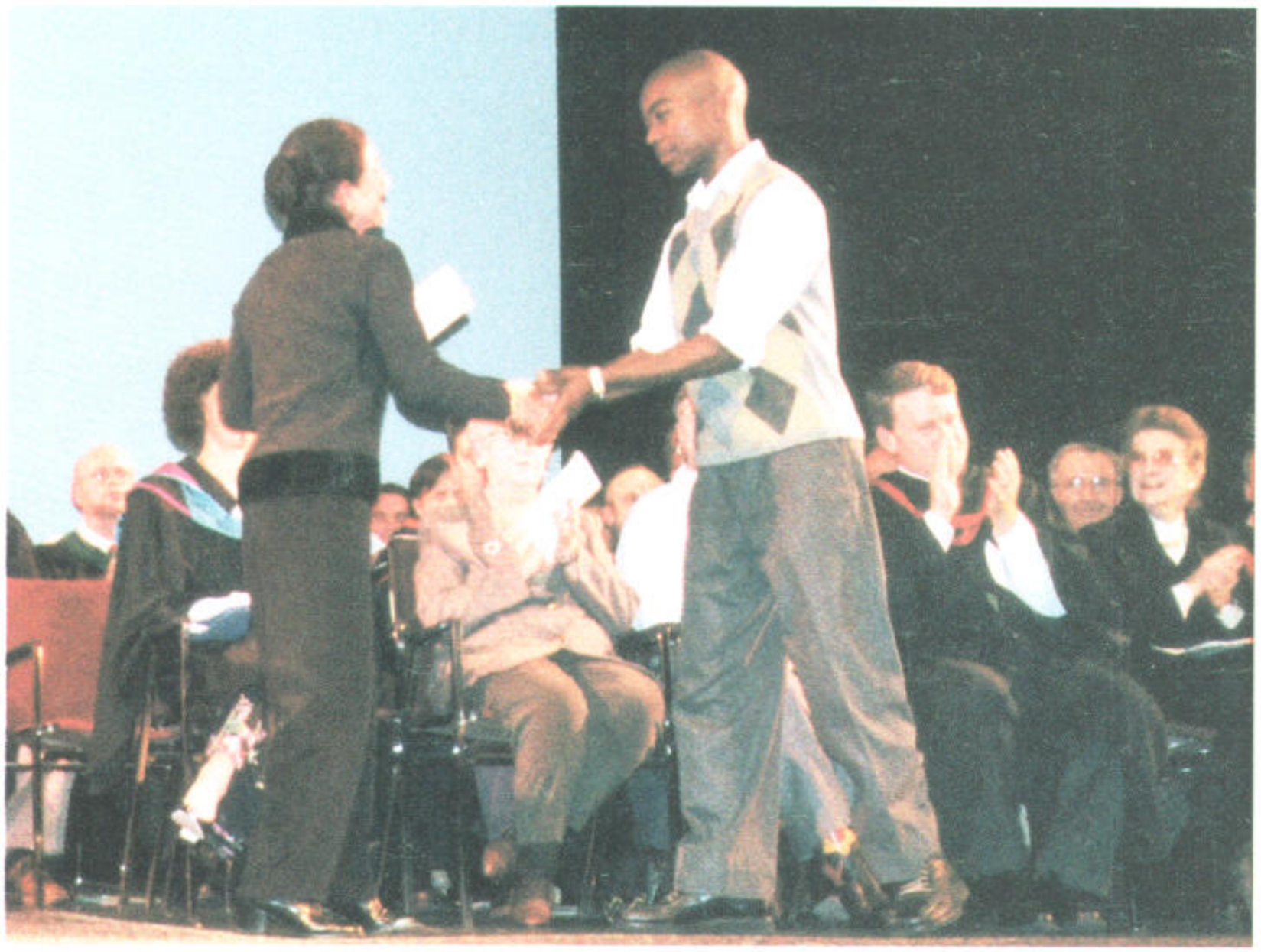
The Value of Education

Most Canadians believe that the best way to prepare for a career is through formal post-secondary education. Students are encouraged to qualify for the jobs they want by learning the necessary skills in a college or university program. In 1999, the Council of Ministers in Education, in their Report on Education (p. 6), emphasized the value of education:

> All jobs, not just new jobs, demand higher levels of education and technical ability. Since 1990, the number of jobs requiring a university degree or post-secondary diploma has increased by 1.3 million. The total number of jobs available for people with less learning has decreased by 800 000. The more learning you have, the more likely it is that you will find a good job.

Increasingly in Canada, education is valued for job training rather than for its intrinsic interest (Gaskell, 1991). Côté and Allahar (1994) refer to this trend as **credentialism**. Students receive career counselling to select courses that provide the prerequisites for further education, and then to choose the post-secondary program that will earn them the credentials for a job. They also tend to select courses in which they expect to achieve higher marks, rather than choose those that are interesting but challenging (Gaskell, 1991). Clearly, Canadian youth expect education to prepare them for work. Ninety percent of post-secondary graduates in 1990 stated that it was important or very important to obtain employment related to their field of study (Little & Lapierre, 1996).

The majority of young Canadians attain some post-secondary education. Canada's secondary graduation rate—the percentage of 18-year-olds outside of Québec and 17-year-olds in Québec, where secondary school ends at grade 11—was 72. However, when students are allowed more years to complete their schooling, 85 percent of 24-year-old Canadians had completed high school



Most high school graduates will go on to post-secondary education to prepare for their careers.

(Clark, 2000). Most of them graduated at the end of their high school years, but others were school leavers who returned to school to complete their high school education. Of those who graduated from high school:

- 80 percent went on to post-secondary education
- 42 percent chose university
- 29 percent chose community college
- the remainder went to other post-secondary programs, such as private business or art schools and apprenticeships

In addition, one in four school leavers—those who had left before graduating—eventually enrolled in post-secondary programs (Clark, 1997). Not all students who enrol will graduate. Universities estimate that 10–20 percent of students will drop out by the end of their first year, and only 58 percent of those who start will graduate within five years. However, Canada now leads the industrial nations of the world in the percentage of the population having post-secondary education (Canadian Education Statistics Council, 2000).

"Jobs demand higher levels of education and technical ability" (Council of Ministers of Education, 1999), but do individuals require the education

web connection

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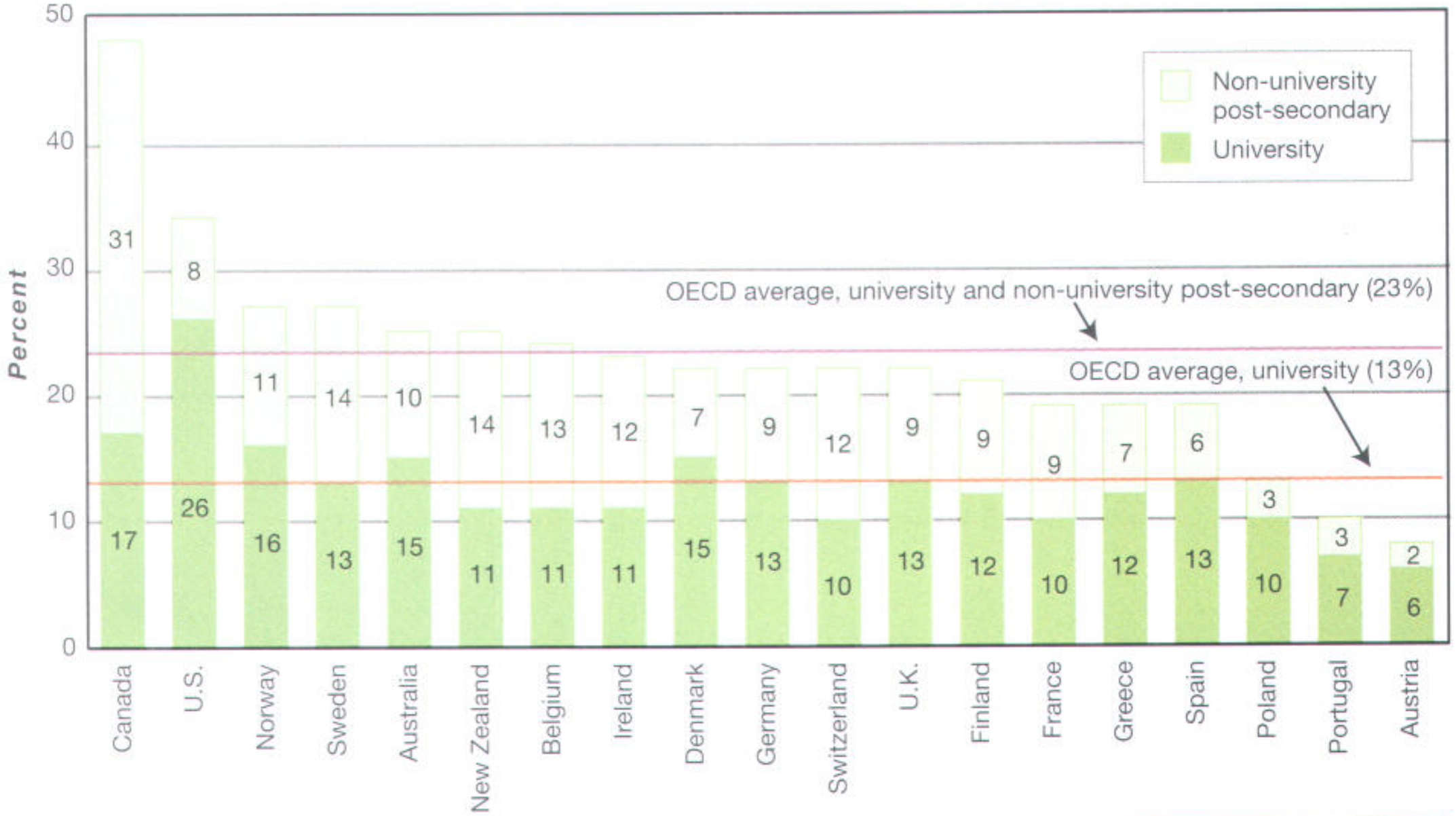
To learn more about school issues of interest to Canadian youth, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

Percentage of the Population Aged 25 to 64 That Has Completed Post-Secondary Education, OECD* Countries, 1996



***OECD** = Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

Notes: The following OECD countries did not provide data for non-university post-secondary completions and are therefore not included in this figure: Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and Turkey.

International comparisons need to be made with care because of the effect differences in definitions can have on the results reported.

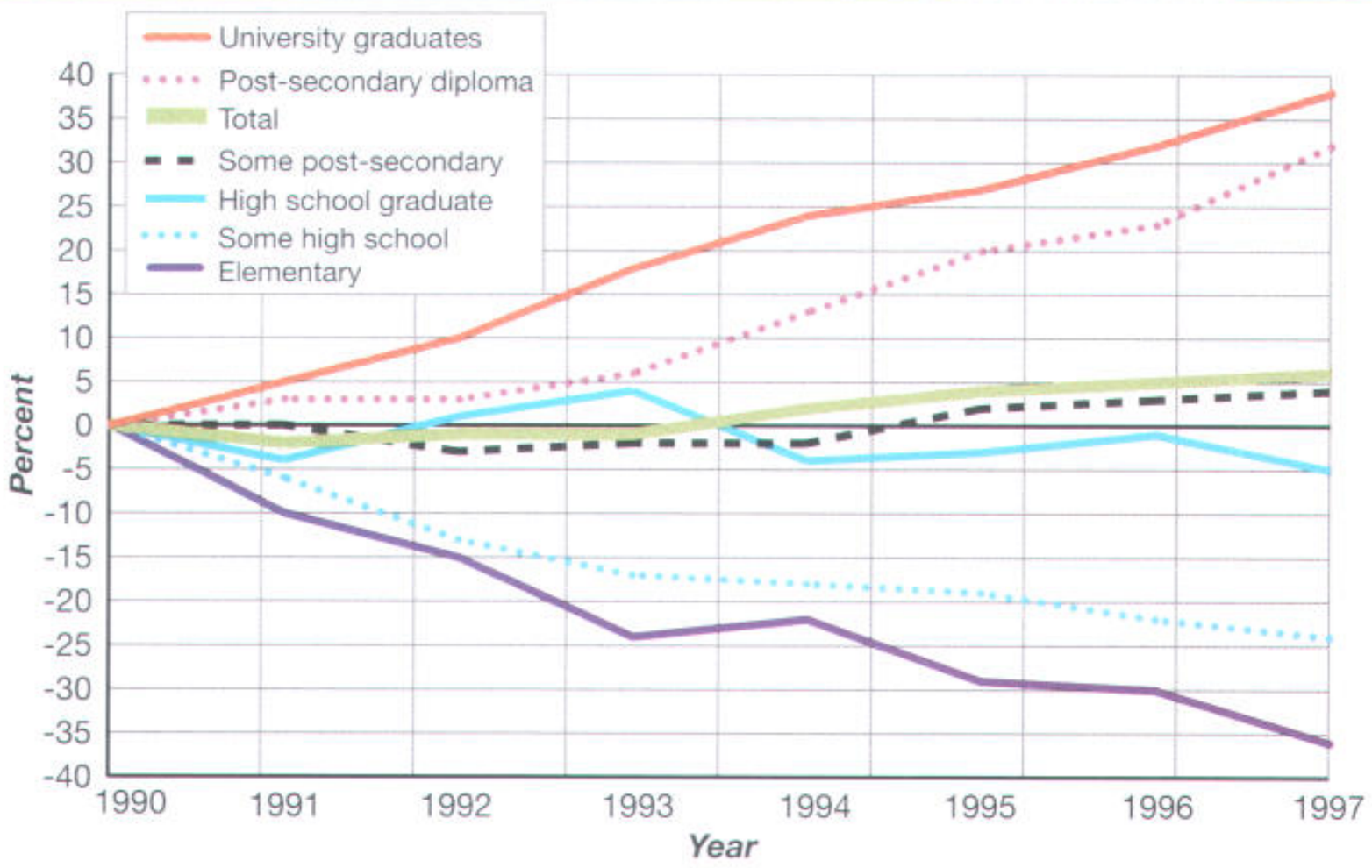
Source: Adapted from the Statistics Canada publication *Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 1999*, Catalogue 81-582.

and technical training demanded to do the job? In their book *A Generation on Hold*, Côté and Allahar argue that **education inflation** has meant that youth today require more education to qualify for some jobs now than was required of the same jobs in the past (1994). Using a conflict theory perspective, they argue that the demand for higher education reflects a desire to gain professional status and wealth, not higher skills. For example, they explain that medicine was not considered to be a respectable occupation until university education became a requirement for doctors in the nineteenth century. They quote the results of an American survey: 40 percent of graduates holding jobs that required a bachelor's degree said they didn't think a degree was necessary to do the job. They conclude by suggesting that "education inflation" is eroding the faith Canadian youth have in education (Côté & Allahar, 1994).

Employment and Education

Whether or not the knowledge and skills acquired in post-secondary education are actually needed to do the job, there is ample evidence that earning a college diploma or university degree will improve your chances of getting a job you enjoy. Many of the jobs that baby boomers did when they started work no longer exist (Clark, 2000). In the 1960s, many young women took "commercial" courses, such as typing and shorthand, to qualify for secretarial work. Now middle management is expected to word process their own letters, and lawyers are required to write documents such as wills using computer software. Employers prefer educated workers with a broad skill base, such as oral and written communication skills and computer literacy. They look for people who can gather information, analyze it, and reach creative solutions. *Symbolic analysts*, people who can manipulate mathematical data and words and identify and solve problems, are in demand for many occupations (Foot & Stoffman, 1998). The skills that enable you to be successful in higher education also make you a more valuable employee, whatever your field of study.

Employment and Education (growth or decline in employment, by education level)



Sources: Partially created with data from the Statistics Canada publication *Labour Force Annual Averages, 1989–1994*, Catalogue 71-529, 1995 and "Figure 3: Employment and Education" from *Boom, bust & echo.* Copyright 1996, 1998 by David K. Foot and Words on Paper Inc. Reproduced by permission of Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited.

in focus | The Great Divide

by Robert J. Birgeneau, President, University of Toronto

When I was in Grade 10 at St. Michael's College School in Toronto 45 years ago, I studied history, social science, mathematics, Greek, Latin, German, French, and English. This might seem like an unusual program for a future physicist, but science was dropped from the Grade 10 curriculum that year, and those in the accelerated class studied the humanities almost exclusively. So it is not so surprising that I later came to the University of Toronto on a Classics scholarship.

Others, in high school in the 1960s, had the opposite experience. If they were bright, they quickly got shunted onto the science track and found themselves waving languages, literature, and the social sciences goodbye.

It is no wonder that there is a divide between the sciences and the humanities in our culture. In reality, the divide is an artificial one. The sciences and the humanities are all part of the human continuum. You cannot separate them and understand what it is to be fully human any more than you can remove the colour from a Tom Thomson painting and still call it great art.

Our fundamental purpose at the University of Toronto is to push the frontiers of knowledge on all fronts. Those frontiers are just as noble whether they involve an astrophysicist trying to explain the distribution of matter in the universe, a philosopher probing the meaning of justice in a democratic society, or a playwright illuminating the intricacies of human relationships.

What's more, the humanities play a special role in education for without them, we would merely be training students, not educating them. Typically in our high-tech age, engineers, for example, are no longer practising engineering 10 years after graduating. Therefore, instilling the ability to think about sociological, psychological, and political issues is crucial in preparing them for the leadership roles they will play.

Robert Birgeneau educates undergraduates for the twenty-first century by combining the sciences with the humanities.

Likewise, it is critical for politicians, writers, and artists to have some understanding from a scientific point of view about the world they inhabit. What are the fundamental constituents of the world? What role is the planet Earth playing in the universe as a whole?

The President's Council on Undergraduate Education, led by Provost Adel Sedra and myself, has been charged with addressing the issue of what constitutes a proper education for our undergraduate students. The twist I am hoping to bring to the University of Toronto, and to undergraduate education in general, is to broaden the armoury of the educated person and incorporate science on an equal basis with the humanities. In my view, in the twenty-first century,

if a person does not know what the genetic code is and has no idea what underlies DNA testing, then she cannot call herself an educated person. In the same way, if a person cannot communicate and write fluently, he is not an educated person. Of course, a deep appreciation of music, drama, film, and the arts is also a hallmark of a well-educated person. The University of Toronto offers these experiences fully to its students.

If we widely exploit this scope, our graduates will be able to "read" the natural world. They will be able to navigate the boundary "where art and science meet," as American scientist Stephen Jay Gould put it in a recent work. As Shakespeare expressed it for the ages in *As You Like It*, they will be able to live a life that "finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything." ■

Source: *University of Toronto Magazine*. (2001, Spring). p. 5.

1. What is the difference between being an "educated" person and being a graduate?
2. What are the benefits of a broad education?
3. What subjects would you recommend for an "educated" person today?

The Gender Gap in Education

Traditionally, women have received less education than men. Educating a woman was considered to be a waste because she was going to stay home and raise children, and not have a career. However, by the 1970s, more women were working, so there was a need for them to acquire skills to get a good job. For the last 25 years, the education of female students has been a focus of concern in most Western countries. By 1999, Canadian test results showed that 13- and 16-year-old boys and girls perform equally well on mathematics and science tests, and that girls outperform boys in reading and writing (CESC, 2000). Eighty-five percent of all high school students will graduate, but only 78 percent of all boys. At the post-secondary level, in 1997, women earned 58 percent of all university degrees, half of the degrees in medicine and law, and have doubled their enrolment in traditionally male fields like engineering (Clark, 2000; CESC, 2000). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the widening gap between the educational achievement of men and women suggests that the focus of concern should be on the under-achievement of boys.

University Qualifications[1] Granted by Field of Study and by Sex, 1998

Field of Study	Total	Male	Female
Canada overall	**172 076**	71 949	100 127
Social sciences	**67 019**	27 993	39 026
Education	**25 956**	7 565	18 391
Humanities	**20 816**	7 589	13 227
Health professions and occupations	**12 658**	3 514	9 144
Engineering and applied sciences	**12 830**	10 121	2 709
Agriculture and biological sciences	**12 209**	4 779	7 430
Mathematics and physical sciences	**9 992**	6 876	3 116
Fine and applied arts	**5 256**	1 735	3 521
Arts and sciences	**5 340**	1 777	3 563

[1]Includes bachelor's and first professional degrees, undergraduate diplomas and certificates, other undergraduate qualifications, master's degrees, doctoral degrees, and graduate diplomas and certificates.

Source: Adapted from the Statistics Canada web site www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/People/Health/educ21.htm, extracted September 2001.

Lifelong Learning

Education does not end with graduation. According to the 1998 Adult Education Survey, 39 percent of youth aged 17 to 34 participated in some form of training or education program (Statistics Canada, June 18, 1999). Although adult education could allow those with less education to catch up, that is not the case. Only 11 percent of school leavers, but 48 percent of university graduates, were pursuing training through adult education. It seems that the more education you have, the more you continue to achieve, further widening the gap between graduates and school leavers. Half the people in the sample group were upgrading their skills for their current job, usually acquiring computer skills. Over half the courses were paid for by employers. Other people were paying for courses themselves to enable them to switch careers (Carey, 1996). Since the emphasis has been placed on education as job training, it is interesting that 10 percent of courses were taken out of personal interest (Statistics Canada, June 18, 1999). A goal of education in the Province of Ontario in the 1970s was that everyone would become a self-motivated, lifelong learner. The results of this survey suggest that Canadians have become lifelong learners.

Community College[1] Diplomas in Career Programs, 1994–1995

Field of Study	Total	Male	Female
Canada overall	**74 548**	30 288	42 260
Business and commerce	**20 979**	6 597	14 382
Engineering and applied sciences	**14 722**	12 150	2 572
Social sciences and services	**14 304**	3 947	10 357
Health sciences	**11 020**	2 043	8 977
Arts	**5 968**	2 518	3 450
Natural sciences and primary industries	**3 708**	2 367	1 341
Humanities	**1 167**	353	814
Arts and sciences	**544**	242	302
Not reported	**136**	71	65

[1] Includes related institutions such as hospital schools, agricultural colleges, arts schools, and other specialized colleges.

Source: Adapted from the Statistics Canada web site www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/People/Health/educ19.htm, extracted September 2001.

Entering the Work Force

A successful transition into adulthood depends on acquiring an income. For all but the very wealthy, the major income source is employment. Preparing for an occupation is a process that begins in adolescence, when students are required to choose the program they will study in secondary school and whether they will achieve post-secondary education. This section questions one of the expectations identified by sociologist Margaret Mead as a prerequisite for becoming independent: Does this society provide opportunities for youth to participate in clear adult roles? (In Côté & Allahar, 1994) In this section, these research questions will be investigated:

- What type of work is available for youth?
- When do youth begin working?
- Are youth able to earn enough to become independent?

The Changing Employment Market

As Canada became industrialized, young people migrated to urban centres to work. Employment in the early twentieth century was clearly segregated by gender, age, race, and social class. Women were usually restricted to domestic work: girls from lower classes laboured as servants, and girls from higher classes could become companions. African Canadian men could work as servants or porters but were not allowed in the trade unions. Most Chinese men were

labourers. Most Aboriginal men worked in primary industries such as forestry or fishing (Baker, 1993).

Coulter described the effects of industrialization on young workers in Edmonton in the 1920s and 1930s. Those who left school early found themselves limited to menial jobs with no job security and low wages. Employers paid less than minimum wage to apprentices, a status that could last for many years if the practice was abused by shifting young workers to one new job after another within the same business. Wages for all youth were low, so they had to work long hours to afford to pay room and board if they could not live at home (Coulter, 1982). White men had more job opportunities but received lower wages until they were married (Baker, 1993). Because youth were limited to menial work that did not pay enough to allow them to become independent, the benefits of staying in school eventually outweighed the small income that adolescents could add to most families.

In the twentieth century, Canadians expected their children to stay in school long enough to attain the credentials to get a good job. The common belief was that young people would "start at the bottom" and, by working hard and developing their skills, they would eventually move up the "ladder of success" (Allahar & Côté, 1998). In the thriving economy of the 1960s and early 1970s, successful young employees could expect to be promoted fairly rapidly, and they were. Unemployment rates were low and incomes were rising. Youth were able to become independent, leave home, marry, and have children in their early twenties. Parents of the baby-boom generation made the transition into adulthood quickly and with a high degree of success. However, if individuals were promoted to the top early in their careers, they would stay there a long time. So in the 1980s, when Generation X was ready for advancement, there were fewer opportunities for new employees to move up the ladder.

In the later decades of the twentieth century, the Canadian economy changed. There were fewer jobs in the traditional areas of agriculture and manufacturing, and many new jobs in the service economy. Côté and Allahar call this an *advanced industrial economy* (1994). Although young adults aspire to management jobs in the new service economy, those available are in the lower level, require few skills, and are poorly paid. The entry of women into the workforce since the 1970s,

Young adults may have limited opportunities for promotion because there are many older workers in senior positions who have nowhere to advance to, yet they are not ready for retirement.

combined with the fact that there are more older people than younger ones, has created a stagnant employment market. By 1995, this prompted the Canadian Youth Foundation to petition the Canadian government to raise the maximum qualifying age for youth employment programs from 24 to 29 (Allahar & Côté, 1998). Young adults who came of age in the 1990s have started at the bottom but are less able to locate the ladder of success than their parents were.

web connection

www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12

To learn about youth employment, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

In 2000, 86 percent of students aged 15 to 19 expected to get the job they wanted when they graduated (Bibby, 2001). All students, male or female, richer or poorer, recent immigrants or those born in Canada, are sure that there will be opportunities for them. Post-secondary graduates, especially those with student loans to repay, are three times more likely to want jobs that pay well than they are to want jobs in their fields of study (Clark, 1999). Their high expectations might be justified. As the baby-boom generation retires earlier than previous generations did, many vacancies must be filled with new workers. There will be a need for well-educated and highly skilled employees to fill the jobs that the baby boomers leave (Carey, 2001). It is possible that the ladder of success will again be there for the next two decades or more.

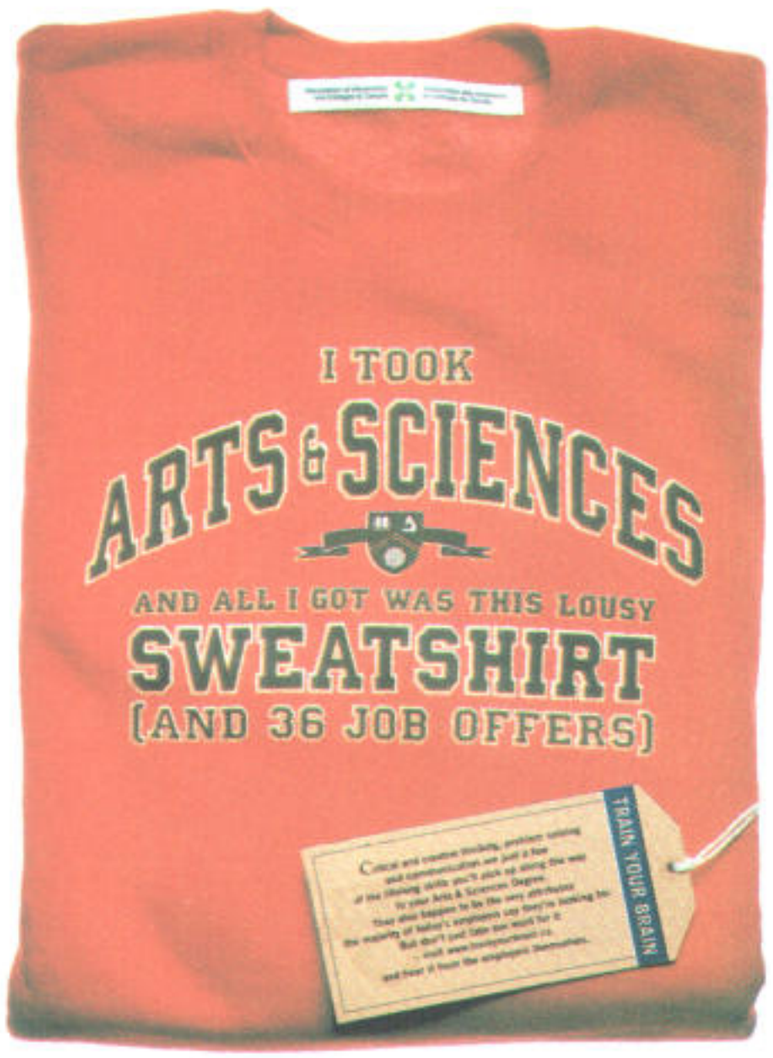
Some graduates choose to work as volunteers to develop their skills and broaden their experience while helping others, before they settle into a permanent job.

Employment Rates and Income

Higher education improves your job prospects. According to the National Graduates Surveys, most of those who graduated in 1982, 1986, and 1990 found permanent full-time jobs and received reasonably high incomes (Finnie, 2000). Finnie found, however, that the transition into employment was a longer process than individuals anticipated. Employment rates were good after two years, but significantly improved by five years after graduation, at which time 92 percent of males and 82 percent of females were employed full time, and only 5 percent were unemployed (2000). The unemployment rate for high school graduates was 10 percent and for school leavers, 20 percent (CESC, 2000). Youth with less education are more likely to change jobs frequently, so the actual percentage of those who had experienced periods of unemployment was higher than these figures suggest.

The high employment rates for post-secondary graduates mask the concern about underemployment. Krahn and Lowe conducted a longitudinal survey of Canadian students from May 1985 to May 1987 to find out their educational and work experiences. They concluded that the transition to adulthood is

prolonged by the difficulty graduates have in finding permanent jobs related to their education. Of greater concern is the fact that many graduates continued to work in the "student work market" in clerical, sales, and service occupations alongside students working part-time (Krahn & Lowe, 1991). By 1999, 50 percent of post-secondary graduates reported being in full-time jobs related to their education two years after graduation (CESC, 2000). Graduates change jobs frequently in the first years, averaging 2.1 jobs in the first two years. Some graduates delay permanent employment in various ways, such as travelling, working at temporary jobs to pay for a year or two of recreation, or participating in volunteer programs. The education-job match might be improved by the end of the longer five-year transition period, which appears to be the pattern (Clark, 1999).



Possessing a university degree or a college diploma, regardless of the field of study, can open the door to many careers.

Many post-secondary students believe that it is the degree or diploma that provides the credentials to get a job, not the courses studied (Krahn & Lowe, 1991). Graduates of professional programs, such as medicine, law, nursing, or law enforcement, are most likely to be fully employed. Since these programs place restrictions on enrolment, students have chosen the program with career goals in mind. In stating that one in three graduates felt that their knowledge and skills were not being used, researchers assume that education is "job training," but that is not the expectation of every graduate. Students in undergraduate arts and sciences programs are more likely to have chosen programs that reflect their academic interests without having specific career plans or any expectation that they will eventually use their knowledge in a job. Because graduates may apply their generic communication, information-management, and problem-solving skills in a variety of fields, a graduate in philosophy could become a sales manager in business. The fact that their jobs are unrelated to their fields of study does not necessarily mean that graduates perceive themselves as underemployed.

According to The National Graduates Survey of 1995, graduates discovered that finding a job after completing their education was a challenge. They reported that getting a position that paid enough was the most difficult. They felt well prepared to write résumés and letters of application and to do well in interviews, because most had received career counselling as part of their education. This class of graduates found most of their jobs through networking. One-third got jobs through family or friends, one-sixth by making cold calls to employers, and one-tenth through former employers. Graduates who had co-op experience, previous work experience in the field, or volunteer experiences attained employment more easily. Graduates who started working for an organization part-time before graduation were more likely to stay in that job

(Clark, 1999). The experiences of the 1995 graduates suggest that while career counselling or courses can help you acquire job-search skills, you can make the transition to work by accumulating experience in your occupational field; talking to family, friends, and former employers about your job search; and making cold calls to potential employers.

The income that young adults earn will determine how easily they can achieve independence from their parents. Although perceptions about the amount of money needed will vary, a sufficient amount is the primary factor in a young adult's decision to leave home. Graduates rank high pay as their first priority when looking for a job, especially if they have accumulated student

How 1995 Graduates Found a Job

	College	University	Both
Through family and friends	33%	32%	
Unsolicited calls to employers	17%	18%	
Classified ads			14%
Previous employers			10%
Campus placement office			9%
Employment agencies	3%	4%	
Internet*			1%

[1]The Internet was new at the time.

Source: Adapted from the Statistics Canada publication, *Canadain Social Trends–Autumn 1997*, Catalogue 11-008, Issue No. 46, page 15.

The Median Earnings of 1990 Graduates Working Full Time in 1992

Source: Adapted from the Statistics Canada publication, *The Class of 90: A compendium of findings from the 1992 National Graduates Survey of 1990 Graduates*, December 1996, Catalogue 81-577, page 37, chart 3.2.

loan debts (Clark, 1999). Income levels are affected by the level of education achieved and by the match between the level of education and the job. Very simply, the more diplomas or degrees you achieve, the higher your pay will be. Graduates from professional and vocational programs earn more than graduates from arts and sciences programs (CESC, 2000). The gap between the income of men and women has narrowed, but female graduates still earn less, perhaps because they are more likely to work part-time or to be more constrained in where they can work than men. Over the 20-year period from 1976 to 1996, however, the pay of young men has dropped in terms of actual earnings and relative to the changes in income for older men (Morisette, 1997). Graduates have the potential to earn good salaries, but it will take up to five years to find a well-paying job in your field.

developing your research skills | Using Abstracts

When you do library research, it is important to get to the information that is most useful as quickly as possible. A periodical index or computer database search provides the bibliographical entry for each source related to a topic. This gives only a vague idea of what the study or article is about. University libraries have entire floors designated for journals or periodicals. It would be very time-consuming to find and read each study to determine whether it was useful. Abstracts simplify the search for pertinent research papers. An abstract is a summary of the contents of a document. A well-written abstract includes the research question or hypothesis, the method, and the results of the study. Abstracts of all related studies are collected and bound into volumes each year. They are also available on-line. The abstract also appears on the front page of the research paper. Read the abstract that corresponds to the study you think is important to find out very quickly whether or not you want to read the entire paper. ■

From School to Work: The Evolution of Early Labour Market Outcomes of Canadian Post-Secondary Graduates

by Ross Finnie

This paper reports the results of an empirical analysis of the early labour market outcomes of Canadian post-secondary graduates based on the National Graduates Surveys, representing those who finished their college or university programs in 1982, 1986, and 1990. The major findings include that post-secondary graduates have generally been doing quite well as a group, with most finding full-time and permanent jobs, receiving reasonably high earnings, and otherwise successfully moving into the labour market according to the various outcomes measured here; that the school-to-work transition is clearly a process, rather than an event, with most outcomes improving significantly from two to five years following graduation; that these outcomes vary by level (College, Bachelor's, Master's, Ph.D.) and sex; and that successive cohorts of graduates did not experience any widespread decline in their labour market fortunes over this period.

Relationships

Relationships with others provide support for young people making the transition into adulthood. Parents and teachers are the major supportive relationships in childhood and adolescence. These relationships are provided, not chosen. To become independent, a person will form new relationships with a variety of people who can support the transition. Young adults will also renegotiate their existing relationships with family and friends. Communicating effectively with others in personal, academic, and business relationships is necessary for the individual to take on appropriate adult roles. Research questions that reflect the influence of relationships on this transition are:

- How do young adults and their parents adjust their relationship to reflect the adult status of the children?
- How do young adults form appropriate workplace relationships?

Although working is the most important factor in becoming independent, personal relationships—those with family, friends, and lovers —are the priority for most young adults. People perceive their personal relationships as most important to their happiness (Bibby, 2001). Almost 90 percent of men and women state that friendships enhance their self-esteem. Friends offer emotional support and can provide an objective point of view to help solve problems. They can also lend a hand and provide tangible support when it is needed (Anderson & Hayes, 1996). Most research about relationships focuses on family and on intimate, "romantic" relationships. Less is known about the role of friendships in the lives of young adults, and even less about the functional relationships formed in the workplace. Young adults who develop appropriate behaviour and communication skills suited to their new role and their status within the organization will be more successful in the workplace.

Parent-Child Relationships

Parents know that their children will leave home some day, but neither they nor their sons or daughters can predict when that will occur. Since the 1930s, perhaps following the advice of popular child-care books, North American parents emphasized independence more than obedience when raising their children. Because families no longer send their youth away from home when they become physically mature, young people must become independent while still living in their parents' homes. Individuals who were encouraged to become independent are more likely to have a positive relationship with their parents when they reach young adulthood. This could explain why Goldscheider and Goldscheider found that leaving home appears to have no effect on a young adult's relationship with his or her parents (1997).

From the systems theory perspective, the family has to adjust to allow the adolescent and then the young adult to change. Because systems do not adapt easily, the family will be less stable as the family members attempt to develop new strategies for relating to one another and for completing the work of the family. However, the parents, who have less need to change, will be less motivated to give up the existing strategies that have worked well in the past. Arguments between parents and adolescents during this period of instability break down the old strategies and allow the young person to become more independent by taking on new roles in the family. In some families, the system does not adjust, and parents and adult children continue in the comfortable roles they established in early adolescence, with young adults having very little responsibility until they leave home (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1997).

But, as you have seen, young adults seem to be staying home longer than either they or their parents thought they would. When adult children continue to live with their parents, there will often be conflict unless both can change the relationship. The challenge for the young persons will be to balance their responsibility to their family with their need to establish their personal priorities (Wiener, 1997). According to Valerie Wiener, families should negotiate new house rules and routines suited to the lifestyles of all members of the family, but young adults should accept that "the nest is the parents' home, and will still be their home after [the young adults] leave" (p. 92). The challenge for parents is to accept their adult children as responsible people who can make a contribution to the family. The research so far indicates that fewer than 7 percent of young adults living at home contribute any money for their room and board (Allahar & Côté, 1998).

It is possible for adult children and their parents to establish adult-adult relationships if they can establish a more equal footing (Wiener, 1998). The foundation of any relationship is effective communication skills. However, honesty, empathy, and assertiveness, the cornerstones of effective communication, are difficult to achieve in hierarchical relationships in which the parents wield the power. When young adults are financially dependent on their parents, any power they have within the family home is granted to them by their parents. There is some evidence that leaving home temporarily to go to college, university, or the military will change the power structure in the family (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1997; Wiener, 1998). Others suggest that families can create their own rituals to replicate the initiation rites of pre-industrial societies (Wall & Ferguson, 1998). Among the BaMbuti people, when male youth return from their initiation rites, they can no longer live with their parents but must build their own hut near them, where they can begin to live an adult lifestyle. Perhaps young Canadians fixing up rooms in the basement so

"Human beings are the only species on the face of the Earth that allow their young to come back home."

— Bill Cosby

web connection

www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12

To learn about the relationships between parents and adult children, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

Forming effective relationships with co-workers can help you get the job done well and enable you to demonstrate the skills that can earn you a promotion.

web connection

www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/families12

To learn about workplace relationships, go to the web site above for *Individuals and Families in a Diverse Society* to see where to go next.

that they no longer sleep down the hall from their parents achieves the same purpose. Parental authority gives way to advice and acceptance when young adults are free to accept responsibility for their lives.

Workplace Relationships

Although most young people have worked part-time before they seek their first full-time job, few have experienced the complex relationships of the workplace. Jobs in the "student work market" entail students working alongside other students in temporary positions with few prospects. However, when they enter their first adult jobs, young people enter into relationships in which they must balance the co-operative behaviour required to work as a team to get the job done, with the competitive behaviour necessary to achieve promotion up the career ladder (Gottman, 1999). They will meet people with a wide range of attitudes toward their work. Some will be very ambitious, but others will be content to do the minimum required. For many young people, determining who to align themselves with can be challenging in some workplaces.

Since most friendships in life are formed with those people with whom they associate on a daily basis, individuals navigate through the confusion of workplace relationships to seek connections. As you have seen, most employment opportunities arise from family, friends, and previous employers. Networking by getting to know people who work in the field is an effective way for young adults to prepare for job changes and for promotion. Yet individuals, by nature, are social beings who seek out friendship, even love. It requires a big adjustment in outlook to recognize that the purpose of workplace relationships is primarily to accomplish the goals of the organization and to further individual careers (Yager, 1997).

Mentor Relationships

When young adults begin their careers, they usually start at the bottom and look forward to climbing the ladder of success. When American psychologist Daniel Levinson interviewed young men about their early careers in the early 1970s, they described important relationships with people who helped them up that ladder. Levinson (1978) explained the role of the **mentor**, usually a man several years older than the young man, who assisted him in his transition into a career path. A mentor served several functions. Initially, a mentor helped a young man to understand the people, values, and behaviour in his

new environment, and taught the young man to acquire the knowledge and skills he needed. He used his influence to help the young man advance and acted as a role model for him to emulate. He might also have provided advice and support when things went wrong.

Young women are less likely to have mentors, Levinson found in a later study (1996). It could be that there were fewer older women available as mentors for the young women in Levinson's sample group in the 1980s and 1990s. Perhaps young women and older men were reluctant to form mentor relationships out of fear that these relationships might be construed as sexual. Levinson also suggested that women had to compete more for opportunities and, therefore, were less able to assist younger women.

Later research conducted by The National Center for Women and Retirement Research (NCWRR) in 1990 found that women who had graduate and post-graduate degrees and those who saw work as being the core of their lives often identified mentors who played key roles in supporting their dreams. The NCWRR study also found that many women had male mentors (Anderson & Hayes, 1996). Both studies reported that young women have a stronger sense of having achieved success by themselves in a highly competitive work environment. However, because mentors serve an important role in the career success of young adults, perhaps women would benefit from more mentoring.

Successful Transitions

The transition from adolescence to independent adulthood is a process that takes many years. Individuals develop goals in middle adolescence concerning their education and a possible career. Most young Canadians will choose to acquire post-secondary education before they venture into the adult work force. The experience of the last two decades suggests that graduates will spend two to five years, changing jobs several times, to settle into work that matches their education. Although some will choose to marry or cohabit in their early twenties, most young adults will choose to continue to live at home into their mid-twenties. By their late twenties, life finally becomes more stable for young adults. Individuals make many decisions during the transition process. Some lives will follow the life patterns outlined by research, while others will be the exceptions that require researchers to be content with trends, not rules. The next chapter will examine how individuals are motivated to make these important decisions about their lives.

By your late twenties, when, probably, you have finished your education, started your career, and moved out, you might be ready to prepare for the responsibilities of marriage or cohabitation, a home, and children.

chapter 3 Review and Apply

Knowledge/Understanding **Thinking/Inquiry**

1. When will you and your peers become adults? Explain the criteria you have developed for yourself for defining adulthood.

2. Trace the changes in the transition to adulthood through history as described in this chapter. Identify and explain the factors that encouraged young men and women to take on adult roles at different ages than they do now.

3. **a)** Using the social exchange theory, identify the costs and benefits of living at home at the following times:
   - while attending high school
   - while attending college or university and working part-time
   - while working at a first job after graduation

   b) When does leaving home become cost-effective, in your opinion?

4. Explain why the following developments in education have occurred.
   - Elementary education was made mandatory until the age of 14.
   - The school-leaving age was raised to 16.
   - Eighty-five percent of high school students now graduate.
   - Eighty percent of high school graduates go on to post-secondary education.
   - More women than men attend college or university.
   - Forty-eight percent of workers with degrees participated in adult education in 1998.

5. Currently, young adults take up to five or six years after graduating to move into jobs that match their education. Summarize the reasons for this.

6. **a)** Why do you think the men in Levinson's sample group in the 1970s identified mentors, and the women in the 1980s and 90s did not?

   b) What value would mentors have for young women? Suggest whether the situation would be different now than in the 1980s.

7. Based on your experience of working with others in the workplace or in the classroom, describe the challenges people might face in relating to their co-workers.

Knowledge/Understanding | Communication | Thinking/Inquiry

8. **a)** Discuss the ways that families must adjust if an adult child lives at home, taking into consideration the potential for conflicting family and individual roles.

   b) Summarize your recommendations in a letter of advice to a graduate who is moving home after living with roommates while away at college or university.

9. Do Canadians perceive the purpose of post-secondary schooling to be credentialism or education? Write a brief essay in response to Dr. Birgeneau's article "The Great Divide" (see page 79) in which you defend your thesis based on your experiences in your family, at school, and in Canadian society.

Knowledge/Understanding | Communication | Thinking/Inquiry | Application

10. **a)** Design a questionnaire to determine how young adults in your parents' generation left home, completed their education, or found jobs.

    b) Compare the results with the expectations of your generation and with those described in this chapter. What could account for the similarities and the differences?

    c) Suggest the impact of these differences on intergenerational relationships within families and in Canadian society.

11. **a)** Survey students in your community using a questionnaire to determine their expectations about becoming independent.

    b) Compare their answers with the research results summarized in this chapter.

    c) Analyze the results to determine whether there are variations based on cultural background.

    d) Discuss the implications of these variations in a diverse society.

12. **a)** Using a questionnaire, investigate the preparation your class has received for choosing a career path and getting a job, and determine the sources of that preparation.

    b) Compare the results to the research evidence.

    c) Suggest improvements to career preparation programs for adolescents.