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I. PERSPECTIVES

Changes Affecting Workplaces and Worker Needs

Economic and social trends projected for the coming decade are likely to focus continuing attention on the need to develop the skills and maintain the morale of American workers. Concern over declining productivity, together with demographic shifts and workers' changing values, all suggest the importance of developing more effective opportunities for education and training and for expanding the use of flexible work patterns.

Declining productivity is already causing a search for ways to improve workers' performance. Although few employers look to flexible schedules as part of the solution, many are discovering that the introduction of new work patterns—with its resultant higher employee morale and more effective use of time—often contributes to increased productivity. More important, even though conclusive empirical evidence of links to productivity is lacking, employers have been investing increasingly larger sums in education and training. The pressure for a more rapid application of new technology will now call for expanded retraining of workers: those who will be forced to switch occupations, others whose skill requirements may be increased in low level jobs, and still others whose new jobs will require greater technological knowledge.

Productivity concerns are also affecting changes in management styles, particularly in medium and large sized firms. The development of new horizontal as well as vertical relationships, through "matrix" management, enhances the responsibility for organizational effectiveness of
all supervisors and managers. It has strongly influenced the nature of corporate education and training. 1/ It may, in the future, also contribute to further consideration of the need for and the means to promote performance of all employees. In some U.S. firms, although far less than in other industrialized countries, added awareness of education and training deficiencies arises with moves to enhance worker participation in organizational problemsolving and decisionmaking. Other efforts in job redesign require re-examination of task analysis and better worker preparation for these redefined responsibilities. They may often call attention to changing the scheduling of work so that jobs may be more productive and more satisfying.

New management styles are emerging also to meet changing worker values. A more widespread recognition of "quality-of-worklife" issues has come about in part because of the slow but steady decline in job satisfaction. 2/ Because a workforce with generally higher than ever education credentials is dissatisfied with routinized jobs, it is seeking more varied job content. Some employees are asking, too, for better control over their worktime. Men as well as women are looking to balance work with other aspects of their daily and lifetime family and leisure needs. As many more adults participate in informal and formal schooling, an increasing number are questioning the traditional life-cycle stages of education-work-retirement.

Demographic changes will further affect these issues as a more heterogeneous population is expected to include larger numbers of men and women with a lowered likelihood of job mobility. 3/ The coming decade will see a proportionately larger number of older workers as the age of the
working population rises with a decline of the post-war "baby boom." This increase in the number of prime age workers with a higher level of educational attainment than before suggests that opportunities to advance in organizations may be less than worker expectations. Education and training will assume more importance as one of the several means to achieve horizontal as well as vertical mobility. Furthermore, older people, who will become a large proportion of the population, are likely to be working longer, a result of inflationary pressures and of the extended mandatory retirement age (raised to 70 in the private sector and eliminated in the public sector by the 1978 Age Discrimination Act Amendments). Many older workers may be forced to prepare for second and third careers, often through jobs which are more flexibly scheduled.

The expected rise in the numbers of poorly skilled, non-English speaking workers will also pose a significant challenge to industry and business. It will tend to exacerbate the problem already disturbing employers, as many high school graduates now appear to lack basic skills in math and English. At a time when a minimum of college education or other "credentialing" has become the prerequisite for a variety of blue-collar as well as white-collar jobs in the expanding service and information sectors, the lack of skill development in workers disadvantaged at an early age is likely to become even more acute.

Of primary importance, however, for the purposes of this paper, will be the issues arising from the "feminization of the labor market"--the expected continued increase in the proportion of workers who are women. About 52 million women, it is anticipated, will be in the labor force by 1990, an increase of about one million a year.
Nearly all of the projected additions will be aged 25-54, most will be married, and the majority will have minor children. The growing prevalence of two-earner married couples together with the anticipated high number of parents who are single (even for some period of time) will undoubtedly bring to the forefront the search for new means to achieve family well-being and expand the demand for jobs which permit a better balance between home and work. Also strongly implied is a more critical role for education and training as women seek preparation to: 1) make transitions from home to school, 2) advance to higher job levels within traditionally female occupations and, 3) surmount the barriers which now make difficult their entry and promotion in the predominately male professions.

The overriding question raised by the increased labor force participation of women will be whether greater vertical and occupational mobility can be achieved. Otherwise, the added numbers of women seeking employment will serve only to sharpen the competition for the same low paying jobs in traditionally female occupations which the great majority of women workers now hold. Indeed, because women are still entering stereotypically female, low level positions, according to some observers, the rise to date of women's participation cannot be considered a sign of true progress. Instead, they contend, the result has been a larger proportion than before of women employed at or near entry level. 5/

A Conference Board report on the advances in women's employment opportunities from 1970-1975 points out that change is underway, but cautions that the process is complex, particularly in male-intensive industries where resistance has been great. 6/ It found that, even in
white-collar work where women hold more highly paid jobs, major progress has been made only in those industries with traditionally larger female workforces--banking, insurance, retailing and communications. The real problem again is that, unless provision is made for upward mobility, when women do move into nontraditional fields they tend to remain at entry level and continue to be segregated.

This study on the feasibility of new work patterns to increase participation in education and training activities does not presume that the availability and utilization of such opportunities, alone, will lead to greater upward and cross-occupational mobility. Antidiscrimination laws and regulations are of primary importance; even though they best redistribute employment opportunities when the total number of jobs available is growing. Internal mobility is, of course, also affected by equitable promotion policies and other procedures such as job-posting. Additionally, career counseling and informal on-the-job training, which includes the team skills traditionally available to male employees, will make formal education and training programs more effective opportunities. Other supports, above all, perhaps, the provision of child care, will facilitate the career mobility of working women. But, although education and training have had a lower return for women than men, (i.e., women of similar educational attainment to men generally have had much lower job status), these activities still carry significant economic value. If new jobs of the future are to be sex-neutral, new initiatives in training and education will be essential.

In sum, attention to both worker education and training and to flexible time schedules will be
heightened during the coming decade. However, it is of crucial importance that future consideration also be directed to changing existing patterns in each of these areas of personnel policy. In order for new schedules to offer more than a temporary palliative as an accommodation to some working women, they must also begin to better fulfill their more long-range potential to expand new job levels and occupations for women as a group. Otherwise, a real danger exists that flexible hours may, paradoxically, reinforce the same narrow occupational stereotyping of women.

Moreover, if continuous learning activities are to be opened to the great majority of employed women who are now outside the structure of opportunity, participation must be encouraged by supportive policies, including the use of flexible hours. Although these two concerns have, until now, appeared to be quite separate, policymakers might now begin to consider whether and by what means they might be advantageously linked.

Investigation of each of these topics in the last decade has yielded substantial data through numerous surveys and case studies. Despite the fact that neither learning activities nor new worktime practice lends itself to generalization because each is diverse and often informal in nature, the brief overview which follows may usefully serve as background to some specific current experience of their linkage.

**New Work Patterns: Possibilities and Problems**

**Flextime**

New work patterns—flextime, the compressed workweek and permanent part time—are in greater use by American workers than is generally realized. About one-fifth of the workers in the
U.S. are not working a traditional 40-hour, 5-day schedule. Of these, 7.6 million workers or 12 percent of those in full-time, non-farm, wage and salary jobs are on flexible schedules. The unique nature of this pattern has been aptly described as a transfer of some control over the timing of work from supervisors to individual workers, even though it does not change total hours.

Flextime is particularly promising because it offers the kind of "free" time which might be used easily for education and training--a regular daily open time at the beginning and end of the working day. Moreover, several types of flextime are possible: (1) those within the 8-hour day requiring starting and quitting time either within a specific or variable period, and (2) others where credit and debit hours are allowed as long as the total hours worked fulfill weekly or monthly organizational requirements, or where core time is required only on certain days.

It is important, however, to remember that the degree of flexibility open to and chosen by workers varies considerably even within an organization, at the same site or from one location to another. According to a recent estimate, about 20 percent of organizations used flextime for at least some of their employees in 1980.

Women workers are less likely than men to be working in flextime schedules (as are young workers and union members). Data on occupational categories shows a widespread use by sales personnel, managers and administrators, professionals and technicians. Practice in these occupations is generally long standing and informal. Although relatively lower, the use of
flextime by clerical and service workers is substantial (9.8 percent and 8.7 percent of the total number on flexible schedules), representing a recent development in which eligibility and schedule rules are more carefully prescribed. Female-intensive industries are also high users--finance and insurance (with real estate), second only to the federal government.

Both employers and employees have found positive results from the introduction of flextime. Workers value easier commuting and the reduction of the pressure to be at work at a fixed time. They find flextime helps to balance their need for both free time and time for family responsibilities. Despite some problems of equity in eligibility and of initial supervisor resistance, employers generally cite these overriding benefits to employees as their rationale for adopting flextime. Several studies show economic results favorable to the organization. As is true of other alternative patterns, however, the initial decisions to implement tend to be based on the need to solve particular business problems (tardiness, absenteeism) or to reflect the belief of senior management that flextime is the "right thing to do," rather than on careful economic analyses.

Compressed Schedules

Current use of compressed schedules would seem to offer a much narrower but still possible linkage with education and training opportunities. The actual hours of nonworktime are usually more limited--from a half day to two full days weekly, depending on whether the 3, 4 or 4-1/2 day schedule is used. Furthermore, in comparison with flextime, use of compressed schedules is low (2.7 million as of May 1980) and numbers have edged up only slightly since the early 1970s. \( \)
Use of this time pattern may remain comparatively restricted because advantages and disadvantages cannot be easily generalized; compressed schedules are particularly firm- and occupation-specific. They have been primarily used: (1) in manufacturing for shift work and for 24-hour, 7-day week continuous-process industries where start-ups and shut-downs are costly; (2) where capital equipment may be underutilized; and (3) where work is located at a considerable distance from workers' homes (as protective service jobs). But such schedules can also cause organizational problems because of the difficulty of synchronizing operations within and between firms. Use of compressed schedules is also limited (as is the flextime credit and debit scheme) by conflicting union contracts and legislation on overtime premiums. Workers have found that although the compressed week gives a longer block of free time and reduces the number of commuting trips, it may also complicate social and home life, particularly for families with young children.

It may be somewhat surprising that, for industry as a whole, recent data reveal that, almost as many women as men are working in compressed schedules. In terms of occupations, clerical workers are less likely to use a shortened week than are employees in other occupations, but we might assume that many women are included in the high use occupations of service and factory operatives. Shortened workweeks are relatively rare in female-intensive industries (among the lowest users are finance, insurance and real estate) compared with local public administration (including police and fire personnel). The small proportion of clerical workers who are on such schedules may however, be employed in insurance and banking. 12/
Part Time: Its Several Variations

Part-time employment would seem to offer a natural linkage with education and training. Generally defined as work of less than 35 hours a week, part-time jobs have traditionally afforded a means for younger adults to support their continued learning. Part-time work has grown rapidly over the past 20 years, from about 1 in 12 workers to 1 in 7, and now appears to remain steady. Part timers are employed in more than one-half of all firms, although they account for usually only 2 to 7 percent of each firm’s workforce. Furthermore, many employers are now regularizing the new status of these employees, differentiating among them by categories which range in title from "supplementals" to "prime-time" workers. Some companies offer salaries and fringe benefits comparable to those accorded full-time workers in similar jobs; only a few have expanded the occupational range open to part-time employment or have extended promotion opportunities to part-time employees. Whether the pattern can now be used in a broader fashion so as to encourage education and training for prime-age workers, particularly women, depends in large measure on the success of current efforts to promote such changes.

These initiatives to develop part-time employment as a longer term, career work pattern rather than a temporary, peripheral arrangement, however, must first counter the long prevailing practices and perceptions of part-time workers. Women, and the young and old, who are considered to have little sense of job attachment, are those who traditionally work part time. Although not all part timers are confined to the unskilled labor market, most are concentrated in the trade and service industries where uneven scheduling demands make their employment most attractive to
employers. Because these jobs often involve discrete tasks or workloads with predictable cycles, employers have been able to meet special operating problems by increasing shifts. Sales, clerical and service workers and laborers are likely to work less than full time more often than managers, supervisors or skilled craft workers who find few part-time positions because of organizational perceptions of high skill requirements, continuous work flow and the need for communication.

Part-time work has generally yielded significant economic returns to employers. Superior job performance by part timers often reduces labor costs, as does the lack of many or all of the fringe benefits accorded to full-time workers. Part timers are frequently paid less than full-time employees, but the wage differential may be largely due to the fact that part time is still confined to lower level jobs for men as well as women. 14/

Given these considerations, part-time employees and their employers have rarely invested in education and training. Workers, both male and female, on part-time schedules theoretically have more nonwork time for training and education, but realistically have far less incentive when the availability of higher level jobs on a part-time basis is low. Nor are they as likely as full timers to be able to afford the cost of education and training. Employers traditionally have been reluctant to train even those women who work full time, generally citing higher turnover and absentee rates. According to some studies, turnover and absenteeism often show a greater correlation to low job status, lack of advancement and other factors than to gender alone. 15/
The more recent development of career oriented or permanent part-time employment may well encourage greater provision of opportunities and more widespread participation in education and training activities. Beyond the regularity of hours available for learning, incentive is enhanced when such jobs, considered permanent by the organization, offer advancement possibilities and a range of fringe benefits comparable to those accorded full-time employees. Although occupational segregation largely dominates, more regularized part-time employment has opened in jobs at higher skill levels and also in technical, professional and even managerial fields where continuous learning is a more accepted requirement for successful job performance.

In creating a greater number of permanent part-time positions in the last decade, employers have responded to the demands of an increasing number of workers—particularly women who wish to remain in as well as enter or re-enter the labor force. But, industry and business have also found that advantages frequently outweigh the added financial costs of social security and of fringe benefits, especially when the latter can be prorated or offered in cafeteria style. Aside from solving peak demand problems, companies have experienced reduced labor costs, including less overtime, as a result of a better match between work load and labor input. Many employers have maintained, if not improved, productivity due to improved employee morale and lower absenteeism and tardiness when employees are better able to organize nonwork activities outside of paid hours. Others report easier recruitment and, even more highly valued, a higher retention rate of skilled employees—those in mid-career or pre-retirement periods who wish to reduce hours for family, health and other reasons. In the case of skilled employees and in others where training
involves future full-time workers, overall hiring and training costs may actually be lowered.

**Job Sharing**

Job sharing, which emerged in the late 1970s, combines some of the advantages of part-time with those of full-time employment. The job is a regular full-time position but the jobholders work part time and divide salary and fringe benefits. This pattern may offer a unique potential for education and training in two respects. Sharing allows a regular block of nonwork time, as do other part-time arrangements, but because it affords greater continuity of coverage and, often, a combination of diverse skills, the new pattern may further expand the variety of occupations and levels of part-time jobs. Furthermore, this form of flexibility may encourage a new type of on-the-job training whereby a partner with more highly developed skills may be teamed with a less experienced worker.

Unlike other new work patterns, no aggregate data exist on the extent of the usage of job sharing. Practice is sporadic in the private and in the public sector, although it has been more visibly utilized in the latter where educational institutions and local state agencies have offered job sharing along with other voluntary time reductions. Current use by private organizations may well be greater than has been reported. But, in general, it may be safely assumed that most of these employers have yet to expand job sharing beyond a proportionately few ad hoc arrangements in each organization. Occupations are thought to be diverse and job levels vary from professional to unskilled workers. An informal national survey in 1979 found that the largest percentage were teachers (26 percent) and administrators, coordinators/program developers (25 percent). 17/ A more recent Conference Board survey found that
banking and insurance were the most likely of the industry users. 18/

Most job sharers, who are married women and are likely to have children at home, particularly value the ability to balance home and work. But, beyond this, they have often been able to find employment with salary and fringe benefits which are not generally available on a part-time, one person basis. In addition, some sharers find special advantage in supportive team collaboration and in the ability to trade time and tasks with a partner.

Employers have realized benefits from the use of job sharing similar to those discussed earlier of other part-time schedules. But, additionally, they report unique advantages of this pattern which can alleviate or solve many of the difficulties associated with part-time work. Greater flexibility is made possible when one employee covers for the other or when both partners adjust worktime to peak and slow periods. Furthermore, job sharing in professional and supervisory positions has often been found to bring a more productive performance than would a single full-time employee. The pattern has been especially successful in those higher level positions which require: (1) liaison within and outside the organization, (2) field work in different geographic locations and, (3) time pressures over long or short periods. 19/

The complications of instituting and managing job sharing which employers usually anticipate have been handled successfully in both the private and public sectors. Careful brokering to ensure complementarity between partners and between partners and the job, appropriate scheduling, and communication between sharers, co-workers and managers are all important conditions. And
although this form of part-time employment requires, too, that employers revise policies on fringe benefits, many have instituted a system of prorating. Finally, in some instances, the inclusion of these and other provisions of parity with full timers has mitigated the union objections to even this form of part-time employment.

However, it must be pointed out that organized labor generally continues to object to the expansion of all part-time employment on the grounds that it will increase job competition, worsen unemployment and detraect from the goals of shorter worktime for all workers. National leaders also contend that part-time jobs tend to downgrade occupational status, aid those workers less in need, and make future organizing difficult. This claim continues, despite the fact that at several local levels, union officers, recognizing the need to respond to workers' genuine desires for reduced hours, have negotiated for part-time options. They have acknowledged, in the bargaining process, that some jobs are more conducive to part-time hours and that the option of reducing worktime is often preferable as a temporary alternative to lay-offs.

**Employer-Sponsored Education and Training**

Unlike new work patterns which appear as a mutually advantageous accommodation with relatively few organizational costs or changes in structure, industry-sponsored education and training have become an expensive and complicated business necessity. It serves basically to adapt previously acquired skills and knowledge to the needs of the job. Increasingly, these activities also serve to compensate for deficiencies of general or vocational knowledge. They often include general knowledge designed to
enhance skills and to adapt to new technology. This continuous learning takes place in both informal on-the-job training by co-workers or supervisors and through more formal instruction at the worksite and elsewhere.

Although industry activities are still largely considered a private affair, they have become of greater public concern as billions of dollars are spent and millions of Americans involved, and as the desired effects on productivity and workers' income and occupational mobility are questioned. Yet, there are real difficulties in appraising these diverse and often informal learning activities. National surveys of industry-sponsored education have been infrequent and irregular. More important, they cannot measure the unrecorded on-the-job activities which are the most prevalent type of education and training. And, despite the fact that the training itself is becoming an industry, there has been little examination of the total job to determine the optimum relationship between activities which take place on and off the job. 21/

Available information on the scope and nature of employer-sponsored programs underlines the uneven access to training. A 1980 review of the diverse surveys concluded that:

--Employers provide formal education opportunities in fewer than half of all firms, but by more than 4 out of 5 of the larger firms;
--Among those larger firms, about 1 in 5 workers takes part in training programs during any one year, whereas the proportion is much smaller for all industry;
--Management and white-collar workers, far more than manual workers, are likely to participate in formal training;
Skill training accounts for only a small part compared with learning about company products, orientation and safety; --Most companies which offer training do so on company time. 22/

Occupation and industry also determine what opportunities are available. The number and type of opportunities vary significantly among managerial employees, sales, supervisory personnel, draft and operative workers, clerical workers, and professional and technical workers. The structure and technology of industries affects the provision of education and training; high technology employers, for example, find difficulty in hiring already trained workers in most occupations, depending on the location and available labor supply.

The most specific data on the learning opportunities available to nonexempt workers is found in a 1981 Conference Board report of small, medium and large size establishments in banking, manufacturing, utilities and insurance. About 84 percent of the respondents provide on-site education and training for both office and clerical workers and production operations workers. Banking, utilities and insurance, particularly, provide programs for clerical and office workers. Utilities and manufacturing industries (to a somewhat lesser extent) offer these activities to production and operations workers. At the non-exempt level, training aims largely at providing specific job skills or safety and industrial skills to newly hired employees, in contrast to training for lower level exempt employees which aims to improve performance and to prepare employees for new duties. 23/
Utilization of Tuition Assistance

The availability of tuition assistance programs, it might be assumed, would provide learning opportunities for low status workers. These are programs by which companies offer financial assistance to some or all employees to encourage them to study, generally at outside educational institutions. But the problem arises not in provision by employers but in utilization by workers.

The Conference Board survey referred to above found that tuition assistance is provided to full-time, white-collar workers, both exempt and nonexempt, by 90 percent of the companies surveyed. For blue-collar, nonexempt workers, tuition was provided by 80 percent of the companies. A 1977 study by the National Institute of Work and Learning estimated the number of workers eligible through union-employer negotiated plans as nearly 2 million. Participation, however, in all plans in the United States is generally considered at between 4 and 6 percent. Those most likely to utilize tuition aid are workers who already have a greater number of years of schooling and are in higher paid jobs—essentially white male workers.

A study focusing on the utilization of tuition assistance by women found that lower participation related basically to women's position in low-status jobs. Although women of all income, education and skill levels took advantage of tuition assistance than did men at the same level, within either sex the status/hierarchy distinctions held true. Among the program-related barriers faced by women were the requirements that courses be job-related and tuition be paid in advance. Women were more likely than men to believe that education would not help on the job
and to cite their "fear of returning to school." They were also more inclined to feel that "fatigue" and rigid work schedules barred their participation. 25/

Research on programs where tuition aid is highly used by employees at all job levels has found that organizations develop specific means to encourage employee participation when they are committed to broadly-based education and training programs. Where this kind of commitment exists, opportunities for nonexempt workers and women among them are made more effective. In order to assess the relative value of new work patterns to increase participation in education and training, this preliminary study will take into account the ways in which worktime is adjusted in some of these organizations.

NOTES


5. This analysis is primarily based on data on earnings and occupational distribution of women working year round, full time, as compared to male workers. Despite the gains by some women in higher level positions, the wage differential in earnings between the sexes has persisted at basically the same rates from 1960-1977. Moreover, in general, women gain little in earnings over the life cycle as compared to men since their jobs lack similar advancement possibilities. See: Testimony of Alexis Herman, Nancy Barratt, "The Coming Decade: American Women and Human Resource Politics and Programs, 1979," Hearings before the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, 96th Congress, 1st session (January 31 and February 1, 1979), pp. 353, 1042. See also, Mary C. Dunlap, "The Legal Road to Equal Employment Opportunity: A Critical View," and Barbara B. Reagen, "De Facto Job Segregation," in Anne Foote Cahn, ed., Women in the U.S. Labor Force, Report for the Joint Economic Committee (New York, NY: Praeger, 1978).


8. These data refer to usage as of May 1980. Unless otherwise noted, information in this section is found in U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, News Release, February 24, 1981. The
definition used was phrased as "flextime or some other schedule that allows workers to vary the time they begin and end work."


11. See note #8.


15. See note #7, pp. 29-30. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, the rate of absenteeism for single women in 1980 was approximately the same as that of men. Occupation and union membership also account for differential rates. (See: News, Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 26, 1981.) In regard to tenure, Bureau of Labor Statistics reports during the period 1973-1978 no differences for men and women in the early years of labor force participation, with a widening differential increasing with age. Women had the highest tenure
rates in professional, technical and kindred fields and approximately the same job attachment as men in operative (nontransport) occupations. (See: News, Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, April 23, 1979.)


18. See note #12, Table 5. The survey found that 6 percent of the 541 respondent firms have job sharing arrangements but there was no indication of the number of teams in each organization. A 1981 survey of 104 human resource executives of the Fortune 1300 by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. found a high degree of interest in job sharing (and other flexible patterns). Of the policies considered likely to be adopted in the next five years, job sharing was indicated by most (70 percent) of the respondents. General Mills American Family Report 1980-81, FAMILIES AT WORK: Strengths and Strains (Minneapolis, MN: General Mills).


20. This summary is based largely on papers of the Worker Education and Training Policies Project of the National Institute of Work and Learning (formerly the National Manpower Institute), Washington, DC, 1980. See especially Harold


22. Goldstein, cited in footnote 20, p. 34.

