

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 301 754

CE 051 550

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 TITLE Women and Men: Preparing for the Future. Monograph. Volume 1, Number 4.
 INSTITUTION Ohio State Univ., Columbus. Instructional Materials Lab.
 SPONS AGENCY Ohio State Dept. of Education, Columbus. Div. of Vocational and Career Education.
 PUB DATE Nov 86
 NOTE Sp.; Document contains colored ink and paper.
 PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS *Educational Needs; *Education Work Relationship; *Employment Patterns; *Employment Projections; Females; *Futures (of Society); Males; Postsecondary Education; Relevance (Education); School Business Relationship; Secondary Education; Sex Discrimination; *Sex Stereotypes

ABSTRACT

Today's life-styles and labor force are changing as more women enter the workplace and the workplace becomes more service- and information-oriented. However, women still earn much less than men and are more likely to live in poverty than their male counterparts. Schools also have changed, as equity in education has been mandated. At present, excellence in education is being stressed, but equity is needed first. Although widely believed myths suggest that girls and women have more verbal ability and are more successful in school, research shows these ideas to be false. Girls start out ahead, but receive lower scores as they advance in an educational system that is built on the model of the male learning style. However, schools are enrolling more girls and women in nontraditional courses, and these programs may lead to higher-paid employment for women in the future. Many of the jobs of the future will be in service and highly technical occupations. In particular, more opportunities for technicians and for entrepreneurs will open up. If the education establishment is to keep up with these trends, educators must interact more with business leaders in order to keep abreast of change in the job world. More adults will retrain and many people will continue to learn throughout their lives. Schools must meet the challenges caused by these new realities. (KC)

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MONOGRAPH

WOMEN AND MEN:
PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

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Center for Sex Equity
The Ohio State University
College of Education
Instructional Materials Laboratory

Volume 1, Number 4, November 1986

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WOMEN AND MEN: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Published by the Center for Sex Equity, The Ohio State University, College of Education, Instructional Materials Laboratory, 154 West 12th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210-1302, Marcia Fear-Fenn, Director, through a grant from the Sex Equity Section, Division of Vocational and Career Education, Ohio Department of Education, Volume 1, Number 4, November 1986

By Marcia Fear-Fenn
The Ohio State University

Change may be the only constant in today's complex society. It is affecting all aspects of people's lives, work, family life style, and education. Technological advances have changed the environment of business and industry. The increasing number of female workers during the past 15 years has resulted in changes in family member roles. Both of these changes have implications for educators—from what is taught, to when and where it is taught, and to whom it is taught. This monograph explores the changes that have occurred in the family and the workplace and discusses the role of education in responding to and anticipating future change.

CHANGING LIFE-STYLES

The traditional family consisting of 2.3 children, an employed father, and a mother who is a full time homemaker is no longer typical. Today, fewer than seven percent of the nation's families conform to this old average. Women and men are changing their roles, their goals, their behavior, and their language. More women are working, and more men are involved in homemaking activities. Modified life-styles and family values are causing social, economic, and emotional changes. There are more dual career couples than ever before raising new issues and demanding more creative resolutions.

The nation's population is shifting, the economy is refocusing; and the whole nature of work and education is changing. Technology is creating new jobs and causing other jobs to become obsolete. Individual differences are being examined and nurtured, and the countries of the world are uniting interests and goals as technology joins them closer than ever before.

To minimize concern over these changes, people cling to established traditions. These traditions have become customary patterns of thought, action, or behavior and maintained to help people feel comfortable with

change. However, change is occurring so rapidly today that everything is becoming more nontraditional. In the past, the nontraditional roles and occupations that people assume today were considered inappropriate. But in the future, nontraditional roles and careers will be commonplace. Learning to accept, plan, and prepare for all these changes is the challenge. Begin by dreaming, anticipating, and confronting the changes that are occurring every day.

CHANGING ECONOMY: CHANGING LABOR FORCE

Several major economic and demographic trends in the United States are affecting changes in the labor force. It was believed initially that the postindustrial society was becoming a service-producing society, but it has become increasingly more evident that many of the "service workers" are in fact working in some manner with information. We have changed from an industrial society to an economy based on the creation and distribution of information, says John Naisbitt (1982) in *Megatrends*.

Now, more than 60 percent of us work with information as programmers, teachers, clerks, secretaries, accountants, stockbrokers, managers, insurance people, bureaucrats, lawyers, bankers, and technicians. And many more workers hold information jobs within manufacturing companies. Most Americans spend their time creating, processing, or distributing information.

...The second largest (job) classification after clerk is professional, completely in tune with the new information society, where knowledge is the critical ingredient. The demand for professional workers has gained substantially since 1960, even more dramatically than the rising need for clerical workers. Professional workers are almost all information workers—lawyers, teachers, engineers, computer programmers, systems analysts, doctors, architects,

accountants, librarians, newspaper reporters, social workers, nurses, and clergy (p. 14).

Everyone needs some kind of information to do a job; however, for professional and clerical workers, the creating, processing, or distributing of information is the job. In the future, new technologies will emerge to accelerate the pace of change. Innovations in communications and computer technology give rise to new occupational areas and adversely affect the employment opportunities of other occupations. Because the amount of information available is increasing so rapidly, the next shift to occur will be from the supply of information to the appropriate selection of information (Naisbitt, 1982).

The nation's population is shifting also, from north to south and from east to west; employment is shifting from the urban core to suburban business and residential areas. Accompanying this movement is a decrease in regional disparities of income, education, population concentration, and cost of living. America is decentralizing, it is diversifying, and individual differences—rather than similarities—are being celebrated. More opportunities and choices for individuals will result.

Women in particular are choosing new roles, and, as a result, the family and the labor force are changing dramatically. Traditionally, women worked in the home and cared for the children. Their household duties were not measured in financial terms nor considered valuable experience applicable to the workplace. However, women have entered the labor force in increasing number over the past two decades. Geraldine A. Ferraro, a homemaker who went back to work in 1974, overcame many obstacles to become the Democratic Party's vice presidential nominee in 1984.

The dramatic growth in the female segment of the labor force has occurred among women between the ages of 25 and 54—the primary childbearing and family-building years. Between 1970 and 1984, the number of families maintained by women grew by more than 84 percent, whereas today, almost two-thirds of the women presently employed work full-time and maintain families also. Women work because of economic need, yet, poverty in families headed by women is a source of increasing public concern. Almost one half of the poor people in the United States live in families headed by women, while one of three families maintained by a woman is poor. The characteristics of women workers who maintain families include higher unemployment, lower educational attainment, more dependent children, and lower earnings when compared with other segments of the labor force (U.S. Department of Labor, 1985c).

There is an upward trend in women's earnings; however, on the average, women still earn less than two-thirds as much as men. Recently, researchers have been examining why earnings differences persist when the educational gap between women and men is shrinking and when there are more women than ever before working full-time and year-round. There is general agreement that women's lower earnings are attributable, in

part, to their concentrated employment in lower paying occupations. Women continue to enter the labor force in traditional occupations such as secretary, teacher, nurse, and sales clerk. Just as it was at the beginning of the decade, secretarial work is still the largest occupation of women. However, the employment patterns of women suggest that women are entering nontraditional occupations more than ever before. This, coupled with the reduction of discriminatory practices in hiring and promotion, should make the future labor market a more equitable and profitable venture for women.

CHANGING EDUCATION

There have been many changes in education over the past decade.

In the 1971-1972 school year, nearly three million girls and women were enrolled in occupationally specific high school and postsecondary programs, and 60 percent of them were in office occupations. Girls and women could be, and were, excluded from some vocational programs simply on the basis of their sex (Vetter & Hickey, 1985, p. 26).

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act became law in October 1984 and was made effective on July 1, 1985. It reauthorizes vocational education programs at the state and local levels for 5 years (through fiscal year 1989). The act provides federal funds to states to expand and improve existing vocational education programs and to develop quality programs to meet the needs of the country's current and future work force. It ensures access to programs for those who have been underserved in the past, such as single parents and homemakers, the handicapped and disadvantaged, women and men entering nontraditional occupations, persons with limited English proficiency, and incarcerated individuals. The law establishes, for the first time, an industry-education partnership for training in high technology occupations, and emphasizes assistance to women....(U.S. Department of Labor, 1985a).

The desire for equity in education recently has given rise to a controversy concerning equity and excellence. Are the two at odds? Charol Shakeshaft (1986), associate professor at Hofstra University, New York, referred to President Reagan's claims that the reason schools were failing was due to the attention that had been focused on female, minority, and handicapped students. What the President failed to note, she said, was that once these three groups of students are eliminated, only about 15 percent of the school population remains. She believes that excellence in education cannot be achieved without equity. "Although an equitable system might not be an excellent one, true excellence in education cannot exist without equity. The two are not at odds; rather, they are dependent on each other" (Shakeshaft, 1986, p. 499).

Even with the attention that has been focused on equity in schools, Shakeshaft believes that few schools

provide a truly equitable culture in which students and faculty members can grow. The white male model is still the standard by which schools operate. The goals of schools, the composition of schooling, and the methods of knowledge transfer all are based on male development. "Although females mature earlier, are ready for verbal and math skills at a younger age, and have control of small-motor skills sooner than males, the curriculum has been constructed to mirror the development of males" (Shakeshaft, 1986, p. 500).

Teaching techniques also reflect the pattern of male needs. Competition often is provided as a learning style, yet it is not the best learning environment for females. Girls prefer connection, and the win-lose philosophy reinforced in the classroom threatens connections between group members. Shakeshaft cites the studies of Janet Lever who observed boys quarreling during games and not once terminating a game because of the quarrel. Girls, on the other hand, tended to end a game when a dispute arose. More use of cooperative approaches to learning must be reinforced if educators desire to aid girls' development. Education currently embraces girls and minorities who are "ahead of the game in some areas and never in the game in others. Some grow bored, others give up, but most learn to hold back, be quiet, and smile" (Shakeshaft, 1986, p. 500).

Harvey (1986) discusses some of the myths about sex equity in education. Myth 1: Girls have more verbal ability than boys, and boys have more mathematical ability. The reality is that, between 1972 and 1980, the advantage of females over males in reading and verbal abilities was all but eliminated. Although females appear to start out ahead of males in many areas, test scores of females have tended to decline more than those of males. When there is evidence of progress, "males have generally exhibited greater gains than females. These facts raise serious questions about the current educational experiences of females and the causes of their achievement declines" (p. 510).

Myth 2: Schools are more hospitable to girls than to boys.

It is typically the academic and behavioral problems of boys, not those of girls, that are the primary focus of the school's energy and resources. Thus what is perceived to be a supportive environment for girls is in reality one that ignores female learning deficits. What is perceived to be hostile to boys is really an emphasis on early identification of and attention to male learning deficits (p. 510).

This leads to Myth 3. "The low percentage of females enrolled in special education programs reflects the fact that females do not need specialized programs to succeed in school and in the workplace to the same extent as males" (p. 510). In reality, referrals just tend to occur later on in development for females — when they are older and further behind in their academic work. "The experience of female students in U.S. schools is unique. What other group starts out ahead — in reading, in

writing, and even in math — and 12 years later finds itself behind?" (Sadker & Sadker, 1986, p. 515).

Professional educators are also the subject of many misconceptions. One particularly pervasive myth involves the unsubstantiated belief that women now have access to the same professional opportunities as their white male counterparts and that, in this respect at least, sex equity has been achieved within the education profession. In fact, only 10 percent of secondary school principals are female — a smaller proportion than in the 1950's (Harvey, 1986, p. 511).

Both equity and excellence can be achieved in the educational system. Effective programs are already in place to increase the participation of females and minorities in the education process. Productivity of all — students, educators, workers — appears to be increasing in supportive nonsexist environments. The structure of schools, instructional and counseling techniques, student/teacher interaction, and remediation all will be affected as our schools are made more equitable.

The Blue Ribbon Study Committee on Secondary Vocational Education in Ohio specifies three areas of concentration for vocational education: career exploration, employability skills, and job training. Specifically, vocational education prepares people for employment with the capacity for continued learning (Chambers, Ilenin, & Wright, 1986). Rosemary Kolde, president of American Vocational Association (AVA), asserts that vehicles are in place to assist women in entering the labor force.

Sex equity programs, displaced homemaker programs, and career education programs all are designed to provide the avenues to help people become aware of their interests and competencies, to examine career opportunities available in the world of work, and to find and use the means necessary to match their abilities with these opportunities (Kolde, 1985, p. 25).

Nontraditional enrollment has increased already in many areas of vocational education. "In the traditionally male programs of agriculture, technical, and trade and industry, both the numbers and the percentage of students who are women have increased. Agriculture shows the highest overall percentage increase in female enrollments" (Vetter & Hickey, 1985, p. 26). Two technical programs showing large increases in the enrollment of women are scientific data processing and police science technology. There are over 10,000 women enrolled in auto mechanics, commercial art, electronics, metalworking, and quantity food occupations. The number of women in marketing, distributive education, and health occupations has increased also. In two traditionally female programs, home economics and office occupations, an increase in male student enrollment exists. And, within the office occupations of supervisory and administrative management, women now constitute over half the students enrolled (Vetter & Hickey, 1985).

It is very likely that the importance of vocational education will increase in the future. The need for learning is increasingly urgent, says Perelman (1986), however, the utility of much formal education appears to be declining. "We no longer can assume that more education necessarily benefits either the individual or the nation. ...15 percent or more of today's workers are overeducated or overqualified in that their knowledge and skills no longer fit the requirements of a changing economy" (p. 13). The changes occurring today will require workers to upgrade their skills continually in response to the new technologies. The workers of tomorrow may seek vocational training several times during their careers just to keep current.

FUTURE WORK

By 1995, the total number of people employed in the United States is expected to be approximately 130 million, with women accounting for about 47 percent of those persons working. The total civilian labor force is expected to increase 15 percent from 1984 to 1995, as compared to a 20-percent increase that occurred from 1975 to 1985. As a result of the reduced post-baby boom generation, there will be fewer young people entering the labor force, while people over the age of 55 will decrease their participation in the labor force

also. The number of persons of prime working age (25-54) is expected to grow much faster through 1995, while nearly three fourths of the labor force in 1995 is projected to be in this age category. The median age of women and men, by 1995, will be about 37 years (U.S. Department of Labor, 1985b).

The largest growth in the labor force over the next decade will be in the participation rates of women. Nearly two-thirds of the labor force growth will be accounted for by women. By the end of the next decade, 60 percent of all working-age women are expected to be in the labor force. The female labor force participation rate in the United States exceeds that of almost all industrialized nations except Sweden, whose rate is 80 percent (Cahan, 1985). Also, racial minorities are expected to increase their participation in the labor force over the next decade.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor (1985b), the economy will add nearly 16 million new jobs between 1984 and 1995. Many of these jobs will be in service-producing industries and deal in some manner with creating, processing, or distributing information. Table 1 lists the occupations with the most job openings projected in Ohio from 1985 to 1995 (Kelley & Blaine, 1986).

Table 1

Occupational Projections For 1995

Occupations	Job Openings Per Year Due To Growth And Separation	Percent Growth
1. OTHER MANAGERS, ADMINISTRATORS ^a	17,917	12.59
2. MISCELLANEOUS SALES WORKERS ^b	13,912	7.53
3. FOOD WORKERS, NEC ^c , EXCLUDING PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD ^c	8,264	19.61
4. SECRETARIES	8,097	27.10
5. ALL OTHER CLERICAL WORKERS ^d	7,934	9.98
6. JANITORS, PORTERS, & CLEANERS	7,689	11.14
7. NURSING ASSISTANT OCCUPATIONS	6,312	37.41
8. NURSES, PROFESSIONAL	5,088	29.41
9. TEACHERS, ELEMENTARY	4,137	16.64
10. BOOKKEEPERS	4,066	9.63
11. OTHER HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES, TECHNICIANS ^e	3,771	28.01
12. WAITERS & WAITRESSES	3,629	5.04
13. ALL OTHER OPERATORS & SEMISKILLED WORKERS ^f	3,447	10.31
14. CASHIERS	3,385	15.16
15. GUARDS	3,331	14.58
16. COOKS, EXCLUDING PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD	3,129	11.08
17. TEACHERS, SECONDARY	2,841	15.77
18. CRAFTS & KINDRED WORKERS, NEC ^g	2,695	15.60
19. ASSEMBLERS	2,670	14.47
20. BLUE COLLAR WORKER SUPERVISORS	2,563	11.54
21. TYPISTS	2,319	11.72
22. MISCELLANEOUS PROFESSIONAL WORKERS ^h	2,299	19.42
23. TRUCK-DRIVING OCCUPATIONS	2,235	11.40
24. OTHER LABORERS	2,218	6.15
25. RECEPTIONISTS & RELATED WORKERS	2,193	20.34
26. ACCOUNTING OCCUPATIONS	2,154	18.47

(table continues)

Occupational Projections For 1995

Occupations	Job Openings Per Year Due To Growth And Separation	Percent Growth
27. OTHER INSPECTION OCCUPATIONS	1,999	18.47
28. COMPUTER, PERIPHERAL EQUIPMENT OPERATORS	1,686	108.72
29. STOCK CLERKS, STORE KEEPERS	1,663	9.09
30. LAWYERS & KINDRED WORKERS ^a	1,409	28.31

^a Includes Wholesalers

^b Includes Salespersons, Retail

^c Includes Food Preparation and Service Workers, Fast Food
(NEC = Not Elsewhere Classified)

^d Includes General Office Clerks

^e Includes Licensed Practical Nurses

^f Residual Category

^g Includes Maintenance Repairers, General Utility

^h Includes Curriculum Specialists, Technical Directors, Safety Inspectors, Travel Agents, and various Insurance and Financial Services Workers

ⁱ Includes Paralegal Personnel

Of the 30 occupations projected to be the fastest growing, nearly all will be affected by technological advances in communication and information processing. Manufacturing-related occupations will continue to claim a smaller share of the growth in the future. Specific manufacturing industries experiencing employment declines include dairy manufacturing, leather tanning and finishing, blast furnace and basic steel production, and leather product production, such as footwear (U.S. Department of Labor, 1985b). Long-term declines in farming and manufacturing are expected to continue.

The largest export industries will include computers, aircraft, electronic components, and motor vehicles, while the fastest growing export industries will be computers and communication-related products such as telephone and telegraph apparatuses. Increasing numbers of scientists, engineers, computer specialists, and technicians will be needed to provide the high degree of technical knowledge required in some industries and occupations. Continued high growth is expected in some of the traditional areas of work for women, such as clerical work, nursing, and teaching in kindergarten and elementary school. Many jobs have been created in financial services and health care, especially in the nutrition and fitness fields. Also, the growing proportion of elderly in the population will require more specialists in geriatrics and related areas. It is projected that medical care, business and professional services, and amusements and recreation will provide almost one fourth of the total employment by 1995 (U.S. Department of Labor, 1985b). Naisbitt (1982) suggests a future emphasis on software programming, biotechnology, and gene splitting.

Our society is turning from a managerial to an entrepreneurial society. National policies developed specifically to encourage the expansion of business opportunities for those with limited capital and/or experience have resulted in a sharp increase in the number

of people who own their own business. Women in particular have turned to entrepreneurship. The number of self-employed women has increased from 2.1 million in 1980 to 2.4 million in 1983 (a 16-percent gain), whereas the number of self-employed men increased only 5 percent over the three-year period (4.9 million in 1980 to 5.1 million in 1983) (U.S. Department of Labor, 1985a).

According to the U.S. Department of Labor (1985a), the following three factors have been significant in the rapid rise in the number of businesses owned by women.

1. Increasing numbers of women, as wage and salary workers, have acquired skills and experience that can be translated into entrepreneurship.
2. More women are preparing themselves through education and training for business opportunities in expanding fields such as aerospace, telecommunications, electronics, biomedical engineering, and skilled crafts.
3. The expanding role of small business in the economic growth of the United States, particularly in the service sector, has provided many entrepreneurial opportunities.

In general, the types of businesses operated by women continue to be in the traditional areas of retail trades and services, personal services, and educational services. Women business owners have made modest progress in entering the nontraditional areas of manufacturing, finance, insurance, real estate, and agricultural services.

The movement of women away from their traditional areas of business ownership is expected to continue to increase as new generations of women leave college and households to become wage and salary workers and business owners. Women are entering new educational fields and occupations both in the professions and in management, which will

assist in their transition to high growth, less traditional, and more profitable business ventures (U.S. Department of Labor, 1985a, 85-5, p. 2).

EDUCATION'S RESPONSE

The role that education plays in the future is extremely important because of the massive number of technological changes occurring. The skills to maintain high-technology systems are becoming as important as the creative skills needed to design the systems. The high-tech repair problems we already face with computers, machines, and nuclear power are testimony to the need for mechanically skilled engineers, technicians, and repair people. Unless we begin to fill the need for the skilled technicians, we will be forced to abandon technology and return to older, simpler methods (Naisbitt, 1982).

Vocational and technical education is on the cutting edge of this issue. Cooperative linkages have to be expanded between schools and business and industry so that the most modern equipment and techniques can be a part of students' training. Students may begin on-the-job training as early as eighth grade and will have their work supervised and graded by employers' standards (Cetron, Soriano, & Gayle, 1985). Educators will have to exhibit a continuing interest in upgrading knowledge transfer and personalizing instruction to fit the individual and the situation. As their work with business increases, teachers will be more valuable to their schools and to the private businesses they serve.

Harold Shane, a pioneer in educational futurism, says there always has been a need during his lifetime to reconceptualize the classroom climate and the content of instruction because of rapid technological and social change (Long, 1986). In the future, Shane believes that continuing education will be necessary for everyone, even people who remain in the same field. Education will become a lifelong process and a self-help tool. People will choose what they want to learn based on interests and career demands, and most will retrain several times during their lifetime. This retraining and upgrading of skills will be a priority for competence in most occupations. The overall objectives of education must become more long-term and focus on lifelong education to suit the needs of adult workers.

The resulting changes probably will keep schools open longer hours during the day, more days during the year, and on weekends. Students may work more at teaching each other in groups, and the ratio of computers to students may increase to 1.4 (Cetron, et al, 1985). The focus on equal opportunity for all will lead to more choices for each individual. Once women and minorities are emancipated totally, the shift in schools will be to a more refined, individual instructional plan; but until then, the challenge to prepare women and minorities continues.

Not only must we make the necessary training available but we must provide career counseling and guidance, vocational assessment, evaluation, individualized education and employment plans, and placement assistance. Women need to be made aware of all occupational choices and opportunities.... Barriers to employment need early identification in order that they might be prepared for what faces them in the future. Successful employment and individual productivity are significant aspects of personal fulfillment and belong to male and female alike (Kolde, 1985, p. 24).

The focus on effective communication skills, computational skills, employability skills, and decision-making skills will continue. Responsibility and integrity will never go out of style, and the ability to adjust and adapt while making effective decisions will be crucial in a future that promises higher displacement rates for workers. The choice has to be up to the individual; but the responsibility of preparation for choice will always lie within education.

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