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An Assessment of Perceptions of Career Services Providing Job Search and Survival Skills Training

Brett D. Hobby

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by

Brett D. Hobby

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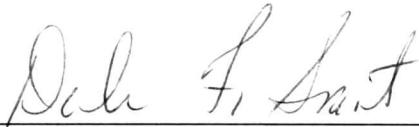

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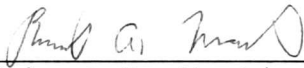
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Dale F. Grant, Advisor

_____

Robert A. Martin

_____

Stephen J. Jenkins

_____   7-29-97

G. Lane Van Tassell   Date
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
and Dean of Graduate Studies

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The area of Career Services on college and university campuses is ever-changing. The boom of technology makes it easier for students to find and examine job openings via the Internet and to put their resume on line. These advancements are good as they help Career Services office's expand their job search services and provide the most current technology available to students while continuing to offer the traditional job search services. According to McBride and Muffin (1991), the main focus of Career Services has always been on helping students develop effective job search skills to obtain an interview and hopefully a job offer.

However, few services are offered to students to help them develop skills to survive in the work force once they have obtained a job. Some colleges offer services geared toward adults such as the dislocated worker workshops offered by the state of Missouri, but similar services are not available to the student populations on college campuses. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine whether or not services geared towards providing job survival skills would be beneficial to undergraduate students by preparing them for the work world. If the workshops are found to be perceived as beneficial by the

students, this would be valuable information for institu-
tions across the nation, expanding Career Services to
include job survival skills training.

Review of Related Literature

In the human resources field, the need for employee
acculturation is realized and programs have been developed.
As stated by Leibowitz, Schlosberg, and Shore, (1992),
turnover among new hires places inescapable pressure on
companies to manage the recruiting process in ways that
actively promote employee retention. As most managers will
attest, turnover among any segment of the work force is
expensive, time consuming, and often demoralizing. And as
stated by Wanous (1980), it is evident that turnover among
new employees is a problem of considerable scope and
urgency. Wanous (1980) and Stevens-Long (1988) report
findings on why new employees leave their jobs. Wanous
(1980), states that unrealistic expectations of new
employees causes "reality shock" and Stevens-Long states
"one reason people change jobs is that they never feel
welcome or a part of the organization they join" (Stevens-
Long, 1988, p.140). Despite organizations' growing awareness
of the importance of addressing new employee socialization,
integration, and development needs, general practice in this

area remains impoverished. "Currently, most United States organizations either have no process for helping new employees adjust, or use a 'one-shot' orientation approach that involves giving employees information" (Montross et al., 1992, p.147).

On College and University campuses, the beginnings of Career Planning and Placement, typically known today as Career Services, is rooted in Oxford University's Committee on Appointments created in 1899, in England (Wrenn, 1951). However, instead of placement services being coordinated by a Student Affairs professional, these services at Oxford were done by the faculty who assisted male graduates in securing ministerial positions with local churches. This early placement practice continued until the mission of higher education was broadened from an elitist model to an egalitarian model (Rentz and Saddlemire, 1988).

Placement offices became a separate function within institutions of higher education when Yale University established an office in 1919 (Rentz et al., 1988). Also during the 1900's, the "student affairs unit assumed responsibility for matching college students with employment positions during the academic year, the summer months, and after graduation" (Rentz et al., 1988, p.72). The main goal

was to "aid young people in choosing an occupation, preparing themselves for it, and building up a career of efficiency and success" (Brewer, 1942, p. 61). This is still true of Career Services today.

Influenced by the nature of the job market, the focus of Career Services fluctuates. There are periods when the Career Service departments of an institution focus on strictly job placement functions, and times when they focus on a career planning and counseling function, depending on the current economic state of the nation. The steady evolution in Career Services began in the 1950's, when attention was focused only on job placement. In the 1970's, the focus of Career Services was more on career planning and counseling. According to Barr, Rayman, and Upcraft (1993), in the early 1980's, the main focus of Career Service departments was also on career planning and counseling. In 1985, the economy was fueled by a new-found optimism of the Reagan administration. This caused the demand for entry-level positions to skyrocket and thus career services shifted it's focus away from career counseling, development, and planning, and back towards the function of job placement.

However, the demand shifted once again in the 1990's. This shift was due to the white-collar recession of the 1990's which created an environment of intense competition between the recently laid-off college-educated employee with five to ten years of solid work experience and the recent graduate (Barr, et al., 1993). The anxiety of current students and recent graduates over the competitive job market permeated college campuses across America and caused career centers to focus their attention again on the functions of career counseling and development. Due to this refocusing of the mission of Career Services, more programs and services, including workshops, were developed in order to better prepare current students to be more knowledgeable about the job search process.

In addition to its influence on Career Services, the economy has also influenced the perceptions that students and faculty have of this office. Generally, these groups have the idea that the Career Service office is to be utilized only by students approaching graduation in order that they may find a position in a timely manner. However, this popular perception and the difficulties of placing the graduating senior, that are occasioned by the economy, has

led many career services offices to offer programming in

conjunction with other departments to attract students

earlier in their college career.

According to Barr et al., (1993),

> virtually every career center has programs
> that teach participants the basics of
> career planning and job seeking. Usually,
> these programs assist students in assess-
> ing career interests and values, exploring
> educational and occupational options,
> making decisions regarding employment or
> graduate study, and building skills in
> resume writing, interviewing, and job
> seeking. The center may also offer mock
> interviewing, help with choosing a major,
> and sponsor career fairs designed for the
> entire campus community.

Barr et al., (1993), also states that although these

programs and services are offered by most institutions, it

does not mean that they are necessarily sufficient.

Tiedeman and O'Hara, (1963), career development

theorists, believe that the individual is striving to

integrate within society-more specifically, within a career-

searching for acceptance by members of a career field yet

retaining some individuality. If the uniqueness of the

individual finds congruency with the uniqueness of the world

of work, integration, synthesis, success, and satisfaction

will follow. These two theorists also stress adaptation to

a working environment for meaningful peer group affiliation

and work performance. Therefore, Tiedeman and O'Hara both support the need for offering something to help the individual to assimilate into the world of work.

Dawis and Lofquist (1984), have a theory on work adjustment emphasizing that to survive, the individual and the work environment must achieve some degree of correspondence. They also state that work includes human interaction, and sources of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, rewards, stress, and many other psychological reinforce-ments.

Therefore, as indicated by the literature, there are three topics that have a unique relationship to jobs and survival within jobs. And these topics could also form the basis for fulfilling programming needs in the area of job survival skills.

The need for a program on mentoring in association with work adjustment is supported by Bragar and Kram (1992), when they state that "mentoring is now widely recognized as an important source of development at every career stage" (p. 221). Participation in a mentoring program, either formal or informal, appears to help new employees adjust to their new work environment by helping them to learn new skills, develop self-confidence and professional direction while

realizing new opportunities for advancement, and making a greater commitment to their career and organization. However, as stated by Bragar et al, (1992), "the actual benefits found in a particular setting will depend on the original objectives, for in some instances, skill development is emphasized where in others, building self-confidence or preparing for advancement are the primary aims" (p. 232). Another equally important benefit is the formation of relationships that might not otherwise occur, particularly those that cross gender and/or racial boundaries.

Sexual Harassment as a potential program in association with its effects on work productivity, and as an issue in the social interactive realm in the workplace was chosen based on the documented consequences of Sexual Harassment that include work ineffectiveness, as well as negative outcomes related to physical and psychological health (Thacker, 1996). Also those who feel that they can look to their organization to remove unwanted social-sexual attention are potentially less likely to engage in such unproductive behavior as absenteeism and other work-avoidance behaviors than are those who feel they have no recourse internally (Thacker, 1996).

It is hoped that by providing some knowledge on this topic to students would be sufficient to help make their transition into the world of work a little easier. This is supported by Livingston (1982), who states that "possibly women object to harassment do so because they believe it is their right rather than because it is necessarily the most effective response. The underlying assumption of many training programs is that as women learn which responses are most effective, they will begin to utilize those actions"(p. 15). Therefore, the more exposure females have to the topic of sexual harassment, the quicker they will learn which responses are the most effective. Also, the effects of training on sexual harassment have been found to affect men positively. As stated by Loftus (1995), "In civilian life also, employees who find themselves interested in a co-worker are proceeding with caution, in light of the new sensitivity toward sexual harassment. Men start slower and are careful to make sure advances are wanted; in the past, they might expect to be rebuffed, but not to lose their job" (p.28).

The topic of Office Politics is associated with the satisfaction and "fit" that an employee has with their organization. Based on research by Gillian Flynn, (1995),

"Office politics will never go away. Even if offices become completely virtual, there will still be the constant power play. Office politics are basic to the business world" (p. 32).

Also, as stated by USA Today (December 1995),

> Today, employees who want to advance in their careers must become experts on dealing with it. Office politics are basic to the business world. If allowed to get out of hand, they can be negative and destructive, but dealt with properly, they enable work to be accomplished more smoothly. Employees who want to advance in their careers must learn to make use of the positive 'diplomacy' aspects of office politics, while avoiding the negative side.

Although no literature was found indicating that most post-secondary institutions have responded to the need of providing workshops geared towards helping students survive in the work world, the corporate world has. However, some corporations still do not provide specific programs or services on helping new employees adjust to becoming part of a new environment.

The rationale of this paper is to follow the lead by the corporate world. It is not uncommon for educational institutions to implement models that originate in the business world. One such example is TQM or Total Quality Management. As discussed by Bryan (1996), "there is a

growing concern for quality in the campus setting" (p. 97).

Bryan also mentions that "since the late 1980's, many

academic institutions have sought to implement TQM either as

a comprehensive campus agenda or within selected campus

administrative units" (p. 1). Also, this notion is

supported by Miller and Winston (1991).

As researched by Merriam, Thomas, and Zeph, (1987),

many studies on the topic of mentoring within higher

education exist. These studies focus on mentoring

relationships between faculty and students, senior faculty

and junior faculty, and mentorings effects on executive

administrative positions. Also on the topic of mentoring,

Bryant and Ross-Thomas (1994), indicate that planned

mentoring is currently a concept at universities seeking to

improve retention and graduation rates and it is used to

help facilitate the learning of gifted students. Cameron

(1978), who studied specific dimensions of mentorship in

academia, focused on financial support, dissertation

funding, publication support, and first job placement. She

found significant differences among academic disciplines in

the mentorship support provided during graduate education.

The differences existed among the fields of sociology,

psychology, and English. However, unlike these studies,

this paper focuses on the feasibility of career service offices offering information on mentoring to undergraduate students in preparation for job placement.

For the topic Sexual Harassment, the education, business, and ERIC databases were searched with the keywords Sexual Harassment, higher education, and work productivity. No citations were found that related to the purpose of this research project.

For the topic of Office Politics, the education, business, and ERIC databases were searched with the keywords Office Politics, higher education, and work satisfaction. No citations were found that related to the purpose of this research project.

The original idea for this research came about during the researcher's internship. The internship was in a Career Service office in a university in southern Georgia. In a discussion of possible thesis topics, the director informed the intern that the newly graduated students from the College of Education had been expressing the difficulties they had faced in their transition from school to work. These students attributed the difficult transition to their academic program that did not prepare them socially.

Therefore, based on the aforementioned and this litera-ture, it is theorized that there is a need to provide interventions to college students who are about to enter the workforce, to better prepare them to survive in the work world. However, since these services have not been offered, it would be helpful to know if students perceive a need for work adjustment/survival training on these topics.

To determine whether the students at the institution perceived such a need, the two research questions below were tested:

1) What is the level of perceived knowledge of college students on Mentoring, Sexual Harassment, and Office Politics?

2) What is the level of perceived need of college students for training on the topics of Mentoring, Sexual Harassment, and Office Politics?

Methodology

Participants

A total of 131 students were invited to participate in this study. Twenty-five or 19% of these students declined participation or were not present when the survey was distributed. Therefore, the number of participants in this study totaled 106 students, mostly seniors, in the College of Education, who were enrolled in three of four randomly selected senior level classes. This represented about 21% of the 507 seniors in the College of Education enrolled in winter quarter 1997 in a moderate-sized state university in southern Georgia. Seniors were targeted for this research because it was believed that since they had finished the majority of their course work, they would be engaged in the job search process and therefore, more likely to be in a position to anticipate transition needs within the work setting. The College of Education is one of six different undergraduate colleges at this institution.

The majority of the participants were White/ European American (84/79%), the remainder were Black/African American (21/20%), and Asian (1/1%). Females made up the majority of

the respondents (92/87%), while the males represented (14/13%). The mean age of the participants was 29 and the range was from 21 to 50.

The largest number of participants had declared early childhood education as their major (53/50%). Those with secondary education represented (29/27%), while the remainder of the students declared their major as being special education for exceptional children (24/23%).

The targeted group was seniors. The mean for the total number of quarter hours completed was 177 and the range was from 75 to 280. In order to be classified as a senior, a student must have 135 hours or more. Although some students did not meet this criteria to be classified as a senior, the date of graduation was used to confirm their class status.

The majority of the students, eighty-two or 77%, reported that their expected date of graduation was June 1997, while 17 or 16% reported that they would graduate in August 1997. Of those that remained, five (5%), reported a graduation date of December 1997, one (1%) a graduation date of October 1997, and one (1%) a date of January 1998. Since the anticipated date of graduation for these students was no greater than one year, which would place them all in senior

status. And since this study targeted seniors, none of the participants were excluded.

Instrumentation

A survey was developed to assess whether or not and to what extent the students perceived they had any knowledge of three job survival skills areas associated with different aspects of the world of work. There was no pilot test for the survey.

The first section consisted of 10 items and inquired about biographical information in order to establish the demographics of the subject group. The information collected consisted of the student's sex, age, ethnicity, major, quarter hours completed, expected month of graduation, current work status, number of hours worked each week, job title, and employer.

The purpose of the second section was to determine if the participants had utilized the services of the Career Services office. This section was designed in two parts, those workshops and programs that the participants could have attended as a member of a group, or those services they could have participated in as an individual.

Part one in the second section established whether or not the subject attended any workshops or programs offered

to groups by Career Services at the host institution. The workshops and program topics from which the student could choose were based on workshops or programs offered and included choosing a major, interviewing skills, resume writing, job search strategies, hot careers for the year 2000, and graduate school planning.

Part two of section two establishes whether or not the subject utilized any of the services or resources offered to individual students by Career Services at the host institution. The options from which the student could choose included College of Education career day, resume referral, mock interview sessions, job vacancy listings, employer literature and directories, resume expert plus, resume/cover letter critiquing, on-campus interviews, school system applications, and counseling.

The next three sections dealt with the topics of Mentoring, Sexual Harassment, and Office Politics, respectively. The first half of each section asked the respondent to rate their perceived knowledge level on that particular topic and the second half of each section asked the respondent to rate their perceived need of that particular topic. The questions in the first half of each section were patterned after the literature that suggested

what someone should know about each subject to really have a thorough understanding of it. The second half of each section contains questions designed by the researcher to evaluate the respondent's perceived need of that particular topic for themselves and for others.

In section three, there were a total of eight questions on the topic of Mentoring. For question one, the students indicated whether or not they had ever had a mentor, by responding with either yes or no. For each of the remaining questions, the participant could indicate very much, somewhat, or not at all. The next three questions were related to the perceived knowledge level of the participant. These questions asked the participant whether or not they had an understanding of what mentoring actually was, if they knew what the basis of a mentoring relationship was in the work world, and if they knew what personal attributes a mentor should have in the workplace. The last four questions were related to the participants perceived need of the topic. These questions asked the participant whether or not they would benefit from having a mentor in their first professional position, if they thought a workshop on this topic was needed for seniors in the College of Education, if they thought a workshop on this topic would have been useful

for students in the College of Education, and if they would have been interested in attending a workshop on this topic if it had been offered.

Section four, had a total of nine questions on the topic of Sexual Harassment. For each question, again the participant could indicate very much, somewhat, or not at all. The first five questions were related to the perceived knowledge level of the participant. These questions asked the participant if they had an understanding of the term Sexual Harassment, if they knew that there were different kinds of Sexual Harassment, if they knew what to expect from their employer in regards to the issue, if they knew what their legal rights were in the workplace, and if they were aware of what constituted Sexual Harassment in the workplace. The last four questions were related to the participants perceived need of the topic. These questions asked the participant if they thought a workshop on this topic was needed for seniors in the College of Education, if they thought a workshop on this topic would be useful for students in the College of Education, if they would have attended a workshop on this topic if it had been offered, and if they thought that a workshop on this topic would have

been beneficial for them in preparation for their first professional position.

In section five, there was a total of eight questions on the topic of Office Politics. For each question, the participant could indicate very much, somewhat, or not at all. The first five questions were related to the perceived knowledge level of the participant. These questions asked the participant if they had an understanding of the term Office Politics, if they understood the potential consequences of being involved in the "rumor mill" at work, if they understood "mutual protection alliances" as it relates to Office Politics in the workplace, if they knew how to develop savvy in the workplace, and if they knew how to avoid conflict in the workplace. The last three questions were related to the participants perceived need of the topic. These questions asked the participant if they thought a workshop on this topic was needed for seniors in the College of Education in order to prepare them for the job market, if they would have been interested in attending a workshop on this topic, and if they thought a workshop on this topic would have been beneficial to them in preparation for their first professional position. These questions were not pilot tested.

Procedure

The Director of the College of Education Advisement Center was consulted to identify classes which had a high enrollment of seniors during winter quarter 1997, four were selected. From these four classes, three were randomly selected. The professor's of each class granted permission, distributed, and collected the surveys for the researcher. The survey was administered to all students in the three classes by the professor. All three classes completed the survey within the same week. All students completed the survey within 15 minutes. Participation in this study was strictly voluntary. Approval by the Institutional Review Board, which reviews all research proposals concerning the use of human subjects, was also granted.

For sections three, four, and five, the students' perceived knowledge level and perceived need was measured by determining how many students responded to the options very much, somewhat, or not at all for each question. Remember that the first half of each section asked the respondent to rate their perceived knowledge level on that particular

topic, and the second half of each section asked the respondent to rate their perceived need of that particular topic.

Results

This descriptive study tested two research questions. The first research question asked college seniors what their perceived level of knowledge was about the topics of Mentoring, Sexual Harassment, and Office Politics. In section three dealing with the topic of Mentoring, the responses to question two, do you have an understanding of what Mentoring is, were as follows. Forty-three or 40% indicated very much, 60 or 57% indicated somewhat, and three or 3% indicated not at all. In regards to the third question, do you know what the basis of a Mentoring relationship is, the responses are as follows. Thirty-five or 33% responded very much, 58 or 55% responded somewhat, and 13 or 12% responded not at all. For the fourth and final question, do you know what personal attributes a mentor in the workplace should possess in order to be effective, the responses were as follows. Twenty-nine or 27% responded very much, 63 or 59% responded somewhat, and 14 or 13% responded not at all.

In section four, dealing with the topic of Sexual Harassment, the results to the first question, do you have an understanding of what is meant by the term Sexual

Harassment, were as follows. Eighty-five or 80% of the participants responded very much, 20 or 19% responded somewhat, and one or one percent responded not at all. In regards to the second question, do you know that there are different kinds of Sexual Harassment, the responses were as follows. Seventy-six or 72% responded very much, 27 or 25% responded somewhat, and three or three percent responded not at all. For the third question, do you know what to expect from your employer in regards to the issue of Sexual Harassment, the responses were as follows. Fifty-one or 48% responded very much, 50 or 47% responded somewhat, and five or five percent responded not at all. In regards to the fourth question, do you know what your legal rights are regarding Sexual Harassment in the workplace, the responses were as follows. Thirty-two or 30% responded very much, 62 or 59% responded somewhat, and 12 or 11% responded not at all. In regards to question five, are you aware of what constitutes Sexual Harassment in the workplace, the responses were as follows. Forty-one or 38% responded very much, 58 or 55% responded somewhat, and seven or seven percent responded not at all.

In section five, dealing with the topic of Office Politics, the responses to question one, do you have an

understanding of the term Office Politics in relation to the workplace, were as follows. Nineteen or 18% responded very much, 56 or 53% responded somewhat, and 31 or 29% responded not at all. In regards to question two, do you understand the potential consequences of being involved in the "rumor mill" at your place of employment, the responses were as follows. Forty-one or 39% responded very much, 36 or 34% responded somewhat, and 29 or 27% responded not at all. In regards to question three, do you understand "mutual protection alliances" as it relates to Office Politics in the workplace, the responses were as follows. Thirteen or 12% responded very much, 31 or 29% responded somewhat, and 62 or 59% responded not at all. For question four, do you know how to develop social savvy in the workplace, the responses were as follows. Seventeen or 16% responded very much, 51 or 49% responded somewhat, and 37 or 35% responded not at all. For question five, do you know how to avoid conflict in the workplace, the responses were as follows. Thirty-one or 30% responded very much, 69 or 66% responded somewhat, and four or four percent responded not at all.

The second research question asked students what their perceived need for training was on the three topics. For the topic of Mentoring, the fifth question, do you think you

would benefit from having a mentor when you enter your first professional position, received the following responses. Seventy-seven or 73% responded very much, 26 or 25% responded somewhat, and three or three percent responded not at all. The sixth question, do you think a workshop on Mentoring in the work world is needed for seniors in the College of Education in order to prepare them for entering the job market, received the following responses. Forty-nine or 47% responded very much, 47 or 45% responded somewhat, and nine or eight percent responded not at all. In regards to the seventh question, do you think a workshop on Mentoring in the work world would be useful for students in the College of Education, the responses were as follows. Fifty-five or 52% responded very much, 44 or 42% responded somewhat, and six or six percent responded not at all. For question eight, would you be interested in attending a workshop on Mentoring if it had been offered before you graduated, the responses were as follows. Forty-five or 42% responded very much, 50 or 47% responded somewhat, and 11 or 10% responded not at all.

For the topic of Sexual Harassment, the sixth question, do you think that a workshop on Sexual Harassment in the workplace is needed for seniors in the College of Education

in order to prepare them for the job market, received the following responses. Forty-nine or 46% indicated very much, 48 or 45% indicated somewhat, and 9 or 9% indicated not at all. For the seventh question, do you think a workshop on Sexual Harassment in the workplace would be useful for students in the College of Education (in general), the responses were as follows. Fifty-two or 49% responded very much, 45 or 42% responded somewhat, and nine or nine percent responded not at all. For question eight, would you have been interested in attending a workshop on Sexual Harassment if it had been offered before you graduated, the responses were as follows. Forty-four or 41% responded very much, 41 or 39% responded somewhat, and 21 or 20% responded not at all. Finally for question nine, do you think that a workshop on Sexual Harassment in the workplace, would have been beneficial to you during your degree program, in preparation for your first professional position, the responses were as follows. Thirty-four or 33% responded very much, 50 or 48% responded somewhat, and 20 or 19% responded not at all.

For the topic of Office Politics, the sixth question, do you think a workshop on Office Politics in the workplace is needed for seniors in the College of Education in order

to prepare them for the job market, received the following responses. Forty-five or 43% responded very much, 51 or 48% responded somewhat, and 10 or nine percent responded not at all. In regards to question seven, would you have been interested in attending a workshop on Office Politics if it had been offered before you graduated, the responses were as follows. Forty or 38% responded very much, 42 or 40% responded somewhat, and 23 or 22% responded not at all. For question eight, do you think that a workshop on Office Politics in the workplace would have been beneficial to you during your degree program, in preparation for your first professional position, the responses were as follows. Forty-two or 40% responded very much, 43 or 40% responded somewhat, and 21 or 20% responded not at all.

In addition to answering the two research questions, further analysis of the data was done. When asked if they were currently working, 39 or 37% responded yes and 67 or 63% responded no. Also, of those that worked, the average number of hours worked per week was 22. The largest number of students tended to be employed part-time, off-campus. Also, the majority of the jobs were in the retail field.

The responses from the students in regards to their working status and how it related to their knowledge about

the three topics is also notable. When the survey instrument was being designed, the researcher expected that those students who were currently working would have more of a perceived knowledge and perceived need than those students who were not. On the topic of mentoring, for those who were working, the responses were as follows. For question one, have you ever had a mentor, 59 or 56% responded yes and 47 or 44% responded no. For question two, do you have an understanding of what Mentoring is, 18 or 46% responded very much, 20 or 51% responded somewhat, and one or three percent responded not at all. For question three, do you know what the basis of a mentoring relationship is in the working world, the responses were as follows. Fifteen or 38% responded very much, 23 or 59% responded somewhat, and one or three percent responded not at all. In regards to question four, do you know what personal attributes a mentor in the workplace should possess in order to be effective, the responses were as follows. Fourteen or 36% responded very much, 21 or 54% responded somewhat, and 4 or 10% responded not at all. Therefore, due to these responses, the majority of the students who were working perceived that

they had at least some knowledge on the topic of mentoring. Very few students indicated that they had no knowledge at all.

In regards to question five, do you think you would benefit from having a mentor when you enter your first professional position, the responses were as follows. Thirty-six or 92% responded very much, three or eight percent responded somewhat, and no students responded with not at all. For question six, do you think a workshop on mentoring in the work world is needed for seniors in the College of Education in order to prepare them for entering the job market, the responses were as follows. Twenty-two or 56% responded very much, 14 or 36% responded somewhat, and three or eight percent responded not at all. In regards to question seven, do you think a workshop on mentoring in the work world would be useful for students in the College of Education, the responses were as follows. Twenty-two or 56% responded very much, 15 or 38% responded somewhat and two or five percent responded not at all. For question eight, would you have been interested in attending a workshop on mentoring if it had been offered before you graduated, the responses were as follows. Seventeen or 44% responded very much, 19 or 49% responded somewhat and three

or eight percent responded not at all. Therefore, due to these responses, the majority of the students indicated that they very much perceived a need for offering a program or service on the topic of Mentoring.

For those who were not working, the responses were as follows. In regards to question two, 25 or 37% responded very much, 40 or 60% responded somewhat, and two or three percent responded not at all. For question three, 20 or 30% responded very much, 35 or 52% responded somewhat, and 12 or 18% responded not at all. For question four, 15 or 22% responded very much, 42 or 63% responded somewhat, and 10 or 15% responded not at all. For question five, 41 or 61% responded very much, 23 or 34% responded somewhat, and three or four percent responded not at all. In regards to question six, 27 or 40% responded very much, 33 or 49% responded somewhat, and 7 or 10% responded not at all. For question seven, 33 or 49% responded very much, 29 or 43% responded somewhat, and five or seven percent responded not at all. Finally for question eight, 27 or 40% responded very much, 31 or 46% responded somewhat, and 9 or 13% responded not at all. For the most part, those students who were working rated themselves as having close to the same

level of perceived knowledge and need as those students who did not work.

In regards to the topic of Sexual Harassment, the responses of those who were working were as follows. In regards to question one, do you have an understanding of what is meant by the term Sexual Harassment, 34 or 87% responded very much, 5 or 13% responded somewhat, and no students responded not at all. For question two, do you know that there are different kinds of Sexual Harassment, 31 or 79% responded very much, 8 or 21% responded somewhat, and no students responded with not at all. In regards to question three, do you know what to expect from your employer in regards to the issue of Sexual Harassment, 23 or 59% responded very much, 14 or 36% responded somewhat, and two or five percent responded not at all. For question four, do you know what your legal rights are regarding Sexual Harassment in the workplace, 15 or 38% responded very much, 19 or 49% responded somewhat, and 5 or 13% responded with not at all. In regards to question five, are you aware of what constitutes Sexual Harassment in the workplace, 21 or 54% responded very much, 17 or 44% responded somewhat, and one or three percent responded not at all. Therefore,

the students perceived that they had a very good amount of knowledge on the topic of Sexual Harassment.

For question six, do you think a workshop on Sexual Harassment in the workplace is needed for seniors in the College of Education in order to prepare them for the job market, 20 or 51% responded with very much, 15 or 38% responded somewhat, and 4 or 10% responded not at all. In regards to question seven, do you think a workshop on Sexual Harassment in the workplace would be useful for students in the College of Education, 20 or 51% responded very much, 14 or 36% responded somewhat, and 5 or 13% responded not at all. For question eight, would you have attended a workshop on Sexual Harassment if it had been offered before you graduated, 19 or 49% responded very much, 15 or 38% responded somewhat, and 5 or 13% responded not at all. For question nine, do you think a workshop on Sexual Harassment in the workplace would have been beneficial to you during your degree program, in preparation for your first professional position, 13 or 33% responded very much, 19 or 49% responded somewhat, and 7 or 18% responded not at all. Therefore, the students perceived themselves as needing a program or service offered on the topic of Sexual Harassment.

For those who were not working, the responses were as follows. In regards to question one, 51 or 76% responded very much, 15 or 22% responded somewhat, and one or one percent responded not at all. For question two, 45 or 67% responded very much, 19 or 28% responded somewhat, and three or four percent responded not at all. In regards to question three, 28 or 42% responded very much, 36 or 54% responded somewhat, and three or four percent responded not at all. For question four, 17 or 25% responded very much, 43 or 64% responded somewhat, and 7 or 10% responded not at all. In regards to question five, 20 or 30% responded very much, 41 or 61% responded somewhat, and six or nine percent responded not at all. For question six, 29 or 43% responded very much, 33 or 49% responded somewhat, and five or seven percent responded with not at all. In regards to question seven, 32 or 48% responded very much, 31 or 46% responded somewhat, and four or six percent responded not at all. For question eight, 25 or 37% responded very much, 27 or 40% responded somewhat, and 15 or 22% responded not at all. In regards to question nine, 20 or 30% responded with very much, 32 or 48% responded somewhat, and 15 or 22% responded with not at all. Overall, the students who were working had

both a higher perceived knowledge and a higher perceived need than those students who were not working.

On the topic of Office Politics, for those who were working, the responses were as follows. In regards to question one, do you have an understanding of the term Office Politics in relation to the workplace, 11 or 28% responded very much, 20 or 51% responded somewhat, and 8 or 21% responded not at all. For question two, do you understand the potential consequences of being involved in the "rumor mill" at your place of employment, 24 or 62% responded very much, 10 or 26% responded somewhat, and 5 or 13% responded not at all. In regards to question three, do you understand "mutual protection alliances" as it relates to Office Politics in the workplace, 8 or 21% responded very much, 10 or 26% responded somewhat, and 21 or 54% responded not at all. For question four, do you know how to develop social savvy in the workplace, 9 or 23% responded very much, 21 or 54% responded somewhat, and 9 or 23% responded not at all. In regards to question five, do you know how to avoid conflict in the workplace, 15 or 38% responded very much, 23 or 59% responded somewhat, and no students responded with not at all. The percentages for this question do not add up to 100% since one student did not respond to this question.

Therefore, the students perceived that they had some knowledge of this topic.

For question six, do you think a workshop on Office Politics in the workplace is needed for seniors in the College of Education in order to prepare them for the job market, 20 or 51% responded very much, 16 or 41% responded somewhat, and three or eight percent responded not at all. In regards to question seven, would you have been interested in attending a workshop on Office Politics if it had been offered before you graduated, 17 or 44% responded very much, 16 or 41% responded somewhat, and 6 or 15% responded not at all. For question eight, do you think that a workshop on Office Politics in the workplace would have been beneficial to you during your degree program, in preparation for your first professional position, 17 or 44% responded very much, 16 or 41% responded somewhat, and 6 or 15% responded not at all. Therefore, the students perceived that they very much needed a program or service offered on this topic.

For those who did not work, the responses were as follows. In regards to question one, 9 or 13% responded very much, 35 or 52% responded somewhat, and 23 or 34% responded not at all. For question two, 16 or 24% responded very much, 27 or 40% responded somewhat, and 24 or 36%

responded not at all. In regards to question three, six or nine percent responded very much, 22 or 33% responded somewhat, and 39 or 58% responded not at all. In regards to question four, 8 or 12% responded very much, 31 or 46% responded somewhat, and 28 or 42% responded not at all. For question five, 16 or 24% responded very much, 46 or 69% responded somewhat, and five or seven percent responded not at all. In regards to question six, 25 or 37% responded very much, 35 or 52% responded somewhat, and 7 or 10% responded not at all. For question seven, 24 or 36% responded very much, 27 or 40% responded somewhat, and 16 or 24% responded not at all. In regards to question eight, 24 or 36% responded very much, 28 or 42 responded somewhat, and 15 or 22% responded not at all. Overall, the students, regardless of working status had the same level of perceived knowledge on this topic. But on perceived need, those students who were working perceived more of a need for a program or service to be offered on this topic than those students who were not working.

Upon further analysis of the data, the responses of females regarding the topic of Sexual Harassment and the responses of the males on the topic of Office Politics are also notable. The majority of students who indicated that a

workshop on Sexual Harassment would be useful for students were female. And, the majority of students who indicated that a workshop on Office Politics would be useful for students were male.

When the researcher was designing the survey instrument, it was expected that the females would perceive their knowledge level as higher than the males, and also that more would perceive the need for training on the topic than males. First, 44 or 48% of the females felt that a workshop on Sexual Harassment would be very useful, 40 or 43% felt that it would only be somewhat useful and eight or nine percent felt that it would not be useful at all. Six or 43% of the males indicated that this workshop would be very useful 6 or 43% indicated that it would only be somewhat useful and 2 or 14% indicated that it would not be useful at all. Based on this data, it was found that the majority of the students who felt that a workshop on the topic of Sexual Harassment would be useful were female. Although, the difference between the two groups was very minimal.

Secondly, half of the males 7 or 50%, indicated that a workshop on the topic of Office Politics was very much needed in the College of Education, while 5 or 36% indicated

that it was somewhat needed and 2 or 14% indicated that it was not needed at all. Thirty-eight or 41% of the females indicated that a workshop on this topic was very much needed in the College of Education, while 46 or 50% indicated that it was somewhat needed and eight or nine percent indicated that it was not needed at all.

Also upon further analysis of the data, in the section dealing with students attending programs or workshops related to Career Services, the overall attendance rate was 59 or 56% out of a total of 106 students surveyed. The most popular workshop attended was Resume writing 31 or 43%. It is important to note that students could have attended more than one program or workshop.

Concerning usage of resources and services offered by Career Services, 85 or 81% of the students surveyed indicated that yes, they had utilized some service or resource available. The most often utilized service or resource was the College of Education Career Day 77 or 46%. Again, it is important to note that the students could have utilized more than one resource or service offered.

Discussion

In reference to the first research question--What is the level of perceived knowledge of college students/seniors on Mentoring, Sexual Harassment, and Office Politics, the results suggested that during either their school or college careers the students were exposed to these topics in some form or another. The researcher arrived at this conclusion due to the responses by the participants. For each question related to perceived knowledge on the topic of Mentoring, questions two, three, and four, the most common response was "somewhat". For the topic of Sexual Harassment, the most common response for the first three questions related to perceived knowledge was "very much" and the most common response for questions four and five was "somewhat". And for the topic of Office Politics, the most common response was "somewhat" for questions one through five, but for question two, the most common response was "very much". It is not evident how these students had prior exposure to these topics. Also, the researcher cannot be sure if the subjects were formally introduced to these topics as part of an academic curriculum or if they decided to read and learn about the topics on their own. But what is important to

remember is that the knowledge levels the students indicated on each topic was based on their own opinion of their knowledge level.

For the second research question--What is the perceived need of college students for training on the topics of Mentoring, Sexual Harassment, and Office Politics, the students responded in support of the services. Although currently Career Services does not offer any programs or services dealing with Mentoring, Sexual Harassment, or Office Politics. On the topic of Mentoring, for questions five through seven, the most common response was "very much", while for question eight, the majority of the students responded with "somewhat". In regards to the topic of Sexual Harassment, for questions six through eight, the most common response was "very much", while for question nine, the majority of the students responded with "somewhat". And with regards to the topic of Office Politics, the most common response for questions six and seven was "somewhat", while for question eight, an equal number of students selected "very much" and "somewhat". Overall, the responses indicate that in regards to each question for each topic, the students supported the need for programs or services being offered on each of these topics.

This evidence then provides some support for expanding the services to include these topics.

The additional analysis of the data provide some surprising and some expected results. In relation to working status, the average amount of hours worked by those who indicated that they worked was 22 hours a week. This would classify the student's jobs as part-time. Also, the students jobs were mostly in the area of retail, and were not professional positions. Therefore, the responsibilities linked with these jobs may not have presented the opportunity to handle questions or concerns associated with Mentoring, Sexual Harassment, or Office Politics. Also, the very nature of the job may have been such that these issues had to seldom be dealt with. All of the aforementioned may have been the cause of the surprising findings that in regards to the topics of Mentoring and Office Politics, regardless of working status, the students responded similarly on the issue of perceived knowledge and perceived need. However, on the topic of Sexual Harassment, those students who were working indicated more of a perceived knowledge and perceived need than the students who were not working.

In regards to the topic of Sexual Harassment, females expressed more interest in the topic as a potential topic for a program or service than did the males. These results could be do to the possibility that most reported Sexual Harassment cases involve harassment against women. Therefore, since most women probably feel that they are much more likely than men to be confronted by this issue when they enter the workforce, it makes sense that they would want to have some type of exposure to their rights concerning this issue.

In regards to the topic of Office Politics, men expressed more of an interest in this topic as a potential topic for a program or service than did the females. This response could be due to the fact most men probably feel that they are expected to constantly be looking for ways to get ahead and advance in their positions. They may feel that the only way to do this is to be familiar with Office Politics, how they work in the business world, and how to best utilize them to benefit their promotion within an organization. Females may have responded they way they did due to not feeling the need to engage in or understand office politics in order to succeed in their position.

<u>Limitations</u>

This study has several limitations. First, the knowledge level of the topics expressed by the students were all based on their own assessment of their knowledge level. From this study, there is no way to determine whether or not the information provided was accurate.

Second, this study only questioned students from the College of Education. Students from other colleges and degree programs may respond differently.

Also, there may not be a connection between current work status and knowledge level that the student may possess about each topic. Instead, it could be possible that those who claimed to not be currently working may have done so based on the fact that they do not get paid for any particular task that they do. However, it is possible that these students are volunteering their time instead of working a regular job and are therefore getting just as much exposure to the outside world, as those who are working and maybe more so. This exposure could possibly be the reason for the surprising findings.

Thirdly, the survey instrument utilized in this research was developed by the researcher. The researcher

did not establish its reliability or validity. For this reason, this study can be seen as very limited.

Implications for practice

This study may yield one main implication. Since there is some support provided for offering services on the topics of Mentoring, Sexual Harassment, and Office Politics, Career Service offices could provide information on these topics under the title of work survival skills. These offices could then choose to implement pilot programs utilizing these topics and evaluate their effectiveness or they could conduct feasibility studies at their institutions.

Recommendations for future research

There are a few recommendations. It would be very interesting to actually offer information on these topics as workshops and then evaluate the programs/services. It would also be informative to determine if the subjects were formally introduced to these topics as part of an academic curriculum or if they had read any literature about the topics on their own. Analysis of this research would help to either confirm or deny the need for job survival training. This in turn would provide evidence to other institutions that additional workshops focusing on job

survival skills are needed in addition to the traditionally offered services.

It would be significant to determine if those who indicated that they were not currently working were volunteering instead. Also, surveying those students who were recently employed after graduation may yield different results. This would help to determine why students who were not working perceived themselves as being more knowledgeable about the topics of Mentoring, Sexual Harassment, and Office Politics. Perhaps it would be helpful to test the "real knowledge level" of the participants.

Thirdly, for this project, senior-level students were chosen because it was expected that they would find a program or workshop on these topics useful. As supported by this study, senior-level students were in favor of these topics for programs or services. However, it would also be informative to know if underclassmen would perceive them-selves as having similar needs. And would underclassmen benefit more or less from such programs?

Fourthly, it would be very useful to determine if seniors in other academic areas at this or any other institutions would respond in similar ways regarding the topics. Since this research only utilized the seniors in

the College of Education, it is unknown if most students,

regardless of their academic area would respond similarly.

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Informed Consent

Job Survival Skills: Are They Needed in Addition to Job Search Skills?

Dear Student:

   Congratulations! I understand you are about to graduate. Since you are about to graduate, I hope you will take a few minutes to voluntarily complete this short survey. As a Georgia Southern graduate student in Higher Education Student Services, one of my degree requirements is a thesis. By completing this survey, you will help with the data to be used for my thesis. All information obtained will be confidential and reported only as group results. This information will be used to hopefully help those who come after you, by determining whether or not career service workshops which usually focus on learning job search skills should be expanded to include workshops that focus on job survival skills. There are no risks to you physically or mentally. The survey will take 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

   Your completion and return indicates your willingness to participate in my research. Furthermore, you understand that all information will be treated confidentially and that no individual will be identified. Also, you can withdraw from this research project or refuse to answer any questions on this survey at any time without penalty. If you have any further questions, you may contact Dr. Dale Grant (advisor) in the College of Education at 912-681-5425 or the Institutional Review Board coordinator in the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912-681-5465. Finally, if you would like a copy of the results from this study, provide your name and address on the form included.

Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Please complete the following by placing a check by your response or filling in the requested information.

I.   1.   SEX: Male ___   Female ___

     2.   AGE: ___

     3.   ETHNICITY: American Indian / Alaskan Native___
                         Asian / Pacific Islander   ___
                         Black / African American   ___
                         Hispanic / Latin American   ___
                         White / European American   ___
                         Other _____

4. **MAJOR** (within College of Education):
    Early Childhood   ____
    Secondary   ____
    Exceptional Child   ____

5. Quarter hours completed: ____

6. Expected month/year of graduation:_____

7. Are you currently working?   **YES**___   **NO**___

8. If yes, how many hours per week?_____

9. If yes, what is your job title?_____

10. Who is your employer?_____

II. 1. Have you attended any of the following programs or workshops related to career services at GSU?   **YES**___   **NO**___
    (If **yes**, please circle all that apply).

    Choosing a Major   Job Search Strategies
    Interview Skills   Hot Careers for the Year 2000
    Resume Writing   Graduate School Planning

    other:_____

    2. Have you utilized any of the following services or resources offered by career services at GSU? **YES** ___   **NO** ___
    (If **yes**, please circle all that apply).

    College of Education Career Day   Resume Expert Plus
    Resume Referral   Resume/Cover Letter Critiquing
    Mock Interview Sessions   On-Campus Interviews
    Job Vacancy Listings   School Systems Applications
    Employer Literature and Directories   Counseling

    other:_____

III. 1. Have you ever had a mentor?   **YES**___   **NO**___

Please answer the following questions according to this scheme:

Very much	**Somewhat**	**Not at all**
1	**2**	**3**

CIRCLE THE ANSWER THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR KNOWLEDGE

2. Do you have an understanding
of what **mentoring** is?   1   2   3

3. Do you know what the basis of
a **mentoring** relationship is in the
working world?   1   2   3

4. Do you know what personal attributes
a **mentor** in the workplace should
possess in order to be effective?   1   2   3

5. Do you think you would benefit from
having a **mentor** when you enter
your first professional position?   1   2   3

6. Do you think a workshop on
mentoring in the work world is
needed for seniors in the College of
Education in order to prepare them for
entering the job market?   1   2   3

7. Do you think a workshop on
mentoring in the work world would be
useful for students in the College of
Education?   1   2   3

8. Would you have been interested in
attending a workshop on **mentoring**
if it had been offered before you
graduated?   1   2   3

	Very much 1	Somewhat 2	Not at all 3

IV.   1.   Do you have an understanding of what is meant by the term **Sexual Harassment**?   1   2   3

2.   Do you know that there are different kinds of **Sexual Harassment**?   1   2   3

3.   Do you know what to expect from your employer in regards to the issue of **Sexual Harassment**?   1   2   3

4.   Do you know what your legal rights are regarding **Sexual Harassment** in the workplace?   1   2   3

5.   Are you aware of what constitutes **Sexual Harassment** in the workplace?   1   2   3

6.   Do you think that a workshop on **Sexual Harassment** in the workplace is needed for seniors in the College of Education in order to prepare them for the job market?   1   2   3

7.   Do you think a workshop on **Sexual Harassment** in the workplace would be useful for students in the College of Education (in general)?   1   2   3

8.   Would you have been interested in attending a workshop on **Sexual Harassment** if it had been offered before you graduated?   1   2   3

	Very much 1	Somewhat 2	Not at all 3

9. Do you think that a workshop on **Sexual Harassment** in the workplace, offered at GSU would have been beneficial to you during your degree program, in preparation for your first professional position?   1   2   3

1. Do you have an understanding of the term **Office Politics** in relation to the workplace?   1   2   3

2. Do you understand the potential consequences of being involved in the "rumor mill" at your place of employment?   1   2   3

3. Do you understand "mutual protection alliances" as it relates to **Office Politics** in the workplace?   1   2   3

4. Do you know how to develop social savvy in the workplace?   1   2   3

5. Do you know how to avoid conflict in the workplace?   1   2   3

6. Do you think a workshop on **Office Politics** in the workplace is needed for seniors in the College of Education in order to prepare them for the job market?   1   2   3

| | Very much | Somewhat | Not at all |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |

7. Would you have been interested in
   attending a workshop on **Office Politics**
   at GSU if it had been offered before you
   graduated?   1   2   3

8. Do you think that a workshop on **Office
   Politics** in the workplace, offered at
   GSU, would have been beneficial to you
   during your degree program, in preparation
   for your first professional position?   1   2   3