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ABSTRACT

Focusing on five possible transition points in a woman's career, these five symposium papers explore some major problems that women encounter in career and job transitions and present existing and potential solutions and the extent to which women develop skills and abilities in one setting that are transferable to another situation. Priscilla Elfrey, Transition Point I presenter (initial entry), discusses the importance of power, including competence, confidence, and connections, in helping women obtain, progress, and change their jobs and careers. Carol Eliason, Transition Point II presenter (re-entry), stresses the need for women re-entering the work world to validate life skills. Joan Humphries (Transition Point III) suggests counseling/career services, training programs, educational and employment practices, and applied research activities to help women assess their career progression during this period of career advancement. To help women achieve upward mobility, Corrine Rieder, Transition Point IV presenter (job mobility), recommends two perspectives: an academic approach and a more personal experiential approach. Phillip Randall, Transition Point V presenter (pre- or post-employment), discusses the factors and events leading to post-retirement jobs and careers. He proposes work-, education-, and community-related approaches to helping older women returning to or changing in the paid labor force. (YLB)

Information Series No. 190

WOMEN AND WORK:
PATHS TO POWER

-A Symposium

compiled by

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The National Center for Research in Vocational Education
The Ohio State University
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

National Institute of Education

FOREWORD

"Content and Methods of Career Preparation: Transferable Skills," a research project conducted at the National Center, is continuing a study into the nature of occupational adaptability and transferable skills, under the sponsorship of the National Institute of Education. Efforts are underway to generate and synthesize new knowledge and information that will be useful to individuals and groups, both youth and adult, in coping effectively with all kinds of occupational and job changes. The collection and synthesis of information about the nature and use of transferable skills can be a part of a very important change process—namely, those critical career transitions that we all will experience throughout our work lives.

The symposium, the second in a series, addressed the question:

> How can training for and development of transferable skills and occupational adaptability contribute to the improvement and use of human resources, particularly of women, in the labor force?

The symposium, which took place on June 15, 1979, at the National Center, explored some major problems that women encounter in career and job transitions and, in addition, presented existing and potential solutions and the extent to which women develop skills and abilities in one setting that are transferable to another situation. Several presenters addressed some practical methods and coping strategies, and opportunities by which women can improve the transfer of their skills and abilities in these transitions. This symposium also represented the fusion of two of the National Center's long-term efforts: career development for women and transferable skills.

We wish to acknowledge the symposium presenters:

- Priscilla Elfrey, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA); Washington, D.C.
- Carol Eliason, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC); Washington, D.C.
- Joan Humphries, National Science Foundation (NSF); Washington, D.C.
- Corinne Rieder, National Institute of Education (NIE); Washington, D.C.
- Phillip Randall, American Telephone and Telegraph Company AT&T); Akron, Ohio.

Our appreciation is extended to the nineteen individuals from all over the nation participating in discussion groups. (See Appendix A.) Two of these participants, Laura Armstrong and Carol Fought, assisted in designing the conceptual framework of the symposium. Our thanks to Tom Ryan, Channel 6 News, for moderating a "Meet-the-Press" session at the symposium, and to many OSU departments for their dissemination efforts. The National Center would also like to thank the 150 people from the state and from the nation who attended the symposium.

Many National Center staff members were involved in this symposium. Nancy Laitman-Ashley organized, developed, conducted the symposium, and compiled the document. Robert Abram and Constance Faddis contributed to symposium planning and implementation. Karen Heydman, Joan Jones, Kate Kitchen, Della Neuman, Nina Selz, Paul Shaltry, Louise Vetter, Karin Stork Whitson,

and Allen Wiant assisted in symposium activities. William Ashley, Director of the Transferable Skills Program, provided useful guidance and encouragement from start to finish. In addition, our thanks to Robert Stump, National Institute of Education Project Officer, and Frank Pratzner, Associate Director of Research, for their valuable advice.

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or perspectives of the Transferable Skills Program, the National Center, or the National Institute of Education.

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
The National Center for Research
in Vocational Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Most people spend a large portion of their lives engaged in some sort of work, which may be paid or unpaid employment. They derive a sense of identity from their careers and work organization affiliations. Where they live, the type of family, lifestyle, friends, leisure time activities, prestige, and self-esteem, affect and are affected by the nature of their work and career experiences.

Work is an area of their lives profoundly affected by the acceleration of change in American society. As lifestyles are changing, orderly career patterns are becoming the exception, not the norm; that is, many people experience significant occupational or job changes before they establish orderly career and life patterns. In the last ten years, there has been an increase in the number of women entering or re-entering the paid labor force as well as changes in the jobs they hold. Because of these and other social changes, many women, in the course of their careers, have encountered significant transition points in establishing and maintaining a career.

Five possible transition points in a woman's career were discussed in this symposium. These transitions seem to represent those points in a woman's life where job or career changes occur. Although these transition points appear to cover a woman's career chronologically, each transition point is not limited to one specific age group, with the exception of Transition Point V, which by its nature is limited to the older woman. Women of various ages may enter, progress, and change careers at a variety of transition points.

Priscilla Elfrey, Transition Point I presenter (initial entry), spoke of the importance of power for women who enter or progress in their careers. *Competence*—knowing appropriate skills for a job, *Confidence*—applying those skills successfully, and *Connections*—knowing the rules and people in a work situation, are all elements of power. These three factors and others help women obtain, progress, and change their jobs and careers. Ms. Humphries, presenter, Transition Point III, suggested a variety of approaches that could help women assess their career progression. She provided current information on how training programs, counseling services, and applied research and educational activities could prepare a woman to face many legal issues surrounding a woman in the world of work.

Carol Eliason, Transition Point II presenter (re-entry), stressed the importance of research on transferable skills to female, mid-life career changers. Because many people change jobs or occupations a number of times in their career cycles, Ms. Eliason suggested that targeted efforts should help individuals to become vocationally versatile. One of the many efforts she mentioned in her presentation was project ACCESS, which will identify and assess women's skills and relate these skills to vocational programs and occupations.

Many of the presenters discussed occupational mobility for women. Corinne Rieder, Transition Point IV presenter (job mobility), provided data and background history on occupational mobility. Ms. Rieder claimed that ten years ago, the concern of women in the job force was with barriers—for example, what the effects would be on children and husbands of women entering the work force. However, Ms. Rieder's presentation, as well as the other presentations, went beyond exploring impediments. Instead, issues of women moving within jobs and occupations were discussed.

Ms. Rieder interpreted some major findings of the 1972 National Longitudinal Survey, a four-volume, comprehensive look at women and men in the labor force. Painting a somewhat grim picture of upward mobility for women, Ms. Reider claims that, on the average, women *experienced almost no upward mobility* between 1967 and 1971.

Ms. Rieder also described what groups are occupationally mobile and the characteristics of the occupations and individuals in these groups. In addition, Ms. Rieder as well as the other presenters suggested practical recommendations that can help women break out of the "forced compression" situation in which women are clustered into a small number of traditionally female occupations, that limits, in part, their upward mobility.

Phillip Randall, Transition Point V presenter (pre- or post-retirement), described ageism and sexism as two factors in post-retirement jobs and occupations. He claimed that women, valued for their youth and beauty, move rapidly from being sex objects to being obsolescent as they age. In addition, older women might become widowed and financial needs might prompt them to return to the paid work world or change jobs to earn more. The inherent conflict here is that although older women have domonstrated many skills and abilities across a wide range of occupations, they can often find it difficult to obtain employment in their areas of expertise. Randall points out that until employers are willing to focus on actual job qualifications and not on age and sex, low job mobility will continue among older women.

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Issues

In 1978, women reached a milestone: for the first time more than half of all American women over age 16 were participating in the labor force. The actual numbers of working women have more than doubled since 1950. Some recent statistics (September 1978) show that women comprise 42.1 percent of the total work force. Projections are for an increase of 12 million by 1990 and for women to constitute almost half of all workers by that date, with more than 70 percent of all women working. In 1900, only 20 percent of American women worked outside the home. Sociologist Eli Ginzberg has aptly called this dramatic projected increase "the single most outstanding phenomenon of our century."

Arbeiter et al. (1976) assessed the career needs of a national sample of adults who are undergoing or anticipating job or career changes. The sample included adults who were unemployed and looking for work, and employed adults who were dissatisfied with their work and were considering new employment. The findings indicated that 36 percent of the American population between ages 16 and 65 were in job or career transition. Most of the adults in transition tended to be females between the ages of 20 and 39. They were typically married, with one to three children at home, and with a family income of $10,000 a year or more. The majority of the sample was employed full-time at semi-skilled or unskilled jobs.

Despite the increased participation of women in the labor force, some problems persist. Marcia Freedman, in her book *Labor Market Segments and Shelters* (1976), discussed trends in the labor market for women. She found that, compared to the market for men, the most striking aspect of the market for women is homogeneity or the forced compression of the female labor force into a small number of occupations. Of 440 jobs in the Census Occupation Classification System, the majority of women are found in only twenty. Occupations that are more than 90 percent female include bank teller, typist, secretary, telephone operator, bookkeeper, and nurse. In the case of "female" jobs, what stands out is the specificity of tasks and absence of promotional ladders. Permanent type-casting in the labor force is often a result of these two employment characteristics. Given the phenomenon of homogeneity, it is not surprising that women experience less upward occupational mobility than men. However, among married women with children, a larger number have been downwardly mobile rather than upwardly mobile. By and large, therefore, women continue to work in the less favorable corners of the labor market. Although 63 percent of women are employed in the paid labor force, they earn between $3,000 and $5,000 a year with only 5 percent of those making more than $15,000.

These low earnings could occur because many women lack accurate and timely information about job opportunities as well as the "job-getting" skills necessary to maximize job-hunting efforts. Also, some women have special needs (such as the need for part-time employment) to allow them to meet other major family obligations and expectations without suffering losses in job status, salary, or tenure.

Women need to be fully aware of the options that are available for integrating their careers and their personal lives. For those who experience significant job or career changes, the concept of transferable skills holds promise for smoothing their transitions and increasing their occupational benefits and outcomes. The transfer process could be assisted by more systematically analyzing one's perceived skills and abilities and recognizing the broader set of job options available.

Occupational adaptability is seen as a significant requirement for women of today and tomorrow. As the need for women to transfer knowledge and skills to new situations increases along with the advancement of technology, lifelong learning is emerging as a significant part of their career progression. Using new learning approaches and alternative learning styles and applying them in non-traditional settings are becoming the trademarks of the successfully adaptable women who can meet job changes and transitions with a sense of competence and self-direction.

Concepts

The following definitions are included to clarify some concepts used in this report.

Occupational Mobility: Occupational mobility, as used by labor market economists, refers to the movement of workers from one occupation or job to another (Sommers, in print).

The potential for occupational mobility can be viewed as the degree of match between an individual's knowledge and skills and the range of currently available jobs and occupations. That is, some persons have a greater potential for mobility than others: The knowledges and skills they possess are more marketable across a broader selection of current employment possibilities. This view of mobility is related to the concepts of occupational adaptability, or the relative success with which an individual is able to change jobs or adjust to change within a job. It is in these areas of occupational mobility and adaptability that issues of transferable skills are paramount. With occupational mobility a fact of American lifestyles, the idea that one set of occupational skills can be learned once and should last a lifetime is no longer valid.

Occupational Adaptability: Occupational adaptability might be defined as the capacity of people to adapt to an environment and/or to adapt the environment to themselves. Some factors that might necessitate adaptive behaviors are changing situational variables, job demands, performance contexts, skill requirements, and personal needs and desires.

Transferable Skills: All skills may be potentially transferable to some extent and on some occasions. However, there doesn't seem to be a single agreed-upon list of specific skills and characteristics that applies generally to most settings. With the regard to the world of work, transferable skills are often described as "the skills and abilities which an individual brings with him/her from job to job, and which apply in each job" (Pratzner, 1976, p. 15). The transferable skills cluster in groups such as mathematics skills, communications skills, interpersonal skills, reasoning skills, and manipulative skills.

Transfer Skills: Basic to occupational adaptability is the capacity to transfer and generalize. In preparing women for occupations, the first competency needing concern could be transfer skills. Transfer skills are the process skills that help a person take job-specific skills developed through past experience and use them in a new situation.

Format

The one-day symposium, which took place on June 15, 1979, at the National Center, was divided into two sessions. Session I contained five presentations, or transition points. The five transition points, indicated below, were selected for the individual presentations and serve to structure this report:

- *Transition Point I* — This period is characterized by events just prior to and during initial entry into the paid labor force. Priscilla Elfrey (presenter) stressed the importance of personal power. Without confidence, competence, and control, women might have some difficulty in adjusting to new or different responsibilities.

- *Transition Point II* — This period is characterized by events related to a return to paid employment. Carol Eliason (presenter) discussed the need to convince women entering or returning to the work world, employers, and educators, to validate life skills.

- *Transition Point III* — This period is characterized by events related to advancing and/or progressing in a career. Joan Humphries (presenter) suggested that a variety of approaches — counseling/care services, training programs, educational and employment practices, and applied research activities — could enhance woman progress within a career.

- *Transition Point IV* — This period is characterized by lateral transfers, changing employers, changing occupations, and changing careers. Corinne Rieder (presenter) discussed two perspectives of job mobility for women—an academic approach, and a more personal experiential approach.

- *Transition Point V* — This period describes factors and events in post-retirement jobs and careers. Phillip Randell (presenter) offered work, education, and community-related approaches for older women returning to or changing in the paid labor force.

An audience of 150 individuals from the community, the state, and the nation attended this session, along with 19 invited reactors. Following the presentations, the audience, presenters, and reactors participated in a "Meet-the-Press" session hosted by a local television personality, Tom Ryan. From this morning session, the audience and invited presenters and reactors took away many new ideas and ways to improve their services to themselves and other women in transition.

Session II, which convened later, consisted of five discussion groups representing each transition point. The valuable comments and reactions of those small groups that met in Session II have been incorporated in the text.

This symposium seems to represent many points in a woman's life where job or career changes occur. If women can transfer their skills, if they can improve their occupational adaptability, then they will have the power to make successful job and career changes.

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TRANSITION POINT I

WOMEN ENTERING THE JOB MARKET: POWER, POWERLESSNESS, TRANSFERABLE SKILLS, AND OCCUPATIONAL ORIENTATION

Priscilla Elfrey

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Washington, D.C.

Priscilla Elfrey manages and directs the Federal Women's Program as Coordinator at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Ms. Elfrey worked recently at Computer Sciences Corporation as consultant and task leader for a study at the Department of Energy's Economic Regulatory Agency. Previously, she initiated services and directed programs as Associate Dean of Yale College. She directed staff development and affirmative action planning at New York University. Ms. Elfrey chaired the Yale University Fellowships Committee and served on several policy committees. Her previous experience includes directing dramatics at the Calhoun School, managing Personnel at the American Arbitration Association, and performing college admissions work at Finch College. Ms. Elfrey received her undergraduate degree from Barnard College and did graduate work at Columbia and New York University. She was also a fellow of Calhoun College, Yale University, from 1973 to 1978.

TRANSITION POINT I

WOMEN ENTERING THE JOB MARKET: POWER, POWERLESSNESS, TRANSFERABLE SKILLS, AND OCCUPATIONAL ORIENTATION

Priscilla Elfrey

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Washington, D.C.

INTRODUCTION

An idea underlying concern about skills transfer is lack of power. Power is the issue. Maybe, if we knew how to transfer skills, maybe if we knew how to improve our occupational adaptability, we'd have power. As it is, women too often lack control over this environment and seldom experience success and satisfaction. It may be difficult to define power but, whatever it is, we can agree that few women have it. I believe with William Goode (1975) that women will be the last group to be freed. We grope for a way out, admitting that women are relatively powerless in sex-segregated and low-prestige positions, in jobs where they are underemployed, underpaid and angry, or working as mere tokens in non-traditional occupations.

Perceived Skill-lessness and Undervalued Skills

When people perceive themselves to be powerless—they become so. Their skills atrophy. They even forget that they have any. Job hunters become powerless suppliants. This can characterize all new women entrants: displaced homemakers and those from job training programs, sheltered workshops, skill training, vocational rehabilitation or training agencies, work experience centers, high schools, college, and graduate school. On a bad day, any job hunter will feel disadvantaged and powerless.

Among the problems leading to these feelings are:

- Ignorance of self, skills, options, and the employment system;
- Lack of support from other people;
- Perceived and real skill deficiency and failure to consciously develop skills;
- Insecurity about how skills are measured;
- Passivity in taking control of one's life.

Some women attain power as pioneers, a time-honored American role. While exhilarating, it can also be unsettling and exhausting. Some women, therefore, slide back quickly into the Cinderella role and wait in vain for a fairy godmother. Nowhere is this more obvious than with clerical

workers, the vast majority of whom are women. Clerical workers often have depressed aspirations. My observation of new entrants into secretarial jobs shares the view reported by Kantor that many perceive themselves with:

> no skills whatsoever in these areas: developing programs (74% of the women reported no skills); motivating and persuading (49%); interviewing and selecting (84%); administering discipline (64%); setting goals and objectives (37%); conducting meetings (76%); and leading others (47%). Most felt themselves skill-less (Kantor, 1977).

The vitally important skills that women do develop through their socialization, being difficult to measure, are often undervalued. Then too, many women unconsciously develop skills of time and financial management, and of decision-making (Janeway, 1975). They fail to measure these skills, and we are a society that behaves as if the only things that count are those which can be counted. Measurement of skills is important, but I remember a syllogism by e.e. cummings:

> everything that can be counted is not art and everything that is not art is untrue and everything that is untrue isn't worth a good god damn.

Real Skills Deficiencies

Women often have real skills deficiencies. Education should provide no limits on opportunities available to girls and women so that they might experience truly androgynous, sex-free, learning. We need courses in the sciences and mathematics that don't scare the humanists to death. Sexism is so pervasive that females still face problems in getting into classes in auto mechanics and shop. There are almost no women in physics and aeronautics. Seventh grade girls in need of peer approval are told by boys their age that girls shouldn't be astronauts. Title IX, designed to provide sex fairness in physical training activities, is resisted by the athletics "industry." Women, lacking proper physical development, drop out of apprenticeship programs requiring lifting skills. Similarly, women at the U.S. Naval Academy required a special exercise program to develop strength in the upper body.

Women who failed to take a four-year sequence in mathematics in high school were locked out of three-fourths of the majors at the University of California at Berkeley (Sells, 1974). Ninety-two percent of the women students had thus narrowed their options. Today, mathematics anxiety spawns a new occupation: the math counselor (Tobias, 1978). Women, parents and advisors must take note that our society requires that we ~~all improve our~~ competency with the tools of technology. Even if we never touch a computer ourselves, we should be able to talk as peers with those who do. We need to feel capable of and comfortable with learning whatever it is that we need to learn.

For non-technical positions in one branch of NASA, a manager asks applicants to solve this algebraic problem that requires skills that his staff use regularly in their work:

> Shuttle price is $\$18\bar{M}^{-.45}$
> Shuttle cost per flight in August = $\$282N$
> N is the number of shuttle flights flown
>
> *Question:* At what number of flights does NASA break even?
>
> *Answer:* When $\$18\bar{M} = \$282N^{-.45}$
>
> $$N = \left(\frac{18}{282}\right)^{\frac{-1}{.45}} = 452$$

Solving this problem requires more than first-year algebra (Sjogren, 1977).

Sex Segregation of Occupations

Many programs and studies fail to speak of preparing students, especially women, for the obstacles that they will face. They are moving from an egalitarian, sexually balanced or dominant, school experience to one where they can only be tokens or part of a female ghetto. No balanced full-time occupations exist with a 40:60 relationship between men and women. Sociologists have long told us of the power of the "tipping effect": when more than 50 percent of a group do something, it becomes the norm. Sometimes that norm is pathological, and this is probably true of all segregated work groups whether male, black, Jewish, Protestant, or female dominant in a pluralistic culture. Kantor (1978) points out that tokens and those in female ghettos face special difficulties of which male management and women need to be more aware.

Ignorance of Problems in Job Hunting

I regard as dangerously simplistic, the notion of career education that students need "a set of important yet *basically simple* (job hunting) *skills* that are essential to career adaptability." (Italics mine, Hoyt, 1976.) The process is complex.

One program for minority women in Houston noted that the average job-hunting time for their applicants was 137 days. This compares with the 110 days that the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported in 1974. People entering employment—indeed people at any transition—may have to experience many, many rejections. Learning to deal with this rejection and to prove effective as job hunters can take skillful advice, support, and time.

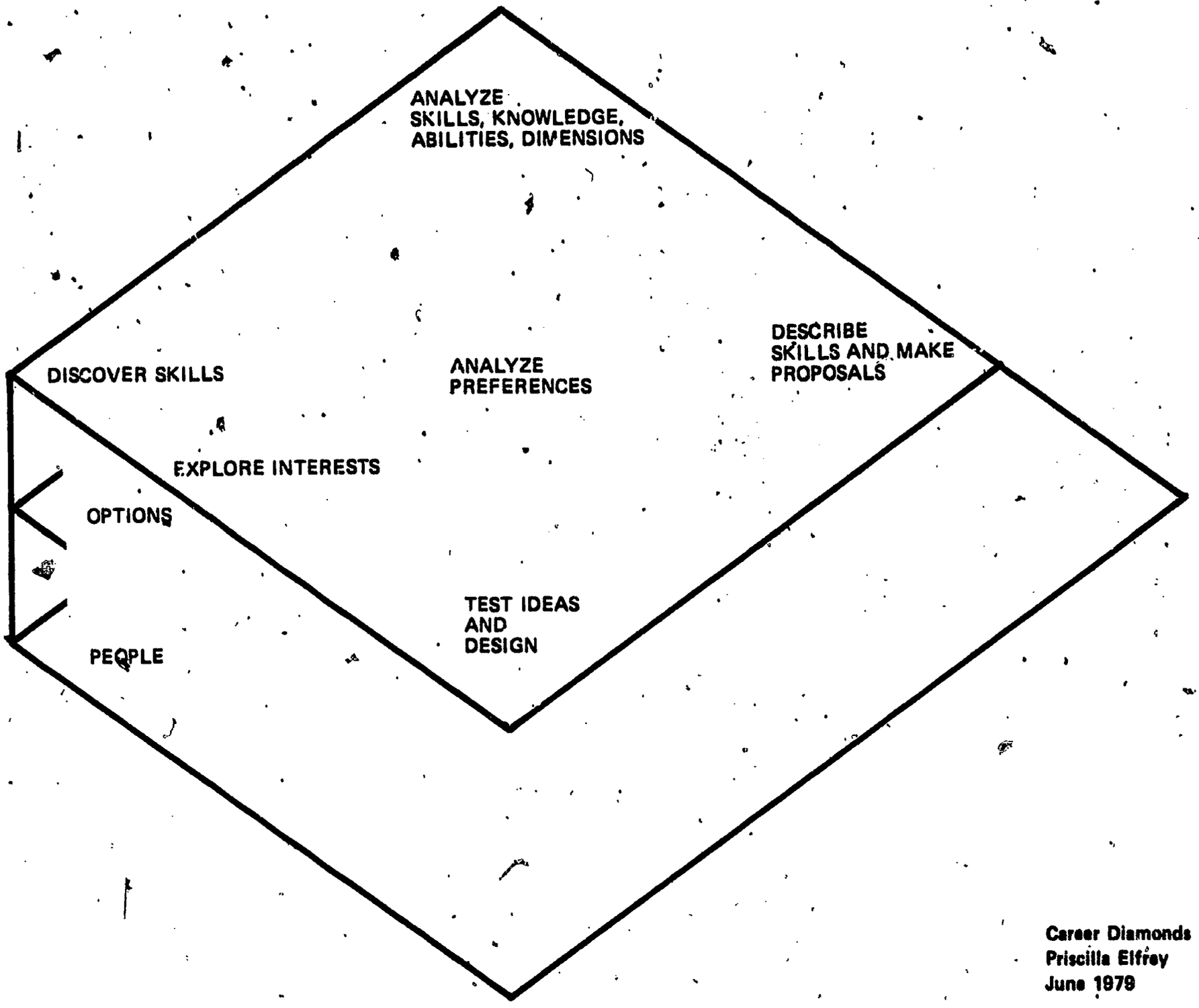
"Quick and dirty" approaches through self-directed instruments and workshops focusing on particular problems (interviewing, writing a resume) enable the advisor to get the person's attention. Short-cuts prove ineffective in serious career structuring efforts as every career planning book and program and my colleagues assert (Crystal and Bolles, 1974; Bolles, 1978 edition; Ford and Lippitt, 1972; Irish, 1975; Ennov, 1977). A job-hunting system funded by the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) of the Department of Labor featured on Bill Moyers' television program (June 8, 1979) takes four 40-hour weeks; John Crystal's basic program is thirteen 3-hour weekly sessions plus considerable work outside of class. A self-directed handbook to introduce NASA employees simply to skills analysis (Elfrey, 1979) takes a minimum of 12 hours but is more effective when complemented with seven hours of career structuring workshops plus one-to-one advising. It is difficult to get people to make such a commitment of their time.

Readiness for Career Structuring

As Hamlet finally knew, "The readiness is all." Each transition point in this symposium has its special characteristics but in each a key factor is the readiness of the woman to learning the process of skills transfer and to exert the effort involved in career structure. The basic pattern of career structuring is a continuous process of expanding one's vision and then focusing on what really matters. The person in transition widens her vision of herself, of her options, of her network, and then focuses on her preferred constructs, her preferred career choices, and on the people and strategies that will enable her to move (figure 1). Through this process of knowledge and control, she gains self-confidence and power over her own life and career.

In my experience people in transition are on a continuum from being *powerless, unaware, bewildered, and unable to move* to feeling *full of power, aware, comfortable and moving with ease.*

Figure 1



Career Diamonds
Priscilla Elfrey
June 1979

The Career Readiness Matrix applies to all transitions (figure 2). Some sit in a well explaining their predicament but doing nothing to get out of the well. The first step is to want to get up and on with life. Awareness of skill does give the powerless some taste of power. Later they need to understand more about options, about future possibilities, and to learn how to gain access to appropriate employment. With each step along the continuum, they gain power.

Women in the last category, of course, are winners. They know who they are, value their skills, and are valued. They understand the problems and opportunities of being pioneers and know how to use people effectively and with grace. In the best of all possible worlds, they support women job-hunters and press for changes in the structuring of jobs that create female and male ghettos.

Gaining Power through Skills Assessment

Women must take the primary role in their own advancement. To empower women, knowledge of skills transfer is vital but is neither easy nor a panacea. The experience of some of us and of some projects and programs provide hope and models for us to consider.

Blue Collar Skills

In 1971 families headed by women had a median income of $5,100 – they had less of everything except poverty, worry, and fear. A Model Cities program in Chattanooga helped address the problem by training women to reassess themselves in terms of occupation and by convincing them that industrial work is where the money is. A major building block in the training was the assumption that everyone has strengths, skills and constructs, often unidentified and even unused. Each is presumed to have goals, objectives, even if unknown, and the capacity to change and grow. The group emphasized positive self-concepts in a beginning toward feeling good about one's self. Values, work habits, and attitudes come into play and the women were prepared to deal with racial and sexist prejudice that they may encounter. Local businesses cooperated and worked in developing the program and the training that covered the basics of welding, machine operation, automobile and small engine repair, building maintenance, and tool technology. Physical exercise was part of the program and coaching has been used successfully to enable the women to assess their skills, abilities, knowledge, constructs and interests (Devivo and Devivo, 1973).

Other "Non-Traditional" Work

A project in Houston now in its sixth year and since expanded to ten other cities, the Minority Women Employment Program (MWEP), adapts and applies outreach techniques to minority women with college degrees or equivalent experience who are seeking managerial, professional, or technical jobs. Aimed at meeting employers' claims that they would hire minority women if they could meet job qualifications and were available, MWEP locates and assists such candidates

From the outset of the project, Houston offered a severe test for this program. Despite a robust economy, minority women shared little in it. One study (Bergman and Lyle, 1971) comparing occupational standing of blacks in major metropolitan labor markets found that Houston ranked 43rd out of 45 for black women.

During the first contract year, 23 placements were made; in the second contract year, 48 placements, bringing the cumulative total to 71. In addition to increasing the quantity of women

READINESS TO DEAL WITH CAREER TRANSITION

POWERLESS, NO CONTROL, UNAWARE	CURIOUS, NO KNOWLEDGE OF SKILLS, TARGETS OR ACCESS – POWERLESS	AWARE OF SKILLS BUT LACKING IDEAS ON TARGETS AND ACCESS	KNOWLEDGE OF SKILLS AND TARGETS BUT NEEDING HELP WITH ACCESS – MORE POWERFUL	POWERFUL, IN CONTROL, AWARE

CAREER READINESS CONTINUUM
PRISCILLA ELFREY, JUNE 1979

Figure 2

placed, MWEP-Houston recorded several breakthroughs in its second year: enabling placement of the first minority female in Texas as regional auditor for a major insurance company, the first black female in Texas in a professional position with a State regulatory board, and the first three black females as auditors with a major State agency.

The MWEP approach designed as a personal process provides support and encouragement aimed at building self-confidence in the women. Debriefing follows each interview. Employers who do not hire are asked why. This enables the staff to learn more about interviewing and about employer needs. By reviewing their experience, applicants learn how to be more effective in subsequent interviews. This process provides information that an individual acting alone may be unable to acquire. The applicant can gain the ability to express herself regarding her skills, her constructs, her career goals and thus enhance her self-assurance and be more in control in interviews with employers (Glover, Rowland and Webir, 1974).

The program provides data on both the types of supportive services necessary and on the real problems that this population had in job hunting; problems that persist even when candidates are aware of their skills and have learned strategies of occupational adaptability.

During the first two years, the applicant file consisted of 695 women of whom 71 found positions through the program. Predictably perhaps, less than 6 percent of the 307 liberal arts and home economics graduates got jobs. However, in the more vocationally obvious fields—science, technology, business, and law—39 percent of the 59 science and technology majors, 14 percent of the 134 business majors and none of the eight lawyers were placed. Those with and without degrees fared evenly. Approximately 16 percent of those with degrees and 16 percent of those without degrees were placed.

The program continues to be funded by the Department of Labor under a research grant to the University of Texas in Austin. The current register is over 1,600. Clearly the talent exists. The skills are known. Hopefully, these skills will be put to use. For perspective, we must remember that in 1973 industry in Houston reported that in managerial and technical positions only 53 were black women or Chicanas.

The Recent Graduate

The largest number of new entrants to the job market come from schools, college, and graduate school. Their preparation for career structuring is often negligible. Unquestionably, of the new job entrants, the liberal art student provides a special test of skills transferability. "My parents worry that if I major in history no one will give me a job" is something that every career advisor hears. Those who major in the humanities and social sciences, even students majoring in chemistry, in biology or in physics, fail to find a ready-made job market. Sixty percent of the undergraduates at Yale College know recent graduates unable to find a job. Employers and parents, uneasy about their children's future, often advise students to choose a practical business-related major.

In a study of recent college graduates in their first jobs (Elfrey, Note 2), I found that those who had chosen practical majors were glad that they had acquired marketable skills. They advised that other students choose a major that is in demand in business, but, complaining of narrowness of interest and sensing that they have missed something, suggested that other students take a broad range of courses, especially in the humanities. One graduate reported that she had majored both in business and in art history. Although this was a difficult academic load, she now appreciates the effort.

Often students say that they chose accounting "to be assured of success on the job." Performance, however, still counts. Those who major in something because it would be a "good thing" find it seldom is. Many students expect a job to be waiting for them if they major in accounting, business, computer science, economics, and engineering. Even if a job is waiting, a job alone cannot guarantee success. Those lacking the aptitude, skills, constructs, or the drive to do well fail to do well.

The students in this study expressed a greater sense of competency with numbers than with verbal expression. Most are working in organizations where they perform computational work for two or three hours a day. They report that their mathematical skills, already well developed in college, are being sharpened constantly. Their choice of major and employment matches their skills and constructs—their talents.

Testing a subject and choosing a major are two different matters. Those who advise students find that they often have to encourage them to follow their inclinations and talents. Many students believe that work and pleasure are opposites, that study is only worthwhile if it is difficult. Fifty years of vocational testing affirm that people do best that which they really enjoy. My experience tells me with equal certainty that choosing a major that you enjoy and do well makes sense. At the same time, I know that every employment study shows us that the classic well-rounded liberal arts student is less and less in demand. If the criterion is instant success in the marketplace, we are in trouble. No one is excited about hiring philosophy and art history majors, even though a major is only one-fourth of what anyone studies. It is one-tenth of any college student's experience. There are some employment managers who believe that the liberal arts graduate provides a depth that technical people often lack. Yet other recruiters state categorically that liberal arts people have "no skills" and "nothing to sell." One remarked testily, "If liberal arts people decide not to prepare themselves for business, why should business bother with them?"

When I found that philosophy majors were having problems getting interviews, I advised them to omit their major from their resumes. There is no law that requires that a major be listed. In fact, if it is not engineering, computer science, business or economics, I would leave it off. I advised the students to say, instead, that their academic work had stressed logic, analysis and problem-solving, all the skills of philosophy. Their problem disappeared. They were interviewed and hired. The problem was not the major. It was the language.

Few businesses are attracted to philosophy majors, yet these are students schooled to think rigorously about complex ideas. They must present these ideas in a detached honest manner, making accurate and precise use of language. Complex organizations require such analysis of problems and attention to language. Those in business affirm the need for people who can rationalize alternatives and provide assessments of both immediate and long-range impact of decisions. Businesses don't need people who talk about history or literature or philosophy. What organizations do need are people who can use their minds in ways that they like to use their minds and are good at using them.

The career advisor's job in this is to help erase the student's perception of a rigid job market, to enable the student to make the conceptual leap between academic talents, school and summer experiences, and the world of work. Once when I asked one faculty member what students could "do" with a major in political science, he responded, "Beats me; sell ribbon maybe." Like most recruiters, salesmen and other people, teachers know little about work other than their own.

Teachers can help students understand to articulate the methods and assumptions of the discipline. Whatever the major, students are expected to demonstrate work habits (constructs) of doggedness, persistence, and ability to perform under pressure. They develop ability to set priorities and analyze projects to determine what is worthwhile, distinguishing the essential from the inessential.

I find that history majors fail to see themselves as trained researchers, able to work with large issues and minute detail, and capable of analyzing and synthesizing conflicting statements. Unaware of being trained to see the factors in important relationships and decision-making, their realization and subsequent delight is surprising. I've had to tell English majors that they can communicate logically, precisely, persuasively, and even gracefully. They can seldom say out loud that they have been taught to work with complex ideas and to express their conclusions with both imagination and coherence. These are all skills used and valued in business. Since education has failed to make this clear to students and to business people, often these assets are never tapped.

Regardless of major, each student displays and develops different skills, knowledge, and constructs in achieving job effectiveness as a student. One may see herself as a researcher, writer, and leader; another as an analyst and an independent and creative thinker; a third may enjoy talking about her work with others, sounding out ideas and gathering suggestions before she settles down to her books. The student with skills as adventurer, scuba diver, outdoor lover, observer, writer, may not know instantly how to earn a living but she can begin to match those roles with other people at work. It can be more comfortable to feel like six roles in search of an occupation than to have no preferences at all.

It may be difficult to see an immediate job connection for a constellation of roles like leader, conceptualizer, diplomat, negotiator, trouble-shooter, advisor. We can be sure that these skills can be valuable. Ours is the first society in which people can be paid to do almost anything: raise worms in Arizona, build kites on an island off the coast of Massachusetts, spin flax in a colonial costume in Virginia, and design hot rods in Ohio. Despite the automobile, people do make buggy whips and eight farrier schools teach people to be blacksmiths.

The liberal arts and graduate students are not terminally unemployable. Advisers, teachers, and employers can aid them through the lies, half-truths, and confusions that abound about the transition from college to work. This requires programs and information meetings to encourage them to look within themselves, to research the literature, to explore out in the field and to examine their experience. This takes time, perhaps the equivalent of a semester course. The students who gained the most, taught us the most, at the Career Advisory Service at Yale (1973-1978) were those who came often. No one benefited more than the students who worked there for ten hours a week. I remember, in particular, one who said, "They keep asking me, 'What can you do with philosophy?' and I say, 'What can I do without it?' " This may not be a good enough reason to choose a major. It beats whatever is in second place and is a happier and more elegant solution than choosing a major merely to meet the market (Elfrey, Note 3).

For the Future

Legal mandates, the thrust of the women's movement, and a climate that speaks to the value of skills development are driving forces in current efforts to overcome the deficiencies in the selection process—a prime factor in sex, age, race, and segregation of occupations. This means developing awareness of how in an ambiguous interview situation men who do most of the interviewing are liable to disregard and undervalue the skills that women and minorities have. First-line supervisors who interview tend to be men worried that women whom they don't understand will take over their territory. They often are poor interviewers. A large percentage of discrimination complaints results from this situation.

Employer's Role in Skills Transfer

Employers must also become more aware of skill transfer. In establishing guidelines for selection (Office of Personnel Management, formerly the Civil Service Commission, 1978), the Federal government struggled with the definitions for seemingly indefinable skills and for a relevant selection process that avoids adverse impact on women.

Certain definitions from the Guidelines may be useful:

Skill: a present observable competence to perform a learned psychomotor act

Knowledge: a body of information applied directly to the performance of a function

Ability: a present competence to perform an observable behavior or a behavior which results in an observable product

These are the easier definitions. The one that matters is:

Construct: the psychological trait which underlies successful performance on the job.

In determining these factors, the Guidelines state that the employer must:

> perform a job analysis to show the work behavior(s) required for successful performance of the job and to identify the constructs believed to underlie successful performance of work behavior. Each construct should be named and defined so as to distinguish it from other constructs. (Uniform Guidelines for Selection, 1978)

The employer's role then is to:

> develop a selection procedure related to the job with empirical evidence that the selection procedure is validly related to the construct and that the construct is validly related to the performance of critical or important work behaviors.

Many employers, themselves, lack requisite skills to perform such an analysis. The resultant confusion and ambiguity can set the stage for stereotypical decision-making.

Nonetheless, users are admonished to:

> avoid making employment decisions . . . (based on) knowledges, skills or abilities which are normally learned in a brief orientation period and which have adverse impact.

Further, the Guidelines refer to Griggs vs. Duke Power Company decision of the Supreme Court: "Congress has placed on the employer the burden of showing that any given requirement must have a manifest relationship to the employment in question."

Top management must commit itself to:

- Assure the job qualifications and testing procedures are valid, that hiring and promotion procedures are free of adverse impact.
- Implement vocational courses for women in skilled trades and put new emphasis on programs on the transition from manager to executive.
- Educate executives, managers, supervisors, and employees toward realistic appraisal and acceptance of women in trades, labor, management, professional, and executive jobs.
- Educate executives, managers and supervisors of their role in the career development of

subordinates.

- Implement training and encourage women to change their way of thinking and feeling about themselves and their skills in relation to jobs.

What women have to offer in this endeavor is in line with MacGregor's Theory Y (1966) that we should work harder for the dignity of legitimate control over our lives. We should assume even more responsibility and put more effort into developing job skills. The power pie will grow larger when it is shared. "You may not regain your control, but you will greatly *increase your power to produce, if indeed, that is your primary interest.*" (my italics, Peabody, Note 4.)

Value Nurturance

Someone remarked to me, only semi-facetiously, that education in America has gone downhill when women were no longer dominant in the profession. What if that were true? McClelland (1975) writing on power patterns of women and men, notes that women have a:

> contextual power style: they are interested in complex, open and less defined aspects of reality . . . with the subleties of interaction . . . Their power depends on their having internal resources to share . . . Women can be described as generalists.

Women perceive building up internal strength and concern for others to be acceptable expressions of power needs (Van Wagner, Swanson, 1979).

Such notions infused back into our school systems might, combined with our new awareness of sexism, benefit the career development of girls and boys at the critical elementary and junior high school level. Instead of discouraging women from traditional roles in education, we should encourage the most highly qualified in terms of holistic leadership skills to come back.

A factor in this is the low esteem in which the nurturing professions are held by the dominant element in our society. Medical students speak of being socialized to "treat nurses as no more than vegetables." Nursing is not inferior doctoring, but society behaves as if it were. You can't talk about women's careers without talking about children. In Komarovsky's study (1974), young college men overwhelmingly cited the importance of children and the need for women to stay home and take care of them. But, as Komarovsky stated, if men thought child-rearing was as important as building bridges, they would demand a role in it.

Reduce Elitism

We might want to pay attention to the sexist and elitist bias and assumptions of much research and theory in the career field. Current books on student and career education seldom mention Richard Bolles' popular book, *What Color Is Your Parachute? A Guide for Job Hunters and Career Changers.* The book is currently No. 3 in the Trade Booklist of the New York Times and, revised yearly, has been on best-seller lists for more than five years. For many, it is the only career advice that they have ever known. Academics tell me that they don't like its style; neither do some students, but they buy it, they read it, and campus bookstores tell me, they rarely sell it back. The message of *Parachute* lies in its empowerment.

Elitism and sexism are so pervasive that little work has been done to assess the actual tasks and pressures on those whose work is primarily nurturant, of those who work with things, or of

those who perform clerical jobs. Secretaries, for example, rarely have individualized position descriptions. With their skills and constructs unrecognized, it is no wonder that they feel skill-less and fail to take advantage of development opportunities (Kantor, 1978).

To see a nursery school teacher as having "insignificant relationship" to ideas as the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (1963) does is never to have worked with a young mind. Working with compound curves and manipulating new synthetic materials requires more than "setting up," which is *The Dictionary of Occupational Titles'* highest rating for work with "things." These jobs, of course, are often held by women, minorities, and the working class.

College, too, often fosters an outmoded elitism that inhibits interest in work. College admission's practice involves alumni, faculty, students, and staff in the process of entrance to the college. Exit from college involves large parties and a small office tucked away on a back street. That so many are called "Placement" offices leads to the belief that their function is to put people into jobs as a shoe manufacturer puts shoes into boxes.

Students often appear at a career center to ask about the opportunities that await them. They don't want to be asked about skills. They want to be "placed" in jobs. Advisors note that underlying both the history major's fear and the computer scientist major's optimism is passivity. Students believe that they will or will not be given a job. Often they and the faculty believe that job hunting is a process similar to admission to school. You apply in a letter for five jobs—one a "safety"—get accepted by three, and accept the one that sounds best. Disbelief often greets the advisor's response that the job markets don't work that way. Students are often unprepared for the lessons of career structuring and job hunting.

Developing Effective Career Services

A career office can be an exciting and productive educational center. It can't be one by accident. There needs to be accountability, a connection between academic and vocational counseling. Advisors, parents, students, and alumni need to press for career offices that are in tune with future career needs and trends and that have a clear calling to teach students to cope with the transition from education to work. Communities should be included in such centers and participate in the costs and the work. This would bring a healthy mix of people with a variety of backgrounds and an abundance of skills to explore.

For career centers, the central question—and one that women may avoid—is, "What do you really want to do?" This demands examination of skills and can lead to empowerment. Women traditionally socialized to be the "second sex" (Janeway) are uncomfortable with the question, but it is the one that counts. "What is available out there?" (i.e., "Where are your lists of available jobs?" What are the facts about occupational fields? Arbeiter, 1978) is less important than "What do you really want to do?"

This question can cause unusual depression and anxiety to males who fear that they are failing to demonstrate masculine qualities of assertiveness and dominance (Komarovsky, 1974). Ignorance of problems of career choice and job hunting seems to grow. I must question the assumption of the Arbeiter Study (1978) that the job market works with relative efficiency. As an advisor of the credentialed, I also question that getting another credential is necessarily a sign of intelligence. Information on jobs is difficult to find. Artificial barriers do abound. Concern about artificial barriers by employers is not to be confused with commitment.

Career centers would be the appropriate place to support research by graduate students, faculty, and others on factors in career choice, male and female sex roles, on empowerment, on interventions, on how people get hired. Granovetter (1976) presented important data on getting a job in one geographical area. We need to know more. Such centers could press for thorough education and training, remedial work to overcome math anxiety (Tobias, 1978), physical fitness training, opening of skilled trades, rigorous examination of skills, and could develop allies among men and women who promote the careers of women.

Many women—tokens especially—take on the responsibility of representing women. Belying stereotypes, we can become scientific data (Bernard, 1976). This can be fun or it can be an experience leading to loneliness, flattening of affect, or rebelliousness. The role can be eased through the collaboration and cooperation of women in groups.

Although much is said about the queen-bee who prevents other women from advancing, little has been documented about the wonderful support that women do provide in the burgeoning women's networks in cities and in occupational fields. In my own transition efforts, men have been helpful, some women have not been, but more women have been extraordinarily supportive and effective.

Although men are famous for their networks, these are often unhelpful to men in transition —especially to men out of work. Dodd's, *The Job Hunter, A Diary of a Lost Year* (1962), presents a searing account of men avoiding the male job hunter as one diseased and contagious. Recently, a group of men in a job-hunting workshop in Washington expressed similar experience to me. Women are generally unsurprised when people have problems in job transitions and accept as real, the internal and external problems caused by pervasive sexism. Women's networks can be a source of humane power.

Help Wanted

For women to gain an equal place in our society it would be necessary for men to really like women. They need to act as if they believe that our lives are worthwhile. We can't do it alone. Pulling oneself up by the bootstraps is ineffective in our complex world. Unfortunately, women's problems tend to be seen as individual rather than as social. Our power is further diluted when we acquiesce to that notion agreeing that it is all up to us and we can do it "if we have what it takes."

Emphasis on personal self-development skills assessment and self-awareness is useful to us in breaking down our stereotypes, in strengthening self-respect, and in increasing assertiveness. While it doesn't change institutionalized oppression, when I assess my condition, I can begin to redirect my life. I enjoy the power that that gives me. No amount of self-awareness will suffice, however, when I am denied opportunity for appropriate employment.

With Jessie Bernard (1976), I would assert that our present situation "has not been an unqualified success." It is not wholesome for most of us, but it is worse for women than for men. To paraphrase an old anti-war slogan, it is not emotionally "healthy for women or other living things."

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TRANSITION POINT II

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH ON TRANSFERABLE SKILLS TO FEMALE MID-LIFE CAREER CHANGERS

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Nancy Carol Eliason is the Director of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. She directs a Carnegie Corporation grant project to assess the status of women in two-year colleges. Previously, Ms. Eliason was an Associate Professor at Lehigh County Community College in Pennsylvania in the Social Sciences Division. Her area of expertise was the sociology of women, the family, and the aging. In 1974, Ms. Eliason devoted her time to establishing services to the aging and some other sectors of the community. She has also worked at the Massasoit Community College as Registrar and Instructor, and at Wheaton College as Assistant Registrar.

Recently Ms. Eliason received the "1977 Woman of the Year" Award from the American Association of Women in Community and Junior Colleges, and was a biographee in *Who's Who Among American Women — 1977-78*. Ms. Eliason received her B.A. in History at Mary Baldwin College, her M.A. in American Civilization at the University of Maryland, and did additional post-graduate studies at the University of Michigan and Pennsylvania State University in education subjects.

TRANSITION POINT II

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH ON TRANSFERABLE SKILLS TO FEMALE MID-LIFE CAREER CHANGERS

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The National Center is to be applauded for its leadership in research related to transferability of skills from the world of the classroom to the world of work as well as its efforts to synthesize the research done in recent years in the U.S. and abroad regarding the nature of skills that are transferable from one occupational cluster to another.

One of the major contributions of the National Center to the growing body of reported research has been the publication of Douglas Sjogren's *Occupationally-Transferable Skills and Characteristics: Review of Literature and Research* (March, 1977) and Richard J. Miguel's *Developing Skills for Occupational Transferability: Insights Gained From Current Practice* (December, 1977 1977) as well as Frank C. Pratzner's *Occupational Adaptability and Transferable Skills* (January, 1978). Their findings are of special import to a growing group of researchers who are concentrating on issues related to projected changes in the labor market for females in the 1980's and 1990's.

Alvin Toffler has warned us for a decade of the alarming growth of workers within unneeded or obsolete job skills. As early as 1969 he warned in *Future Shock* that the worker entering the labor market in the 1970's would probably have to change jobs and job skill areas five to six times during his/her 20- to 30-year career cycle. He argued in favor of major reassessment of the linkages between the worlds of work and education. In 1976 his view was seconded by the Committee on Vocational Education Research and Development of the National Academy of Sciences: "Because individuals can expect to shift occupations several times during their working lives, it is important to design vocational curricula that provide a useful basis for occupational versatility ... vocational education programs should teach multiple and generalizable skills that will prepare people better for mid-career chan s."

The findings reporte in the National Center for Research in Vocational Education papers reaffirm the growing body of data that is being generated by researchers elsewhere who are seeking to document the practicality of a systems approach to transfer of skills from other realms *to* the world of the vocational training classroom and directly to the world of work.

Systems or targeted efforts are of special importance to those of us concerned with the status of women in the labor force and several are of note here:

- Project ACCESS (Assessing Competencies Concerned With Employment and School Success). Educational Testing Service and the American Association of Community and

Junior Colleges. A three-year research and system development study funded by the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education, U.S. Office of Education. The project will develop and field-test a system to identify and assess the skills that women have acquired through homemaking, parenting, volunteer work, community service, and other life experiences. The relevance of these skills for ten occupations and ten vocational education programs will be determined.

- Project HAVE Skills. Educational Testing Service. A two-year research and materials development project funded under the Women's Educational Equity Act Program. The project will develop a matrix showing the relationship between homemaking and volunteer work competencies and the skills required in a wide variety of paid jobs. Workbooks to assist women, counselors, and employers in understanding and using the matrix will be developed.

- American Red Cross Project. Washington, D.C. A training program to help agency supervisors assist volunteers with career and educational planning, using the "I Can" publication. Supported by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education.

- Goucher College, Women's Management Development Project. Baltimore, Maryland. A demonstration project, supported by a grant under the Women's Educational Equity Act, to arrange time-shared placement of women with extensive volunteer experience in internships for re-entry into business administration positions.

- Northeastern University, Women's Career Program. Boston, Massachusetts. A program, supported by grants from the Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education, to identify, train, and move women into management and professional positions by encouraging employers to include generic competencies as well as traditional credentials in their criteria for hiring and promotion. *The Women's Career Program: A handbook.* Boston: Author, 1978. (Developed under grants from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education.)

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It is an underlying hope of all of these projects to measurably contribute to the upgrading of the status of American women in the labor market before the close of the century. The current picture offers some stark contrasts. During the 70's the numbers of females working for pay has passed the 41.1 million mark. Working women represent 41 percent of the labor force. Labor force projections estimate 12 million more women will enter the labor force by 1990—representing one out of two women over 16 years of age. Unfortunately, through social and educational inequities, the 1976 median annual earnings of full-time women workers was $8,312—only 60 percent of the $13,859 male median annual wages. Educational inequities can be directly translated into economic

consequences. The current median annual earnings of a female who has completed high school are $7,103, those of a male are $12,260. A female who has completed four years of college earns a median annual wage of $10,519, a male with similar training $17,129. Thus a female with four years of college is typically paid less than a male with a high school diploma.

Though the news media have headlined recent vocational and occupational "firsts," the majority of women in paid employment are concentrated in low-paying, sex-stereotyped jobs with few options for higher economic or social rewards:

Women are:
- 98% of all secretaries
- 94% of all typists
- 78% of all clerical workers
- 95% of all private household workers
- 64% of all service workers
- less than 10% of skilled workers
- less than 5% of top management jobs

Of 441 occupations listed in the Census Occupational Classification System, the majority of women are found in *only* 20. Add to this discouraging picture the following: Of all workers in the U.S. who earn between $3,000-$5,000, women account for 63 percent; $5,000-$7,000 women account for 58 percent; over $15,000, women account for only 5 percent.

To this demographic profile one must add several elements which further focus our attention to the need for systems-wide approaches to the utilization of skills transfer concepts for increasing female upward economic mobility. The so-called average family (father employed, mother not employed with two children) now describes *only* 7 percent of U.S. families. Mother works to keep the family fiscally afloat. Gone are the "work for pin money" days. There were 56.7 million families in the U.S. in 1976. 7.7 million were headed by women. One-third of these families were designated as having income below poverty levels.

The family with more than one wage earner has become a prominent feature of most communities; in nearly half of all husband/wife families, both are wage *earners.* In Caroline Bird's recent study of dual career families, she notes that the female in this type household is increasingly suffering from not just role stress but role overload—she has not only assumed more activities within one role, but frequently spouse, parent, student, employee and homemaker all at once, without clear-cut guidelines for career development.

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education project's findings make a strong case that transferable skills and characteristics should be among the more important outcomes of *all* student learning (Pratzner, 1978). These clearly go beyond the basic 3 R's generally posed as the essential task of education. Moreover, teaching for skill transfer and application seems to be an effective way of teaching the basics (Miguel, 1977).

Richard Miguel (1977) has reported many of the insights gained from the project's review of selected operating programs in schools and in businesses. Among his important findings was the observation that few, if any, educators will deny the value of students becoming occupationally adaptable. Allen Wiant (1977) also reported positive perceptions and attitudes about adaptability and the transfer of skills among training directors, union representatives, and personnel managers in a variety of business and industrial settings.

Key issues to be addressed in planning intervention strategies include:

- *What job categories* are women most typically trained to perform? What are the economic consequences?
- *What are the most common patterns of labor market participation for females?* How do these patterns limit females from upward economic mobility?
- *What are the family status* issues to be addressed in redressing vocational education and labor force inequities for females?
- *What roles can and should vocational educators*, employers, and unions play in the continuing search for educational, social, and economic equity for women?
- *What tools do we now have available to overcome previous inequities?* What additional research and development programs are needed to assure equity?

I heartily endorse Graham Herman's practical *suggestions and techniques* in teaching for learning transfer (Pratzner, 1978) including:

1. Mastery level learning of material and/or skill,
2. Recognition of the relevance of the original material or skill to a new situation,
3. Ability to retrieve original material or skill by *learning retention cues* in performance of simulated job tasks, and
4. Offer educational growth opportunities that include challenges to succeed or fail against known standards with feedback on performance.

The 1976 Carnegie-funded study of 1166 Community College female students (Eliason, 1977) dramatically underscores the need to improve vocational education's commitment to Pratzner's and Miguel's premises.

In research currently being conducted by the staff of project ACCESS (Ekstrom and Eliason, 1979), there appear to be four major obstacles to the recognition of women's need for access to intensive counseling and training regarding the transferability of skills and aptitudes throughout their adult lives. These are:

1. *Identification*
   Many women do not recognize that unpaid and non-classroom activities *are* learning experiences of value in the classroom or on the job.
2. *Articulation*
   Employers and educators may not perceive the *linkages* between experiential learning and the skills and attributes needed to perform on a job or in a vocational training program.
3. *Documentation and Assessment*
   Appropriate techniques for determining and demonstrating the nature and extent of experiential learning have not been readily available.
4. *Financial Feasibility*
   Systems and tools developed to facilitate recognition of experiential learning must have benefits great enough to offset any cost to the employer or educational institution.

Project ACCESS addresses all ten of Miguel's[1] (1977) positions to the research community in its development of a system to identify and assess the skills acquired by women through homemaking, parenting, community service, volunteer work, and other lifelong learning experiences that will help them to succeed in ten occupations and in ten vocational education programs. It has two central goals: *first,* to facilitate the identification and assessment of job-relevant skills women have developed through work experiences outside the paid labor force; and *second,* to obtain increased recognition by employers and vocational educators of the transferability of these skills to ten direct entry "growth" occupations and to ten vocational training programs in growth potential fields including many in non-traditional fields.

Project ACCESS hopes to achieve its goals through the development of a system with four basic components:

1. A *Self-Assessment Guide* for adult women returning to work or school.
2. *Counseling Aids* to smooth the transitions between unpaid and paid work. This package will include materials for the individual and those who seek to assist her in the work or school setting.
3. *Training Tools* to assist women in making career choices based on the realities of the labor market projections. Special attention will be given to career choice information or better-paying growth occupational clusters.
4. *Assessment instruments and guides* to assist employers and vocational admissions personnel to determine an appropriate match between the woman's personal competencies and those required for success in learning a job or in a vocational education program.

The ACCESS system will be field-tested during 1980 and after analysis of the results and appropriate modifications, provisions will be made for its implementation.

In the development of its methodology the project has drawn on the excellent National Center for Research in Vocational Education research of Miguel and earlier efforts by Altman (1976); Ekstrom, Harris and Lockhoed (1977), and Stolurow (1966a,b) on the psychological and educational factors involved in the transfer of learning. One of the early tasks was to obtain a national sample survey of women from all socio-economic backgrounds to determine those applicable competencies that they had gained through lifelong learning experiences to generate a generalized competency list as well as to develop heightened insights into the breadth and depth of their experiences. Over 100 women were interviewed. Convened in small groups at Displaced Homemakers Centers, Women's Centers, and Community College Counseling Centers across the country, the sample was multi-racial and multi-ethnic. It included both urban and suburban women, ranging in age from the late 20's to the late 50's who had been full-time homemakers for several years and who had made or had been forced by circumstances to make a decision to pursue paid employment in the near future.

The women listed tasks they had done as homemakers, parents, volunteers, part-time workers, and participants in educational and recreational activities. Then they derived the competencies or skills they had developed from these experiences. Aside from nursing, child care, home maintenance, and interpersonal skills, many had competencies in administration and organization, electrical and plumbing repairs, construction, landscaping, gardening and plant care, writing and editing, and financial management and recordkeeping, to mention a few of the frequently listed areas.

[1] Strategies are needed for redesigning or creating: academic and vocational education curricula; innovative instructional technologies; conditions that affect occupational adaptability; skills required for jobs and skills; monitoring and planning devices to keep track of acquired skills; counseling techniques; evaluation techniques; assessment instruments; occupational information documents; and awareness campaigns.

The Project ACCESS staff developed lists of direct-entry occupations and vocational education programs that met criteria prespecified by the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education. These are all in fields for which the Department of Labor predicts a high demand; in addition, half of the occupants are in fields which have not traditionally accepted large numbers of women.

The direct-entry occupations selected by Project ACCESS include: photo lab technician, collection worker, bank clerk, insurance claims adjuster, personnel/employee benefits worker, insulation worker, airline reservation agent, homemaker/home health aide, social service aide, and floral designer. The vocational education programs selected will lead to careers as lithographers, welders, cooks/chefs, library technicians, plumbers, drafters, engineering and science technicians, credit managers, dispensing opticians, occupational therapy assistants, medical record technicians, and respiratory therapy workers.

Materials describing each of these occupations and training programs were collected, along with data on the demand for workers and typical earnings in numerous American cities. Project staff members interviewed employees and supervisors or course instructors representing each occupation or program at two separate locations or institutions. They obtained descriptions of the competencies needed for superior performance in each job or program and for promotion or exemption from required courses.

On the basis of the interviews with women, employees/supervisors, and instructors, a draft list of the competencies required for success in each occupation or program was prepared. These lists include relevant life experience competencies. These lists were rated by panels of employees or instructors in the occupation or program according to how important they perceived each to be for superior performance and for advancement. The raters were also invited to add any competencies they felt had been left out.

Using this data, the project staff will create competency profiles for each occupation and a set of techniques for assisting women to design personal competency profiles. These will emphasize their most fully-developed skills and areas of interest and will lead to the creation of a portfolio documenting the experiential learning and to the writing of an appropriate resume.

Another component of the system will be a set of guidelines and techniques for facilitating the adult woman's entry or re-entry into the labor force and for orienting her to the opportunities and challenges of working in a non-traditional field.

The second year of the project will be devoted to a field test of the system described above. In the fall of 1979, a number of existing career counseling and placement assistance centers will be asked to work with the project staff in selecting women to take part in the field test. These centers, located in several different urban areas of the United States, will receive materials developed by Project ACCESS and training in their use. These centers will supply the project staff with personal competency profiles of women who appear to be well-matched to the requirements of the occupations and training programs. Cooperating employers and vocational education programs will also receive materials and training from the Project ACCESS staff. These will enable them to use the personal competency profiles to make the final selection of women for the field test.

In January, 1980 the field test will begin. Approximately 300 women will take part, 200 enrolled in vocational education programs and 100 taking part in on-the-job training. The Project ACCESS staff will monitor the field test progress throughout the year. Data will be collected to determine what types of pre-training and supportive counseling the women find most useful, what barriers they encounter, and what factors seem most important to their success or failure in the job

or vocational education program. Grades and supervisors' ratings will also be obtained to allow comparison of these women with other individuals receiving the same job training or vocational education. The knowledge gained through the field test will be used to modify the system design as needed.

By the end of Project ACCESS in 1981, several products will have been developed. These include techniques for constructing occupational competency and personal competency profiles; methods of preparing adult women for entry into the labor force, particularly in non-traditional occupations; pilot data on the transferability of women's life experience learning to paid work in these ten occupations and the ten vocational education programs; and the identification of factors mediating successful and unsuccessful placements. An invitational conference will be held to report on the development of the system components, the implementation of the field test, and preliminary results from the field test.

The goals of the project will have been accomplished if the system results in recognition of the relevance of women's experiential learning by a larger group of employers and vocational educators and assists women to consider a broader range of occupational possibilities.

Although only in the ninth month of the study, the research staff already recognizes the need for a continuing federal research commitment to the field of skills transferability. Key issues still to be addressed include but are not limited to the following:

- Conditions that foster and/or impede the development of occupational adaptability and transfer for persons who are underemployed or whose skills are perceived as obsolete.
- Evaluation strategies and tools designed to assess the effects of learned skills or successful job moves.
- Development of strategies and tools for older workers to utilize in anticipation of retirement or second careers.

The female career changer in mid-years has some special needs that relate to other NCRVE research priorities. First of all, she frequently needs and wants vocational interest and aptitudes testing that is free from sex and age biases. Additionally, she needs step-by-step information on how to apply prior learning to the development of a systematic approach to job search. For many midlife career changers, key elements in such job search are the utilization of functional resumes and the job creation skills described in the NCRVE project final report. Others need tools yet to be developed including:

- A national directory of employers, educational agencies, unions and trade groups that utilize the concepts of transferable skills in the evaluation of credentials for midlife career change.
- An analysis of skills clusters most valued by employers in selecting labor force re-entry employees.
- Tools and strategies for overcoming employer biases that create barriers for female midlife career changers.

Finally, she needs to learn how to better translate home-learned hobbies, skills, and volunteer experiences into the role of successful entrepreneur. Although female-owned and -operated businesses accounted for less than 3 percent of the gross national product in 1977, women are turning to small business ownership in ever-increasing numbers. A CWO/AACJC research and

development project for U.S.S.B.A. indicates that female entrepreneurs are a largely neglected target population for vocational educators to better serve.

It has been a pleasure to share some of our research and development concerns with you today. Perhaps now that you have focused on the related economic and educational research issues surrounding the development of a broader acceptance of Skills Transfer Concepts and Practices, it will be easier to address the related public policy issues that have been so long neglected.

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TRANSITION POINT III

ADVANCING OR PROGRESSING WITHIN A CAREER

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TRANSITION POINT III

ADVANCING OR PROGRESSING WITHIN A CAREER

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INTRODUCTION

Most men who have advanced to the top of their careers into management positions established goals early and pursued them throughout their adult lives. In so doing, they applied the concept of skill transfer. It may not have always been done in a structured, organized manner, but the basic elements were still applied.

Women have not been as successful in recognizing and applying learned or acquired skills to higher-level positions in their careers for a number of reasons. Some of these are stated below:

- Barriers based on their sex
- Lack of self-confidence
- Not recognizing transferable skills
- Not setting career goals
- Improper planning and preparation
- Lack of skill development

Advancing or progressing within a career requires far more than a refinement of basic skills required of a particular profession, because promotions are limited if only tied to how well you perform one basic task or job. Promotions are made based on the extent of additional functions, higher-level skills, and responsibilities one must assume in the p rformance of a job. How often have you heard people say, "I do more work than he does, yet I'm paid less." The quantity or quality of work one does is not the determining factor in setting pay (except for those positions where people are paid on a task or piece-rate basis). The individual making this type of statement has not yet learned to recognize the differences, overt and covert, in responsibility and increased skills of people at other levels.

Although the kinds of transferable skills you can apply in your career progression are endless, below are listed a few examples:

- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making
- Organization and Planning
- Financial and Technical
- Analysis and Assessment
- Management and Delegation
- Attitudinal and Cooperation
- Self-Assessment

This paper is addressed to career counselors, educators, and affirmative action officers in hopes that additional light will be shed on the specific problems and concerns of their women clients and students in applying skill transferability within their chosen careers. But even more specifically, this paper is addressed to the woman who is in the lower echelons without benefit of a professional counselor, in the hope that she can apply these knowledges and concepts to recognize her highest potential and then to progress toward that level.

This paper will attempt to identify many of the psychological, social, and organizational barriers that women face. Also, we hope to identify many of the "need to know" skill variables those at the top have, so the individual will have an overview of some of the better tools in assessing her own capabilities and applying them in an action-oriented success plan. The concepts of this paper are heavily weighted with 16 years of experience in employment and affirmative action areas, rather than relying totally on valid research in the field.

Discrimination and Other Barriers to Advancement

Discrimination may or may not be a factor in many cases where advancement for women is limited. The following five cases illustrate some situations which may or may not have involved acts of discrimination.

Case No. 1. A young woman was employed by the Federal government as a GS-8, Administrative Assistant. She had an excellent performance record and had rapidly progressed to this point of her career. She rebelled because she felt she had not been assigned duties consistent with her grade level. She requested a desk audit. The Classification Specialist made a desk audit and concurred that she was not performing at the GS-8 level. Result: the position was abolished and re-established at the GS-5 level. The woman was given a "reduction in force" notice.

Case No. 2. A heavily credentialized and respected female nuclear physicist accepted a promotion in a new organization. Her supervisor never consulted with her and never permitted her views to be expressed in meetings involving other colleagues in their field. She couldn't cope, so she resigned.

Case No. 3. Another woman was sharp in performance and abilities, as well as sharp in her sexy looks and attire, and attracted a lot of attention from her male colleagues in both areas. But when mid-level management positions opened up, she was passed over for promotion by males whose abilities did not exceed hers.

Case No. 4. A woman with 30 years experience as a newspaper writer accepted a writing position at more pay. She was given numerous writing assignments. However, after she turned the work in, it would be reassigned to another staff member for rewriting. Although frustrated, she continued to play the charade. Her career advancement came to a screeching halt.

Case No. 5. A young woman with several small children was consistently late for work. She was an excellent employee with great potential. She had a "valid" excuse for being late or absent —her six-month-old child had a heart problem that required constant medical attention. She was sole supporter of her family. She was denied the opportunity to work overtime and was never promoted solely because of her "poor" time and attendance record.

After reading these actual examples of real-life experiences, one might comment:

"Hey, that sounds like an obvious case of sex discrimination. Didn't she know there is protective legislation?"

"The same thing happened to a woman I know."

"Oh, wow! That fits my situation right to the letter."

Even if these situations were acts of discrimination, how many women have the courage to go through the often costly and excruciating experiences of exercising their rights by filing a charge of discrimination? A woman who is informed and has learned some of the basic skills she needs to cope could have possibly avoided all of these situations.

How do these examples tie in with skill transfer, or how *could* these women have been promoted under the circumstances short of filing a charge of discrimination? Hopefully, many of these questions will be answered in the following sections.

But there is a reality women must face. She will be confronted with numerous barriers as she attempts to progress in her career. Many of these barriers are organizational barriers that most men face. Others are unique to women. It is important to know what these barriers are so you can recognize them; recognize some of the reasons they exist; but most importantly, so you can learn the skills necessary to break through them. Most of these same skills have already been acquired by women at the top. If you can't effectively handle confrontation and problems of *this* nature, how can you effectively handle the numerous organizational problems that top managers face day-in and day-out?

Protective Legislation

The employee who is not protected by either Federal or State legislation or Presidential Executive Orders (which have the force of law) prohibiting employment discrimination based on sex, is the exception to the rule. If you find yourself in one of these small companies excepted by law that actively practices discrimination, it may be in your best interest to change employers. If you are a working mother, you should become aware of allowable child-care tax deductions, or work for a progressive employer that permits flexible or part-time work schedules. In so doing, however, make certain an alternate work schedule does not interfere with business necessity in higher-level positions to which you aspire.

If you feel you've been discriminated against, don't be too hasty in making accusations or filing charges. Consult with an Equal Opportunity or Affirmative Action Officer or make inquiries as to how similarly situated men are affected. There may be a simple solution. But know your rights and be prepared to exercise them if necessary. There is a considerable amount of case law being made each day related to sex discrimination. Before filing a charge or bringing the situation to management's attention, it is helpful to know the outcome of court cases on the same or similar issues.

Understanding Psychological, Social, and Organizational Barriers Based on Sex

It is important to know that most discrimination is not intentional but is frequently based on the results of learned psychological, social, or organizational behaviors. Knowing that the boss didn't mean his actions to be discriminatory or otherwise harmful to you does not make his (or her) actions right. But understanding why the action may have occurred helps you cope or be better able to correct the situation. There are certain sex role categories that men and women are supposed to fit nicely into, which has been carefully prescribed throughout each man or woman's lifetime.

Psychological barriers are very real even though they are not always recognized. Self-esteem and self-confidence are closely related to achieve motivation. Similar results are reported when males and females rate themselves in these areas. Psychological research shows that there are very few documentable psychological differences between the sexes. Yet, the behavior of women trying to fit the learned role can limit her abilities and opportunities in and beyond those categories. Men approach a variety of tasks, including new ones, with more confidence than do females. Women do apply high standards to their work, and they do perform well, but they do *not* predict that they will perform in the future as their current performance indicates. This is a reflection of assumptions of the feminine role of dependence, altruism, and sacrifice.

Women often measure their own worth as reflected in the eyes of others. If they are not complimented and told how great they are, they are often left with a sense of ambivalence about their own self-worth. The multiple negative effect is that their own lack of conviction of their self-worth undermines their self-confidence, making them more dependent, passive, and ambivalent.

So the cycle needs to be reversed. If no one else steps forward to pat you on the back, you must learn to develop your own sense of self-confidence by not only saying, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the greatest of them all," but through an action-oriented approach. Sit down. Set both personal and career goals. Stick your neck out and reach for new assignments, new responsibilities, new experiences, and if it means advancement, a new job.

A social barrier is the expectation that women will behave in a socially appropriate manner. Most social barriers are based on social mores and expectations rather than deliberately designed attempts to put and keep woman "in her place."

The assumption that science is a masculine career field continues to resurface throughout all phases of women's academic and professional scientific development. This same assumption also flows over into other career fields. The result is that women are often subjected to various patterns of social pressures. You may be encouraged to mend your ways and behave like a nice young lady. Efforts may be aimed at convincing you that you'll get absolutely no support if you persist in your tom-boyish pursuits. By ignoring you or poking fun at you, people assume you'll eventually come to your senses. Or, social pressures of coercion may be directed toward you in the form of physical, psychological, or emotional harm. Your parents could threaten to disown you or your husband threaten to leave you. Support is important to our psyche, yet social pressures, when women do not act as "women" and try to invade "masculine" territory, can continue to expand throughout the organization. The degree of confidence a woman has in her own competencies will affect her ability to cope with pressures. Back to the mirror. Organizational barriers are a part of the reflections of a culture that emphasizes expectations and role descriptions differentiated by sex.

The study of science, for example, is considered by persons already in these professions as being unsuitable for women based on such assumptions as the necessity of contributing to the endeavor on a full-time uninterrupted basis. Since women may have babies to interrupt their careers or not be able to always work full-time in a laboratory away from home, the concept of women merely wasting their education adds to the rationale for not giving adequate support and encouragement to the female science student. Confidence in oneself can draw support in an organizational climate. Expectation of failure can, on the other hand, contribute to the development of other barriers in the organization.

What does become apparent, however, is that many women in top positions have learned to cope. They have developed the self-esteem and self-confidence to overcome these barriers without self-destructing, while at the same time progressing in their chosen career fields.

Know Thy Enemies and Allies

After an individual has successfully obtained a job, the real work starts. Holding on to a job, in some organizations, can be more difficult than having acquired it. After learning the ropes of holding on, a person can then focus on advancement techniques. Much of what is learned in the holding-on stage can work toward potential advancement.

Assuming you have obtained a job in your chosen career field, it is important to remember that this is merely the starting point. How far you go in your chosen career and how rapidly you ascend will depend on a number of factors, including not only how well you do your work, but the positions or jobs you occupy. Having just entered the work force, you may have a rude awakening. You may be entering a totally new world, entrenched with rules and regulations, manuals, internal policy circulars, personnel procedures, handbooks interpreting policies relating to clients. You are likely to be faced with keen competition.

The early work patterns you establish can make a difference in how far you go towards reaching your career goal. Most organizations, public and private, make promotions based on past performance plus a judgment as to whether or not the individual is considered capable and ready to take on additional responsibilities. If you do not demonstrate cooperativeness and the ability to perform at a higher level of responsibility, you may either be shown to the door, or find yourself peaking at a mid-career level. Although these basic promotion standards apply to both men and women, women need to pay particular heed to them since they are more likely to face barriers related to their sex as well. Should it ever be necessary to exercise grievance or legal rights, it's even more important that management not be in a position to justify its failure to promote you. There are certain skills that are basic to holding on and advancing that must be followed. Some of these include tact, diplomacy, following the rules, or being loyal. It is essential to develop a sense of trustworthiness and competence.

People who advance in their careers do so because they usually know where they want to go, have confidence that they can get there, prepare themselves to succeed, identify behavior within their organization that is rewarded, and win the support of those who can best help them advance.

Situation Assessment

When an individual first starts working, she seldom knows much about the organization or the opportunities offered. It is important to fully assess the job situation as noted in the following situations.

Requirements of the Job. One of the first moves in a new job is to learn the rules and be prepared to follow them. If there is a position description, obtain a copy of it. Most organizations have certain rules or factors governing promotion, including educational requirements, skill requirements, experience needed, length of service, prior job experience, and leadership qualities. When assessing the situation it may become obvious that people given promotions possess other skills or attributes not stated in the organizational rules, so it is also wise to try to determine what these additional qualities are. They may even include unwritten dress codes. They may vary from supervisor to supervisor, or from organization to organization.

Organizational Needs. The mission or nature of business of a specific organization may have limited advancement opportunities in some career areas. In planning a career, it is important to know whether advancement is achievable in-house, or whether it is necessary to move to another organization to achieve career goals. Along this same line, it is also necessary to know the extent of such opportunities and the number and skills of others in the area of competition. If competition is too keen for the limited number of opportunities available, you may be in the wrong organization.

Identification of Barriers. There are institutional barriers that may apply to all employees, i.e., restrictive qualification requirements, seniority, written tests, or formal education requirements, to mention a few. There may well be additional barriers based on sex. As indicated in the second section of this paper, sex discrimination and barriers based on sex (psychological, social, and organizational) continue to be prevalent throughout society and the business world. Since most barriers based on sex are not intentionally devised systems for excluding women from active participation, even though the result is exclusion, women wishing to advance need to know the extent of such barriers. Although the past often serves as a poor guide for the future, particularly during a period of time when career opportunities are improving and expanding for women, an attempt should be made to ascertain how your career opportunities may be affected as a woman. Are there other women in top positions in the organization? If so, how did they progress and how well are they received? Are women primarily segregated into ghetto positions, with limited promotion potential? There may be those women who are willing to take chances and push their way through the barriers. If they succeed, other women may well benefit. But the individual should be aware of such barriers, know what risks may be involved, so that if you wish to take them on, you will have information upon which to base your decisions.

Communication Networks. Identify those persons, male or female, in the organization and outside who can be most beneficial to your career development. Since your supervisor makes numerous decisions that can either enhance or restrict your career, and makes promotion decisions, this individual should be on top of your list. Identify co-workers and top officials who are well respected in the organization and who can help give you career breaks such as prestigious assignments, recognition, and promotions.

Know Thyself

If you really know yourself and what your needs are and you've found a position with growth, exposure, and visibility, you are on the right track. To stay on the track may involve much more than just doing your job well. A survey of managerial attitudes toward the developmental needs of women by Martha G. Burrow (1978) cited lack of education, experience, motivation, and limited career commitment as the major deficiencies of women in relation to organizational needs. Other deficiencies heading the list included gaps in technical financial knowledge, hiring and promotion practices, deficiencies in qualities and skills, and lack of confidence and attitude toward self.

In this section of the paper, an assessment should be made of the organization you are in to identify success factors of those who had moved up. You may find that most of them have many of the following characteristics:

- Self Motivation
- Emotional Maturity
- Common Sense and Good Judgment
- People Sensitivity
- Inquiring Minds
- Intelligence
- Integrity

So, in making a self-analysis, search through your life experiences: compare your skills and attributes with those of others (both peers and superiors); do you have the characteristics noted above of many successful managers?; are you deficient in any of these areas? Be realistic. If you really don't know what Mr. Jones does or what authorities and responsibilities he has, how can you compare your current skills and abilities to his? If you have concluded that "He doesn't do anything but sit around and give orders," you may still have a lot of basics to learn.

Few basketball players make good coaches without additional preparation, training, and experience beyond playing their position. A coach has to know every player's role; their strengths; their weaknesses; how these strengths can best be utilized in a team effort; develop strategies; be able to make momentary decisions in the heat of a game; plus deal with the individual personalities that must be pulled together for team success.

Think again. Does Mr. Jones just "sit around and give orders?"

Self-analysis is a core element in advancement considerations. Not only is it important to know and identify skills you already have, but it is important to be able to categorize your skills and attributes in written form and to convince selling, hiring, or promotion officials that these skills set you a notch above other candidates, many of whom have the same experiences as you.

One mistake many federal employees make is in not updating the applications that are maintained in their official personnel folders. Some federal agencies request an application and performance evaluation when you apply for promotion; others use official personnel folders. Since minimum qualification determinations are made from these records and then a rating panel ranks you based on these records, you can disqualify yourself by not keeping them up-to-date. Recent training and experiences are often omitted.

Most people prepare deficient resumes in terms of skill identification. One of the major differences by sex is that men talk about accomplishments but women about tasks. Many women must assume that the reader knows what they do based on their title, and give brief, nondescript statements. Others state their job duties from their position descriptions. Not only is it dull reading, it says nothing about what you do, how well you do it, or your ability to assume additional responsibilities. A review of numerous resumes clearly points out that many women are not good at assessing their skills. Remember to look beyond the task to the skills you have that permit you to perform this task better than others.

Organize Thyself

Hopefully by now you know where you want to go, what skills you already possess that can be transferred toward reaching that goal, and skills others have who are already there; and you have identified many of the barriers that may impede your progress. You should have also identified alternative paths others have followed. You've identified personal attributes of those who are there. You've identified key respected people whose advice or recommendations can give you needed exposure. Carefully lay out a plan showing where you are now, and alternate paths to take you to your goal. Identify skills you will need each step of the way, and how you will obtain them (on-the-job training, seminars, research, classroom, special assignments, etc.). Set time frames for accomplishing every action item in your developmental plan, then work on it. On a continuing basis it is necessary to step back and reevaluate your position to determine whether or not goals need to be reestablished; whether you gave proper recognition to your attributes, abilities, skills; whether the career path you chose is the proper one. Essentially what is needed is to go back to the starting point and go through the entire cycle of situation analysis, self-analysis, etc., and make any necessary modifications.

The job market situation may have changed. Your perspective of who you are and where you want to go may have changed based on new experiences and skills acquired. Not everyone can be a top-level manager. Did you over-estimate your capabilities? Are you having difficulty in acquiring all the skills you need? If so, why? Throughout your working life you will need to go back through this entire process. If you reach your objective, what then? Are you beginning to slide because of lack of interest or obsolete skills? If you don't continually reassess your situation and update your skills you may find the progression is a downward spiral.

Summary

Although the approaches suggested in this paper may appear to be over-simplified and lacking precise detail, no single known source can tell you what exact transferable skills are needed in a particular situation to enable you to advance in your career. There are too many variables to consider in any given situation. When you add into the equation some of the unknown variables such as the ever-changing economic situation, changing labor market patterns, and the potential results of mechanization, the identification and actualization of developing and utilizing transferable skills makes the problem become more difficult to solve.

To assist women in planning and identifying the most important barriers to career advancement that are both common to men and unique to her, the following recommendations are made:

- Future research and development is necessary that is more responsive to women's needs in the applications of transferable skills to assist her in advancing or progressing in her career field.
- More organizations and schools need to institutionalize career counseling programs that include a special emphasis in dealing with special problems unique to women.
- Teachers, counselors, and other users of career counseling tools need to be better equipped in knowledge and innovative techniques to better enable them to serve their female clients.
- Self-help materials need to be developed for the woman who believes in the do-it-yourself concept, but needs expert knowledge and guidance.

- An all-out attack by organizations, their Affirmative Action staffs, and the carriers and perpetuators of artificial barriers should be made to eliminate all non-job-related barriers that stand in the way of women advancing to their highest potential.
- All organizations need to specifically recruit women from both in-house and other sources for their management training programs. And women should be more highly utilized as resources in identifying other women as potential managers.
- Promotion systems should be developed and formalized for making advancement decisions based solely on an objective assessment of the relative job qualifications of all interested employees. This would reduce the influence of personal bias and other non-job-related factors.
- All training sessions should include both sexes, particularly those which address barriers to women. Men not only need to know specifically what these barriers are and how they impact on women, but also the legal consequences if they perpetuate.

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TRANSITION POINT IV

OCCUPATIONAL ADAPTABILITY AND MOBILITY AMONG WOMEN

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TRANSITION POINT IV

OCCUPATIONAL ADAPTABILITY AND MOBILITY AMONG WOMEN

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INTRODUCTION

I am delighted to be here today to discuss with you occupational adaptability and mobility. This topic itself, I believe, points to the fact that women are making progress. Even up to a decade ago we seemed stuck on the question of whether or not women should work for pay outside the home, and the effects their working would have on children, husbands, family life, and all the unpaid services they performed as community volunteers. During the last decade we have placed greatest emphasis, and rightly so, on overcoming barriers and impediments to educational and job access. Today we are talking about mobility *within* the job market. This is movement. I foresee some future symposia such as this focused on pregnancy and truck driving, or ulcers and the managerial woman. Then I'll know we have really achieved equity.

I find myself in the enviable but awkward position of having two perspectives on mobility rather than one. The first of these is the academic approach, i.e., what do we know from the available research literature, mainly statistical, about career mobility and its relationship to transfer skills? A second perspective has developed out of my personal experience of occupational and upward mobility in the several large governmental and private sector organizations in which I've worked over the last 20 years. I have yet to integrate these two views satisfactorily and therefore look forward to the discussion this afternoon to do so. I would like to begin by highlighting the academic perspective and then take up the ideas developed as a participant observer.

The focus of this inquiry is women in the labor force who are mobile—occupationally, upwardly, and geographically. To understand mobility is of critical importance. Most of the over 40 million women who are now working in the United States are occupationally segregated. That is, they are concentrated in relatively few occupations and these occupations are characterized by both low wages and limited opportunity for upward mobility. Low wages may in fact be a result of their occupational segregation. Women are occupationally segregated because they are victimized by overt and covert discrimination, the latter sometimes unintentional, and by socialization practices that impose a self-limitation on educational and career opportunities.

Through increased awareness, we may begin to take positive steps to foster greater mobility among employed women. Understanding mobility, and the skills associated with it, is also important for women who, for family reasons, have taken part-time, secondary labor market, or otherwise less responsible jobs, and are ready to move into other, or more significant, positions. Aggressively pursuing this goal will enable women as individuals and as a group to enhance their occupational status and enable the labor force to take better advantage of their diverse capabilities.

This inquiry is organized around the following questions.

- What is the status or character of women's mobility? How many women are mobile? How much of women's mobility is upward, downward or horizontal?
- Who changes occupations? Is it possible to distinguish occupationally mobile women from non-mobile women? Are there personal characteristics, educational or training experiences, certain sectors of the economy, or the type of occupation a woman has that relate to greater or lesser mobility?
- Why do women change occupations? Are there factors, both external and internal, to women that tend to precipitate an occupational shift?
- What facilitates and inhibits occupational mobility? Are some individuals more adaptable? Do these individuals have particular skills, attitudes or knowledge that make them more mobile? What outside factors impede or contribute to occupational adaptability and therefore mobility?
- What are the implications of the above concerns for further research, policy, and program development?

Before attempting to answer these questions, I would like to say a brief word about the difficulty in measuring occupational mobility and to note the studies to which I have turned for data. Occupational mobility is an understudied phenomenon of labor-market behavior because it requires longitudinal data identifying labor force status over time. Even less studied is the occupational mobility of women, due to women's historic social role and position in the labor market. Studying mobility is also expensive since a large sample is needed to provide reliable information by sex, age, ethnicity, and detailed occupational title. The National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS), sometimes called the Parnes Study, are the data upon which I'll rely most heavily. These data are the most extensive national data available on women's occupational and employment experience. One of the five NLS population subsets currently being studied are women who were 30 to 44 years of age in 1967. This particular age group was selected originally in order to examine problems associated with re-entry into the labor force after children are in school or grown. Initial interviews of a national probability sample of over 5,000 women were held in 1967. Additional mail surveys or interviews occurred in 1968, 1969, 1971, and 1972. Subsequent mail surveys or interviews have taken place. Four volumes of comprehensive reports have been published on these data entitled *Dual Careers*. However, the last of these comprehensive reports, published in 1975, is based only upon the surveys of women through 1972.[1] One of the constraints in using these data are their age and the short "time span" of the longitudinal data available. This latter problem is slightly offset by retrospective data collected in the initial interview. A second major data set is the 1970 population census. These data are also retrospective in that respondents in 1970 were asked to report information not only on their current labor force status but also on their work and occupational status in 1965.

What Is the Status or Character of Women's Mobility?

Data from the 1970 census reveal a striking amount of occupational mobility among workers in the U.S. For most Americans the time of working in a single occupation and then retiring appears to be over. Nearly one-third (32.3 percent) of all workers employed in 1965 transferred to a different occupational title by 1970. Occupational mobility of women, however, was somewhat less than for men (27.2 percent versus 34.6 percent).

[1] Dixie Sommers and Alan Eck, "Occupational Mobility in the American Labor Force," *Monthly Labor Review*, Vol. 100, No. 1, January 1977.

Data from the NLS confirm the substantial amount of movement that takes place between home and the labor market, and within the labor market, from the time women begin their first job to the job they had in 1967. Among 30- to 44-year-old women who were or had been married (ever-married), 73 percent were in a different three-digit occupation and nearly 50 percent were in a different occupational group. They were also geographically mobile. Nearly 50 percent had moved to a different community from where they had their longest job between school and marriage.

One might assume that all this movement represents upward mobility. In fact, white women, on an average, have experienced almost no upward mobility between first job and subsequent jobs held in 1967 and 1971. More married women have moved downward than have moved upward occupationally. The work histories of ever-married women reveal a considerable volume of movement between white collar, blue collar, and non-domestic service jobs. It appears that the expansion of clerical and sales positions, many of which have distinct work-schedule advantages, have induced many professional and technical women to take such positions later in life. Another interpretation might be that work interruptions for family reasons have caused women's skills to become obsolete and they are unable to compete with more recent graduates for these positions. At the same time, a rather substantial number of women in the NLS survey who started in clerical and sales positions subsequently moved to blue collar and non-domestic service jobs. Shea (1970) has interpreted this pattern of downward mobility to be the result of extensive periods of absence from the labor force and to inadequate education. There are differences between white and black women with respect to ability. Black women have been less geographically mobile than have white women. Black women were slightly downwardly mobile between first job and job held in 1967. However, Rosenfeld (1978) reports that when she compared initial job with the job held in 1971, black women showed small gains in status. In any case the net effect for both white and black women has been to leave them in approximately the same relative position as when they entered the labor force.

With increased interest in moving more women into male-intensive occupations, it is particularly important to examine the relationship between occupational mobility and non-traditional occupations. Jusenius (1975) found that while movement away from traditionally female occupations was very limited, more white women in the NLS sample than black women moved out of traditionally female occupations over the 1967-1971 period. Black women, on the other hand, tended to move *into* typically female-intensive occupations. The proportion of white women in atypical jobs increased by 4 percent and the proportion of black women decreased by 3 percent. Women who tend to move into atypical occupations were primarily women with 12 or fewer years of education. Among more highly educated women, the movement into atypical occupations was modest. This trend is not surprising considering that women with more education tend to have some specialized training which may make them less willing to change jobs. Jusenius also argues that less educated women tend to hold jobs that require less skill and as a result transferability among these jobs is relatively great. The jobs held by women with more education require more specialized skills and thus there is less transferability between them. She illustrates that it is easier for a waitress to become a drill press operator than for a registered nurse to become a pharmacist. She interprets the decline of black women holding atypical jobs to be a result of their having less attractive atypical jobs (e.g., farm laborer) and the recent availability of more attractive typical jobs, especially in the clerical service occupations. For this time period it appears that a reduction of racial barriers for black women has had greater impact than any reduction of sex barriers.

The NLS sample showed there were economic benefits to women holding atypical jobs. For black and white women, both in 1967 and 1971, the earnings for women in atypical jobs were higher than for women holding typical jobs. For example, white women holding atypical jobs earned about 50 cents more per hour both years than women in typical jobs.

The relationship between typical, atypical and average increases in earnings were more complex. White women with 11 years or less of education holding typical jobs in both years experienced higher rates of increase (44 percent) than women holding atypical jobs. However, among high school graduates, a greater average wage increase (52 percent) occurred for women in atypical jobs in both years. Finally, both black and white women who moved from atypical into typical jobs experienced the smallest wage gains while their counterparts who moved from typical to atypical jobs had larger gains in wages.

Finally, work in atypical jobs does not automatically increase job satisfaction. For non-high school completers, greater satisfaction was obtained from moving into typical jobs. Satisfaction was reversed for high school graduates who showed greater satisfaction with atypical jobs.

Who Changes Occupations?

Among both women and men the highest proportion of mobile workers is found in the youngest age group and then it declines steadily with increasing age. Of women ages 16-19 in 1965, 37.6 percent transferred to a different occupation by 1970, while only 12.0 percent of women over the age of 60 transferred to a different title. The corresponding figures for men are 57.6 and 11.9 percent, illustrating even greater movement among young men than among young women.

It is extremely difficult to untangle effects on career beginnings of educational achievement, formative influences, and the pattern of labor demand. Nevertheless, Shea found that educational attainment, in terms of years and types of preparation, was highly predictive of a woman's career chances. Both black and white women with less than nine years of schooling enter a much different set of occupations than women with 16 or more years of schooling or over, begin their initial jobs at lower levels than white women with comparable education and training. Larger numbers of black women held initial jobs in farm and service occupations. Proportionately fewer black women than white women, through the 1960's, had training in typing and shorthand. Thus fewer moved into the clerical and sales fields.

The rate of occupational mobility also varies somewhat by occupational group. Comparing occupations held in 1965 with those held in 1970, Sommers and Eck found that the highest rates of female mobility occurred for non-farm laborers (36.0 percent), farmers (29.7 percent), transport operatives (26.7), and managers (25.7 percent). The lowest transfer rates were for professionals (17.2 percent), and workers in private households (18.0 percent) and services (21.7 percent). Human capital theory may help explain why both women with the most and the least education have the lowest transfer rates. Professionals are likely to have the largest investment in terms of education and training and are thus more likely to remain in the occupation for which they trained. Workers in private households and services who have the least investment in education and training may have low transfer rates because they have fewer skills and thus less opportunity for occupational mobility.

The NLS sample showed similar trends for professionals, but seemingly contradictory evidence for women in domestic service. For ever-married women, three-fourths of those who began as professional or technical workers, three-fifths of those who were in the clerical group, and nearly half of those who initially began as blue-collar workers remained in the same occupational category. In contrast only one-fifth of white women who began in domestic service or sales, and less than a third of farm workers remained in the same broad occupational category.

Following interoccupational transfer is extremely interesting. One such transfer that is particularly worth noting for our purposes is that white ever-married women who began as professional or technical workers have moved into every occupational group except domestic services, though only 6 percent have moved completely out of white collar occupations. Half of the movement from professional and technical occupations has been to clerical positions. At the other extreme more than half of ever-married white women who began in domestic service have moved into blue collar and nondomestic service occupations. None moved into professional or technical occupations and only 1 percent moved into sales.

There were several striking differences between white and black occupational transfers. For example, ever-married blacks who began in clerical occupations were more likely than their white counterparts to move into blue collar work (23 percent versus 8 percent). Blacks who began in domestic service were four times more likely than whites to remain in that category, while substantial numbers of black women in blue collar, nondomestic service, and farm work moved into domestic service. Finally, it is worth noting that contrary to white women, more black women moved into clerical occupations than moved out, although white women are still over twice as likely to be in clerical occupations than their black counterparts.

Why Do Women Change Occupations?

This question is clearly the most difficult to answer from other than anecdotal information. There are not only a variety of reasons why individuals change occupations, but undoubtedly each occupational change involves more than one reason. Also for any individual woman the reasons for seeking an occupational change may differ as both personal and external factors change throughout her work life.

Perhaps the most important reason for occupational change is seeking an increase or decrease in responsibility and usually salary, which is tied to family circumstances. As family responsibilities grow, some women seek less demanding work in terms of both time and responsibility. As children age and leave home, women often want to assume more challenging positions often accompanied by greater monetary return.

There are other reasons for occupational change that are more similar to reasons given by men. Generally both women and men are taking a hard look at their careers as they enter their midlife years (Levinson and Sheehy, 1976) and deciding they don't like what they see. Some individuals seem to just want a change of scenery or pace, others want out of a dead-end job, and some just want to work for a different-sized organization. One prominent Washington area psychologist reports he has seen an increasing number of people who have worked in large organizations, particularly the government, who now want to work in a small organization. He states, "They are grasping for more responsibilities. So many are unable to identify their contribution because of the size of the organization. They want to get into a situation where they can put their hands on the results. More people are saying that if there is no progress on the job and no feeling of contribution, then it's time to move on."[2]

What Facilitates and Inhibits Occupational Mobility?

There are a variety of factors related to occupational mobility. Among the most important are a set of age and sex linked factors including family responsibility, formal and subsequent education and training, the quality of employment experience, type of occupation held, and the pattern and

[1] Bart Barnes, "New Careers," *Washington Post*. Thursday, June 7, 1979.

timing of employment interruptions. Many of these same variables also affect upward mobility. For example, educational attainment, specific skill training outside of school and good health are all positively associated with upward movement.

One set of characteristics inhibiting mobility is associated with age. As mentioned earlier, young workers in contrast to older workers move with greater frequency from one occupation to another. They have, compared to older workers, less personal attachment to a career, seniority rights, and investments in experience, training, capital and retirement plans.

As noted earlier, the amount of occupational mobility by men is greater than for women. Rosenfeld found that differing lifetime patterns of work is important in explaining upward mobility. Women more often than men are employed intermittently over their work lives. Less continuous employment results in less on-the-job experience, and other human capital investments. It also provides fewer opportunities to move into higher positions within the occupational structure since research on how people learn about jobs suggests that people in the work force are more likely than people outside to learn about vacancies at higher levels. Women's higher rates of unemployment would also contribute to the lack of job vacancy information and therefore decrease their chances for upward mobility. There is also evidence that women whose employment is continuous, and thus more similar to men's, have moved farther from their initial job than women with discontinuous histories at an age when the latter are returning to relatively continuous employment. The NLS sample also showed that women who were absent from the labor force for extensive periods of time were more likely to be downwardly mobile and less likely than their counterparts with more continuous labor market histories to be in the same occupations. Rosenfeld found that the average white women in the NLS sample who had been employed at least half a year for 55 percent of the years between initial employment and the 1967 survey, moved up the socio-economic scale 4.2 status points. Timing of employment appears also important to upward status mobility. Here she found that it appears to pay for a white woman to spend more time in the labor force when many women leave for family responsibilities. It is important to note that for black women employment continuity is less important to upward mobility. For black women, education, training, and early occupational level are the only factors which predict occupational status. The reason lies in the typical jobs held by black women of that age group which require relatively little skill. Thus continued employment in jobs requiring few skills to begin with does not increase one's skills.

Number of children and birth interval between children may also be impediments to upward mobility. However, these negative effects are largely mediated through women's employment histories. Greater family responsibilities decrease the probability that women will be employed and the time and energy they may be willing to devote to a career. For example, for white women only, it was found that for each additional dependent a woman had, she experienced a slight decrease in status from her first job. However, this decrease is far less important than the effects of women's education and training. Years of education and other formal training positively affects upward mobility. Research shows that white women obtain slightly greater returns from education than other training, while black women get somewhat greater returns from other training. This phenomenon, however, may again reflect the different types of occupations white and black women tend to hold. White women are more heavily concentrated in white collar occupations (62 percent), especially clerical jobs (36 percent), while black women tend to be in service and blue collar occupations (69 percent). White women's concentration in female-intensive white collar occupations is a result of the fact that they are more likely than black women to have professional, managerial, clerical or general training. This training, however, is perhaps more useful in helping them gain entry into the typically female-intensive occupations they hold than for moving up in them, since these occupations tend to offer only short career ladders.

With regard to geographic and occupational mobility, Shea found that there was a fairly clear and consistent relationship between the two. Women who have been geographically immobile are more likely to have remained in the same specific three-digit occupation and less likely to have been upwardly or downwardly mobile occupationally. This has been particularly true for black women. Over a third of the immobile black women from the NLS sample have remained in the same specific occupation between first and current jobs, but this was the case of only 17 percent who had moved to a different labor market area. Geographically mobile black women, like their white counterparts, have been both more upwardly and downwardly mobile than less geographically mobile black women. Shea also found some evidence, although the sample was small, that both black and white women in the professional-technical and managerial categories suffer most in terms of occupational status when they move geographically. Almost one-third of the mobile but only 14 percent of the immobile whites from these occupations moved down the occupational scale by 15 points or more. This appears at first to be counterintuitive, especially when compared to men. However, it is consistent with the view that married women more frequently sacrifice their careers in favor of their husbands' when the latter move to take a better job.

In 1973 Roderick and Davis published an analysis of interfirm mobility between 1967 and 1969 for the NLS sample.[3] They found that for women employed during all three survey years, slightly over one-fifth of the white and just over one-fourth of the black women were with different employers in 1969 than in 1967. For white women, interfirm mobility did not vary substantially by major occupational group except in the case of nondomestic service workers who were much more likely (34 percent) to have changed employers during the three-year period.

The slightly higher rate of increase in the interfirm mobility of black women is largely due to the substantial number of women in domestic service who changed employers (66 percent). Of note also is the finding that black women in professional and technical occupations were highly immobile in comparison to their white counterparts (4 percent versus 23 percent). Roderick and Davis suggest that both discrimination and the fact that a substantial proportion of black professional women are in teaching account for this difference.

A labor force axiom has been that the probability of switching employers declines as the length of service with the employer increases. This maxim held true for the NLS sample of both white and black women. Among white women, 40 percent who had been in their 1967 jobs for less than one year had changed employers by 1969. For those with one to two years of service the proportion was 31 percent and for three or more years only 14 percent. The comparable figures for black women were 39, 32, and 22 percent, respectively.

Wages were also found to be a factor in interfirm mobility. Wage and salary workers with low pay were more likely than higher paid workers to change jobs between 1967 and 1969. This was true for both whites and blacks.

Roderick and Davis also found, not surprisingly, that job satisfaction was strongly related to interfirm movement between 1967 and 1969. Both black and white women who expressed more dissatisfaction with their jobs in 1967 were more likely to have changed jobs by 1969. Among whites, 34 percent of the dissatisfied made moves, while only 20 percent of those who liked their jobs very much moved. The comparable figures for black women were 50 percent and 21 percent. Finally, changes in marital status, especially for whites, were also positively associated with interfirm mobility. For white women, 35 percent of those who changed their marital status moved to another firm, whereas only 21 percent of those married and 24 percent of those unmarried made interfirm changes. For black women the figures were similar, though less pronounced: 32, 26 and 28 percent, respectively.

[3] Roger D. Roderick and Joseph M. Davis, "Changes in Job Status," *Dual Careers 2*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1973.

What Are the Implications of These Findings for Policy, Research and Program Development?

The major reason for attempting to foster greater occupational mobility among women is to allow women and the nation to make greater use of their varied skills and abilities. The sex of an individual still predicts enrollment in most specialized educational and training programs and an individual's subsequent occupation. We have found over the decade of the 1960's and into the early 1970's that despite a large volume occupational mobility there was very little change in the percentage of women by occupation. Women are moving around, but not up and certainly not out. Women continue to crowd the predominantly female occupations—clerical, service, teaching, and nursing—which probably results, as was mentioned earlier, in lower rates of pay. From the data available it would appear that an increase in the overall amount of female occupational mobility were more dispersed than at present. It is important to keep in mind, however, that increasing occupational mobility by itself is no panacea to achieving greater occupational equity. In fact, fostering occupational mobility will be expensive and as an equity strategy may be less effective and more costly than early interventions at the junior and senior high school and college levels or than providing increased funding to support discrimination cases and such enforcement agencies as HEW's Office of Civil Rights.

How To Do It?

Preparing or otherwise fostering women's occupational mobility is probably not very different analytically and programmatically from preparing men for occupational mobility. In other words, the personal attributes, skills, and strategies that foster mobility are probably fairly similar for men and women as a whole.

How then can mobility be fostered? This requires attention to at least three related issues. First we must recognize that there are barriers to mobility that are not irrelevant. Upward mobility is limited by the occupational pyramid. There will always be fewer jobs at the apex than at the base. Except perhaps for presidential commissions and committees I know of no organizations that are larger at the top than at the bottom. This suggests we must approach upward mobility with realism.

Other barriers to mobility are the personal, social, and economic attributes that are relevant to one's success in the labor force. To state the obvious, Einstein, Sills, and Borg have something we do not have. In addition, personal conditions may serve to limit mobility, such as the individual who has a serious handicap.

There are also the intractable features of the occupational system in which we work. Take, for example, the career ladders of certain occupations in various job settings. Many jobs occupied by women—secretary, nurse, domestic worker—have short career ladders. For example, it is rare for a secretary in a university to rise through the professorial ranks, for the nurse in a hospital to become head of surgery, or for the Sergeant-at-Arms in the Senate to become a Senator. Within each of these occupations and settings a unique set of entrance and promotion characteristics are in operation. They are not easily bent, even for the worthy goal of affirmative action.

The second of the three issues that must be addressed if we are to foster mobility is the question of means. If we assume that mobility is not an automatic escalator, then women have to recognize and have the means and motivation to seize an opportunity. Several factors seem critical. The most obvious one is that women must have a strong initial education and training base. The day

of putting "hubby" through college and graduate school at the expense of the wife's education and future career is over, or is it? It is very clear from research that educational attainment is the single most important variable related to the occupational level of one's first job and further upward mobility in the occupational hierarchy. Women must have at least the minimal specific skill requirements for the job they seek. I am to some degree reluctant to wholeheartedly endorse extensive retraining for women, except in the obvious cases of professional education and training in the crafts. To some extent women may conclude too quickly that what they need to get a better job is a second and third degree when, for example, on-the-job experience might be better preparation. Motivation is equally important. An individual who for a variety of reasons does not want to or cannot, for some reason, change occupations, e.g., avocational interests, family, fear of failing, etc., will probably not be successful in doing it.

Thirdly, a woman who is cognizant of the barriers to mobility and has the means and motivation to seize an opportunity, must be aware of her own skills and attributes, and have sufficient knowledge of the work place to develop an advancement strategy. In other words, women must understand the particular variables—personal, educational, and work-related—they have control over and be able to develop and implement a plan to use them for the purposes of occupational and upward mobility.

Let's look briefly at the skills, attributes and knowledge that might be used to develop a mobility strategy. To date, the recent transferable skills literature has stressed the usefulness of academic competencies, e.g., communication, computational, thinking, and learning skills. While I believe these skills may be important, they do not seem either to explain sufficiently the reasons for the mobility I've observed on the job or to be the most powerful strategies available to women. I have found, having been employed in a large governmental organization, that there are some other variables—personal attributes and attitudes—that appear to be very important. These are (like it or not):

- *Assertiveness.* Assertiveness—defending or maintaining one's rights—could lead people to ask for and demand higher wages and to look for jobs and set time limits on the jobs they take.
- *The Girl Scout Attitudes.* Loyalty (especially to one's boss), perseverance (hanging in there), hard work (workaholism), punctuality, and dependability are some adaptation techniques that could explain mobility.
- *Attaching Oneself to a Rising Star.* This capability for tandem, occupational achievement is the positive interpretation of what my colleague Jean Lipman-Blumen terms "Vicarious achievement."
- *Pygmalion in the Work Place.* Willingness and ability to adapt to the occupational environment.
- *Attractiveness.* This could include internal and/or external attractiveness.
- *The "Old Gal" Network.* Unique accessibility or connectedness to the occupational or political structure, through family, friends, or financial resources. (Nationally this was demonstrated by Carter's recent choice of Linda Robb for Chairperson of the President's Advisory Committee for Women.)

These personal attributes and attitudes are to a great extent not choices. For example, becoming more assertive is not a strategy that can be adopted for all women. To the extent to which these personal attributes are not modifiable, we must return to skills primarily learned through education, training, and related services. Since I have already discussed the importance of academic and vocational competencies and credentials, I would briefly like to mention some often overlooked skills, job finding or job search skills, that are extremely important to one's first and subsequent employment. In an excellent paper, a colleague of mine, Bob Wegmann, presents a strong case that job-finding is a learnable skill. After carefully reviewing a number of job search programs (several having control groups), he identifies a number of successful program elements and particular job search skills. For example, one of them is recognition that there is a statistical element in job-finding: "the more attempts to get interviews, the more interviews obtained; the more interviews obtained, the greater the probability that at least one of them will result in a job offer." Wegmann argues that having and utilizing these skills, while no panacea for unemployment, can substantially reduce for many people frictional unemployment.

Finally, we come to the usefulness of knowledge about the structure and characteristics of different occupations and job settings. There are literally thousands of books on this topic. What is important for our purpose is that one must be aware of and plan one's mobility strategy to fit the features and characteristics of the occupation and work organization that are relevant. Let me illustrate with one system feature that is mobility related. This is performance standards. Where there is consensus on what successful performance is and where performance standards are easily measured, then mobility may be based more on objective competencies than personal attributes and advancement skills. Vague performance standards, on the other hand, probably increase the likelihood that criteria other than competencies will enter into promotion decisions. An example might be a bench researcher at Xerox Corporation in contrast to an administrator at the department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Advancement in a large organization, particularly nearer the top, frequently requires coordination and synthesis skills, understanding the different value structures and being fluent in the language of the advertising, marketing, manufacturing, and personnel divisions. Being aware, having the self and organizational insights, and developing a strategy that involves an interaction of all of these variables is essential to mobility.

Personal attributes and attitudes interact with educational skills and characteristics of the job setting. For example, it may be more useful for a highly motivated secretary of less than average ability to be loyal, hard-working, and attach himself or herself to a rising star than to spend the time learning to type 20 words faster a minute. Or, it may be highly unproductive in a large organization to be assertive if loyalty is most rewarded.

This, then, has been an all-too-brief look at the career mobility literature on women and the personal experiences of one woman. As you can see, the opportunities for further research and program development abound.

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TRANSITION POINT V

POST-RETIREMENT CAREERS AND JOBS

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TRANSITION POINT V

POST-RETIREMENT CAREERS AND JOBS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper addresses the transitional stage of post-retirement careers and jobs for women. Although the 65-plus age group is most commonly associated with the post-retirement period, in approaching this topic, age groups younger than the 65-plus group had to be considered. This consideration is most significant because crises similar to those faced by man upon retirement generally occur earlier in the life of a woman. Thus, the issues that are referred to in this paper are likely to be present not only in the 60's age group, but also in the 50's and 40's age groups as well. The order of this address will be as follows: first, I shall describe a profile of the typical older woman; second, I shall review the impact of ageism and sexism on the older woman; third, I shall consider the contribution that can be made by the older woman through the employment of occupational adaptability and skill transfer; and fourth, advance some recommendations regarding the previously mentioned points.

My experiences have accorded me the opportunity to speak to many women over 50 years old at various levels of concern, one-on-one and in groups, about their relationships with their husbands, other family members, and their careers. And it is those experiences, in part, that I have crystalized in the paper that I will share with you today.

Profile of the "Typical" Older Woman

When one considers an older person, according to Robert Kastenbaum (1979), in his book *Humans Developing: A Life Span Perspective,* the first characteristic one observes is that the typical older person in America is a woman. And he suggests that this is true in most societies. In the United States, there are approximately 3.2 million more women than men over age 65. For every 100 men between 65 and 74 years of age there are 129 women. This ratio increases with age (Shanas & Hauser, 1974). Moreover, when we look at the "typical" older woman, in many cases she is divorced or widowed and lives alone, on a low or poverty-level income, and probably in substandard housing, with minimum medical coverage and little chance of employment.

In this section, I will discuss several important factors that form the profile of the older woman. Included are a variety of topics, from employment and income to marriage, health, and living arrangements.

Income

Although there are some older women who are financially well off, many are poor all their lives and can expect even greater poverty in old age. But there is a middle group who lived basically a good life and experience being poor only after they are retired or widowed. Retirement benefits for women workers, in general, averaged 76 percent of the amount for men. And even when they have sufficient money, many don't know how to handle it. Why? Because, in most cases in a husband-wife relationship, the husband is the center of knowledge and the wife is the support system. So, after the husband has passed away, or a divorce occurs, the wife, ill-equipped to handle the money, is encouraged to turn money management over to another man—a male banker, a male lawyer, a male trust officer, or a son.

Employment

About one million (or 10 percent) of older women are in the labor force and, like men, they are there out of necessity (Rhine, 1978). Many never work outside of their homes until their children leave home or they become widowed or divorced, and then are employed in dead-end and unskilled jobs. Others were employed all their lives but usually earned much less than men of comparable talent and effort. All of this has a multiple negative impact on overall money matters, Social Security benefits, and private pension benefits. When this is combined with a longer life span, it produces a lower income to be experienced for a number of years to come.

In terms of participation in the labor force, it is important to note that from 1947 to 1973, the greatest increase in the labor force participation occurred among women 55-64 years of age — followed by women in the next youngest age group, 45-54 (Rhine, 1978). Harold Sheppard (1976) reports that in comparing the 1940 census data to 1970 census data, he found that there was a 79 percent increase in participation rate of women 65-69 years old in the labor force. This is more significant when one considers that opportunity to retire at age 62 with Social Security benefits was available in 1970, but were not available in 1940. This increase in the participation rate of older women in the labor force can be attributed to the growing "availability" of married women resulting from the reduction in home and child care responsibilities accompanied by increased education levels of women, a desire for an improved standard of living, and the closeness of their living residence to potential employers, i.e., living in large, urban areas. (Sheppard, 1976)

What is more important to note for the purposes of this paper is the issue of work experience and its impact on the older woman. Women, as they grow older and continue to carry out home and child care responsibilities, tend to have less, recent work experience in the paid labor force than other workers. This deficiency causes them to be less competitive for jobs when they attempt to re-enter the labor force. Further, their principal activity, homemaking, is not recognized as one which builds the skills needed in the work force. Consequently, the older woman, who has been out of the work force for a length of time, finds it difficult to re-enter. Unfortunately, volunteer and homemaker activities, both of which do allow for the development of skills that are transferable to the work force, have not, as yet, been enfranchised by the formal work community.

Marriage

Of the 11 million older women, more than 6 million are widows and an additional one million are divorced or single. (Approximately 7 percent of all women never marry.) Thus 65 percent of

older women are on their own—an interesting fact when one remembers that they (more than any younger group) were raised from childhood to consider themselves dependent on men (Butler & Lewis, 1973).

Why so many widows? Women outlive men their own age and also tend to marry men older than themselves. The difference in life expectancy seems to be a rather recent and poorly understood occurrence. In 1920 men could expect to live 53.6 years and women a year longer; but by 1970, a seven-year spread was evident with a life expectancy of 67.5 years for men and 74.9 for women (National Center for Health Statistics, 1971. pp. 2-4).

Living arrangements

Currently, 34 percent of elderly women live alone, 18 percent live with husbands, 39 percent with relatives, 4 percent with nonrelatives, and only 5 percent in institutions. Many women have never lived alone until old age. While it is estimated that up to 60 percent live in substandard housing, many elderly women prefer to live alone (Butler & Lewis, 1973).

Health

Older women cannot count on the medical profession. Few doctors are interested in them. Their physical and emotional discomforts are often characterized as "postmenopausal syndromes" until they have lived too long for this to be an even faintly reasonable diagnosis. After that, they are assigned the category of "senility." Doctors complain about being harassed by their elderly female patients, and it is true that many are lonely and seeking attention. Yet more than 85 percent have some kind of chronic health problem, and both depression and hypochondriasis commonly accompany the physical ailments.

Ageism and Sexism

In our society, there exists a double standard of aging between men and women. To explain, as men grow older they become more desirable and as women grow older they become less desirable. Physical beauty, as it relates to the young, supple body, seems to consume the interest of the women and serves as the benchmark for the society in judging one's desirability. Consequently, as women grow older, they "move rapidly from sex objects to obsolescence."[2] However, this is not the case for men, their desirability is tied more closely to their economic position than to the suppleness of their bodies. This double standard permeates the fabric of our society and compounds the effect of ageism and sexism throughout. Sommers (1974) suggests that the reason why ageism and sexism have not been adequately recognized and addressed is because the aged are desexed. At the time one becomes age 65 in our society, one is embraced by a new and different set of laws and agonies. No longer is one considered a woman or man but one is considered "old".

"Sixty-five is that standard mandatory retirement for men, but women face the same crisis at other stages in their lives, complete with economic, physiological, and psychological trauma."[2] For example, the dependent homemaker has little status on her own account at any time, but what she pulls together to create her selfhood usually crashes in the middle years. The empty nest syndrome coupled with menopause is a crisis of identity similar to the one that men face upon retirement.

[1] Sommers, T. "The Compounding Impact of Age on Sex," *Civil Rights Digest*, Volume 7 (1974): p. 2-9.

[2] Sommers, T. "The Compounding Impact of Age on Sex," *Civil Rights Digest*, Volume 7 (1974): p. 2-9.

Another type of retirement that is a concern for women is widowhood. It is another form of forced retirement. It is a change of status—what retirement is for many—and it is a change of roles—what retirement is for all. There is no preparation in life for widowhood and little opportunity to immediately find a new identity when it occurs. Since that traditional role of the wife in marriage is to create her identity through her husband as supporter and adjunct, when the husband dies, she loses herself as well as her mate. The status of dependency, of working with pay, of early obsolescence, of rules of marriage changed in mid-course and final widowhood—all cry out as problems in search of solutions. (Many of these problems are even worse when you consider old black women.)

Up to this point much has been said about the negative side of being an older woman in the context of ageism and sexism. There are some positive aspects of being an older woman which I feel should be mentioned to effect some balance in perspective. Initially, widowhood might be a forced retirement. However, a widow has the potential of being one of the most liberated of any woman in our society, in spite of the initial trauma that could occur at the initial loss of their spouse. Older women are free of mothering and child responsibilities and, in many cases, marital responsibilities. In addition, they provide perspective for the young. Politically, the older woman is at an advantageous position and is likely to improve with a voting strength of 11 million and a reported 90 percent who are registered.

How Occupational Adaptability and Transferable Skills Could Benefit the Older Woman

This section addresses the major topic of this paper and certainly of this symposium — Occupational Adaptability and Skill Transfer and their relationship to an appropriateness for older women. Generally occupational adaptability and skill transfer are related to the movement of workers and would-be workers within and/or into the work force. Specifically, occupational adaptability and skill transfer are concerned with those skills and abilities needed to affect the adaptation of an individual as he or she transfers from one occupation to another. In the case of older women, occupational adaptability and skill transfer are prime interests because older women are returning to the work force in increasing numbers and, in too many instances, find themselves not suitable for entry because of an assumed lack of skills. Homemaking has been the primary occupation of most older women and, unfortunately, the skills required to be an effective homemaker are not recognized as being transferable. However, it is speculated that through the application of the principles of occupational adaptability and skill transfer, homemaking could well be recognized as a viable occupation whose major, requisite skills are transferable to the work place. The reality of this possibility comes more into focus as one compares those skills or characteristics that are needed to be an effective homemaker (e.g., planning, organizing, supervising, and/or working with others, decision-making, and communicating), with those skills considered to be transferable (e.g., communicating, working with others, problem-solving, analyzing, planning, organizing, managing others, decision-making, and positive work attitude).[3] This commonality would suggest that the "occupation" warrants a second look and that older women, the primary representative of this occupation, deserve like consideration from the workplace.

Moreover, the prospects of re-employment for the older women depend on the extent to which they are considered sufficiently flexible and adaptable to meet the demands of the new situation, as well as make demands on that new situation. The greater the amount of skill needed in a given occupation, the more important the flexibility, adaptability, and trainability becomes. As a result of older women having spent the major portion of their work lives as homemakers, the

[3]Wiant, A.A. *Transferable Skills: The employer's viewpoint* (Info. Series No. 126). Columbus, Ohio: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University (1977): p. 3.

related skills of homemaking may well be the "transferable skill pool" for many of today's occupations. Obviously, a more and varied assessment of their skill ability must be made to determine the potentiality of their skills as a premium for prospective employers. Because of significant negative attitudes present in our society about older people in general, it is important for women to understand that skills alone do not adaptability make. There certainly are other factors involved. For the older woman, formal education was less available and more than likely, less important, when she was growing up. The individual who has a limited knowledge base as well as an outdated one is at a great disadvantage in today's complex and fast-moving society. Real security must rest upon one's ability to move from one job to another. The training of older women in new skills and for transferable skills is a very critical need in readying them for entry or re-entry into the work force.

Employers are becoming more receptive to older women interested in returning to the work force because of their reported good attendance, enthusiasm, and commitment to work. During a recent relocation analysis conducted by a major utility company, special attention was given to the prospects of relocating of one of their major operations to a location where concentration of unemployed older women were present. It is expected that incidents of this kind of special consideration by industry will certainly increase. With an increasing downshift of male participation in the workforce, coupled with a lowering birth rate, the expanding participation of older women in the paid work force will undoubtedly become a necessity and the concerns of occupational adaptability and skill transfer will be given a higher priority within the workplace.

Recommendations

Although many of the problem areas requiring attention have been identified generally, there is still a lack of data about the woman in her post-retirement years. Until more facts are available, stereotypes will remain and women in the post-retirement transitional phase of life will continue to be misunderstood and neglected. It is not a matter of women being excluded in the programs. Women in this particular age group have never been included in the design of programming. The lack of sufficient data makes it difficult to advance specific and concrete recommendations. However, what follows are recommendations which I hope will spur new thinking. Thinking that will serve to develop the more specific and concrete recommendations necessary to achieve definitive and much-needed solutions. The recommendations are grouped according to work, education, and community, three significant areas of change pertinent to older women and work.

Work

1. Increase Legislative Activity to Generate Reform Inside and Outside the Work Place by:

   a. Developing information networks throughout the communities and neighborhoods about job opportunities and training for the benefit of those women desirous of work (particularly regarding jobs which will accentuate the use of skills brought to the job, i.e., home health aides and day-care school teachers);

   b. providing fringe benefits for part-time and temporary workers;

   c. allowing work credit under Social Security for homemakers and volunteers; and

   d. furnishing financial support for women in mid-career transitions which would provide for continuing education and training in new fields as well as retirement education.

2. Remove Barriers to the Entry and Re-entry to Labor Force by:

   a. making work schedules more flexible;

   b. providing for more and subsidize day care facilities for older and handicapped parents; and

   c. helping with the psychological obstacles through guidance, counseling, and training programs.

3. Increase Activities by Trade Unions for Women by:

   a. engaging in joint programs with the community and management to achieve the aforementioned; and

   b. encouraging "Awareness-Raising" activities or programs in dealing with age and sex bias among members.

Education

1. Become a Resource to Women Students by:

   a. developing "New Career" centers; and

   b. facilitating and supporting research on the woman generally and the older woman specifically.

2. Tailor Curriculum to the Particular Needs of the Older Woman

3. Structure and Administer Programs Appropriate for Needs of the Older Woman by:

   a. sensitizing counselors to needs of older women;

   b. providing flexible schedules; and

   c. providing off-campus courses and programs.

4. Develop New Procedures for Granting of Credit and Recruiting of the Older Woman by:

   a. giving credit for skills gained from job-related and general life experiences;

   b. employing "Reachout" programs into the neighborhoods and eliminate/minimize "Red Tape" procedures; and

   c. providing a warm and comfortable classroom environment.

Communities

1. Develop Multi-Purpose Service Centers for Older Men and Women.

2. Promote and Support Family Counseling and Therapy Programs for Children of Older Parents and the Older Woman.

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Appendix A

List of the nineteen individuals participating in the discussion groups:

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Ruth Layfield-Faux
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Frank Lomax
Urban League
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Betty Menson
Ohio University
Athens, Ohio

Mary Miller
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

Steven Sandell
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

Mary Ellen Verhayden-Hilliard
Verhayden and Associates
Washington, D.C.

Kathryn Vesko
University of Akron
Akron, Ohio

REPORTS ON OCCUPATIONALLY TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

McKinlay, B. *Characteristics of jobs that are considered common: Review of literature and research* (Info. Series No. 102), 1976. ($3.80)

A review of various approaches for classifying or clustering jobs, and their use in (a) describing the elements of commonality involved when people make career changes, and (b) understanding better the concepts of occupational adaptability and skill transfer.

Altman, J.W. *Transferability of vocational skills: Review of literature and research* (Info. Series No. 103), 1976. ($3.80)

A review of what is known about the transferability of occupational skills, describing the process or the facilitators of skill transfer.

Sjogren, D. *Occupationally transferable skills and characteristics: Review of literature and research* (Info. Series No. 105), 1977. ($2.80)

A review of what is known about the range of occupation-related skills and characteristics that could be considered transferable from one occupation to another, describing those transferable skills which are teachable in secondary and postsecondary career preparation programs.

Ashley, W.L. *Occupational information resources: A catalog of data bases and classification schemes* (Info. Series No. 104), 1977. ($18.20)

A quick and concise reference to the content of 55 existing occupational data bases and 24 job classification schemes. Abstracts of each data base and classification scheme include such information as: identification, investigator, location, documentation, access, design information, subject variables, occupation variables, and organization variables.

Wiant, A.A. *Transferable skills: The employer's viewpoint* (Info. Series No. 126), 1977. ($3.25)

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Miguel, R.J. *Developing skills for occupational transferability: Insights gained from selected programs* (Info. Series No. 125), 1977. ($3.80).

A report of clues and suggestions gained in the review of 14 existing training programs, with recommendations for practice which appear to have been successful in recognizing skill transfer and taking advantage of an individual's prior skills and experience.

Ashley, W.L., & Ammerman, H.L. *Identifying transferable skills: A task classification approach* (R&D Series No. 146), 1977.

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Proceedings from a national symposium. The topics focused on how training for adaptability can increase the use of human resources in the labor force.

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An analysis of the impact of self-assessment on one's subsequent employment experience. The particular assessment technique studied is one intended to help identify those skill attributes which have provided satisfaction in various life experiences. Outcome measures included skill utilization and job satisfaction.

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Perceptions of national adult samples are reported. Document includes where competencies should be taught —at home, at school, on-the-job, self-taught—and how important these competencies are in successful work and life activities.

Kirby, P. *Cognitive style, learning style, and transfer skill acquisition,* 1979.

A review and synthesis of the literature in adult learning styles, as they relate to the acquisition of transfer skills.

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