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Adding school to work-family balance: The role of support for Portuguese working  
mothers attending a master's degree

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Abstract

This qualitative study examines the work, family and study experiences of Portuguese professional women in two different career stages: early-career and mid-career. Using semi-structured interviews with a sample of twenty two working mothers enrolled in a master's degree, this study explores their experiences of combining the three roles and the role of support for a successful integration of work-family and school. Support from peers was found to be a critical factor for successfully integrating work-family and school responsibilities. Differences in the use of partner and family support were found between early and mid-career women. Lack of or limited support from the workplace was a barrier that emerged in both groups.

*Keywords:* working-student, family-work conflict; peers, family and workplace support