

**MEETING REALITY:**  
**MANAGING the TRANSITION from COLLEGE to WORK**

**Philip D. Gardner**  
**Research Administrator**  
**Collegiate Employment Research Institute**  
**Career Development and Placement Services**  
**Michigan State University**

**March 13, 1994**

" I hear about Americans who worry that they'll lose their jobs to someone south of the border, that their careers will go down the tubes. If you're worried about someone in Mexico taking your job, you don't have a career."

- Anonymous comedian

"If you do your job tomorrow the same way you did it today, you will eventually be replaced by a robot."

- Japanese Middle Manager

PARADIGM SHIFT:

NEW ECONOMY  
&  
NEW WORKPLACE

**Made in Japan**

1990

\*\*\*\*\*

## 1990's

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

# PERSPECTIVES ON INTERGENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Fill in some important historical events, social/cultural trends influenced generation

1949	1954	1967	1971	1974	1989	1994
Born	Started School	HS GRAD College	Marriage	Children	40BD	

1974	1979	1992	1994
Born	Started School	HS GRAD College	

## OUTLAWS and INLAWS

Consider for a moment the external as well as the internal influences that shape how you prepare students to transition from your institution. Working in your groups, discuss the following questions:

- \* How do others affect our success in preparing students to transition?
- \* What insider influences?
- \* What outsider influences?

Write down your items in the appropriate columns. These items will be shared with the group.

INLAWS

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

✱

✱

## OUTLAWS

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

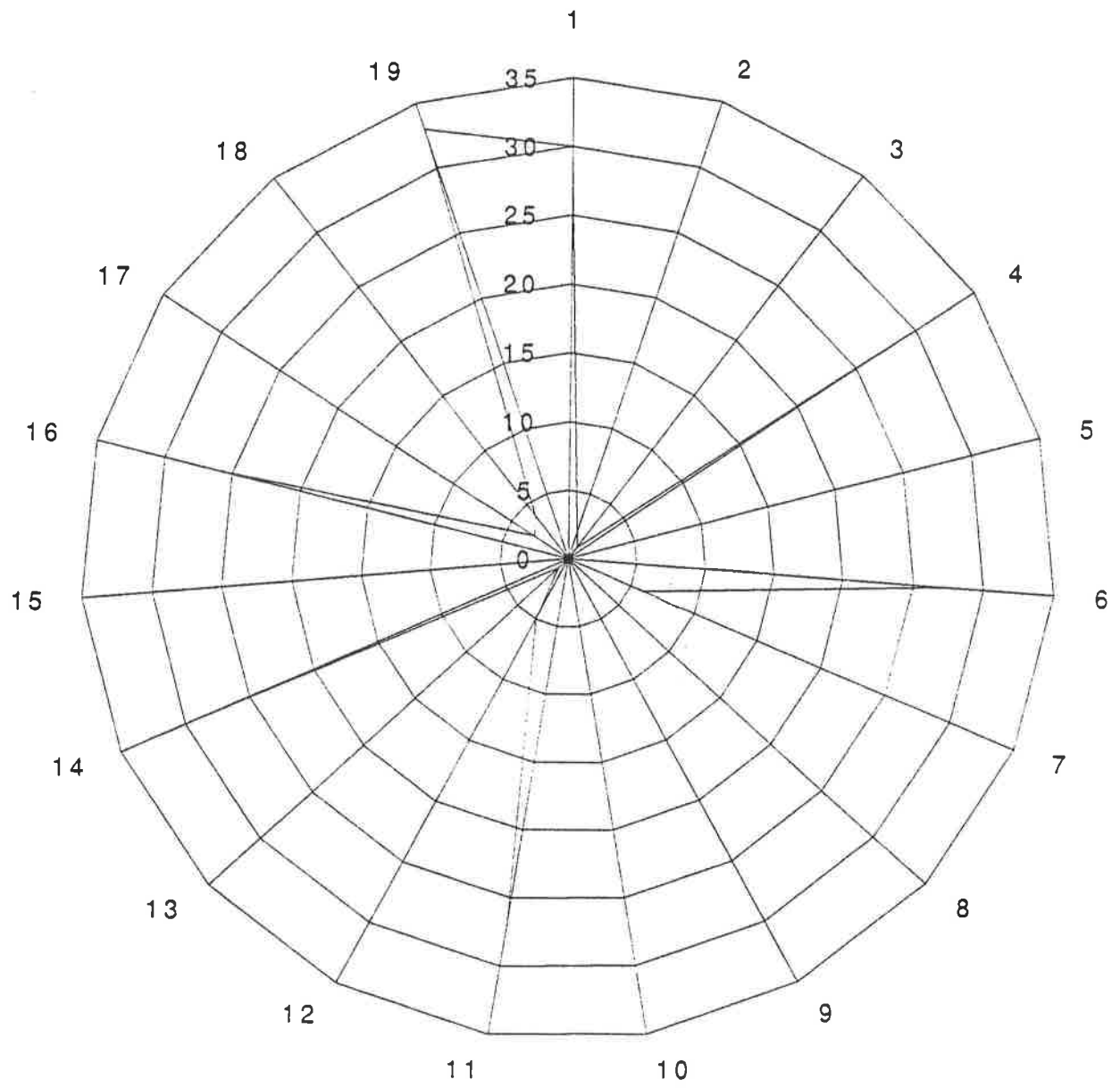
## ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

- \* Non-linear
- \* Boundaryless
- \* Entrepreneurship

## CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

- \* High Quality (zero defects)
- \* Variety (respond to needs of young, old, cultures, etc)
- \* Customization (fits the individual)
- \* Convenience (when I need it)
- \* speed (just in time learning)





# **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORKPLACE**

## **Traditional View**

- Start work at organization while young
- Advancement a function of longevity  
(endurance, loyalty, relationships)
- Focus on technical specialty
- Control of information (power)
- Limited feedback (the annual review)
- Status
- Compensation - increase annually
- Managerial control

## New View

- Flexibility/creativity more important than endurance/loyalty
- Few advancement opportunities
- Breadth of knowledge
- Flow of available information

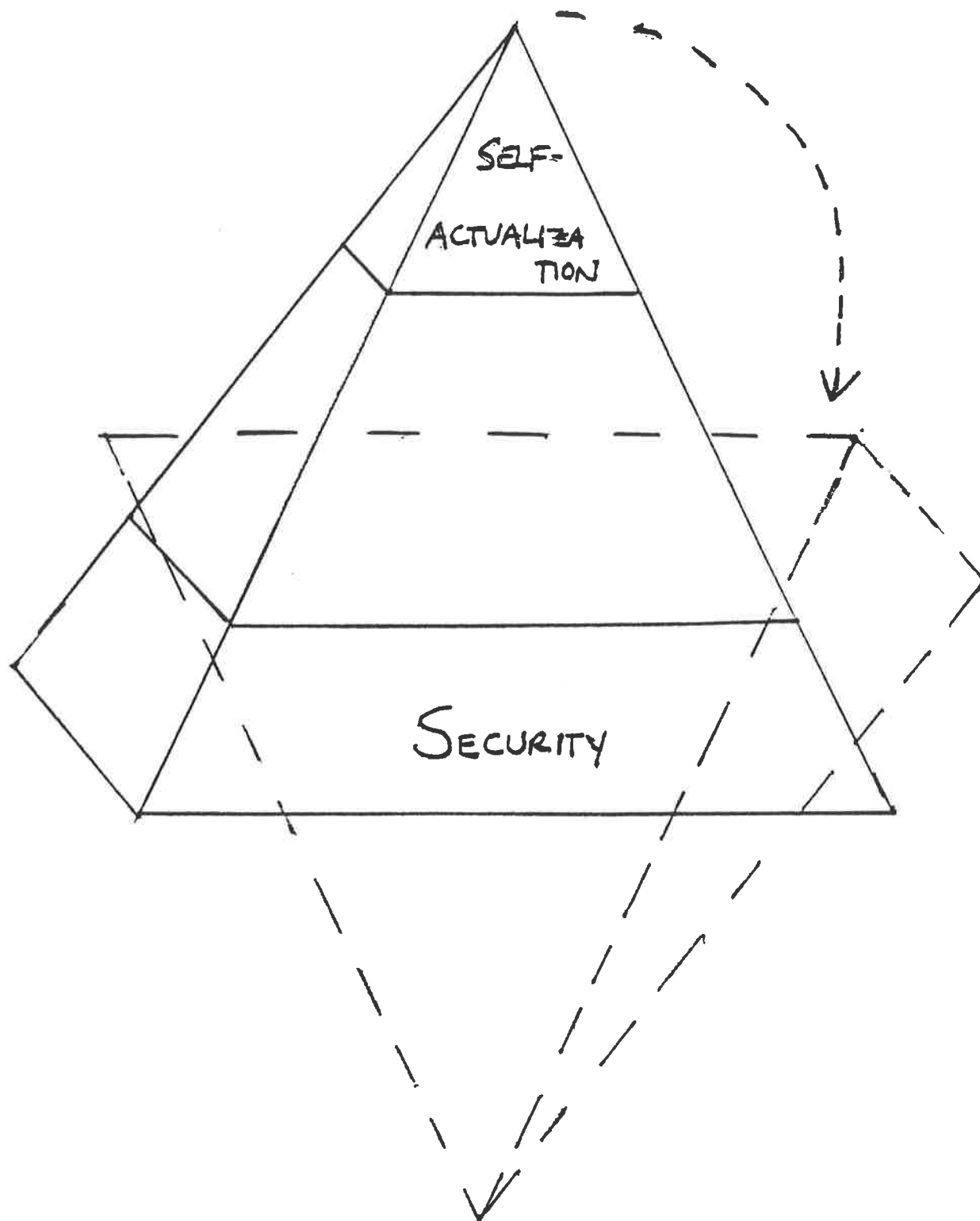
Analyze - draw conclusions, present recommendations, know what competitors/industry is doing

- Constant/immediate feedback
- Recognition based on performance

Not: How many things you do

But: How well you do the things you do

- Peer pressure
- Compensation - small base  
incentives and pay for knowledge
- Team membership
- Employee self-control



## LEARNING STYLES

DESCRIBE YOURSELF: In the boxes below are groups of word clusters printed horizontally in rows. Look at all the boxes in the first row (A, B, C, D) Read the words and decide which of the four boxes is most like you. Give that box a "4". Then rank order the next three boxes from 3-1 in descending preference. You will end up with a row of four boxes, ranked from "4" (most like you) to "1" (least like you) Now do the next row (E,F,G,H) and use the same process (4-1). Continue with all the rows. You will end up with five horizontal rows that each have a 4,3,2 and 1.

ROW 1

active opportunistic spontaneous A_____	parental traditional responsible B_____	authentic harmonious compassionate C_____	versatile inventive competent D_____
--	--	--	---

ROW 2

curious conceptual knowledgeable E_____	unique empathic communicative F_____	practical sensible dependable G_____	competitive impetuous impactful H_____
--	---	---	---

ROW 3

loyal conservative organized I_____	devoted warm poetic J_____	realistic open-minded adventuresome K_____	theoretical seeking ingenious L_____
--	-------------------------------------	---	---

ROW 4

concerned procedural cooperative M_____	daring impulsive fun N_____	tender inspirational dramatic O_____	determined complex composed P_____
--	--------------------------------------	---	---

ROW 5

philosophical principled rational Q_____	vivacious affectionate sympathetic R_____	exciting courageous skillful S_____	orderly conventional caring T_____
---	--	--	---

total the scores for these boxes ( A,H,K,N,S ) \_\_\_\_\_

total the scores for these boxes, ( B, G, I, M,T ) \_\_\_\_\_

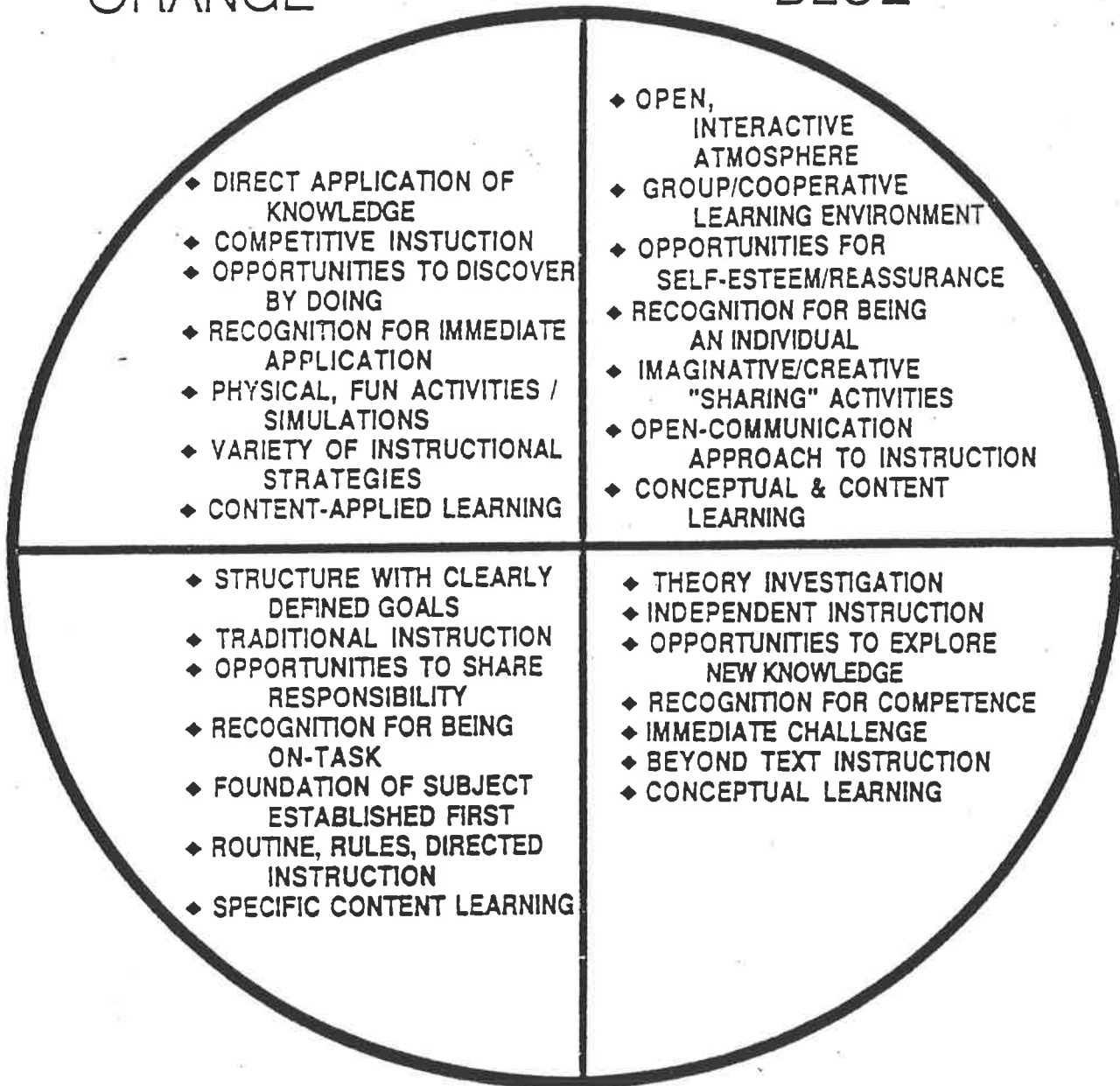
total the scores for these boxes ( C,F,J,O,R ) \_\_\_\_\_

total the scores for these boxes ( D,E,L,P,Q ) \_\_\_\_\_

# STUDENT LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

ORANGE

BLUE



GOLD

GREEN

## **Ideal Value-based Instructional Atmospheres**

### **for the ORANGE student**

1. Best Teacher Role: . Action-oriented, spontaneous, diverse and playful
2. Best Classroom Climate: Exciting, colorful, room to move around
3. Best Learning Content: Useful skills, adventurous, heroic acts, and exciting events
4. Best Learning Context: "Hands-on" activities, competition and games with immediate results
5. Best Student Capability: Natural intelligence for promotion, negotiation, immediate action, entertainment

### **for the GREEN student**

1. Best Teacher Role: Conceptual, abstract, subject-oriented
2. Best Classroom Climate: High tech, scientific, challenging, flexible
3. Best Learning Content: Ideas, concepts, theories, future possibilities, systems design
4. Best Learning Context: Independent work, problem solving, intellectual debate, exploration
5. Best Student Capability: Natural intelligence for logical inquiry, innovation, futuristic vision



for the **GOLD** student

1. Best Teacher Role: Fair, structured and organized, content-oriented
2. Best Classroom Climate: Conservative, neat, traditional seating arrangement
3. Best Learning Content: Realistic facts, details, practical subjects
4. Best Learning Context: Independent work, clear and predictable routine
5. Best Student Capability: Natural intelligence for practicality, being of service, organization, details

for the **BLUE** student

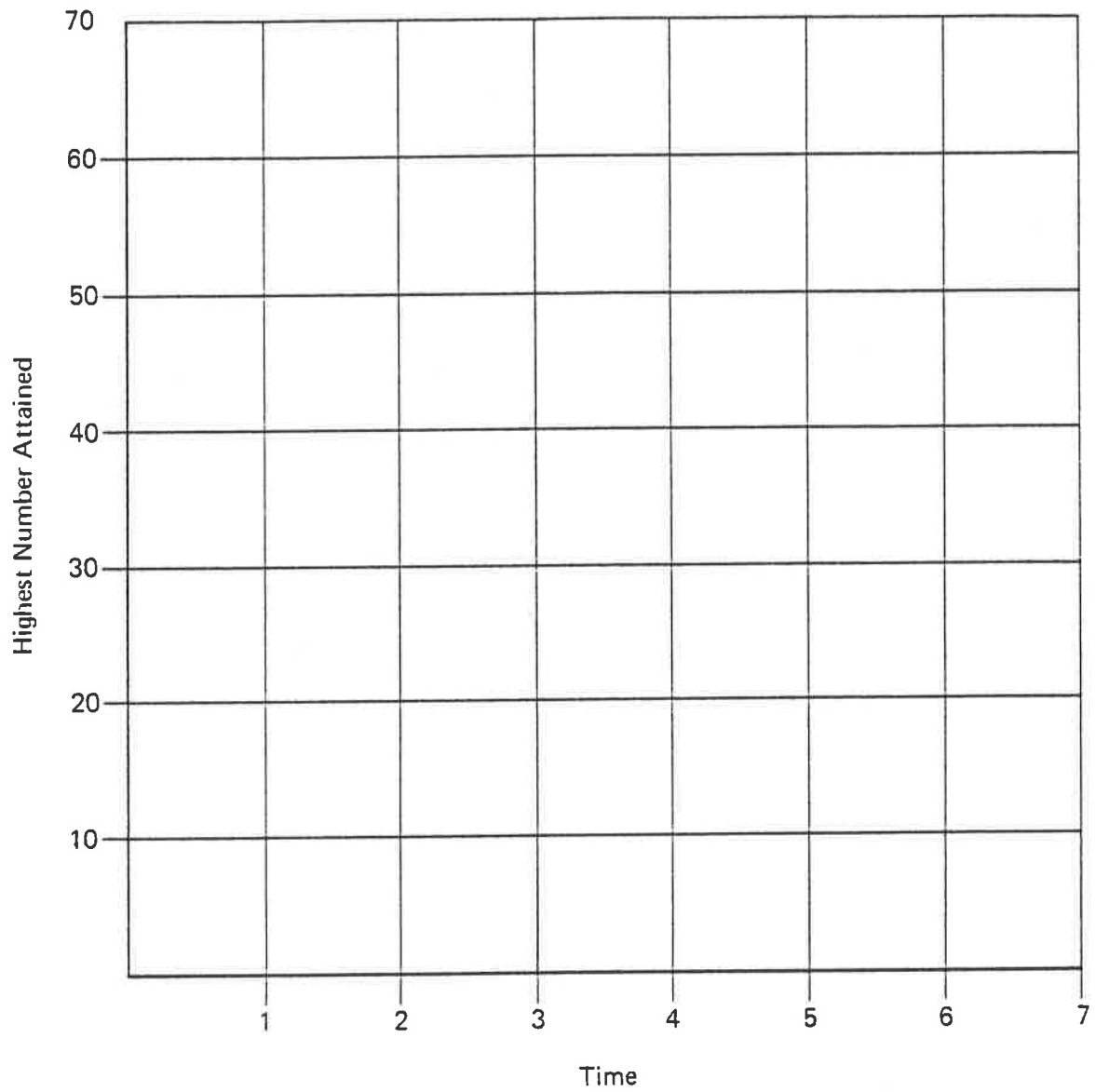
1. Best Teacher Role: Personal, nurturing, process-oriented
2. Best Classroom Climate: Warm, friendly, non-competitive, casual seating arrangement
3. Best Learning Content: Self-awareness, self-improvement, communication, interpersonal skills, personal stories
4. Best Learning Context: Group work, cooperative learning, discussions, sharing personal experiences, personal applications, creative expression
5. Best Student Capability: Natural intelligence for empathy, nurturing, communication, cooperation

Table 1.  
Co-op and Nonco-op Use of Information Sources. Sources Listed Were Used  
Significantly More Often By This Group.

<u>Type of Information</u>	<u>Source of Information Used By</u>	
	Non Co-op	Co-op
<b>TASKS:</b>		
tasks, duties, assignments	Supervisor, Referent	
how to deal with red tape	Referent	Observation, Trial/Error
standard operating procedures	Mentor, Supervisor, Referent	Trial/Error
priority of tasks	Mentor, Coworker, Referent	
how to perform tasks & duties	Coworker, Supervisor	Referent
how to handle problems	Mentor, Supervisor, Referent	
where to obtain information for job	Supervisor, Referent	Trial/Error
how to use equipment or tools for job	Mentor, Supervisor	
<b>ROLE:</b>		
how to fit in company	Supervisor, Referent	Observation
how much can make own rules	Referent	Observation, Trial/Error
when can act alone		
how to act	Coworker, Supervisor, Referent	
what responsibilities are	Referent	Trial/Error
what is expected on job	Referent	
how much can define own tasks	Referent	Trial/Error
how much authority to do job	Referent	Trial/Error

	Non Co-op	Co-op
<b>GROUP:</b>		
how to act & behave in group	Supervisor, Referent	
how to get along with coworkers	Coworker, Supervisor, Referent	
group members with status	Supervisor, Referent, Trial/Error	Observation
role of group in organization	Referent	Observation
how work is done in group	Referent	Observation
group belief re quantity & quality of work	Referent, Observation	
how coworkers feel about job	Referent	Trial/Error
atmosphere of interpersonal relations	Referent, Observation	
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>		
goals & objectives of organization	Referent, Observation	Trial/Error
who has power in company	Supervisor, Referent, Observation	Trial/Error
organizational policies, procedures, rules	Supervisor, Referent, Observation	Trial/Error
management's beliefs re workers		
norms & values of company	Supervisor, Referent, Observation	
special language of company	Referent, Observation	Trial/Error
channels of authority	Observation	
ropes for getting ahead	Observation	Trial/Error
organizational legends, myths, & stories	Observation	

## WORK SKILLS



LEARNING CURVE

# WORKSHEET FOR FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

<p>1</p> <p><i>h</i></p>	<p>2</p> <p>— — — — —</p>
<p>PB MB</p> <p>3 BB</p>	<p>Drum Dog</p> <p>Sex Child 4</p>

## BASIC SKILLS

- \* COMMUNICATION: Writing, Reading
- \* MATHEMATICS: Basics, Fractions, Measurement, Statistics
- \* SCIENCE: Applied Physics, Biochemistry
- \* PROBLEM SOLVING
- \* INTERPERSONAL: Diversity, Teamwork, Respect
- \* LABOR STANDARDS: Willingness to Work, Prompt, Reliable
- \* LEARNING TO LEARN
- \* PERSONAL: Self-esteem, motivated

## ADVANCED SKILLS

- \* COMMUNICATION: Verbal, Listening
- \* PROBLEM SENSING
- \* INTEGRATION
- \* TEAMWORK: empathy, stress, sharing, conflict
- \* MATURITY: flexibility, risk-taker, autonomous,  
take responsibility, self-esteem
- \* APPLICATION
- \* LEADERSHIP: organizational effectiveness



# CRITICAL SKILLS: EMPLOYER SAYS

- \* Accept Responsibility
- \* Honesty and integrity
- \* Enthusiasm and attitude
- \* Critical thinking
- \* Initiative
- \* Communication: verbal
- \* Problem solving
- \* Flexibility
- \* Self-esteem
- \* Listening Skills
- \* Leadership
- \* Academic training
- \* Learning to Learn
- \* Self-management
- \* Reading-writing skills
- \* Life skills

## Weaknesses

- \* Writing skills
- \* Verbal skills
- \* Interpersonal Skills
- \* Problem solving
- \* Contextual exper.
- \* Motivation
- \* Work ethic

Source: L. P. Scheetz, Recruiting Trends 1993-94, Career Development and Placement Services, Michigan State University.

## GRADUATES SELF-REPORTED SKILL

### STRENGTHS

- \* Problem solving
- \* Report writing (some forms)
- \* Theoretical understanding
- \* Work ethic/discipline (especially if from a professional field such as engineering, accounting)

### WEAKNESSES

- \* Teamwork
- \* Communication: writing and verbal
- \* Applied and Contextual
- \* Realities of Work
- \* Leadership

## TRANSITION EXPERIENCES

### WHAT DO PEOPLE WANT FROM THEIR JOBS?

Individual	Group	Factors	Supervisors	Employees
		High Wages		
		Job Security		
		Promotion in the Company		
		Good Working Conditions		
		Interesting Work		
		Personal Loyalty of Supervisor		
		Tactful Discipline		
		Full Appreciation of Work Done		
		Help on Personal Problems		
		Feeling of Being in on Things		

## TRANSITION EXPERIENCES

### \* Expectations and Reality of Workplace

What I wanted versus What I got

What suprised me the most  
Communication  
Work Environment  
Self-evaluation

Harassment and Discrimination

### \* Socialization Experiences: Organizational Adjustment

Job Assignment  
Autonomy  
Feedback  
Skills  
Task Completion

Socialization  
Friendships  
Power and Politics

# EXPECTATIONS

	EXPECTED	ACTUAL
<i>SALARY</i>	\$21,440	\$20,680
<i>HOURS/WK</i>	44.5	44.5
<i>FEEDBACK</i>	20% DAILY 35% WEEKLY 28% MONTHLY	SELDOM
<i>REMAIN WITH FIRST EMPLOYER</i>	36 MONTHS	54%CHANGED 11 MONTHS
<i>FIRST POSITION</i>	OF THE 46% STILL WITH FIRST EMPLOYER, 36% WERE IN NEW POSITIONS AFTER 12 MONTHS	

## REACTIONS TO THE WORK PLACE

### GENERAL ATMOSPHERE

#### Negative

Disorganized/Inefficient  
Non professional  
Low expectations/Not  
progressive  
Poor working conditions  
Very Political  
Bad work ethic/Poor attitude

#### Positive

Relaxed/Trusting  
Comfortable  
Friendly/Helpful

### TRAINING

#### Negative

Poor/No Formal Training  
Only available if sought  
Useless/Too much time

#### Positive

Complete training prog.  
Variety/major commitment  
Hands on training

### COMMUNICATIONS with MANAGEMENT

#### Negative

Slow to none  
Incompetent/Inadequate  
Inconsistent  
Secretive  
Political

#### Positive

### NATURE of WORK

#### Negative

Non-engineering related  
Level of responsibility-  
unchallenging  
Low quality expectations  
Dull/Monotonous/Routine  
Uncertainty about Position  
Different from Training & College  
Traveling

#### Positive

Very technical-advanced  
Level of responsibility-  
challenging  
Traveling

### CO-WORKERS

#### Negative

Quality-mixed  
Poorly trained  
Generation Gap  
Difference in Life  
& Job Expectations  
Unfriendly/Big egos

#### Positive

Helpful/friendly  
Bright, capable  
Young  
Diverse

## **SUPERVISORS**

### Negative

None/minimal  
Inept/Negative attitude  
Poor direction  
Oppressive/demanding  
Plays favorites

### Positive

Relaxed/flexible  
Open/helpful

## **PERFORMANCE**

### Negative

Slow to Start  
Failed to meet expectations  
Bored

### Positive

Excelled  
Competent

## **PERSONAL REACTIONS**

### Negative

Disillusioned-Corporate  
Structure  
Bad attitude  
Cost of Living  
High Stress

### Positive

Good Attitude  
Challenging Life  
Adjustments

## **OUTSIDE WORK**

### Negative

No time  
Social life-boring  
Budgeting Difficulties  
(not enough money)  
Do not like Location  
Balancing Career/Family  
Revolves too much around  
co-workers

### Positive

Social life-good  
Enjoyed new location



## **HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION**

**\*30% have experienced or observed harassment/discrimination at their workplace**

**\*Managers reported more incidents**

**\*Response:**

**Run-away**

**Confront**

**Remain Silent**

**Engineer: Older men sending info to my boss and peers, but no females. Don't see us as engineers.**

**Engineer: Various remarks made by co-workers that show disrespect and lack of acceptance of my abilities**

**Engineer: First boss hated me on-sight from day 1. He made sexist remarks regularly. It is difficult to be female because you have to act "male" to be accepted but many men are offended if you do not act "female." Traditional females are belittled. I would be less threatening if I were married.**

**Sales: Customer held purchase order because I would not go out on a date. My company supported me.**

**HRI (Sales):** Discrimination for being a White Female along with sexual harassment.

**Business-Bank:** Disappointed to learn how women, especially young women, are treated with old fashioned attitudes. I consider myself very professional and mature and don't appreciate being called "hun" or "honey."

**Customer Service Rep:** Manager of my department asked me out a week before I was to start my job. Didn't report incident, wish I had so problem would have been dealt with.

**U.S. Customs Inspector:** Co-workers (male) indicated to supervisors that I wasn't working as much and spent too much time on computer; found out to get ahead to give-in to people who have rank or have advantage with supervisor.

**Surveillance Officer:** Males dominate the area in which I work and they don't take me seriously. A supervisor said I dressed too sexy at times and I should "put a bag over myself" to keep him from looking at me. Sexual innuendoes.

**Sales:** Was just hired and was sexually harassed by a trainee. I had to get a lawyer before company acknowledged the incident. Boss constantly tells racial jokes.

**Wildlife Biologist:** I work with land owners and its easy to see their expression when they see a woman instead of a man walking up to them. One employee had a particularly negative view of women.

**USDA Food Inspector:** Good old boy network that did not care for women.

**Nanny:** Several occasions a minority was hired when I was more qualified and had experience but quotas dictated the federal program.

**Designer:** Male co-worker constantly remarks on my anatomy or lack of it; has a problem working with women.

**Account Executive:** Have been passed up for responsibilities because I am not male and I am not paid as a male in my position. Clients make suggestive and loud comments to me.

**Ag Engineer:** Hand on Leg. Male counterparts refuse to let go of female stereotypes. Have to continually prove myself.

**Restaurant Manager:** Owner made very aggressive sexual advances.

**Editor/Comm. (Hospital):** Men treated differently - promoted faster. Total male management in an organization 75% female.

**Teacher:** Man made a pass at me and assumed I would say yes to his sexual advances including intercourse. He was mistaken. Uncomfortable when he is around.

**Retail Manager:** Boss told me I would never advance unless I became involved with him. I walked the next day.

# JOB CHARACTERISTICS

## EXPECTED

## JOB

## ACTUAL

WIDE VARIETY

SKILL VARIETY

LIMITED VARIETY

COMPLETE OR  
INITIATE TASKS

TASK COMPLETION

ENTIRE TASK  
RESPONSIBILITY

REGULAR

FEEDBACK

SPORADIC

LITTLE

AUTONOMY

WIDE LATITUTDE

*After two years, many jobs still defined as  
mundane, unchallenging, requiring few skills.*

# WORK COMMUNITY



## SOCIALIZATION

Time II: Separated group at mean into highly socialized and low socialization groups

\*High socializers were primarily women

\*High socializers in III had high social expectant scores in Time I

\*Among low socializers, women tend to have higher expectant socialization scores than men

	<u>% Low</u>	
	Men	Women
Politics of organization	70	56
Organizational goals	74	58
People - co-worker/supervisor	74	56
Performance - expectations	60	49
Language of culture	56	48

### College: Problem area

Ag/Nat Res:Men - politics, goals, people

Women - goals, language

Business:Men - all categories

Engineering:Men - performance

Women - people, performance

Natural Science:Men & Women - all categories

Education:Men - politics, people, performance

Women - all categories

Communications:Men - goals, people, language

Women - goals

Arts & Letters:Men - all categories

Women - goals, people

Social Science:Men - all except language

Women - politics, goals