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ABSTRACT

Underemployment is the focus of this transcript of a radio series broadcast by the National Public Radio System, entitled "Can You Get There from Here?" The first of a 4-part series on the relationship between schooling and jobs, this program incorporates studio interviews with: James O'Toole of the Center for the Study of the Future; a ceramics college graduate working as a shipping clerk; various college students concerning their career expectations; and a graduate student working as a mail clerk for the U. S. Congress. The concept of underemployment, job satisfaction, and attitudes and expectations about work are discussed. (TA)

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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Options in Education

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TRANSCRIPT
WEEK OF JANUARY 5
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OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is an electronic weekly magazine devoted to coverage of news, features, policy and people in the field of education.

This transcript marks the beginning of a four-part series on the relationship between jobs and schooling, "Can You Get There From Here?" This first program in the series, available for broadcast by most of National Public Radio's 181 member stations during the week of January 5, concentrates on the subject of underemployment - people working in jobs far less demanding than their intelligence or education requires.

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A full transcript is available as is a cassette at cost. Due to special funds received for this series on schooling and jobs, transcripts for the month of January programs are available at no cost and cassettes for all four programs are $12.00 (Single price for cassettes are $4.00 each)

MERROW: Options in Education is a news magazine about all the issues in education, from the abc's of pre-school to the alphabet soup of government programs. This is John Merrow. In this special four-part series we ask the question about schools and jobs, "Can you get there from Here?"

GOLDMAN: How would you describe yourself by the things you do?

Well, I am a lawyer, so I am a paper pusher. I push a ton of paper.

I work for the government but my avocation is rowing. I am a sports fanatic.

I work in an office. I work in an office, like everybody else.

Horses are my life. I own and raise Thoroughbred horses.

I am a photographer and I express my feelings through photography.

I am in psychiatry. I guess it is essentially trying to have or allow or permit people to find themselves and be more, I guess, together within theirselves.

I am an inventor.

Well, I am a writer. You know, what I do is I think and I type. I am an articulate typist.

ENSOR: This is David Ensor. One way we define ourselves is by the work we do, as reporter Connie Goldman just demonstrated. And we very often judge our own values by what society is willing to pay us for the work we do. Now that is fine if you are a doctor or a lawyer or in some other high-paying, high status occupation, but not so good if you shine shoes or pick vegetables.

MERROW: Things must have been simpler in the old days, David. Then only the rich and privileged went on to college and simply going to college was itself pretty much a guarantee of a good job. Now we are well into the noble experiment of mass education and about 60 per cent of each year's graduating high school seniors are continuing their education, either in two-year colleges, trade or technical schools or four-year colleges. By and large high schools are geared to serve that college population. But that in itself creates problems because it gives the short end of the stick to the 40 per cent who aren't going on to school after high school.

ENSOR: I can demonstrate the second part of the problem with a riddle. What do Caroline Kennedy, Susan Ford and Steven Ford have in common? One answer is of course that they are children of Presidents. But there is another link: all three are college dropouts, young people who have decided that at least for the moment college doesn't fit into

their plans. The world knows that Caroline Kennedy is studying Art in London, that Susan Ford is taking pictures in Colorado, and that brother Jack is learning to bust broncos on the West Coast. But you may not know that half of those entering college will drop out before graduation. That is over 800,000 dropouts a year.

MERROW: And they are joining the high school graduates and the high school dropouts in the market place, looking for work at a time when the national unemployment rate is roughly ten per cent.

ENSOR: Because of this situation, some widely-held views are under attack. First is the notion that nearly everyone should go to college. Second is the idea that "college pays" -- in fact it may not pay to go to college, at least in terms of more dollars earned.

MERROW: It still pays for bank robbers, though. There is a study showing that those who rob banks by means of sophisticated computer schemes get away with twice as big a haul as those who use the conventional "stick-em-up" approach. We need more evidence than this to prove that education pays, but nevertheless college enrollment reached an all-time high of 11,300,000 students this fall and is likely to go even higher in the immediate future.

ENSOR: Analyses looking at the problem find a cycle of more and more college-trained people applying for fewer and fewer jobs that actually call for a college education, and accompanying that, an ever larger army of young dropouts who were trained to go to school, but aren't. It is social dynamite, according to James O'Toole of the Center for the Study of the Future, in California. Professor O'Toole, author of "Work in America" and "The Reserve Army of the Underemployed" talks with my collegaue, John Merrow.

MERROW: Jim, your monograph is called "The Reserve Army of the Underemployed". That idea of underemployment, would you explain what you mean by that?

O'TOOLE: Economists have different definitions for this term. I will just give you the definition that I use, not the ones that they would all accept or use. Underemployment is the under-utilization of human talents, skills, training, ability, education, in effect, under-utilization of human resources. It is my contention that this is becoming a cronic or lasting problem in western industrial societies. Unemployment, which is clearly something that is very painful, has at least the one saving grace that it is cyclical, that is unemployment rates do go up and down. They tend not to stay high or to stay low for any period of time. The problem of underemployment, though, seems to be growing and will continue to grow. We can't see that this will be cyclical and this will reverse itself. So I feel that underemployment may come to characterize the problems of our work force in a much more painful manner even than will unemployment.

MERROW: So by "underemployment," then you mean really that the job doesn't ask enough of the person who is doing the job? The job is too dumb?

O'TOOLE: That is a pretty good way of putting it, I think The worker just feels that he deserves better, that he can handle a lot more, that his training and his intelligence is not being used, that he could have more challenge, more responsibility, that he could handle it, he could give a lot more to the organization or to the employer than he is currently giving. He gets a feeling that one's talents are being wasted. You have heard this expression. When someone says,

"My talents are being wasted on this job." that is a pretty good characterization of the fact that the person is probably underemployed.

Now, whether the person is underemployed or not is something that is very hard to measure. What is important, I think, is whether the person perceives that he is underemployed. If you feel that your talents are being wasted, that perhaps is more important than if they actually are, because then it leads to frustration and it leads to all kinds of problems with morale and eventually even to lower productivity.

MERROW: That is interesting. You are saying that the notion of lower productivity, in your book you mentioned that studies show that sabotage and the accidents that occur in factories, that it is the underemployed workers, the brighter workers who aren't sufficiently challenged, they are the ones who apparently are more responsible.

O'TOOLE: Well, the data on this is very weak. I got into a lot of trouble with that study. The author has backed down on his original claims. But I think that the argument, though, is worth thinking about for a minute, because if we look at the work that Ira Berg and the others done, it seems to support this notion. Let me just backtrack for a second to try to explain it. We also assumed that by upgrading the skills of the worker that the worker would be more productive. That is, that if you have a worker with a high school education, he will be less productive than a worker with a college education and this is a basic assumption of economists and of managers in our society, that we have constantly upgraded the credential requirements for jobs. Berg and others have looked at this and they have found that just the opposite seems to happen, that if you don't change the nature of the job, but you upgrade the credential requirements you tend to get lower productivity from the workers.

Now, that happens for several reasons. First of all, if you have a person with a high school education who ends up, say, in a middle managerial job, he will be terribly satisfied. His expectations were met. He will say, "This is a pretty good job for a guy like me. I never expected I could go so far." And he will work very, very hard and very diligently. But if you take someone with a college education who is expecting to be President of the company and he ends up in a middle level managerial job he will say, "What a failure I am. They don't appreciate me." He will become frustrated and he won't work as hard and he will cause all kinds of trouble.

Now, if we look at what happens on the shop floor, I think something is quite interesting here, that if you look at the data on the IQ's of workers we find an extremely high number of blue collar workers or laborers with very, very high IQ's. There is something like a third more blue collar workers who have IQ's over 130 than do college professors. Of course any of you who have been in a faculty meeting won't be too surprised by those numbers. But clearly there are more blue collar workers than there are college professors. But what is important here is that among blue collar workers we have a rather normal distribution of intelligence, on the bell curve, normal distribution of intelligence, which means that the average is 100. Well, we design the jobs for the lowest common denominator. We design them to be ---

MERROW: Like television?

O'TOOLE: Yes. We say "goof-proof" in management. You assume

that the workers are idiots and you design the job so they can't foul it up.

MERROW: Which means that half of your workers are going to find themselves in jobs that are too dumb for them, that they are much too smart for.

O'TOOLE: If you set it for the level of 60 it will be more than half.

MERROW: Okay.

O'TOOLE: So we have a situation, then, that a lot of very intelligent blue collar workers on dumb jobs. Now there are clearly some dumb blue collar workers on dumb jobs, too. I think that we probably can't worry too much about those people.

MERROW: But the former group are underemployed.

O'TOOLE: I would say they are underemployed and I would posit that they are the ones who are dissatisfied with work. There are some studies of indirect evidence that these people, they start assuming that they are in dead-end jobs. When people complain, blue collar workers complain that they are in dead-end jobs, their levels of frustration rise. And according to work that has been done by my colleague Harold Sheperd, these are people who tend to want some kind of continuing education. They want to get out of this vind that they are in. They also are people who seem to have to transfer their hatred and their frustrations on to radical political causes.

There is some other evidence to show that these people cannot achieve their desire to learn and to grow in their leisure activities. They are so destroyed in the job, the jobs so beat them down that they go home and all they want to do is end up watching television. So I think that we do have this resource, this human resource, these very intelligent workers, that we are not fully tapping.

MERROW: Studs Terkel quotes a lady, "Most of us have jobs that are too small for our spirits," which I guess is what you are talking about when you talk about the underemployed people or the underemployed self. I wonder, Jim, if you hold the view that we have the right to job satisfaction, if that is a basic right.

O'TOOLE: Well, that is a very difficult question I would be rather reluctant to add any more rights to the rights that we already seem to have. Part of our problem in society is this question of entitlement. We feel that more and more factors, more and more things that used to be privileges are now rights. I would argue, though, still saying that, that in a way it certainly is a right for a person to have a job that does not demean him. I think that a job that destroys a person so that the person, as I was referring to a few minutes earlier, cannot effectively go home and take part in community activities and a person can't go home and recreate himself, if the person is so destroyed on the job that there is no other life left for that person, then I would argue that that is probably infringement of the basic human rights.

How one goes about creating that, I don't know. I don't pretend to have the answer to that. But I think that employers have in the past made a very false assumption and that is that correcting that worker's morale and their lives are kind of a free good and that the employer

then could take the worker on the job and just destroy the person physically and mentally and then throw him out to the community at night and assume that that was his right to do it and that there were no costs. There is a kind of psychological pollution that goes with the industrial pollution. The employers assume that they can take the air and the water as free goods and send it back to the community befouled. What they do is feel that they can take the worker and pollute his mind and destroy him so that he is not an effective member of the community and send him out and that is their right. I don't believe that that is the right of employers.

ENSOR: We will hear more in a moment from James O'Toole, author of the HEW report, "Work in America" and "The Reserve Army of the Underemployed."

BAXTER: My name is Julie Baxter. I went to Catholic University studying ceramics and now work at Georgetown Leather Design as a shipping clerk.

ENSOR: Julie Baxter, the shipping clerk, spent four years in college. Was it a waste of time? She discovered that she enjoys making pottery.

BAXTER: I think I have changed a whole lot since I decided to go to college. I don't think I had ever even thought of working with clay at all when I was a senior in high school. It comes from, I guess, the last four years. I watched this one lady teach and I was just -- I had seen it done before, but watching this one woman who I would like to apprentice from soon, I just couldn't believe it. She had one arm in a sling and she was throwing with the other one. It was like magic.

ENSOR: But now she is a shipping clerk. Listen as she describes her working day and her hopes for the future.

BAXTER: Basically, I am a shipping "cluck", clerk. I just receive the garments and items that are made downstairs, bags, and "schlep" them up in the plastic bags and receive them, write it up. If there is anything for wholesale that gets shipped, I ship it. I mean it is nothing. My job is not overly impressive. It is not taxing at all. I have to make up work a lot of times to look busy. People like you to look busy. But they won't give me the time off. I would rather only work three days a week and hustle for three days and have the other time off. But that is not the way it is. They like you to be here all five days and look busy. I don't work too fast. After I have my coffee and have done a little work other people have come in. I talk to them for a while. The major conversation is what they are going to do for the day, you know, nothing. Everybody is talking about lunch at 10:30.

Everybody is in the same boat I am. I feel frustrated. It is all such busy work. You get to feel like a worker ant, and why, why do you do it? At one point I needed the money, but now I don't need the money, so I am leaving. I have enough money to live without them until I become a success.

I am going to use my college education, I guess. I am going to be working in ceramics. But I haven't been using my education at all. What is there to use? I walk in in the morning. I never have to think. I could be a zombie. I could have had a lobotomy and conducted my job

the same. I don't need to think, being here at all. You almost get the impression they don't want you to anyway. There is no taxing problem. There is nothing to think about. There is no challenge. I mean, the only thing to think about, I guess, is having a good conversation with everybody around you and getting the most out of the people you work with because there is nothing to get out of the job.

But it has gotten to the point, I mean, I have been there an embarrassingly long time, and I'm quitting. I am leaving my job to try and make it in ceramics, be a functional potter, in some way, shape, or form. I mean, I would like to do pottery, do production work. That is kind of a big dream. It costs a lot of money just to set up. That is what I am working towards. That is why I am quitting, because I may try and set up and do it on a smaller scale now.

But ideally I would like to do that and then like to take in other people. Well, I would like to be taken in right now, maybe. So right now if I could get a job as an apprentice I would be perfectly happy. I would not mind "schlepping" around in an atmosphere that I like. To me, clay is a lot different than leather or than paper work. And when I have the time I can just do that all the time.

Back when I was throwing in school, throwing pots on my wheel, I had developed a rhythm then. Without the rhythm you can't get the life in the pots. I come home from work now and you are just too beat to throw. But college seems like an absurd place to learn about ceramics. It is not that I -- you know, like I think it is great that they taught it and everything, but I don't think it was necessary, I don't think it is necessary for me to even have a B.A. in Art for ceramics. It doesn't say "B.A. Pottery". Who needs it? I know, I don't think a B.A. is important, personally.

There is no market for you in today's society. There is nothing you can do. I mean like there is commercial art. But my interests went elsewhere. So, it is just proof that you know more than somebody else. That is all it is. I mean like how many degrees do you stack behind you? I don't think I need the proof.

ENSOR: Julie Baxter doesn't think she needs proof that a college degree represents. But Julie learned about ceramics in college, not in high school, on television, or at home. Then, armed with a college degree, she became a shipping clerk. There are millions of Americans in Julie Barter's shoes -- too tired after eight hours in a boring job to recreate themselves in their leisure time. Julie Baxter is probably typical in another way, too. Because she's a college graduate, she -- and the rest of society -- expect more from her. And she expects a "good job". Now even if the "good" in "good job" is a relative term, we do know that there aren't enough good jobs to go around.

Let's listen in on more of John Merrow's conversation with James O'Toole.

MERROW: There are simply not enough good jobs for everyone who thinks he deserves one. Why is that? Why aren't there enough good jobs?

O'TOOLE" It is very difficult to talk about the supply of jobs. You can't make a statement that there are not enough good jobs, period, because you get into the whole area of attitudes and expectations, that a good job for someone with an IQ of 30 might be cleaning clothes. The person might find that as challenging and as rewarding and about as interesting as any kind of work that he or she could do. Now, on the other hand, if you look at the other end of the spectrum of intelligence, if you get someone who has an IQ of 150, that person might even be bored being a radio announcer, for example.

MERROW: Oh, I can imagine that.

O'TOOLE: What would appear to be a good job for most people still might not be stimulating for a person who is very bright and who had quite a bit of education and particularly who had very high expectations. The key aspect of what I was talking about there when I said there aren't enough jobs to go around for everyone who thinks he deserves one is the issue of attitudes and expectations.

MERROW: That is what determines a good job, then.

O'TOOLE: Yes, and what has happened in the labor force is that a growing portion of the force is now expecting better and better jobs. That is because people are better educated, because they have had a great degree of affluence, because their security needs are met, that is they don't worry about it if they don't work that they are going to starve to death -- none of their friends are starving to death if you are a college graduate -- that they can constantly expect more from work. And I think that educational institutions have done a great disservice, I would say, in fostering these very high expectations.

MERROW: You make it sound like progress is its own worst enemy.

O'TOOLE: Well, I don't think that it is progress that we are talking about necessarily. I think that it certainly is progress that people aren't starving to death and it is certainly progress that people have better security and that we managed to get through this recession without having a depression. But it is not progress when people with unreal expectations are fostered by the society. When young people are told "You go to college, you get a degree, and you go out and you are going to get a good job and a well-paying job." The University of California even had a time where they had billboards around the State saying that a college education was worth, I don't know, $300,000 a year, or whatever the figure was at that time. Given the rate of inflation since then, it is probably worth $1 million in 1975 dollars.

MERROW: If you can get a job.

O'TOOLE: Yes. So young people went to school with the expectation that they were going to get a good job and a well-paying job and this is an open sesame to success.

MERROW: But Jim, let me interrupt. Wasn't that true ten years ago when people were saying, "Go to school" and so on and so forth?

O'TOOLE: Yes. I think for a time it was true and I think that at certain stages in the economic development of a nation it is going to be true in any country. At certain stages it is not. It is not in a country that is way underdeveloped, that has massive and acute unemployment as they have in India and Africa. What happens there is that college graduates grow up and they end up standing on the street corners looking for a job. But it seems to be true at a certain level of development. Clearly, it was in the 50's and 60's in the U.S. It was true. But some things have happened now that the nature of the work force has changed, the nature of demand has changed, and it is no longer true today. Some recent studies done by a team of researchers at Harvard and MIT show that the relative economic advantage of going to college has all but disappeared. There is a very small, minor advantage over those who don't go to college.

MERROW: Explain what that means.

O'TOOLE: Well, it means that in the past that if you went to college your lifetime income would be something like $300,000 or $400,000 higher than someone who only had a high school diploma. Today, because of a rather depressed demand for college graduates and also because a lot of blue collar workers, particularly the skilled union workers, are making very high salaries, that the difference has all but disappeared.

MERROW: Now, when you figure something like that, I assume that you first have to figure that, well, you are going away to college for four years, therefore you are giving up four years of income and you are also investing four years of tuition and fees. So that then you have to calculate, well, when I get out of college how much more will I make? Are people actually making those calculations? Are 17-year olds and 18-year olds actually making those calculations? Do you suppose?

O'TOOLE: Well, I don't agree. The economists feel that there is a, they say, a Scotsman in each of us, that we are constantly making these kinds of rational decisions. I don't buy it for a moment. But young people didn't have to make those calculations because they were made for them. The billboard was there in the subway. I can recall at the same time there were signs that said, "Don't drop out; you will ruin your chances of getting a good job."

MERROW: I remember that well.

O'TOOLE: And so the young people were told by their parents, by their teachers, by people in government and their ministers and everyone else that they had to go on to college and stay in school and not drop out and it was an investment in their future. And I think that that was the key concept here for us to think about. That is, education has been viewed and it has been sold as an investment. Now I would rather think of it in terms of what economists call a consumption good. That is that the reason why one pursues higher education is because presumably one thirsts after knowledge, one wants to become well-rounded, one is curious about what is happening in the world. Education is important in terms of providing the skills for citizenship, the skills for coping with life, the skills needed to have a successful family life, to raise children, to participate in community activities, the leisure-time type skills that are going to become much more important in the future; that education is something that we do for all of these things.

Now it also has, clearly, an indirect relevance to work in that the skills that most employers seem to want are being able to read and write and compute and to get along with other people and to cope with change and all those things. And education has an indirect value there, too. But it is not a direct value. It is not that direct dollars and cents payoff that young people were led to believe that was there over the last few decades.

ENSOR: James O'Toole, talking with John Merrow. O'Toole says that while a college education may not pay off in direct dollar gains, education itself is a sound investment because there is more to life than work. Rising expectations -- what workers and students expect

from their jobs -- are hard to measure. We sent reporter Keith Talbot to a local college library during the Christmas vacation. There he discovered a lot of students hard at work. He interrupted a number of them to ask about their job expectations.

I am a student in American University Law School in Washington, D. C., and I'm studying law.

TALBOT: Do you think that from what you are learning in school now you will be able to get a job?

Possibly not the type job that I want initially when I get out. But after going through a few jobs, hopefully I will get the job that I want.

TALBOT: Which is?

Which is a position in a law firm, not a big one, but something like I'll have some responsibility and apply some of the things I have learned.

I'm a student at Georgetown University in pre-med, psychology and English.

TALBOT: Do you think you will be able to get a job from what you are learning in school now?

I'm going to go to graduate school and medical school.

TALBOT: Do you think you will get the job that you want?

Sure, after medical school I think I can get the kind of job that I want, yes.

ENSOR: Others who were spending their vacations in the library professed to be relatively unconcerned about future employment.

I'm a student at Clark University in Western Massachusetts, and I'm studying biology.

TALBOT: From what you are studying now, do you think you will be able to get a job?

Well, I don't expect -- that's not what I'm there for -- to get a job. I'm not goal-oriented. I'm not a pre-professional student. I'm there for the education.

I'm a student at American University. I'm studying literature and I don't think I'm going to get a job from my education.

TALBOT: Is that a disappointment? Were you planning on getting a job from what you are learning?

Not really, no.

I go to school at Antioch in Yellow Springs, Ohio. I'm studying Environmental Studies.

TALBOT: Do you think you will be able to get a job from what you are studying in school now?

Probably not, but that is not my goal because I would like to work on my own farm somewhere.

TALBOT: Why are you going to school then?

To learn about Environmental Studies and plant nutrition so that I can know myself later on about those things while I'm living on my farm.

TALBOT: Okay. Do you have an independent source of income?

No. I'll figure it out later.

I go to school at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. I'm studying Political Science. And who knows if I can get a job?

TALBOT: You don't think you will be able to get a job when you get out of school?

I'm working on my doctorate, so I have no idea.

TALBOT: Why do you go to school then?

A very typical answer: What else do you want to do?

TALBOT: The young man working on his PhD. thesis may be in for a real jolt when he finishes school because the more schooling, the fewer jobs. That is a Catch-22 to rival the original. Many students get their Bachelors Degrees, discover that they cannot step into what they see as a "good" job, and so go on to graduate school. But when they complete the Masters Degree or PhD., they are worse off because they are now overqualified for most jobs, and the competition for the "appropriate" positions is brutal. But most of the students reporter Talbot talked with seem aware of the job situation in their chosen fields and willing to go the extra mile, or wait the extra year, to land the kind of job they want.

I'm a student at Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio, and I'm studying Music Therapy.

TALBOT: Do you think you will be able to get a job from what you are learning in school?

Yes, either as a teacher in college or actually working with children.

I'm a student at the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware and I'm studying Physical Education.

TALBOT: Do you think from what you are learning in school now you will be able to get a job?

No, I don't, because the field is very tight right now, all teaching is, pretty much so.

TALBOT: So what are you going to school for?

To get a degree and hopefully work some other kind of job until I find one in Physical Education that I want.

I'm a student at the University of Florida in Gainesville and I'm studying Electronics.

TALBOT: Do you think you will be able to get a job from what you are learning in school now?

I think so.

TALBOT: Are you confident about it?

Yes, pretty sure. There has been an uprise in the need for majors in Electronics, Masters or something.

I go to Genesee State, part of the State university system in New York. I'm a Speech and Hearing major; and yes, I think I can get a job.

TALBOT: There are positions available?

Not a lot, but they are there. You have to look for them. You have to travel for them. But they are there.

ENSOR: College students talking about their job expectations with reporter Keith Talbot. What those jobs are actually like may come as a surprise because in all likelihood they haven't had much on-the-job experience. What's more, they will probably change jobs quite a number of times and end up doing something they never dreamed of doing, let alone trained for. The average worker holds down seven jobs in a lifetime, and the more education, the greater the job mobility. James O'Toole has looked at schooling and at jobs and he thinks both are in need of an overhaul.

O'TOOLE: We need a type of dual policy here, a policy that affects the workplace and a policy that affects the schools. The policy that affects the schools, I think, can be stated rather simply: We have to do things to break the expectations that the college degree is a passport to a good job. We have to say it is not an investment. There are other things that can be done and we can talk about those later.

But in terms of the workplace many things can be done to make work more challenging and more interesting than it currently is. In the report, "Work in America," we outlined several of these. There is much recent research that shows that work can be redesigned, most jobs can be redesigned to make them more interesting, rewarding, to increase the intrinsic rewards from the job. Now, I must say that there are limitations to this. There are some jobs that for very bright people you could never make them interesting. But for most jobs, if you do things like have the workers involved in decision-making, if you provide workers with a chance to constantly learn new skills and new tasks, to learn how to do the jobs of other people that they work with, to put tools of self-management in the hands of the workers, that it will be more interesting and more rewarding.

MERROW: You seem to be saying that these demands that our better-educated populace are making are legitimate demands; it's necessary for the workplace to change, for there to be more intrinsic satisfaction in jobs.

O'TOOLE: I like very much the way you phrased that question. It is necessary for the workplace to change. I think it is because the

alternative is cutting back on education. Now, it is clear that if you educate people you increase their thirst for learning and for growth. Now, we have a situation in this country and also it is occurring in most of the industrialized countries of the world -- it is not just an American phenomenon by any stretch of the imagination. But we have the case where we have more and more young people coming out of school with these higher expectations.

You have only a couple of choices here. One is, you can say, "We'll cut back on higher education. We'll limit access to higher education. We'll limit the number of people who can go to college to the number of people whose jobs actually require that education." Now, they do this in the Soviet Union and in other places, and I would say at intolerable costs to freedom and to opportunity and even to equality, which is presumably the primary goal of the Soviet system. But we can either cut back on education, which I would say is impossible -- once you open the door to education you can't close it because education is viewed in this country,more increasingly viewed, as a right for every citizen. Higher levels of education are viewed as a right. And you might be able to cool off the expectations of people a little bit and you might also want to be more honest with people about what education really means, but you can't say "No, you can't go." Particularly you can't say "no" to Blacks and other minorities who now suddenly they are getting access to higher education and you say, "Hold it, we made a mistake. We are going to cut your access off now because you're not going to get a good job and you really don't want this anyway."

Well, I don't think that we are going to get away with that. So the alternative, then, is to change work as much as we can. And I think that we can change work, although it is not a simple thing to do. But there are enough things that can be done with the workplace to make it more interesting and rewarding, to cut back on some of the problems where we are not meeting the expectations of these newly-educated workers.

MERROW: You made the argument that you can't cut back on education; but let me take the other side of that. Maybe less education would be a good idea. You yourself say that by 1980 only 20 percent of all jobs will require a college education. Today half of the jobs don't require even a high school diploma. So, it seems to me there is a real argument there that is saying, "Well, why should we bother educating people? They don't need it for their jobs and all we are doing is raising and creating false expectations. Therefore, cut the budgets," et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

O'TOOLE: Well, that goes back to a point I was making earlier that if you view the primary purpose of education to prepare people for the world of work, then I would say there is some reason to accept the argument that you just offered. But if you feel that there are some higher purposes to education, which I happen to believe, then you cannot follow that line of reasoning. If education is as much for leisure and family and citizenship as it is for work, then just because people aren't using those skills in the workplace is no excuse or rationale for cutting back education.

I would hate to think that people would use the argument -- and I realize there is a danger in this -- that people are using the arguments that I'm making about the relationship of education and work as an excuse to cut back expenditures for education. I would argue just the opposite. I think that the kind of world that we are getting into will need a better-educated populace. We'll need better-educated people.

We may not need them necessarily, they may not need that education necessarily on their jobs, but certainly they are going to need it as citizens and they are going to need it to be able to cope with the enormous changes that are going to occur in their lives. They are going to need it to raise their children in a better way than our parents did with us.

MERROW: To get over the dead spots in the future, whatever the line you quote from John Dewey.

O'TOOLE: Yes, but the people are going to be constantly assaulted with change in the future. And some of it is at work, but a lot of it will be just in their lives, changing sex roles, changing family roles, changing political structures. All of these things will require, I believe, a much better educated population.

MERROW: You are arguing, then, not for more technical education. You are arguing for something which is usually called a liberal education; education to enable one to understand and thinking processes, it sounds to me.

O'TOOLE: Yes, exactly that. I feel that in the past the people who have been most able to cope with change, with different kinds of jobs, with different kinds of environment, have been the liberally educated. These people have learned how to learn. And learning how to learn, I think, is the secret for survival over the next several decades. We cannot predict what the future is going to offer. The pace and the scope of technological and social and political change has increased to such an alarming rate that we can't keep up with it and we can't really predict it or forecast it. What we have to provide, I believe, is an educated population of people who know how to cope with change; whatever change may bring, they will be able to look at it, see what they need to learn, what they need to do to cope with it, and step in and be able to get the resources that they need to be able to survive.

I think that really a liberal education is the key to this. Now, when I'm saying "liberal education," I'm not talking just about the traditional kind of education that people have gotten at Harvard and other places. I'm talking about the type of education in which people may have more experiential kind of learning experiences. It is not possible, I don't think, just to learn to cope with change from reading the classics. Young people may have to, at a very early stage, have some kind of exposure to the real world. That is why I favor things like cooperative education. What happens, though, is that they can take these practical experiences and they can bring them back into the classroom and the teachers can help them raise the level of these experiences to some higher level of abstraction. This is where I think the key to learning in education may be. That is to take something that is practical and seems particular, to raise it to a higher level of abstraction so that when people are faced with a similar situation in the future they will know how to cope with it. I think that it is really coping skills that we are looking for.

ENSOR: James O'Toole talked about the need for a liberal education, which John Dewey described as a means of getting through life's "dead spots".

MERROW: We need coping skills also, O'Toole says, and he is certainly right about that. A recent test of the ability of adults

to function in a complex society found that 20 percent could not. Another 34 percent functioned on a minimal level.

ENSOR: Not everyone is underemployed, over-educated and frustrated, of course. It is possible to steer the course that O'Toole suggests. Bob Osmond just finished graduate school in photography. He now works as a mail clerk for the United States Congress. By some standards he is a failure. Not by his own lights, or, we expect, by O'Toole's either.

OSMOND: I got very interested in photography. I must have been 14 or 15 and I was messing around with a Polaroid camera and I decided that was a little too limited and I realized you could develop your own film. Now, look over at the house. Now stare right into the camera. Now, that was a little too wicked. You looked like Neil Young. And I ended up going to graduate school for photography. Now, you wouldn't want me to say "cheese". It wouldn't work. With some people you can. Like if I was taking a picture of my grandmother I could probably get away with saying "cheese".

I have always known that I am going to be using writing and communication skills such as photography and film all my life. Like, that just was a preconceived notion that I'm sure I picked up in high school. So,everything,I would say, going through the college courses was very much different. Like, I know for one thing, when you get out into the real world, like I have had many different jobs which weren't related to photography or writing and you have to learn that job and your background is more or less instincts or your educational background, you pick up instincts for things. But you can't pick up the skills as such because each job is just so completely different. And that is pretty much true, too, of photography. Like each photographic job is different.

So what you learn in college and what you do on the job are two different things. The trick is to find the job and to get it and start working at it. That is where it is very difficult because that takes a certain kind of public relations sense, I believe, if anything. Like that could be something that would be a relevant course in college, to teach a student a public relations point of attitude just when they go get the job, other than drilling in all these economic principles where you start working for an accounting firm and they are using all different sorts of forms and things so you have to relearn the whole thing.

I mean, you have to get a basic understanding. But I don't believe it should be so tightly geared towards the technology. That is going to change anyway in two years. The technology always does. Like, even the cameras and the things I was using several years ago and the films, they are all different. What you do pick up probably is somewhat of a confidence. Like, you can get out and you feel that you have gone so far and you aren't scared of people such as teachers or instructors or the hierarchy any more because you know what game they are playing.

As a matter of fact, I kind of have a whole philosophy like if I'm living I want to know it. I don't want to kind of get in a rut. I think that is something like that you pick up in college, that life is a lot richer than just doing the nine-to-five job and coming home and watching the TV, although you can't say that that applies to everyone. But I think if you know there is something more it will keep you fighting. It will give you a little more to living and there is nothing to say that you can't be changing jobs all your life. Like, I know I have been changing jobs all the time. That is part of the fun of it.

Because after you learn one thing there is always something else. Even if you became President of the United States, look at Gerald Ford, he seems to be bored with his job. There is just nothing in it. But it is what you can make with your whole life a a total. Your job is primarily eight hours a day. And I think you find that with the greatest people because they have developed, in the other 16 hours of the day, something very worthwile.

ENSOR: Bob Osmond has had three jobs in his few months in Washington, each one better than the last. He says he looks forward to moving from job to job as long as he can satisfy his need to work in photography off the job.

OSMOND: And so it is kind of just playing it by ear and taking the blows logically when they come and adjusting and being flexible. It depends, if you want to live in a luxury situation with all the thrills and frills and all that, or whether you want to live as an individual in an enviroment where you are pretty much alone with your own interests and hobbies and friends and all that.

ENSOR: But Bob Osmond's particular situation probably wouldn't work for most of us. We value stability, for one thing. And besides, many people are looking for job satisfaction built in, that is intrinsic satisfaction from the job itself. That is what we learned in school. But in reality we generally settle for extrinsic rewards, that is the money or privileges that come with the job. We may compensate for an unfulfilling job with an interesting hobby or a lot of TV. John Merrowasks James O'Toole for some solutions to the problems he had described.

MERROW: I hear you saying that, well, the schools really do have to change because the schools have been selling education as meal ticket to more money and a job with both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

The market place, the workplace, has to change also where jobs have to be redesigned. Jobs have been heretofore designed with almost a kind of contempt for the workers, assuming they are dummies. They have to be redesigned so that there will be challenge, there will be interest in doing the work itself. So that with both those kinds of changes you will be moving toward a much better society. Now that is all very nice, and I agree with you, but it is not realistic. So let me try out another solution, one that we are much closer to. How about a good depression? How about a war? Would that solve our problems?

O'TOOLE: Well, it wouldn't solve all of our problems, that is for sure. Of course depressions do tend to lower people's expectations a little and I think that is probably what you have in mind.

MERROW: That is what I meant.

O'TOOLE: I don't think it is such a good idea that we lower people's expectations. I would hope that young people and that the goal of educational processes is to still make people want something better than they currently have. You wouldn't have progress is you didn't have that. I hope we didn't lower expectations to the point that young people were willing to accept the kinds of jobs that they are offered.

I think that it is the purpose of education to have people aspire a little bit higher than they would without it. But what I worry about is very, very unreal expectations, expectations that can

never be met, expectations that would lead to frustration; expectations that could lead to people thinking that I am a failure because I didn't achieve this, when really it is a product of the social system.

ENSOR: The changes in the workplace might come about nationally, though not necessarily quietly, if educated workers simply refuse to accept what they see as dumb jobs. But because there are more workers than there are jobs these days, the workplace is unlikely to change drastically. O'Toole doesn't want young college graduates to see themselves as failures merely because their college degrees haven't proven to be tickets to good jobs. But he does want people to keep on going to school and to keep on learning.

MERROW: But we barely scratched the surface of the problem, David. First off, whether James O'Toole likes it or not, those who pay for our colleges and universities are doing so largely because they believe that education increases personal productivity and the gross national product. It will be a cold day in Congress when that august body votes more money for education simply because it makes people's inner lives richer. That holds true for State Legislatures, too.

There is another facet of the problem of schooling and jobs that we have to mention. Do you remember that doctoral student who, when asked why he was going to school, asked rhetorically, "What else do you want me to do?" to me, that answer not only smacks of a legitimate fear of graduating, but also of a kind of arrogance, probably unconscious. Half of the young people in the country never have the luxury of asking that question or of making that kind of choice.

ENSOR: For them, high school graduation, if in fact they even graduate, means going to work the next day or the next week, that is if they can find work -- because unemployment among some groups of young people is as high as 40 percent.

MERROW: We haven't considered their expectations and we haven't asked whether they are underemployed. We know that schools, in their rush to prepare the majority for college, are not preparing many of them to cope with a changing society. Next week we will be taking a close look at the other side, the underside of the coin, if you will.

ENSOR: We'll also guide you though the maze of terminology that inflicts this aspect of schools, vocational education, experiential education, distributive education, hands-on learning, cooperative education, and career education. We'll also talk to classroom teachers all across the country on what they are doing to prepare their students for a lifetime of work.

MERROW: In the last program in this series we want to present your thoughts and ideas about schooling and jobs and how both might adjust to a changing society. We would like your answer to one specific question about your own present occupation. Here's the question: When you were in school, did you plan or train for the job you now hold? Send your answer to Options in Education, 2025 M (as in employee) Street, Northwest, Washington, D. C.

ENSOR: Transcripts of the four-part series are available for $1.00. A single cassette costs $4.00. The entire series (four cassettes) is available for $12.00. And don't forget that question: When you were in school, did you plan or train for the job you now hold? Our address, 2025 M (as in employer) Street, Northwest, Washington, D. C., 20036.

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