NEW NONPROFESSIONALS IN THE HUMAN SERVICES--AN OVERVIEW.
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LARGE SCALE EMPLOYMENT OF THE UNEMPLOYED POOR AS
NONPROFESSIONALS IN THE HUMAN SERVICES IS BEING PROPOSED AS A
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ONLY WILL LARGE NUMBERS OF POOR PEOPLE BE EMPLOYED, BUT THE
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APPROACH ARGUE THAT MANY POOR PERSONS ARE TOO DEBILITATED BY
THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY TO ASSUME ROLES THAT WOULD BE
MEANINGFUL RATHER THAN MENIAL AND THE QUALITY OF SERVICES
WOULD BE DETERIORATED. THE MAJOR ISSUES INVOLVED ARE--(1) THE
CAPABILITY OF THE POOR TO ASSUME BOTH JOBS AND CAREERS IN
HUMAN SERVICES, (2) TRAINING THE POOR FOR JOBS AND CAREERS,
(3) THE RESPONSES OF PROFESSIONAL GROUPS TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF
NEW NONPROFESSIONALS, AND (4) ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS RELATED
TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW CAREER PROGRAMS. THIS PAPER
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New Nonprofessionals in the Human Services: An Overview

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by

Gertrude S. Goldberg

Wedding the unemployed poor to the human services can be regarded either as a felicitous natural match or as a marriage de convenance—a practice which has never been particularly popular in this country. To some, notably the proponents of the "new careers for the poor" proposal, this pairing is not merely a means of employing large numbers of poor people nor even of coping with the large and ever-deepening manpower chasm in the professions but of improving the quality of services. (1) Advocates claim that the use of persons similar in economic and ethnic status to low-income, minority-group clientele would help to make many services, particularly those of the large public-welfare agencies, more responsive to these groups. Further, the creation of one million new careers for the poor, as Riessman and Pearl have proposed, would not only raise the economic status of many poor families but would, as a result of the satisfactions of the helping role, increase the image and self worth of the new workers. (2)

Those who deem the marriage contrived or forced find themselves torn between their deep concern for alleviating unemployment and for "closing the gap" and their fear that the employment of the poor in sufficiently large numbers to affect these two social problems would result in diminishing the quality of services. Some argue that many poor persons are too debilitated
by the effects of poverty to assume roles that would be meaningful rather than menial. (3) Or they regard the rationalization of manpower in these professions as something more complex from the point of view of quality of service than merely siphoning off from present professional tasks those activities which do not require professionals or even adding some activities which are presently neglected. (4) The well wishers are thus involved in grooming the professions and the prospective nonprofessionals for what they hope is an impending mass marriage, while others feel that the characteristics of both partners need further investigation during a more circumspect courtship.

It is perhaps indicative of how far the nonprofessional movement has progressed that one can begin a paper like this with what might have been a conclusion only a short time ago. (5) For; particularly in a gathering like this, it is hardly necessary to describe fully the so-called demonstration programs or the reasons for which these activities were undertaken. There are, according to a recent estimate by Frank Riessman, "probably close to 75,000 of these new nonprofessionals, most of them in jobs having been developed by antipoverty legislation." (6) This figure includes about 25,000 full-time positions produced for indigenous nonprofessionals by the Office of Economic Opportunity and another 25,000 or more part-time preschool aides in Operation Head Start. Riessman also estimates
that 30,000 teacher aides will be employed through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and Medicare will utilize many thousands more as home-health aides. Although Grosser did not estimate the number of nonprofessionals, both lower- and middle-class, who were employed in the manpower development programs of the Department of Labor, their use was widespread enough to warrant his investigation of the effects of their employment. (7) Indicative of growing public support for new careerists was the proposal of Americans for Democratic Action at their 1966 convention that five million jobs for nonprofessionals be created in public services. Such a figure is close to the estimate by the National Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress that expanded public-service employment in six categories "where social needs are now inadequately met if indeed they are met at all" would create 5.3 million new jobs for people "with relatively low skills." (8) Finally, Congress has enacted the Scheuer-Nelson Subprofessional Career Act which will appropriate approximately seventy million dollars to employ and train unemployed persons for jobs in public services.

Three major and relatively recent studies, the above-mentioned work of Grosser and two under the auspices of the Office of Economic Opportunity, The CAP Aide Study by the National Committee on Employment of Youth (NCEY) and A Study of the Nonprofessional in the CAP by Daniel Yankelovich, Inc., provide
not only discussions of issues and future recommendations. But particularly in the case of the two OEO studies, there are as careful descriptions of programs, job designs, and characteristics of employees as the helter skelter of these programs permits. Based on these surveys, analysis of some recent programs which have come to my attention, and a fairly comprehensive review of the literature late last summer, I should like to identify the major issues in the nonprofessional field. To the extent that they can be discussed discretely, these include the capability of the poor to assume both jobs and careers in the human services; training for jobs and careers; the responses of professional groups to the employment of new nonprofessionals; and organizational factors related to the implementation of the new careers program.

The Employability of the Poor in the Human Services

Employability must always be viewed in terms of the offered employment and training. If aides are really maids, as Edith Lynton has characterized some of the new workers, there is no question that the poor are employable—they have been so employed for a long time. If menial jobs which offer the security of public-service employment are to be the result of the nonprofessional experiment, then it is misleading to speak of new careers. Some argue that permanent jobs, are not to be scoffed at, that new careerists are grateful for
work and do not worry about advancement. Yet, as Joan Grant points out, the experience of several projects has shown that "within a year the gratefulness vanishes and demands for upgrading, training, and definition of career lines begin to be made...."(11) It is also hard to see how a teacher aide who is largely confined to housekeeping assistance can be upgraded by either the income or status that such a job would convey. One fears that bringing low-income parents into the classroom on such a basis would dramatize their low status to their children rather than offer models of achievement. Professionals, who would become supervisors of these aides might be upgraded, but nonprofessionals, only further grated. If, in addition, we are creaming the poor, that is, hiring only the more capable and least unemployable anyway, to employ them in such circumscribed activities is only furthering the current trend in the employment market of demanding higher credentials for employment than a job requires—for example a high-school diploma and a written examination for garbage collection. If, on the other hand, persons with little formal education and scant pre-/or on-the-job training are being thrust into professional roles, then services may indeed be downgraded. As the surveys of the nonprofessional scene indicate, however, each of these possibilities is a distorted statement of the prevailing policies toward selection, training, and employment of most nonprofessionals in the poverty programs.
That creaming with respect to formal credentials has been a common phenomenon among anti-poverty agencies hiring nonprofessionals has been validated by both the Yankelovich and NCEY studies. Viewing nonprofessionals in CAP programs in nine major cities, the Yankelovich study reports that "most nonprofessionals are not 'hard core.'" Only twenty-five percent have had less than a complete high school education, and twenty percent have had some college or are college graduates. Edith Lynton, commenting on the NCEY study in which she was Senior Research Associate, points out that although formal educational criteria were waived or lowered, "selection methods and criteria, often established by teachers or social workers, tended to nullify the reduced requirements through emphasis on verbal skill or attitudes." It is really very difficult to transcend our middle-class biases, for the Mobilization for Youth homemaker program we thought we were hiring the most "down home" people possible, but as Grosser's data revealed, these and other indigenous workers in the agency were closer in social attitudes to the professional staff than they were to the project community.

Whether it has been necessary to cream is a more difficult question to answer since it depends once again on how people were employed and trained, and on the job's opportunity for upgrading. It is perhaps tolerable for an entry job to be unchallenging but certainly not for it also to be one's career.
That one job level was provided in the vast majority of programs under CAP sponsorship was a finding upon which both major surveys agreed. In this respect the majority of new nonprofessional jobs is not very different, except in unfulfilled promises, from the old nonprofessional jobs which have characteristically been dead-end drudgery.

Leaving aside the question of career mobility, it is very difficult to determine the levels of skill and knowledge which are demanded by most nonprofessional jobs. In general, most observers have found that the new workers are performing an important role and that they are performing it well. In fact, the Yankelovich group asserts that satisfactions which accrue from performing helpful, socially-useful jobs have initially compensated for the low salaries and uncertain futures of these jobs—although they anticipate that morale will wane if these marginal factors persist.\(^{(15)}\)

It is significant in attempting to determine the competence of nonprofessionals that neither of the groups which has conducted the most extensive surveys of current programs has been primarily concerned with the quality of professional services nor competent to determine the extent to which the anti-poverty programs meet professional standards. Grosser, on the other hand, is a member of the faculty of the New York University School of Social Work and until recently engaged in professional social work practice. His assessment of nonprofessional compe-
tence, though somewhat more guarded than those of the CAP investigators and based on the employment of both middle-class and lower-class nonprofessionals, is nonetheless positive. Grosser recognizes that the hiring of nonprofessionals has sometimes represented a cooptation of militant activists or troublemakers and is aware of the many drawbacks of nonprofessionals to which we shall, in turn, allude. Yet he nonetheless was impressed with the extent to which the target populations were engaged when nonprofessionals were employed. "Not only is the presence of nonprofessionals very much felt by neighborhood populations," but, he asserts, despite their inability and frequent disinclination to effect institutional changes, they have had a salutary effect on professional practice in their agencies. (16) We notes that "professionals in these projects are markedly more effective with the poor than are their counterparts in ongoing agencies." (17) That there have been no objective performance tests of nonprofessionals or that their impact on clients has not been systematically measured is acknowledged by most observers. But then, professional practice has not frequently been subjected to such scrutiny.

A major obstacle to determining the level of work required of nonprofessionals in relation to their capacities is the lack of uniformity in tasks, as opposed to job titles. The NCEY reports the futility of attempting to make such an evaluation:

The jobs reviewed in this study generally were defined only in terms of broad guidelines. As
a result, there was little standardization within programs or between programs. The same titles often had different meanings. Any attempt to assess the nonprofessional's ability to function in a given role, or the training required, therefore, became impossible. (18)

While job titles give little clue to job level, it is possible to discern to some extent the degree of competence which the nonprofessional jobs require. Grosser found that the wide variety of tasks to which nonprofessionals have been assigned may be subsumed under four categories. (19) Direct service responsibilities, which were the least common in man-power programs, are those usually performed by professionals—counseling, remediation, job development, tutoring, and teaching. Grosser asserts that such assignments, though infrequent, made best use of nonprofessional skills, such attributes as enthusiasm and spontaneity, ability to communicate with clients through common language or style, empathy, and ability to help clients negotiate the complexities of the ghetto. Most common among assignments were those Grosser termed ancillary to the provision of professional services such as clerical, administrative, and transport, all of which help to bring the client and the service into productive contact. These might also include some tasks closer to those of professionals such as reception, intake, and vestibule services. Recruitment and follow-up, although they require more independence than other ancillary tasks, were also frequent. According to the Yankelovich study, recruitment and referral were the most common non-professional assignments. (20) Grosser felt that in these
activities nonprofessional assets were also exploited, although the client is eventually turned over to a professional for ongoing direct service. The bridge function, to which most observers have attributed recruitment, referral, and follow up, is said by Grosser to characterize those activities in which nonprofessionals help to relate the agency to the entire target population rather than to the individual client. These functions, which are more akin to community organization in social work practice, include speaking engagements, door-to-door canvassing, and leaflet distribution.

It is perhaps significant that Grosser's findings indicate more demanding use of nonprofessionals than the CAP studies. This is probably because middle-class nonprofessionals were included in the manpower programs of the Department of Labor, whereas CAP aides were to be drawn from target populations. And, as previously noted, the middle-class workers were more frequently given direct-service assignments. Such a tendency was particularly marked in employment divisions of manpower programs, where lower-class workers were not assigned to provide counseling or remediation, although they did provide both social work and educational services in other divisions of the same projects.

What one can glean from available evidence is that nonprofessionals, including at least some of the indigenous lower-
income employees, are being used in creative and innovative ways that include tasks formerly done by professionals and others that were largely neglected, particularly those related to linking low-income clientele with social agencies. There appears, however, to be considerable evidence of housekeeping assignments, particularly among teacher aides, although there are notable exceptions where school systems seem to be moving toward permanent aide positions that allow for considerable upgrading. 1) What is lacking is data that would provide some indication of the extent to which nonprofessionals with various levels of skills, prior experience, and formal credentials can meet the demands of the tasks which they are required to perform.

Despite our inability to provide definite answers to the question of employability, it is possible to identify some of the strengths and weaknesses of nonprofessionals, particularly indigenous workers. In the ensuing discussions an attempt is made to distinguish between capacity to assume current nonprofessional jobs and the ability to master the knowledge required to achieve upward mobility. (22) It should be noted, however, that neither those who are skeptical of nonprofessionals' competence nor those who contend that they can perform adequately or that they have special rapport with the disadvantaged are able to supply evidence beyond their own impressions.
Commenting on indigenous workers in the Mobilization for Youth program, Sherman Barr finds many poor persons too limited to assume new roles in the human services and stresses the deleterious effects of poverty:

It is extremely difficult to vitiate the effects of the many years of poverty, brutalization, and discrimination endured by many poor indigenous persons. Expected limitations remain pervasive in spite of training efforts. (23)

It is Barr's corollary view that those indigenous persons who have been less disadvantaged are more valuable human-service workers. "Those who were most successful had in the main experienced less poverty, were better educated and had managed their lives with a reasonable degree of success and productivity." (24) Such a view would tend to suggest that creaming has not been at all unnecessary. In contrast were the observations of the Yankelovich study that where the "hard core" were employed, that is persons with less formal education and prior work experience, aides seemed to perform as well as their more employable counterparts. (25) On the other hand, a deficit observed among aides by the Yankelovich group, and one which might be anticipated among the technician as opposed to the worker with dynamic understanding of problems, was a lack of flexibility. Nonprofessionals had difficulty in coping with the unanticipated: "If they come upon a situation that deviates from what they have been told to expect, they do not know what to do. They fall back on improvisations that are
inappropriate, or they simply do nothing."(26)

Those with confidence in the educability and trainability of the poor as a group put emphasis on their special strengths or on that common capacity which experimental evidence suggests they share with most other human beings, that is, to perform at a higher level than they currently do. Some experience does suggest that the skills of the poor can be upgraded by the manipulation of such motivating variables as meaningful employment, job-related instruction, and opportunities for higher education; and there is evidence from current training experiments in industry that with some extension of training time, a very high proportion of persons with limited intellectual performance can be prepared for positions requiring semi-technical skills.(27) It is also true, of course, that those who have been impressed by the special knowledge and style of the nonprofessionals are less likely to use professional criteria to evaluate their performance. They are also more prone to point out that those who appear to be poor risks in terms of social deviance and lack of formal education perform as well as persons who appear more promising in terms of conventional personnel standards. One might assume that some of the interpersonal skills requisite for human service jobs are not necessarily dependent upon educational attainment.(28) And while critics may find the poor lacking in verbal skill, advocates point to the fact that though few are well spoken,
Many are articulate. However, one limited problem reported by the Yankelovich study is that aides, despite the fact that many are high-school graduates and possess at least elementary skills in reading and writing, often have difficulty in using these skills on the job. (29)

Many slum residents, including some of the very poor and those dependent upon public assistance, know their neighborhoods and slum life intimately and are often quite canny in managing well in difficult circumstances. Barr appropriately warns that we must guard against glorifying a plucky approach to deprivation and a concomitant acceptance of the status quo. (30) But with that caveat in mind the knowledge, know-how, and understanding of the indigenous nonprofessional may be a valuable asset to human service programs. Nonprofessionals can help familiarize professionals with the problems and expectations of the clientele, and having endured poverty themselves may offer a perspective on behavior which enhances professional understanding. Their tendency to find external rather than intra-psychic explanations of behavior, to react strongly to material deprivations such as lack of food, clothing, and heat, though it may sometimes reflect merely their lack of training, often appropriately tempers the professional's penchant to psychologize. In addition, the nonprofessional in offering direct service can incorporate some of the traditional self-help patterns of the poor into the professional service.
A more telling argument against many nonprofessionals is that they sometimes may have negative attitudes toward the poor. Although it is often assumed that proximity to slum life will automatically provide neighborhood workers with empathy and understanding, many persons who have lived in poverty share the prevailing middle-class attitudes toward the poor. They tend to look down on deprived persons and to be contemptuous of those who manage less well in what they consider circumstances comparable to those they have suffered. The lower classes are, as a number of studies have shown, less liberal as a group than the upper classes. And those who have themselves been the victims of social inequities may nonetheless feel that an individual is responsible for his own circumstances and that those who receive aid have no right to be critical of services for which they do not pay. Fortunately such attitudes appear to be less damaging to worker-client relationships than might be anticipated, possibly because their roles permit many indigenous workers to provide direct and meaningful help to clients—assisting with child care, shopping, and serving as translators and escorts when their clients visit schools, clinics, and other institutions. It is also true that the styles of behavior of nonprofessionals may be more naturally attuned to those of the client population and that the relationship tends to be one of reciprocity rather than that of donor-donee.

In the final analysis, many of the questions about the true capacity of the poor can be dealt with more systematically if
we recognize that nonprofessional jobs require various levels of competence and that there is a wide range of capability and trainability among the poor. Perry Levinson and Jeffry Schiller have recently suggested a typology for social work that may be useful in delineating the roles of professional and nonprofessional personnel in the other human services as well. They propose three levels of workers--preprofessionals, semiprofessionals and nonprofessionals--each with different kinds of tasks, training, and career expectations. The preprofessionals would be geared toward professional status, while the other two groups would have mobility through nonprofessional channels or through regular significant increments. Such a classification speaks to the capability issue by allowing for a differential use of workers in terms of their present performance and their receptivity to future training. Moreover, it defines differentially the workers' problems in maintaining rapport with the client group in the face of changing status.

As he gained professional knowledge and training, the preprofessional's proximity to the clientele would be decreased by acquisition of middle-class status. But he might well maintain a commitment to them such as is possessed by many professionals and which might well be maintained if training emphasized such attitudes. For the subprofessional who would be engaged in routine tasks now performed by professionals, who might have little client contact and might even perform his work outside the target community, the problem of losing identification with the poor would not be relevant to adequate performance. For the
semiprofessional, who would be upwardly mobile as a result of his new career but whose job would require continued closeness to the community, role discrepancy would be high. Discomfort might, however, be mitigated if agency rewards were no longer, as at present, solely associated with professional status. Grosser reports varying degrees of nonprofessional identification with the community and with the agency employing him and observes that this factor is affected by the nature of the job assignment, identification with the community being enhanced in direct service activities or where the activity can stand on its own. High professional identification and orientation, in contrast, ensued where the service was ancillâry and "where the nonprofessional's successful performance was tied to a client's amonability to service to be provided by a professional colleague."(32)

Training for New Jobs and Now Careers

As was probably apparent from our discussion of some of the pros and cons of employing nonprofessionals in human-service positions, it is impossible to assess potential or employability without specifying the training which workers will receive. In surveying current practice, one finds, on the one hand, an almost monotonous consensus on the part of the few who have given it serious thought, concerning both the importance of training and its appropriato style, structure, and content. Yet, even those
who have developed systematic training programs have seldom pro-
vided evidence of its efficacy in relation to the interrelated
variables of workers' present level of performance and the level
of employment for which he is being trained. On the other hand,
the vast majority of action programs, in contrast to the rela-
tively few projects whose primary interest and mandate is in the
area of training, have offered new workers little in the way of
well-conceived pre-employment and on-the-job training, much less
education for upward mobility. (33) Thus the prevailing practice
makes it impossible or at best premature to assess the employ-
ability of the new nonprofessionals, particularly the hard-core,
who presumably require more training.

Since there is no dearth of materials suggesting training
guidelines it should suffice here merely to allude to some gen-
eral characteristics of such schemes and to comment about the
assumption on which they are based. (34) Most experts recommend
a short pre-service program (brief to avoid undue anxiety among
neophytes) to orient the worker to the particular professional
discipline, the agency, and service as well as some basic skills
for performing at least enough of their jobs for them to begin
to work. Following is a period of combined supervised field
work and instruction, often split between a half day in training
and the other half in the field, initially, but gradually lead-
ing to a full day at work with ongoing supervision and regular
but less frequent training sessions. This instruction deals with
specific skills and information to perform an increasingly complex set of tasks which Riessman, in particular, has suggested should be phased into the job.\(^{(35)}\) It also includes general knowledge required of all human service roles such as understanding of human behavior and social problems, and individual and group exploration of problems encountered in the work situation. A particularly important component of training in view of problems of recording and reporting is remediation.

Speaking in terms of the types of instruction offered rather than their sequence, William Denhnan of the Howard University Institute for Youth Studies identifies a "basic core curriculum" or the employability aspect of training.\(^{(36)}\) The goal is to develop understanding of the agency, satisfactory work habits, and an acceptance of supervisory authority. In addition, there is a "specialty skill component" consisting of knowledge and skills for the particular task.\(^{(37)}\)

The style and format of most training programs have been based on the assumed learning characteristics of the nonprofessionals and the consequent need for phased training, the acquisition of skills functionally related to the tasks, an active rather than participant style of teaching, and frequent reinforcement and minimization of anxiety.\(^{(38)}\) Peer learning and such group techniques as job simulation and role are popular.

In view of the fact that most nonprofessionals have been creamed—or are not the skim—in terms of educational attainments, one
wonders if the training may not on the one hand be unnecessarily diluted or devoid of conceptual material or whether the learning characteristics of the group which has thus far comprised the nonprofessional corps are not so special. An unscholastic approach may be more compatible with the learning styles of most people, particularly when they are being trained for a job. On the other hand, it is a mistake to gear training to one style of learning in view of the increasing evidence that the lower classes may exhibit a greater range of behavior and of conceptual levels than the middle classes. Finally, it may be important to think in terms of goals rather than of learning styles, in which case the quick, non-didactic method may be appropriate for the job at hand, especially at the entry level, and the more discursive, conceptually-oriented approach more compatible with subsequent education for upgrading.

Because the nonprofessional is by definition untrained we have naturally tended to concentrate on his need for training. However, increasingly we are being warned of the need for trainers and for training the trainers. Clearly the education of social workers and psychologists may provide basic knowledge upon which an understanding of most practice depends, but it is hardly geared to the training of nonprofessionals. Riessman has recently posed the problem in terms of manpower:

If one million nonprofessionals were to be employed, at least 50,000 training and supervisory personnel would probably be required. It is clear that while the new careers movement may potentially reduce certain manpower shortages in the human service fields, it is also developing new shortages of a specialized manpower, namely trainers.
Two major sources of trainers are most frequently suggested: professionals and successful nonprofessionals, the former being used to train and supervise the latter. The use of nonprofessionals as trainers is frequently recommended in terms of its training advantages and its potential for upgrading the nonprofessional without impinging on the professional career line. The nonprofessional would offer a form of peer learning to the trainee and would also be able to base his training on the experience of having performed the task himself. In terms of mobility it would obviate the need for some nonprofessionals to obtain substantial academic credentials in order to be upgraded.

There is somewhat less consensus concerning the auspices of training than its format. In the opinion of this observer there are some important reasons why training should be the major responsibility of a training institute, with the employing agency necessarily supplying the supervisory instruction on the job. Because hiring organizations are now called upon to make substantial commitments of staff time and money to prepare new workers, employment of nonprofessionals makes demands upon an agency different from those required by other types of staff and can, as a result, negatively influence attitudes toward hiring them. There is, however, one respect in which agencies should offer educational opportunities comparable to those for professionals. The latter can acquire considerable education and training at agency expense, frequently remaining on staff or receiving stipends during the period of graduate study. Lest
status inequities be abetted by organizational practices, educational opportunities to acquire high school equivalency, associate of arts, bachelor, and graduate degrees should be extended to non-professionals. Naturally, this kind of staff development is most feasible in permanent agencies, as opposed to temporary anti-poverty projects.

Perhaps the best argument for devising training resources independent of the employers is that it would make the new workers less dependent upon the organization for which they work and therefore freer to represent community concerns that conflict with agency plans. The danger of being coopted by the organization through reliance on it not only for a job but for training would also be mitigated. Training could also become more generic, less tied to a particular work situation, and therefore more conducive to job and career mobility. Training for upward mobility is much more likely to receive careful consideration if training is the province of groups whose major role is training rather than direct service. For example, the California Center for the Study of New Careers and the Howard University Institute, neither of which has primary responsibility for direct service, have made significant contributions to the analysis and development of training strategies. The experience of the Contra Costa Council for Community Services, an action agency which has given careful training to nonprofessionals suggests a month's period of basic training to be done centrally or contracted to an outside agency, followed by in-service training and supervision.
which should rest with the employers. (42) Perhaps a good reason for having the employer assume full training responsibility after the nonprofessional is at work is to avoid conflicting authorities and to make the instruction as job-related as possible.

Although the majority of programs have not offered opportunities for upgrading, there are some promising programs and proposals for furthering the education and development of nonprofessionals. One of these is the Institute for Urban Service Aides at Georgetown University. (43) A year's course of study including two, two-hour sessions a week, will be offered to from seventy-five to ninety aides currently employed in the Washington area. Students are selected on the basis of their motivation to attend, able job performance, and the commitment of the employing agency to foster their career advancement. The curriculum includes growth and development, group fundamentals, and understanding the urban setting, as well as remediation. The project hopes to demonstrate that residents of poor neighborhoods with little formal education can benefit from a college-level course whose goal is to broaden intellectual understanding and increase job performance and that such a course will encourage social agencies to develop a permanent career ladder for aides.

Another promising scheme for upgrading, developed by the Newark Board of Education, Newark and Montclair State Colleges, and Scientific Resources, Inc., seems to incorporate most of the recommendations of the new careers proposal. (44) In contrast to the Georgetown Institute it combines education with a definite
promise of job mobility. Two levels of subprofessional teachers, one with instructional responsibilities, are proposed. A combination of employment, in-service training, and university courses permits an aide, who can be employed without a high-school diploma but who must acquire one during the first two years of employment, eventually to acquire professional status. There has been considerable involvement of teaching staff in the planning phase, and institutional changes including modifications of the instructional program for the socially disadvantaged are integral to the plan.

Professionals and Nonprofessionals

Professional reactions to the employment of nonprofessionals are not solely limited to an objective evaluation of the employability of nonprofessionals. There are, in addition, what may be termed professional qua professional resistances which lead some professionals to conclude that the use of untrained workers in positions of responsibility would adversely affect the quality of services. Furthermore, there is justifiable anxiety about the effect of new careerists—not so much on clients as on professional status and role. Finally, professionals face genuine difficulties in working with nonprofessionals which may also be separate from their capability. (45)

Many professionals, unwilling to be driven by manpower exigencies, may take the position that most human-service tasks demand a full understanding of the client's situation, the ability,
as it were, to recognize both symptoms and underlying problems. Thus a professional social worker with long experience in public welfare commented that even in the simple delivery of a special welfare check there is "so much dynamics": the implication being that the trained worker would be likely to understand the meaning of the client's reaction to his receipt of a check and that he would be able to make diagnostic or therapeutic use of such knowledge in subsequent contacts. That such professional knowledge would seldom be utilized in view of the size of caseloads, not to speak of the client's possible disinterest in interpersonal assistance, seemed not to alter that professional's position. On the other hand, Commissioner Mitchell Ginsberg of the New York City Department of Welfare and former Associate Dean of the Columbia University School of Social Work, flatly states that "eighty percent of the caseworker's job in his department is often clerical in nature and doesn't require an iota of professional skill."(46) Ginsberg's subsequent remark that much of this work might someday be done by machines leads one to wonder whether the portion of professional tasks to be allocated to nonprofessionals would be so resistant to automation as now-careers proponents assume. But, it is clear that Ginsberg, in proposing a subprofessional level in a city department of welfare, would also assign some human-service tasks to the new workers, for he alludes to the need of many clients for "someone who will take some interest in them, who will talk to them, who will take them from their home to the
where there is greater overlap between professional and nonprofessional tasks—as opposed to roles currently neglected or the more routine tasks of professionals—there would, however, seem to be more reason for professionals to resist new nonprofessionals.

Inasmuch as a considerable portion of many nonprofessional roles is more demanding than clerical work, escort services, and friendly visiting, it becomes difficult in many instances to distinguish between professional and nonprofessional activities. A scheme proposed by Willard Richan, which categorizes levels of workers on the basis of "client vulnerability" and "worker autonomy" appears to clarify assignments until it is applied to the current use of nonprofessionals. For some feel that the most innovative and valuable work performed by nonprofessionals has been with vulnerable clients and has required considerable initiative and independence of both the agency and professional supervision. Grosser asserts, it should be remembered, that direct services exploited nonprofessional assets, and the bridge function, which many think is the nonprofessional's most efficacious role, is by definition spanning agency and client worlds. While it may be that work requiring professional skill is offered by a professional after the bridge has been crossed, it is significant that during the 'fifties the type of social casework which was thought to take a great amount of professional skill involved the process of reaching out to and engaging low-income problem families. Much of this work seems to be implied in the
bridge function.

It is clear that there is a genuine argument between those who maintain not only that the professional is, if not the only, the preferable person for most service tasks and others who maintain either that the technician can perform simpler tasks adequately or that the nonprofessional brings a special understanding which is in some instances more helpful to the low-income clientele than the assistance of a professional. The extreme generic position would perhaps be that even if community persons have more information about the environment of the client, it is the trained person who has the dynamic understanding to utilize this knowledge nor the know-how of the indigenous worker is so special understanding which is in some instances more helpful to the low-income clientele than the assistance of a professional. The extreme generic position would perhaps be that even if community persons have more information about the environment of the client, it is the trained person who has the dynamic understanding to utilize this knowledge in the helping process. Sherman Barr, moreover, has argued that neither the knowledge nor the know-how of the indigenous worker is so special that it cannot be learned by good professionals(49) (although in practice professional training has not stressed such understanding). Such an argument deals with that part of the rationale for indigenous staff which is related to their proximity to the clientele. Yet it overlooks another aspect of the manpower issue which is not whether overworked professionals can acquire more skills but whether they can
be relieved of some of their tasks by skilled nonprofessionals. Clearly, there are a variety of issues raised by this problem, the resolution of which is partly dependent upon philosophical commitments and partly on unavailable data.

Proponents of the new careers proposal argue that professionals will be upgraded by the employment of nonprofessionals because they will no longer be required to perform the more menial aspects of their assignments, will become supervisors and trainers of nonprofessionals, or, with the addition of lower-rung personnel, will by implication be enhanced. Once again, much depends on what part of the former tasks are assigned to nonprofessionals. If direct service, itself encompassing many levels of competence, is offered by nonprofessionals, then it is understandable that professionals would be resentful of those who perform the roles for which they had been prepared by years of education and training. A major strength of the new careers proposal, that it offers an alternate route to professional status than the present one of acquiring credentials prior to employment, may at the same time be a source of friction unless it is clearly understood that nonprofessionals will also have to earn credentials—with the difference being that they can be acquired subsequent to employment. Further, in fields such as teaching, where one's status is largely based on education and experience rather than on standards of performance, the employment of persons whose sole qualifications are service-defined is not only revolutionary but threatening to professional staff. Finally, many professionals chose their life's work because they most wanted to
be directly engaged in helping those in need. Such persons may, on the one hand, find supervision and training of nonprofessionals or administration less rewarding than work with clients. On the other hand, continuing to perform tasks which are assumed by nonprofessionals, perhaps former clients, may be inconsistent with career aspirations. If there is so much satisfaction for the nonprofessional in the helping role, are some professionals going to be content with training and supervising the helpers? Once again, a strength of the new careers plan, its blurring of the line between donor and donee, may threaten both the satisfactions and the privileged standing of professionals. If only a portion of the new careerists, for example, one-fourth or 250,000, were to enter the social-welfare field, they would not only outnumber professional social workers but would exceed the estimated number of social welfare personnel presently employed in the United States. Regardless of the division of assignments, their employment would cause massive dislocations, the effects of which must be as clearly anticipated as possible.

The supervision and training of nonprofessionals tax even those professionals who are most convinced of their capabilities and least concerned about the status problems which their employment poses. (That there are many such professionals is suggested by the findings of the Yankelovich study which concluded that friction between professionals and nonprofessionals is confined to a small minority and that "the majority of social workers in these programs are committed to the nonprofessional concept
and are trying to make it work.) Since nonprofessionals do not belong to the professional culture, they are often likely to question its basic assumptions and, in a setting which encourages their independence, to openly express a resentment of professionals. Such hostility often arises from differences of social class and racial ethnic identity. While much of it may be a projection of past bitter experiences the indigenous worker may also be reacting to the present prejudices of many professionals toward lower-class groups and to the status systems of many organizations which institutionalize these prejudices.

The professional who can learn to face these various assaults and to deal differentially with biases according to whether they are his own, the nonprofessional's, or the institution's is likely to become a much more competent worker, particularly with clientele resembling the nonprofessional. It is, however, the unusually confident and competent professional who can respond to such challenges, particularly those involving his own biases. If such competence is to become commonplace, it will need to be deliberately developed in the course of professional study and in-service training.

**Organizational Issues**

The types of organizational issues raised by the implementation of the new careers programs are naturally related to the characteristics of the institutions in which most of them will be employed. Many, though not all, observers agree that the vast
majority of new careerists should work in the large, public health, education, and welfare agencies. (52) These are not only the largest dispensers of human services and hence the largest employers of human service workers but are also chronically understaffed. Moreover, they serve the poor, that is, clientele with whom new careerists are thought to have special rapport. However, for those who feel that nonprofessionals may diminish the quality of services, the fact that the poor will be their clients is another drawback. Some have consequently warned that the nonprofessional movement may simply perpetuate the tradition of offering poor services to the poor. Teacher aides might be employed in Harlem but probably not in Scarsdale. Another reason for choosing the public welfare institutions is that inasmuch as these agencies are poorly attuned to lower-income clientele, indigenous nonprofessionals would seem to offer a special advantage. Specht and Pruger, however, point out that there are special obstacles to their employment where they are most needed, that is, where the institution lacks rapport with the community. (53) Frequently too, they note, institutions may ask to know how they are perceived by a community but reject such information and the informers when it is candidly given. (54) On the other hand, two of the attributes conducive to the employment of new careerists suggested by Specht and Pruger are characteristic of large welfare agencies: a prior differentiation and specialization of staff in terms of both occupations and levels of authority, and a tradition of employing subprofessionals. (55)
The stability of employment which these institutions offer and their policy of offering training incentives at least to higher status employees also makes them compatible with the new careers concept. Although the appropriate sources of employment for non-professionals, these institutions present a number of legal, civil-service, and funding problems which must be identified and dealt with by planners.

There may be both legal and quasi-legal problems in restructuring, the former resulting from enabling legislation and the latter, from civil-service, licensing, or departmental regulations. Either federal, state, or local laws may stipulate that only certain kinds of tasks can be performed by certain kinds of people. For example, the laws may require that initial or continuing eligibility for public assistance be established by persons with a college education. Thus the inclusion of persons without high-school diplomas in certain aspects of the eligibility process may well pose legal problems. The second type of difficulty pertains to the inviolability of job descriptions. For example, there may be no law which states that a probation officer is the employee charged with visiting the probationer in order to assess his home situation, but nevertheless this task may be included in civil-service or departmental classifications or descriptions of the job. Consequently, it may be difficult to assign it to other members of the staff, particularly those with less education.

Such factors have in some instances seemed amenable to compromise. Ginsberg, for example, reports that civil-service authorities in
New York have been quite cooperative in his efforts to institute subprofessional welfare workers, nor does he report legal barriers. In one instance, in Richmond, California, when it seemed illegal to reserve public service positions for poor people, the city council voted to change the laws whose goals were in conflict with a new careers approach. Temporary waiving of civil-service regulations is a means of gaining a foothold for nonprofessional jobs in public agencies, although legislative change may be necessary for establishing permanent positions when laws appear to be the source of offending practices by regulatory bodies.

That many public service agencies are unionized may pose an obstacle to restructuring. Thus far there are mixed experiences with unions. In New York City Commissioner Ginsberg reports that the union to which welfare workers belong opposes reassignment of investigators' tasks to new subprofessional staff and will assent to the creation of a new job only if it consists of activities not performed by present workers. In the same city, however, District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees is jointly administering with the city Department of Hospitals a program through which nurses aides may be trained and promoted to practical nurses.

Another serious obstacle to restructuring may grow out of the status concerns typical of bureaucratic employees. These are sometimes reinforced by union membership and may be a powerful source of resistance to restructuring jobs to permit new
entry levels. The supervisors of present line staff and the line staff themselves would be likely to be most influenced by restructuring, but the entire staff may well be affected, including, as a result, the administrators. The supervisors of present entry staff may fear that their status and salary scale will be lowered, since in large bureaucracies, supervisors tend to be paid on the basis of the level of staff they supervise. Thus if one were to be a supervisor of investigator aides, one might have less prestige and lower wages than the supervisor of investigators. Although workers are not professionally trained for their jobs, as many line staff of public agencies are not, they may nonetheless share the fears of professionals concerning the lowering of their status if persons with less education perform some tasks formerly assigned to them. Related to these points is the objection, often raised by administrators, that the introduction of persons with a special status is likely to lower morale of existing staff.

Perhaps because it is impossible to have a stable marriage without a sound financial base, the question of funding has received increasingly more attention—although it remains a confusing issue. Recent concern may be related to a discussion of wide-scale employment of nonprofessionals, which would be costly. J. Douglas Grant has proposed three strategies for financing new careers: through utilization of existing human-service budgets; through conversion of budgets either in welfare or other sectors of the economy, from national defense, for example; or through increased spending on human services, irrespective of
reductions in other areas. (59)

The third strategy, increased welfare spending in the absence of conversion, will be necessary to finance new careers at this time. It may be feasible to hire a certain number of nonprofessionals by means of the first strategy as Grant has done himself in California. He has initiated a policy whereby the state allocates a percentage of annual budgetary increases in certain departments for subprofessional employment. But in view of the expenses of training and supervising the new workers and the kinds of financial incentives which may be necessary to win compliance of higher-status workers and their unions, the creation of a million new jobs will require increases in budgets considerably beyond projected annual increments. Many professional salaries are so low that wages of subprofessionals, necessarily lower than those of professionals, would otherwise fall below the poverty level. (60) Furthermore, even though an agency might not be able to attract the number of professionals for which funds are allocated, the utilization of these monies to hire nonprofessionals might be rejected because such a realistic response to manpower shortages would formally substitute nonprofessionals for professionals. In the past, the response to such shortages has characteristically been to do nothing, usually at the client's expense. (61) Besides, it is not clear whether such monies are indeed available since some agency budgets may be predicated on unused funds.
Riessman estimates that hiring one million nonprofessionals would cost five billion dollars, not much compared with military expenditures but rather unlikely in view of them. Conversion of military budgets is presently out of the question. The public agencies at local and state levels are both short-staffed and short-changed. It is thus clear that the implementation of the new careers program requires federal support of these agencies considerably beyond the financial commitments of the grant-in-aid programs. But it is not at all certain that such increased federal support for welfare will be forthcoming.

**Professionals and Implementation**

This overview has perhaps been unduly overcast. If one has sounded a bit like the Ancient Mariner, it is possibly because of the seriousness of the occasion. It is, after all, one thing to be enthusiastic about casual dating or scattered demonstrations but another to contemplate a serious courtship which may culminate in a permanent alliance. If the poor have most to gain in this engagement, they may also have much to lose. There is a chance that if the new careers are not properly designed, service may fail to improve and employment may prove temporary, after all. There is also the question of priorities, particularly in view of the apparent retreat from the war on poverty. Employment in the human services may be more permanent than, for example, transient jobs in mass public works programs to build hospitals, housing, and schools. But these programs may substantially aid and employ more of the hard-core poor.
than tuning up services and hiring the less unemployable as non-
professionals.

Perhaps most encouraging on the nonprofessional scene is a conference of this sort, jointly sponsored by the national organizations of two professional groups whose intelligent involvement is crucial to a balanced evaluation of the new careers program and to its successful implementation, if that step is warranted—or taken, anyway. The public and political support for legislation, funds, and necessary institutional adjustments may well lie beyond the scope of most of us, although Riessman has been pressing for a movement in which professionals join present nonprofessionals, civil-rights, and anti-poverty groups to develop mass support for new careers. Our primary responsibility as professionals, however, is to encourage and design research and demonstration which will permit more definitive evaluation of the new careers concept than this overview could possibly report.
FOOTNOTES


5. Various definitions of the unfortunate term "nonprofessional" are given. Herein it will refer to persons who fail to meet the formal credentials for "professional" positions in a given social agency. Thus a person with a bachelor of arts degree might be a nonprofessional in a highly professionalized family agency but a professional in a department of public welfare. This paper is chiefly concerned with "new nonprofessionals," persons who are assuming a wider range of social welfare tasks, including in some cases, direct service, than nonprofessionals have usually performed in the past. There are middle-class new nonprofessionals as well as lower-class workers, but a special attempt has been made to employ persons similar in ethnic, racial, and economic status to the target clientele of poverty programs. When such nonprofessionals also reside in the target neighborhoods, they are called indigenous nonprofessionals.


7. Grosser, *The Role of the Nonprofessional in the Manpower Development Programs*. 


13. Lynton, p. 11.


17. Ibid., p. 50.


21. See, for example, the Newark Board of Education, A Proposal of Education to the Ford Foundation, Newark, 1966. (Presented at a Conference on Training the Nonprofessional, sponsored by Scientific Resources, Inc., Washington, D.C., March 15-16, 1967.) Also see, National Committee on Employment of Youth, Opportunity or Deadend, passim, for a discussion of the efforts of the Philadelphia school system to incorporate the nonprofessional into the regular school staff and to provide career potential for nonprofessionals.


24. Ibid., p. 3.


26. Ibid., p. 75.


30. Barr, pp. 6-7.


32. Grosser, The Role of the Nonprofessional in the Manpower Development Programs, p. 29

Footnotes (continued)


35. Riessman, "Issues in Training the Nonprofessional."


37. Ibid.


39. The diversity of behavioral patterns among the poor has been emphasized by the findings of the Child Rearing Study of Low Income District of Columbia Families. See, for example, the three papers of Hylan Lewis in Culture, Class and Poverty, Washington, D.C.: Health and Welfare Council of the National Capital, no date. The findings of a recent study of learning patterns provides evidence that mental ability scores of middle-class children from different ethnic groups resemble each other to a greater extent than do the scores of lower-class children from the various ethnic groups. Susan S. Stodolsky and Gerald S. Lesser, "Learning Patterns in the Disadvantaged," unpublished, no date. (Authors' affiliation: Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.)

40. Joan Grant, p. 12.


Footnotes (continued)

44. Newark Board of Education, A Proposal from the Newark Board of Education to the Ford Foundation.


47. Ibid., p. 26.


49. Barr, p. 6.

50. I am indebted to Edith Lynton for help in developing this point.


52. The Yankelovich report suggests using the Community Action Agency programs for nonprofessionals as a stepping stone to outside jobs in industry as well as in voluntary and government agencies. See Daniel Yankelovich, Inc., pp. 85-88.

53. Robert Pruger and Harry Specht, Working with Organizations to Develop New Careers Programs, Monograph No. 110, Walnut Creek, Calif.: Contra Costa Council for Community Services, 1966, p. 31.

54. Ibid., pp. 21.

55. Ibid., p. 30.

56. Ibid., pp. 35-46.


Footnotes (continued)


60. Many present nonprofessional wages are near the poverty level. Edith Lynton, commenting on the findings of the Yankelovich and NCEY studies in fourteen cities, concludes that "in the vast majority only one job level was provided -- an entry level wage just over the poverty line of $3,000." (Lynton, p. 11.) The Yankelovich survey reports that thirty-nine percent of the aides received between $4,000 and $5,000 per annum, but over thirty-three percent are paid below $4,000. (Daniel Yankelovich, Inc., p. 13.)