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A secondary business education school-to-work partnership : experience of participants.

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A SECONDARY BUSINESS EDUCATION SCHOOL-TO-WORK PARTNERSHIP:

EXPERIENCE OF PARTICIPANTS

A Dissertation Presented

by

BARBARA DUNN BRODEUR

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 1996

School of Education

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In grade one, I was sent home for indecent exposure-- midriff showing.

In grade six, while studying words that sound the same but mean different things, I answered, "a plane flies, a fly on the wall, and a fly on a boy's pants". I was sent to the principal--for obscenity.

In grade ten, my accounting teacher asked,--"Are you as dumb as your sisters?"

I believe that in some way I have achieved because of them. I have never repeated their behavior and today I am able to forgive them.

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ABSTRACT

A SECONDARY BUSINESS EDUCATION SCHOOL-TO-WORK PARTNERSHIP:

EXPERIENCE OF PARTICIPANTS

MAY 1996

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Although there are many how-to manuals on forming
business/school partnerships, there is little valuative
information on what actually takes place within them. This
dissertation, a case study of a school-to-work partnership
between an urban high school's business education department
and the local business community, affords a practical insight
into the dynamics of such a cooperative.

A series of in-depth, phenomenological interviews were
conducted with student workers and their workplace mentors.
Their candid, powerful testimonies reflect the backgrounds,
attitudes, and concerns that each brought to the workplace.
Their personal voices express the relationships and
interactions that defined their work experiences.

Additional interviews with key figures in several
similar contemporary programs confirmed that business/school
partnerships are as complex and sensitive as the

personalities of the individuals and the characters of the institutions that form them. Although all of the participants in this study attest to the value and importance of such partnerships, it is also evident that the demands of sustaining a successful program are daunting. This study suggests that implementing the business/school mandates as proposed in school reform legislation will be difficult, if not impossible.

The evidence in this study illustrates that predominantly minority students from disadvantaged backgrounds can succeed in an initial work experience, can grow through that exposure, and can then create new personal visions for themselves. Of the twenty-five business students who participated in this cooperative program, over half entered a two or four year college upon graduation; six were offered a permanent position with a business partner.

The director of the partnership that is at the core of this study, a committed teacher and a business owner, was available on a daily basis to provide students with personal guidance as they assimilated new experiences, faced unexpected challenges, or redefined new understandings. The overall findings substantiate the value of such consistent individual support for students in their first adventure into the world-of-work.

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C H A P T E R I

INTRODUCTION

General Problem

The need for educational reform was recognized over
thirteen years ago with the publication of <u>A Nation at Risk:
The Imperative for Educational Reform</u> (National Commission on
Excellence in Education, 1983). This report pointed out that
our educational system was in serious trouble. It was packed
with statistics documenting declining test scores, high
illiteracy rates, high "dropout" rates and the collapse of
standards in education. Among the most troubling aspects of
the report was the fact that many students were leaving
school without the skills necessary to function in the
workforce.

This lack of job-ready workers did not go unrecognized
by other educational and business leaders, many of whom have
expressed concern about the low level of educational
achievement of high school graduates (Naisbitt, 1982; Turner
& Musick, 1985, p. 152), and also about the great number of
students who just "drop out" (Boyer, 1983, pp. 17, 21, 39,
239-248). At a 1992 Massachusetts Department of Education
Conference in Boston, keynote speaker William H. Kolberg,
then President of the National Alliance of Business, quoted

from a proposal presented to Boston legislators. Entitled

"Every Child A Winner!" this proposal was a suggested action

plan for systemic educational reform in Massachusetts' public

primary and secondary schools (Massachusetts Business

Alliance for Education, July, 1991). The proposal made it

clear that businesses in Massachusetts and across the country

could no longer accept an illiterate and non-skilled

workforce. In his speech, Kolberg (1992) said:

> American education has not kept pace with the
> increasing demands of modern society and the
> competitive global economy. New entries into the
> workplace are not prepared. They do not have basic
> math and/or basic writing skills. These new entry
> level people don't have developed listening skills
> and they are unable to take instructions. They do
> not understand how to use or interpret manuals and
> graphs nor are they skilled in . . . just the
> spoken English language.

The evidence presented in both documents made it clear

that schools were graduating large numbers of students who

could not fill out job applications or cope with the demands

of a changing economy. The dropout rates for minorities were

especially alarming.

A growing body of research points out that the United

States is fast losing ground in the global economy. A

predicted future shortage of qualified workers, resulting

from demographic changes and technological upgrades, has
alarmed many educators and business leaders. "We live in a
time of unprecedented change, a change brought about by
technology" (International Technology Education Association,
1994). Given these facts, education and business can no
longer afford to remain separate. An Education Week essay
summarized the problem: "We continue to live and work in two
different worlds--one of education, the other of work. While
they exist side by side, they hardly interact and there are
few bridges between them, especially for young people not
planning to continue their studies in college" (Glover &
Weisberg, 1994, p. 44).

In March 1994, Congress passed legislation known as
Goals 2000: Educate America Act. This federal reform
legislation addresses educational goals, standards,
assessments, and work experiences and systemic reform
(Stedman, 1993, pp. 1-12). Two months later, President
Clinton signed into law the Federal School-to-Work
Opportunities Act. This law requires all states to integrate
"school-based learning", "work-based learning", and
"connecting activities" into their curriculum.
(APPENDIX A. Twenty Elements--STWOA)

A key component of these federal legislations is the
encouragement of school-to-work partnerships. Private sector
involvement in public education has long been referred to as
industry-education or school-business partnerships. Under

the new federal laws, school administrators are now being

"mandated" to develop more inclusive partnerships with

businesses and other stakeholders. All stakeholders--policy

makers, private sector members, teachers, principals, college

and university representatives, parents, and students--are

being called to pool their resources to improve collaboration

and partnerships between schools and businesses. This aspect

of the law builds on the school-to-work partnership movement

that began in the early 1980's.

This movement is well documented. Business and

educational leaders have worked very hard over the last ten

years to create school-business partnerships. Today, more

than 140,000 business-education partnerships exist in the

country, including 3,000 in Massachusetts (Kolberg, 1992).

While there are many start-up manuals for partnerships, there

is little information about the effectiveness of these

efforts.

Specific Aspects of the Problem

In 1993, Massachusetts passed its educational reform

law, called The Educational Reform Act. The state act covers

many initiatives for educational reform from kindergarten

through grade 12. Like the federal laws, the state law

places a strong emphasis on career awareness and job

readiness. The law mandates the elimination of the "general

education track" and the creation of "career path majors" to develop high school students' capabilities to function in careers that require skills beyond manipulative and technical knowledge (Antonucci, 1993, p. 8). A key aspect of the Massachusetts law requires each school district to come up with a plan to provide all high school graduates with basic work skills. Students must be given an opportunity to select a "career path" at the high school level by grade eleven. Both the state and federal laws emphasize job readiness, with the use of terms such as "career pathway," "school-to-work," "connecting activities," "school-based learning," "work-based learning," "curriculum frameworks," and "common core of learning," among others. (APPENDIX B. Glossary of terms)

The Massachusetts state law requires the establishment of "common cores of learning" in all disciplines and "includes criteria for three certificates": (1) Competency Determination [grade ten], (2) Certificate of Occupational Proficiency [encompassing school-based and work-based learning] and (3) Certificate of Advanced Mastery [secondary or post secondary education] (Antonucci, 1993, pp. 9-10). In addition, the law provides for the establishment of high school programs for college-bound students, such as "Tech Prep." (APPENDIX C. Tech Prep Overview)

In order to meet the requirements of these new state and federal laws, Massachusetts educators are going to have to re-tool. DeBevoise (1983) states the coming challenge clearly:

. . . schools' priority should be the teaching

of a core of skills, including reading and

comprehension, mathematics, language arts, the

social, natural, and physical sciences, written and

oral communication and foreign languages.

Vocational training [job-ready workers] should be

considered an addition to, not a substitute for,

courses in basic skills (p. 22).

On July 18, 1994, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, (D-Mass),

announced the awarding of $5.5 million in federal school-to-

work monies for Massachusetts. "Those young people who

graduated from high school without the opportunity of further

education or vocational school, they have been falling

further and further behind" ("State among . . . ," 1994,

p. 9). These grant monies will help state educators to re-

tool for the 21st century.

As chairperson of a high school business education

department for many years, as Work Study coordinator for the

school, as the initiator of an urban city's partnership

program in 1991 the Holyoke High School's 20/20 Co-Op Program

(HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program), as co-author in 1994 of a School-

to-Work implementation grant, which was awarded $850,000 seed

monies for over a three year period, and as start-up

co-coordinator of the Chicopee/Holyoke School-to-Work

Partnership, before and with said grant monies, this

researcher has had years of various partnership experience.

Armed with this personal experience and knowledge, this researcher believes there are implementation problems in the laws in the area of school-to-work partnerships. From my perspective, the obstacles to achieving these partnerships are enormous. These obstacles range from economic realities, to teachers not being trained to understand the law or how to work with outsiders and/or lacking the skills/authority to put partnerships into practice. The converse is also true. The laws do not address the realities of the continuing statewide recession nor do they adequately address the realities of necessary funding. The laws dictate inclusion of school-to-work plans in schools/colleges/universities at the local, district, and state levels; however, the laws cannot require other stakeholders to join a partnership.

It was the realization of future challenges faced by educators in the area of partnerships that triggered this researcher's interest in studying a school-to-work partnership.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study is to broaden the understanding of the challenges faced by participants in a school-to-work partnership. It describes and analyzes through participants' stories their involvement with a specific urban secondary high school's business education

school-to-work partnership. The four-year partnership, the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program, was set up to establish continuous and collaboration interaction among business professionals, business educators and students enrolled in business education courses. The HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program was designed to bring real-life business practice into the classroom, and simultaneously, to extend business education into the workplace.

A comprehensive description of the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program is provided in Chapter III. The study examines influences that affected the partnership and explains what happened from the perspective of various participants.

Significance of Study

This study represents an effort to describe a specific urban school-to-work partnership by providing detailed, first-person narratives of participating students, workplace mentors, and other business participants. An extensive search of ERIC revealed no case studies on school-to-work partnerships involving high school business education departments in Massachusetts. This study will fill in some of the research gaps by providing information about specific influences that affect a school-to-work partnership involving

an urban high school's business education department and several local businesses, such as insurance offices, banking institutions, and health facilities.

This kind of qualitative information is much needed if partnerships are to have the kind of educational and economic impact called for by the new reform laws. As they come together, stakeholders--many of whom will be joining partnerships for the first time--need information on what constitutes a partnership: its purpose, its goals, its possible outcomes. This case study provides this kind of information about a specific high school's business education departments' school-to-work partnership in Massachusetts.

Delimitations

The data was primarily gathered through interviews soliciting individual opinions and experiences. The limitation of a small quantitative study is that the whole picture may not surface. Thus, interviews must be seen as providing views of student participants, workplace mentors and other business participants in one partnership in one specific urban setting.

Having been involved in this partnership for four years, this researcher, understands that certain biases and preconceived notions to the study may be present. Therefore, every effort has been made to listen and make sense of the

participants experiences, through the reconstruction of their accounts told to this researcher, "using their voices," as a way of understanding. This researcher has strived not to allow personal views or preconceived notions to influence the interviewing process or data analysis.

C H A P T E R II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

History of American Education

The literature review is divided into three sections:
(1) a brief history of American education with a focus on
business education, (2) a history and analysis of school-to-
work partnerships, (3) a history of the City of Holyoke,
Massachusetts, with an emphasis on how successive waves of
immigration into the city affected the relationship between
industry and education.

All three sections of the literature review include
discussion of the evolving relationship between education and
business.

Early American Education

In the country's earliest period, education for children
reflected the needs of the times. Farm children learned
about farming in everyday activities of the farm or learned a
trade by becoming apprentices. Children who attended school
received instruction in reading, writing, and religion.

The Boston Latin School, the first secondary school of
any kind in the colonies, was attended only by boys (Tanner,
p. 220). In 1646, eleven years after this school first

opened its doors, Massachusetts passed its first law requiring that elementary and grammar school education be offered to all children, with partial support from public funds.

The 1646 law required towns with more than 150 families to maintain a grammar school. Children and servants were to attend school to read and learn catechism. Subjects taught were reading, writing and ciphering. "Books in use were limited to readers, rhetoric, and the Bible" (Harper, p. 27).

Massachusetts was the first state to enact education laws for the masses; other states soon followed. These compulsory education laws helped to reinforce the belief that success in school translated to success in life and the workplace. Unfortunately, these compulsory education laws did not result in 100 per cent attendance in the public schools by all children. Slave owners, for example, forbade black children from going to school. Class and gender issues are examples of other factors which have historically limited children's participation in school. Some Protestants and Roman Catholics who migrated to America during colonial times supported their own schools at the elementary level for reading, religion, and vocational training.

"Classical" schools, college preparatory, were modeled after the rigid European Latin and Greek style schools and were attended only by boys (Tanner, p. 220). Secondary schools called "academies" were established in the 1700's and

offered practical courses such as bookkeeping and navigation as well as religion and liberal arts. Most of these "academies" were private schools supported by tuition fees. Some admitted girls, and some were established just for girls. Thus, an early business skill, "bookkeeping," was offered to both genders as early as the 1700's.

As schools branched into a more public arena, they were tailored to meet individual community needs. Reflecting the industrial/business needs of their communities, secondary schools developed into the following types: "technical," "comprehensive," "commerce/business," or "trade/vocational," each offering various courses of study.

During the industrial revolution, 19th century school's focused on preparing young people for work. Education at this time focused on teaching skills which would make students productive workers in the offices and the factories that characterized the smokestack economy. For example, schools taught the business skills which were needed; therefore, office help was always available at no direct training cost to business.

The federal government passed the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 to provide federal funds for vocational education at the secondary level. The focus of these funds was on education in agriculture, home economics, and industrial arts all trade skills. The National Society for Promotion of Industrial Education and the National Association of Manufacturers were

only two of the groups that pushed for and were instrumental
in getting the 1917 Smith-Hughes Act passed (Wirth, 1983,
p. 73). American schooling had become charged with the
responsibility to meet the needs of the industrialized work
world by creating an educated and productive workforce with a
strong emphasis on good citizenship. The increasing
complexity of jobs pushed more and more students into
education beyond the eighth grade. Business owners, the
general public, and educators alike, began to recognize the
increasing need for a high school education.

Development of Educational Philosophies

During the late nineteenth century, as the industrial
revolution rocked the country, various philosophies were
being debated and integrated into the American educational
system. The two most influential philosophies were known as
"progressive" and "functional." The "progressive movement,"
based upon principles of child growth, development and
interest, was started by William Torrey Harris, and was best
exemplified by John Dewey's (1928) work in this area. The
other philosophy was the "functionalist view," which saw
schools as institutions that prepared students for work
(Carnoy & Levine, pp. 18-22). Both philosophies agreed,
however, that their focus should lead to creating good
citizens. At the same time as these philosophies of

education were emerging, many educators were trying to "standardize the educational process" and achieve some national uniformity in the schools in America (Tyack, p. 39). Although this notion of uniformity, first put forth by Horace Mann, was tried out by many states, it soon became apparent that uniformity in educational standards "for all" was not possible for all states. In the end the idea met strong resistance. The Massachusetts Common School Reform of 1837 "became a model for the country" (Carnoy & Levine, p. 9). It tried to establish a pattern of schooling for all children under the supervision of state boards of education. Nevertheless, Horace Mann and his followers had to work diligently to convince communities to adopt these reforms and the communities retained significant amounts of power over school policies.

Profound changes in the role of work strongly influenced the direction of education at the turn of the century. By the late nineteenth century, the urban poor constituted not only a significant segment of the population, but also its industrial base. The early lack of uniformity in education gave way to schooling that was increasingly influenced by the organization of industrial production. Education professionals turned their attention to controlling the education of the urban poor, attempting to use schooling as a means of "civilizing" them into a new industrial society (Wise, pp. 58-61). "Progressive" and "functionalist"

supporters during this period were at odds as they tried to meet the needs of society's children and the needs of industry for a workforce (Carnoy & Levine, 1985; Wirth, 1981). This conflict between these philosophies, and various similar versions, continues to the present day because there is no "one best system" approach to preparing children for life (Adler, 1988, pp. 114-138; Tyack, 1974).

By the early 1900's, about 55 per cent of the age-appropriate population of the United States was enrolled in school with less then 10 per cent completing high school. It should come as no surprise that many factors at this time determined the quality and amount of a child's education: gender, parents, income, race, politics, and the quality of teachers and schools. As mentioned earlier, minorities and the poor have not received equal education. It was not until the 1954 passage of Brown vs. The Board of Education that the Supreme Court rejected the idea that separate meant equal. It is important to note that business has benefitted from this "unexpressed system" of racism and classism. After slavery was abolished, for example, underprivileged people in the South picked cotton at very low wages. Their children, like the mill children of turn-of-the century Holyoke, also worked for low wages and often did not attend school.

The same trend can be seen today with the use of teenage workers in fast food chains and the malls. Low-income students and minorities are more likely than their more

privileged peers to drop out of school to earn money. If
these working students remain in school, their school work is
often negatively affected due in part to the long hours they
work. The cycle of failure repeats itself when these
students are perceived by their teachers and others as "not
able" to perform, when in fact they may be "too tired" to do
their homework or to pay attention in class during the day.
Even though child-labor laws have been in place for over 50
years, they still do not prevent low-income children from
working long hours in the evenings on school nights or
weekends at the fast food chains, or at other low paying jobs
offering little or no opportunity for advancement.

The battle for child labor laws began in the early 19th
century and continued until the depression years. As Berg
(1970) noted:

Laws in [1938] of the late depression period
restricting the labor-force participation of youths
strengthened the role of education in society;
almost by default, education assumed an
increasingly important place as it expanded to fill
the time of many youths whose social roles had been
redesigned by several legislatures, with diminished
opposition from the courts (p. 5).

It is interesting to note that the Child Labor Amendment
to the Constitution was submitted to the states for
ratification as early as 1924 and by 1950 only 26 of the

necessary 36 states had ratified it. Despite the reluctance of states to ratify the child-labor amendment, in 1949, the Fair Labor Standard Act was amended to apply to all workers including children. The law set requirements and standards for safety and age-appropriate jobs. The minimum age for work in industries classified as hazardous was set at eighteen. Minors fourteen years of age could be employed in agricultural, and in nonmanufacturing, nonhazardous nonmining, occupations outside school hours, during vacations for limited hours, and under specified conditions of work. Today all states have child-labor laws (Henderlson & Morse, 1975).

Business Needs Educated Workers

In 1946, education through age sixteen became the law for all students in America. Passage of this national compulsory attendance law, in concert with the child labor law, dramatically increased attendance.

By 1950, 59 percent of all persons seventeen years of age or older had graduated from high school; by 1964, the figure was 76.3 percent (Berg, p. 1).

In 1963, Congress revised the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 to create new "vocational" education categories especially in "office occupations" and "distributive education" or retail trade employment. These changes reflected, once again,

education's response to the demands of business, which needed
employees to fill the growing need in these areas (Davis &
Lewis, pp. 69-70). By 1970, 99 per cent of all children age
six to sixteen were in school and 80 per cent of students
seventeen years or older had completed high school.
Responding to the belief that more education was needed for
success, many students graduated from high school at that
time and others wanted to return to school for more
education. During the past two decades, education has
expanded to include the goals of some education after high
school.

In 1983, the release of <u>A Nation at Risk: The
Imperative for Educational Reform</u> sparked a reform movement
that affected all aspects of education. This movement
culminated in 1994 with the passage of the federal School-to-
Work Opportunities Act. This law offers to states an
opportunity to apply for school-to-work federal
implementation grants for school-to-work partnerships. As
stated above, Massachusetts passed the 1993 Educational
Reform Act to establish new standards and programs for K
through 12 students to ensure higher achievement in schools.
The state law's four key elements are: (1) a fair and
equitable system of school finance, (2) a governance
structure that encourages innovation and accountability at
all levels, (3) standards and processes that will enhance
quality and professionalism, and (4) accountability of all

educational personnel and new programs and standards that
will assure that all students receive high quality public
education. As stated, a key mandate for schools is to
implement standards and new program initiatives for
vocational/job-ready education.

Business Influences Education

Before 1900, most city school boards were large and were
composed of local people from a wide range of occupations and
backgrounds. Eventually, business leaders began to occupy
more and more slots on school boards and gained majority
control in many municipalities (Tyack, p. 34). As Callahan
(1962) describes this movement:

> In the spirit of municipal reform, a change in
> composition over to businessmen who were to run
> schools along business lines. Thus superintendents
> of schools were hired and fired by and responsible
> to a small group of business men (p. 7).

Early in the 20th century, 1910, with the control of the
school boards in the hands of business, industrialists urged
educators to make the curriculum more practical.

Callahan (1992) describes additional ways business
sought to influence education:

> Historically, business influence was exerted
> upon education in several ways: through

newspapers, journals and books; through speeches at

educational meetings; and more directly, through

actions of school boards. It was exerted by

laymen, by professional journalists, by business or

industrialists, either individually or in groups,

[politicians] and finally, educators themselves

(p. 11).

Given the magnitude of the industrial revolution, it was

inevitable that business values would greatly influence the

public schools at the turn of the century. Both educators

and business people were attempting to cope with problems of

rapid national growth. Callahan (1962) vividly describes

these problems:

The consolidation of industry and the

concentration of wealth; the ruthless exploitation

of the country's natural resources; the corruption

and inefficiency in government; the tremendous

growth of cities; the flood of immigrants who added

to the complexity of the social and political

problems in the urban areas; and finally, fear

among the middle class that America would react to

these problems in an extreme way (p. 22).

During this period, the management expert Frederick W.

Taylor (1911) developed his scientific management model known

as "Taylorism". Because of social pressures and the fact

that school boards were then controlled by businessmen, this

scientific management model was forced on school administrators and in no way constituted a true partnership. School administrators were expected to use this model and run their schools like businesses, "cost effectively" and with more emphasis on practical education (Wirth, 1983, p. 116). At this point in educational history, the word "practical" was used in its narrow sense to mean immediately useful. To businessmen and educators, this move to practicality meant changing the curriculum to meet the needs of business and industry. The outcome of this pressure was stated clearly by Callahan (1962):

> . . . establishment of vocational schools and vocational courses in the existing secondary schools and the decline of the classical studies, the utilitarian movement pervaded the entire school system from the elementary schools through the universities. A less tangible but more important corollary of the practical movement was a strong current of anti-intellectualism which, when it was given expression, generally appeared in such phrases as "mere scholastic education" or "mere book learning (p. 12).

The tenets of Taylorism permeated the field of education for decades. Callahan (1962) explains this further:

> It is interesting to note that through the 19th century, leading educators such as Horace

Mann, Henry Benard, and William Harris had

conceived of themselves as scholars, and in

professional terms, equivalent to lawyers or

clergymen. However after 1900, especially after

1910, they tended to identify themselves with

successful business executives (p. 8).

Until the 1950's, "almost all school board members were

business or professional men and public school management was

modeled on business management" (Jones & Maloy, p. 78).

Thus, until that point, business was influencing the

management of schools but not collaborating with school

administrators in the sense of true partnership. School

reform that would improve the achievement of American

students was a topic of major concern during this post-war

period. In 1965, Congress passed the Elementary and

Secondary Education Act to provide school districts with

funds to help educate low-income and minority children. The

funding, while financing new programs, offered no support for

the professional development of teachers. The paradigm on

how to teach children had not changed; therefore, the funding

for new programs fell short. Because programs emphasized

tests and measurement to determine performance, the desired

results were not achieved (Wirth, 1983, pp. 155-158). During

the 1960's and 70's, sophisticated successors to Taylor's

philosophy of social efficiency influenced American schools

with their "technocratic ideology" and "systems analysis techniques" (Wirth, 1983, pp. 108-109).

In the 1990's, a phenomenon similar to the imposition of Taylor's philosophies on education occurred once more with the introduction of Deming's Total Quality Management (TQM). An article by Leonard (1991) entitled, "Applying Deming's Principles to Our Schools" describes the principles that Dr. W. Edward Deming developed. This article outlines how these principles, called Total Quality Management, can be applied to education. Deming asserts that his principles can help educators to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools today. America is facing the challenge of regaining its competitive position in the world market. Deming believes that this can be accomplished if all major institutions such as business, government, and education become "partners in the true sense of the word" (Deming, 1982, p. 32). Although some critics are concerned that schools should not focus too narrowly on skills for jobs, helping all students learn the skills they'll need for the work-place is becoming an economic necessity" (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990).

However, the notion that business should work more directly with education is being promoted by many other organizations and commissions today. It is also being mandated by federal laws passed in 1994, requiring the formation of school-to-work business partnerships. Unlike

"Taylorism" (TQM), is not being imposed on administrators but many are being encouraged to include it in their educational missions (Bond & Woodall, 1993, pp. 26-30).

Business Collaborates with Education

Around 1981, the movement toward school-to-work partnerships introduced the notion of true collaboration. The members of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable created the Quality of Education Task Force to organize business leaders throughout the state and to develop a legislative agenda that would focus on the quality of education. Different groups of educators and business leaders at the time were trying innovative approaches to improve schools. Hundreds of innovative partnerships have since been formed across the country. John Naisbitt (1982) outlines the challenges facing these partnerships:

> The most formidable challenge will be to train
> people to work in the information society. Jobs
> will become available but who will possess the high
> tech skills to fill them? Not today's graduates
> who cannot manage simple arithmetic or write basic
> English. And certainly not the unskilled,
> unemployed dropouts who cannot even find work in
> the old sunset industries (p. 180).

As _A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform_ noted in its 1983 discussion of the American deficit in math and science, there needs to be a connection between subject matter taught at school and the skills used in the workplace. As early as the 1970's, a few local businesses around the country began collaborating with schools to try to link what was happening in the schools to what was needed in their businesses. These activities are now called school-to-work programs or adopt-a-school partnerships. As some of these programs and partnerships began to have visible success, businesses and educators alike looked at them as a possible educational solution. Today, in the 1990's, school-to-work partnerships are being explored as a reform strategy that could create success at all levels of education.

In 1993, the National Alliance of Business in Education described a multi-year scheme to assist educators, policy makers, and business leaders in initiating systemic changes in schools that could improve student and school performance. A major aspect of this scheme is to assist educators in implementing school-to-work partnerships (Siegel & Byrne, pp. 1-15).

Both business and education recognize the need for systemic change and new organization of schooling. Education and business leaders must find ways to work together to

accomplish this task. The creation of business/education school-to-work partnerships is one way that systemic change can happen and provide positive results.

However, a clear understanding of a true "partnership" has to be achieved by each participating group. Each has to have a reason for participation and each has to receive mutual benefit. If "partnerships" are to be successful, the roles of school and business must be clearly outlined. While there are many "how-to" books on starting up a partnership, what is lacking in the literature is information about whether they work and how long they continue to work (Martin, pp. 35-43; O'Neil, pp, 142-166; Reville, 1992; Rigden, 1992, pp. 1-138; Ruffins, 1983; Sharp & Sharp, 1992; Sockol & McClain, 1978). Research to determine what makes and keeps sound partner relationships is needed. This dissertation addresses some of these issues.

Currently, over 140,000 plus partnerships exist between schools and businesses in one form or another. The majority of these efforts have been partnerships with local schools, one-on-one, "adopt-a-school," programs. Activities spawned by these programs range from grants to one-shot programs such as career days and luncheons. As Lund (1988) has noted, many of these efforts can be described as "episodic," "fractionated," and "short fixes" (xii).

Research supports the fact that effective school-to-work partnerships require the presence of at least the following

three factors: (1) that they be continuously connected to long-term business policy and goals, (2) that they be viewed as realistic employment and/or training opportunities and not as acts of charity, and (3) that they promote active involvement in planning school curricula and identifying subject areas that have a direct impact on present and future jobs.

At the beginning of this research it appeared that The Boston Compact and Springfield Institution for Savings' Adopt-A-Student Program met these requirements and were widely recognized successful models across the state. The following profiles the intent and direction of these two school-to-work initiatives.

In talking with Edward Dooley, Executive Director of The Boston Compact (1996), he outlined the following:

> The Boston Compact was created in 1982 as a collaborative framework to help improve the Boston Public Schools. It was originally designed to reduce dropouts, to improve student assessment, and to help students find employment or to provide scholarships for higher education. It has changed three times since 1982, About the original compact he said, 'It did not have the desired results with dropout prevention, but the other goals had been somewhat successful. It is now in its fourteenth year and has been through three revisions. The

compact should be looked at as a vehicle for Boston
leadership to define priorities for Boston Public
School improvement, to create access for Boston
students and graduates in continuing education and
careers, and to hold each signer of the compact
accountable for measurable results. The Compact is
an umbrella that guides many partnerships in
Boston. . . .'

In 1994, the Compact developed a new strategic
plan with specific goals, initiatives, and measures
that set an ambitious course for public education
through the end of the decade. (February, 1996).
The Springfield Institutions for Savings (SIS) in
Springfield, Massachusetts, initiated a school-to-work
program in 1986 called Adopt-A-Student:

. . . which matched "mentors" with students
for three years, offering part-time jobs to
students during high school and possible employment
upon graduation. "The school committed a basic
skills teacher to work with the students; likewise,
the bank hired a coordinator to work with the
mentors. Together, they would coordinate the
sessions and oversee the day-to-day operations.
The program has been continuously evaluated since

its inception nine years ago and is being refined on an ongoing basis (Adopt-a-student: Building a future for tomorrow, 1992, p. iii).

Both programs had the necessary components for successful school-to-work partnerships that were stated above. Clearly, partnership status cannot be assigned to programs where these conditions are not present. History is replete with examples of school-to-work collaborations that did not constitute partnerships in the true sense of the word. Some cases were notoriously one-sided in favor of business ideology.

A good example of this business domination over education was the previously mentioned adoption of Taylorism into 19th century schools. When Taylorism was forced upon school administrators, it had no chance to succeed in the schools. Taylorism was developed as a business strategy to make profit. The mistake was to equate schools with profit-making businesses. When administrators were told that Taylorism was going to be good for schools [save money], the purpose of the school mission [educate students] was lost. The work of school is different from the work of business in that the schools' product is the education of children.

As previously discussed, Total Quality Management (TQM) is now being presented to schools as a business strategy that may have the potential to bring about needed change in schools. If it is going to work, it cannot be used to

compartmentalize actions and cut tasks into pieces for the most profit. The notion that schools are learning communities and not profit-making organizations must be recognized. Whether or not TQM will turn out to be an effective model for schools remains to be seen. In any case, there are some signs that it is being applied more effectively than Taylorism. Efforts to apply TQM to the schools have for the most part acknowledged the shared mission and mutual equality of both parties. School and business leaders decide together whether or not to adopt the TQM approach in their school systems.

Regardless of the approach they adopt, if educators and business leaders communicate, network, and collaborate with each other in a way that increases their organizations' resources and addresses the complex issues that they both face, it may be possible to create systemic change that will benefit students and the future workforce. This researcher believes that the right kind of school-to-work school-business partnership holds such a promise for systemic change.

The educational reform movement of the 1990's considers school-to-work partnerships to be a necessary component of the movement. This educational reform movement has the attention of many important stakeholders: the president, members of congress, state representatives, local school boards, business leaders, and others.

Included in the recently passed state (1993) and federal
(1994) legislation are the mandates of "career paths" or
"career majors" to provide all high school students with
actual work experience (work-based learning) through school-
to-work partnerships or other work opportunities.

History of Holyoke's Education

Kendall Walsh, former Chairman of the English Department
at Holyoke High School, Committee Coordinator for City
Lights, and life long resident of Holyoke, related the
earliest history of the city:

> Holyoke is young among New England cities, but
> stands even today as a product of a deeper past;
> ancient lands and diverse people. The community is
> bordered by Mt. Tom, once an active volcanic peak,
> and the Connecticut River, which once stretched as
> a glacial lake over the entire region. Dinosaur
> tracks remain as an etched witness to Holyoke's pre-
> history.
>
> Indians once hunted the forest and fished at
> the great rapids of the 'Quoenktacut.' Beyond the
> rapids, the river cascaded down sixty feet and
> turned in a half circle.   Exploring the
> wilderness from the Bay Colony outpost in

Springfield, Rowland Thomas and Elizur Holyoke gave their names to the two mountains which overlook the city.

When John Riley became the first permanent settler, this section of West Springfield became known as Ireland Parish. A small pioneer village developed in which the six early families 'forted together' to guard against Indian attacks. The original village was bounded by Front and Back Street (now Northampton St. and Homestead Ave.). There was a small sawmill down by the river, and Craft's Tavern served as a halfway station on the stagecoach line between Springfield and Northampton.

A group of Boston financiers, recognizing the enormous industrial potential of the water power at the falls, bought up 1500 acres of land across the bend in the river, and conceived of the first entirely planned industrial city in the world. A dam was completed in 1848, but washed away within hours. A representative telegraphed Boston, "Dam gone to hell by way of Willimansett". A second dam was completed within a year, but before an apron was constructed, the force of the waterfall shook the ground, shattered windows, and could be heard a mile away. Literally miles of canal were dug out

with shovels and dog carts. Bricklayers erected
borders of factories and rows of apartments and the
dream of the New Town became a reality.

The Irish came to work on the dam and the
canal, weavers were enlisted from Glasgow and came
down from Canada in covered wagons. Immigration
from Germany and Poland increased the population
and in 1873 Holyoke became a city.

As the industrial revolution advanced, there was a need
for millwrights and millhands. As an outgrowth of economic
demands, various industries needed increasing numbers of
trained office workers. The mid-1800's had witnessed great
numbers of immigrants arriving into the United States. Among
the first of these immigrants were the Irish, seeking relief
from famine and oppression at home. As additional immigrants
arrived, each contributed to the social and cultural
character of the community--Irish, French Canadian, German,
Polish, and Russian. The population expanded from just 4,600
in 1885 to 60,000 by 1920.

Secondary waves of immigrants coming into the community
often found skilled and semi-skilled employment in factories
where there were foremen who spoke their native languages.
For instance, many German immigrants were employed in the
Germania Textile Mills, a German-founded company with many
German-speaking management people. Utilizing French-speaking
foremen, the Livingston and Skinner Mills, although owned by

English-speakers, employed many French-Canadians to work in the spinning and weaving rooms. The same was true for Polish workers in other Yankee-owned mills.

The Holyoke Water Power Company employed Irish immigrants to work digging the canals. These Irish immigrants were generally English speaking because in their native country they were forbidden by the British to speak Gaelic.

Largely Catholic (except for the Germans and Jews), the first goal of many of these immigrant families was the building of their own churches and schools. As certain language groups tended to settle in separate areas of the city, a person who spoke little or no English could find employment, worship, shop, and communicate with his or her neighbors with little difficulty. It is little wonder that bilingual education was not developed even at this time of mass migration, since the "enclaves" of various language groups maintained their own schools.

Precious Blood, Immaculate Conception, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help were French churches that set up schools to serve the French-Canadian community, providing education for their children in both English and French. The Mater Dolorosa Church established a school of the same name to serve the Polish community. The Irish, English and Scottish

Catholics generally attended St. Jerome's, Sacred Heart, and Holy Rosary diocesan schools established by the Bishop of Springfield.

Response to the Mills

The city of Holyoke was at the forefront of the industrial revolution. Keeping pace with the growing needs of its mill-based economy, Holyoke established a high school in 1852. According to Harper (1973):

> . . . this high school offered two courses leading to diplomas; a thorough course of two years in "English Branches" constituting a practical business preparation, and a four year course in the classics which prepared for college. College preparation still consisted of the study of Latin, Greek, mathematics, and French. Instruction in English as a language and literature was not to begin until 1891 (p. 94).

As Harper notes, a program called "English Branch" offered business subjects in the 1850's at Holyoke High School. This preparation helped fill the need of a trained work force of office workers.

Just before the end of the 19th century, education in Holyoke as we know it today began to take shape. Courses offered at the high school included manual training,

industrial arts, domestic and fine arts, and science. A

"commercial department" was established at this time,

signaling the definite beginning of "vocational" education.

A separate vocational school, Holyoke Trade School, was

created in the city to provide training in agriculture and

skilled trades (Harper, p. 95).

Although Holyoke High School opened its doors to all

children in the mid-19th century, social, economic, and

political forces prevented many students from taking

advantage of public school. The mills needed low-cost labor;

children from low-income families dropped out of school early

to work at the looms or on the paper machines. This trend

was repeated throughout the United States. Statistics

indicated that about two million American children were part

of the workforce in 1910 (Berg, p. 1). Even though many

community leaders of this time supported the various child

labor laws designed to keep children in school and out of

dangerous, hard, and long work days, they often met with

strong opposition. Opponents to these laws included the

Catholic church, most mill owners, and often the parents of

the child-workers. Parents indoctrinated with ideas about

the evils of idleness among children cooperated with

employers, helping them to recruit young factory hands from

indigent families. In Holyoke, Catholic priests took to

their pulpits and told their parishioners not to support the

newly proposed child-labor laws. In Working People of

Holyoke, Hartford (1990) wrote: " . . . Cardinal O'Connell
made it clear that no Catholic should support the bill"
(p. 170).

As noted earlier, after the passage of the national
compulsory attendance law, 1946, larger numbers of children
attending school increased dramatically. As the industrial
revolution made its headway into the area, there was a need
for millwrights and millhands. These changes reflected, once
again, education's response to the demands of business, which
needed employees to fill the growing need in these areas.
These business subjects were already being offered in the
Business Education Department at Holyoke High School.
Documented enrollment figures, sent annually to the State
Board of Education, showed students participating in "office
occupation" and "distributive education" classes at Holyoke
High School.

Failing Mill Industries

Beginning in the 1960's, the city of Holyoke experienced
the latest migration. This migration consisted of Spanish-
speaking United States citizens, most of whom emigrated from
Puerto Rico during the 60's and 70's (Harper, 1973, p. 220).
It was for these new citizens that bilingual education became
needed (DiCarlo, 1982, p. 384; Harper, 1973, p. 199).

According to the 1960 census, there were 100 Spanish-
speaking people residing in Holyoke. At the time of the 1970
census, there were close to 2,000 Hispanics in the city.
Other records such as church documents indicate that the
Spanish-speaking population was actually higher: about 4,500
people in 1970 or about 10 per cent of Holyoke's total
population. By the summer of 1971, the numbers had increased
to 6,000 (Harper, 1973, pp. 221-222). This group of Holyoke
immigrants met with more difficulties than earlier arrivals.
What made this migration unique was that even though they
were United States citizens, they were perceived as
foreigners by most people in the community. Many Holyoke
citizens developed the belief that these immigrants did not
want to work, although the truth was that there were simply
not enough jobs available. These Spanish-speaking citizens
relocated to Holyoke in the hope of securing a better way of
life working in the nearby farms or the mills. But, by the
70's, most mills were closed and potential tobacco jobs had
dried up.

The Hispanic immigrants were also drawn into Holyoke by
the availability of affordable housing. Many apartments had
been evacuated after World War II by families who were able
to buy homes, leaving a large number of apartments vacant.
Most low-income housing was located in Ward 1 and Ward 2,
which are areas located near the canals. These apartments

were within walking distance of the factories where most of the Spanish-speaking immigrants who had jobs were employed.

This massive migration into Holyoke had a major impact on the city's educational institutions. The impact was mainly felt at the elementary level, with a concentration of young students living in Wards 1 and 2. According to Hartford (1990) "10,000 pupils were enrolled in the Holyoke schools as of June, 1972, and almost 1,000 of those pupils were of Hispanic origin" (p. 221).

Concurrent with the wave of Hispanics into Holyoke, and the dying of the paper and textile industries within the city, were major changes on the national level. Once again, the public and the business community were losing faith in the school systems. As Americans watched the Soviets launch Sputnik into space, they became worried that their children were losing educational ground. America was not keeping up with technology. Even though educational standards were needed, it was impossible, with each state in control of its own school systems, to bring about a measurable national standard.

Hoping to give education a shot in the arm, the Kennedy administration established the Head Start Program, and provided programs to instruct school dropouts and the disadvantaged students with various Title programs. This effort to improve education was supported by the public and industry. The pressure was on to give direction to education

by federally funded programs. Holyoke, because of its
disadvantaged population, was an obvious target for these
funds.

The federal government helped Holyoke cope with its
educational problems, particularly those of the
disadvantaged. The city of Holyoke received federal funds to
give Holyoke's children a "better than equal" opportunity in
the schools (Harper, p. 199).

The late Dr. Marcella R. Kelly, former school
superintendent of Holyoke, noted in 1969 that the city had
many children in Wards 1 and 2 who did not speak English.
Stressing the need for these children to be educated, she
hired the first two English as a Second Language (ESL)
teachers to work at Morgan and the old West Elementary
Schools, which were located in these wards. This pull-out
program was set up to help these Spanish-speaking students
learn English. Holyoke was once again ahead of its time.
The Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) laws, passed in
1970, stated that students would learn their basic subject
areas while taking ESL classes. The expectation was for
students to learn basic subjects in their native language
while studying English at the same time. Most students were
mainstreamed to all-English classes within a time frame of
about three to five years. Today, at any given time, there
are more mainstreamed Spanish-speaking students in regular
classes than in either the ESL or TBE classes.

In 1971, one teacher was hired to teach about twelve Spanish-speaking students enrolled at the high school. She taught the academic courses of math, science, and history in Spanish. At that time, the K-12 enrollment was 7,510 students out of a population of 43,705.

It took years for the Hispanic presence in Holyoke to have any impact on the high school's Business Education Department. Up until 1993, only students with well developed English-speaking skills were allowed to elect business preparatory courses. The teaching of these secondary school aged Spanish-speaking children was more complicated than had been originally anticipated. Larger numbers of these students who needed service were now enrolling in school and were being placed in age-appropriate grade level TBE and ESL classes. More teachers and course offerings at all levels were needed to service these students. English as a second language (ESL), along with Spanish Language Arts (SLA), math, science, social studies, and physical education had to be provided. Despite many programs set up to teach Hispanic speaking students in their native language, no efforts were made to accommodate them in business education. One reason was that these students had no room in their schedules to take elective courses. Another reason was there was no perceived need for bilingual workers in local business and offices. However, as Hispanic citizens began to demand health, legal, insurance, and banking services, local

business leaders began to recognize the need for bilingual workers in their offices. The 1990 census for Holyoke reported a population of 43,705, with Hispanics accounting for 31.7 per cent of that total (Community Profile for Holyoke, 1993).

A transitional business computer keyboarding course was offered for the first time in the fall semester of 1993. It was designed to give Spanish-speaking students, with some English language skills, an opportunity to learn with some support in their native language the skill of computer keyboarding. The idea was for students to be mainstreamed into advanced business education courses as they became more proficient in English. This began the first phase of the Business Education Department's plans to offer opportunities for all students at the high school to participate in a course that would help prepare them with an entry-level occupational skill [keyboarding] necessary to succeed in the workplace. The next phase is to continue to build curricula that focus on the needs of the city's present population as we strive to come into line with the demands and expectations of educational reform in the 21st century.

C H A P T E R   III

METHODOLOGY

As a teacher of high school business education, this
researcher has long been interested in students' job
readiness and the job opportunities available to them after
graduation. It seemed important to know whether current
school instructional practices met contemporary demands of
business. Therefore, in 1991, this researcher started a
school-to-work partnership between her high school's Business
Education Department and several area businesses. The
program was absorbed into the local school-to-work initiative
in 1995, and consequently, no longer operated as a separate
entity after that date.

This dissertation is a case study of that partnership.
It is not intended to be a clinical analysis of the
development of the program. It is meant to present as much
as possible a picture of the living partnership. The desired
outcome is intended to be a "thick description of all aspects
of the program rather than the testing of a hypothesis"
(Merrian, 1988). It is intended to be a vision of the
dynamics of everyday interactions between established
workers, who served as supervisors, and students, who, for
the most part, were entering their first job experience.

Additionally, the study will look at issues facing students, workplace mentors, business stakeholders, educators and the partnership coordinator in order to gain a greater understanding of the workplace as a teaching strategy. An examination of this partnership will contribute to the limited body of research presently available in the area of school-to-work partnerships involving high school business education departments.

An Innovative Partnership Approach

In 1991, the author initiated the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program at Holyoke High School. The objective of this program was to establish collaboration and form a partnership which would draw actual business practice (connecting activities) into the classroom (school-based learning), and simultaneously, extend business education into the workplace (work-based training). In order to qualify for the program, students had to successfully complete various business education courses such as Data Management, Keyboarding I and II, Computer Applications, and Accounting. Placed in local business establishments, the students worked between two and one-half to three hours a day for twenty weeks. Students then worked at another business for the next twenty weeks, thus the title of the program. The next year they would be able to continue at two different worksites. The goal was

for students to gain experience in at least four different business environments. For example: banking, insurance, health, legal and/or in other areas of business.

The advantages of the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program were three-fold. First, the student benefitted by gaining work experience. He or she had the opportunity to explore the working world to determine whether to enter into it directly after graduation from high school or to prepare further through post-secondary education. Second, the employer had the benefit of low wage, well-prepared, part-time office help. They had the further opportunity to observe and evaluate students at work and perhaps offer future employment to one or more of these students. Third, the educator benefitted from the breakdown of education's traditional isolation. The continuous interplay among the business community, the educator, and the student provided a valuable flow of communication. Such an arrangement helped to bridge the gap between theory and practice and furnished mutual reinforcement. It also provided a new dimension in the professional development of business education as it aided educators in deciding on, designing, upgrading, and implementing their curriculum.

The HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program may serve as a model to determine whether the formulation of this kind of partnership is an effective educational strategy which will benefit all stakeholders in future partnerships. This program introduced

primarily inner-city minority youths from poor families into a workplace culture with which they had no experience. Due to the sensitive circumstances of these student participants, this study may provide a critical bellwether for future school/business partnerships.

Case Study Method

The case study method provides opportunity for an in-depth qualitative look at a small number of participants. This researcher is interested in understanding the views, experiences, and responses of participants in a specific situation--in this case, a school-to-work partnership.

David Bloome (1989) presented the concept of narrative as a way of knowing. Bloome investigated the idea that stories have structure, and in order to make sense of experiences, one has to listen closely to the stories told about those experiences.

This researcher will offer an in-depth description of the partnership and its participants through a montage of voices extracted from a series of phenomenological interviews. Using in-depth phenomenological interviewing as the research method "will provide access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provides a way for [the] researcher to understand the meaning of that behavior" (Seidman, 1991, p. 4). The goal is to have the participant

reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study. "Making meaning requires that the participant[s] look at how the factors in their lives interacted to bring them to their present situation. It also requires that they look at their present in detail and within the context that it occurs" (Seidman, 1991, p. 12).

These assumptions motivated this researcher to use phenomenological interviewing as the base for this study. This interview method was used to gain knowledge about how participants' ideas, beliefs, and strategies influenced their behavior during their involvement in the program and also to gain information about the workplace as a teaching tool.

Data Collection

In-depth Interviews

In-depth phenomenological-based interviewing is a method that involves a series of three interviews with participants. A series of three 90-minute in-depth, phenomenological interviews were conducted with workplace mentors and participating students (Seidman, 1991).

Single follow-up interviews were held some two or three years after the initial set with participants who could be contacted, in an effort to capture further reflections on

their experiences. Single hour interviews conducted with business and education leaders contributed to this study.

Mentor Interviews

The first mentor interview focused on the historical and biographical background of the participating workplace mentor. A typical stimulus question was, "I am interested in understanding your earlier life experiences. Would you share with me as much as possible about your background, your childhood and schooling, your own family?"

The second interview centered on how they came to their current position and the details of what a typical day might be like for them.

In the third interview, the mentor was asked to reflect on what the student mentoring experience meant to them.

No one had ever asked any of the mentors to relate the stories of their own lives, so they all responded readily to the general question. Occasional prompts from their own discourse were all that was needed to keep their narratives flowing.

Student Interviews

The first interview focused on the historical and biographical background of the participating student.

The second interview was centered on what a typical day at home, at school, and at work was like for them.

In the third interview, the students were asked to reflect on what their work experience meant to them.

It was more difficult to get students to respond with spontaneous flowing answers than the mentors in their responses. A supplementary approach for working with high school students that was suggested by Cleary, Casey, and Hudson-Ross (1993) was used on occasions when students would no longer advance their stories. That technique involved having open ended questions related to the research, prepared in advance to insure that important topics were covered in the interviews. Such guiding questions were appropriately used during student interviews.

Other Interviews

In addition to these in-depth phenomenological interviews, the researcher arranged for single interviews with other individuals who possessed information relevant to the study. These interviews represented "guided conversation" among relevant stakeholders. The idea in this approach is " . . . meeting to share a viewpoint" (Loflund, 1984, p. 68).

All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Business and education personalities granted specific

permission to use their names and affiliations. The mentors'
and students' names are encoded in order to preserve their
anonymity.

Voices of Participants

Depending on the richness of the narratives, portions of
some interviews were quoted verbatim and used extensively in
the dissertation. Other interviews were quoted less
comprehensively.

The researcher intended to inform the reader about the
behavior and responses of participants in a specific school-
to-work partnership designed as a business education teaching
tool. With narratives of workplace mentors, students, and
others, this research has been an attempt to address many
practical issues raised by recent school-to-work legislation.

Field Notes and Student Journals

Field notes were maintained by keeping notes of phone
calls, meetings with workplace mentors, other partnership
stakeholders and students. In this way, the researcher was
able to keep track of details and to remember situations that
were not recorded during interviews. This method of note-
taking helped keep accurate records of various interactions.

Students were required to maintain brief daily journals. These were referred to only to monitor the student's progress and none of those notes are quoted in this paper.

Data Analysis

Methods

The data for this study was presented in two parts. First, the researcher profiled the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program and presented it in context with several other partnerships. Second, the researcher offered representative profiles of mentors and students to provide a human perspective to their relations in the work situation. The related work experiences of mentors and students were then organized into issues that were common to many of the different work stations. These experiences were illustrated with examples from the interviews, with not only those mentors and students who were included in the profiles, but also from the stories of many of the other participants.

Analysis was facilitated by reviewing the transcriptions of the interviews and conversations. By attempting to understand as fully as possible the participants' perspectives, and utilizing the information gleaned from others who responded to questions during the research, this

researcher was better able to analyze the complex factors involved in a partnership that served as a business education teaching tool.

This researcher looked for patterns and/or themes that reoccurred throughout the research. The issues filtered out of the body of documentation by the number of times they were mentioned and by the emotional intensity of the expression used by the participants. There are many "how-to" start-up books on school-to-work partnerships, but this author wanted to illustrate how they applied in the real world.

There is a density of voices in this study. The evidence is presented in this manner to assure objectivity by reducing editorial comment or influence and in the belief that this format best mirrors the essence of the phenomenological approach.

The major goal of this study focused on one school-to-work program that encompassed school-based learning, work-based learning and connecting activities that could be used by other schools and business communities as they attempt to understand and try to meet the mandated requirements of both the state and the federal educational reform legislation.

Integrity of Transcription

In presenting interviews of the participants in the research, brackets [] are used to indicate when, in order to

make sense of the passage, a word or words have been inserted that are not authentic. Brackets are also used to include terms of identification used as a substitute for a proper name that was expressed in the original transcript. Ellipses (. . .) are used to indicate the omission of parts of a selection that have not been included. In most instances, mnemonic expressions, the hesitations and repetitions that are characteristic only of oral expression, have been eliminated and certain casual terms have been modified. In some cases, idiomatic terms, vernaculars and ungrammatical expressions have been retained to capture the authentic texture of the voices. Editing has been dictated by the intent to be true to the larger interview text and to protect the participants.

CHAPTER IV

HHS 20/20 CO-OP PROGRAM: A CASE STUDY

The central intent of this chapter is to consider the
nature of partnerships and to explore the dynamics of the
work experience. This chapter will offer an examination of
the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program, the individuals who participated
in this partnership on the operational level, and their
worksite relationships. In addition, similar area
partnerships will be reviewed, and certain aspects that were
common to these partnerships and that may impact the newly
established school-to-work regulations, will be explored.

The chapter is divided into two major sections, Programs
and Participants. The section on programs has three further
divisions: (1) the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program division presents
an overview of the program; (2) the Other Partnerships
division reviews several school/business partnerships that
operated during the same period as the HHS 20/20 Co-Op
Program. These are examined through the perspectives of
three business leaders and two education leaders who were
interviewed in order to command a broader view of
partnerships; (3) the Common Issues division relates a number
of experiences common among the representative

school/business partnerships. Certain of these raise concerns to be considered as education moves into more school-to-work initiatives. The second major section concerning participants is subdivided into four divisions: (1) The Participants division recognizes that the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program was a student-centered activity. The most immediate, daily interaction was between students and worksite mentors. Representative profiles of mentors, and then of students, will be expressed in their own voices. These personal expressions highlight backgrounds and life experiences that have shaped their individual lives and influenced the way they respond to new experiences and to people. The next divisions; (2) Recurrent Issues, (3) Business Education skills, and (4) the division on Business Expectations explores a number of issues that commonly arose during the work experiences. These issues were selected on the basis of frequency and the intensity of concern. They will be brought into focus through the words of the participants.

<u>Programs</u>

HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program

The HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program was a partnership between the Business Education Department at Holyoke High School and local business offices. It was designed to provide practical

experiences for high school students. Students in the 11th and/or 12th grade of the business sequence could apply for positions. Students were selected on the bases of teacher recommendations, a performance test, and an interview procedure.

A student would work at a location after school for two and one-half to three hours a day, five days a week, for twenty weeks. During the second school semester, the student would work for an additional twenty weeks at a different type of site. A mentor at the work site would provide training and guidance for the student, and prepare a written evaluation after ten weeks. The student would be paid $5 an hour. A favorable evaluation would result in a 25 cent hourly raise. A poor evaluation would result in termination. If, upon graduation from high school, a student was hired for full-time employment, it was agreed that the company would pay for one college course per semester as long as the course of study related to the industry in which he/she was employed.

The Evaluation Form for student work assessment used in the partnership is included in Appendix D to offer a fuller understanding of the process and structure referred to in the profiles. (APPENDIX D. Evaluation Form)

It was intended that all participants would benefit from the arrangement: students would gain valuable work experience, establish recommendations for a resume, and earn

a salary; businesses would gain part-time help who had a
foundation in business skills and practices, be eligible for
a tax incentive, and provide a service to the community;
business teachers would gain an insight into contemporary
office procedures, validate their current instruction, and
acquire a practical measure for curriculum development.

The HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program ran for four years. It was
initiated with a single placement in the Fall of 1991 and
concluded after the Spring of 1995 when the program was
subsumed by the Chicopee-Holyoke School-to-Work Partnership.
As one of the two grant writers for the Chicopee-Holyoke
School-to-Work Partnership: System Building RFP - Local
Partnership Component, this researcher consciously
incorporated the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program into that broader
effort so that it would benefit from the funding available
through the grant. The HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program had been
unfunded.

During the span of the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program, twenty-
five (25) students were provided with forty-one(41)
placements at twelve (12) Holyoke sites. The majority,
eighteen (18), of these students were Hispanic. Six (6) were
white and one (1) was of mixed race. Nearly all students,
twenty-two (22), were female.

Thirteen (13) students entered a two or four year
college upon graduating from high school. Nine (9) are
majoring in Business Administration or Accounting. One (1)

who had been placed with a health facility plans to be a nurse. One (1) joined the navy. Six (6) students were offered permanent positions with a business at which they had been assigned. Four (4) moved away after graduation.

Students who entered the program as seniors were only available for one or two semester placements. Only two (2) students who began as juniors worked at three different sites. No one completed four different work experiences. One (1) student was terminated and seven (7) students dropped out of the program sometime after their ten week evaluation period. Work experiences in these cases averaged 14 to 15 weeks. With the exception of the one (1) student who was terminated, all the students received favorable evaluations and a pay increase, including the seven (7) who left sometime after their first ten week evaluation.

Other Partnerships

During the period that the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program was active, a number of parallel partnership efforts were operational in the city, region, and state. To gain additional perspective on school/business partnerships, this researcher conducted a series of interviews with educational and business leaders who were familiar with alternate models.

The Boston Compact, discussed previously as a nationally recognized and probably the best know partnership group in

Massachusetts, has been reorganized three time in its
fourteen year history. It's an umbrella under which many
partnership ventures are guided:

> The Boston Compact is a partnership among
> teachers, students, parents, administrators, and
> business leaders, with the common purpose of
> restoring the Boston Public School System to its
> former position as a national leader in education.
> . . . It was one of the first community-based
> endowments for public education in the United
> States. Contributions help to fund innovative
> educational ideas, creating programs for students
> in kindergarten through high school and beyond
> through the undergraduate years. The mission of
> the plan is fairly straight forward: support
> innovations and improvements in public schools;
> expand opportunities for students through the
> disbursement of private funds; and strengthen the
> base of community support for public schools by
> promoting greater awareness and understanding of
> their importance (Cilley, 1993, p. 1).

Peter J. Negroni, Ed.D., Superintendent, Springfield
Public Schools, offered comments on The Boston Compact's
success:

> There is evidence that it served. The
> expectations were unrealistic, and it did not

attack the problem from the broader perspectives.
Again, the general tendency in school
administration has been to attempt to deal with
issues by identifying small problems rather than
looking at the total issue called schooling. The
problem has been that you cannot address the issues
that we have now by tinkering. The old ways just
won't work. Maybe the systems have to look totally
different. Maybe they have to reinvent themselves
and that is why the Boston Compact did not work as
it was intended.

Interestingly enough, [the group] has just put
out a new plan and they are refocusing and they are
reassessing and they are developing a new approach.
It did not work as they thought it would work, but
they are now doing new things that are more
responsive to what the needs are now. Hopefully,
they will continue to move.

Robert Fowler is the president of Hampden Papers, Inc.
At the time of the interview he was on the Executive Board of
the Hampden County Regional Employment Board (REB), and
president of the Holyoke Chamber of Commerce. He spoke of
the Chamber's efforts to work with the schools:

The Chamber of Commerce decided several years
ago that education was important, a very important
aspect of the future of business in our community.

We recognized that if our schools do not turn out
future employees, we've all got problems. The
chamber responded by putting together a committee
they called the Superintendent's Advisory
Committee. The idea was the businesses have a lot
of experience about how to run an organization.
And we also have a fair amount of knowledge about
what it is we need in inbound kids. This was
during the tenure of the previous superintendent.
He loved the committee, and he used it a lot. He
could bring us together, and he could float stuff
out to see how we'd respond. We were there to help
him, we were there to advise him.

Well, that was all very well and good until
Gordon Oakes got involved. Gordon Oakes, who was
president of Monarch at the time, chancellor, or
president of the Board of Trustees of the
University, felt that Holyoke was a great
laboratory for figuring out what the University
could do, in helping education. And he formed the,
Business Partnership, I think it was called The
Greater Holyoke Partnership.

Looking for further clarification about this
partnership, this researcher located the coordinating team
chairperson, Kendall Walsh, who said, "that the operational
name of the partnership was City Lights." In an interview,

he gave the following explanation and quoted from pertinent
documents about the City Lights Partnership:

> . . . it was formally formulated in 1988 and
> was a 'coalition of local business, industry, and
> community leaders working toward revitalization of
> the city's educational system.' It was a component
> of University of Massachusetts President David C.
> Knapp's urban school revitalization initiative,
> City Lights. Its mission in Holyoke was 'to
> provide a process to develop partnerships that will
> ensure that its students became competent,
> confident participants in society.' With the
> departure of its key members, City Lights soon
> collapsed.

Robert Fowler continued:

> Gordon called a number of the really big, you
> know, bank presidents. Gordon Oakes himself . . .
> and these guys started meeting with the
> superintendent and they put some money on the
> table. The Superintendent's Advisory Committee, we
> gave lots of advice. We never gave him cash. And
> the superintendent just pushed us aside. Here was
> this other group, they were more important
> businessmen than we were, and they had money and we

didn't. So the Superintendent's Advisory Committee
went away. And that in effect ended, for a while,
the Chamber's connection with the school.

The present superintendent, of course, took a
different view, and we've been meeting with him on
a fairly regular basis, giving him quiet advice.
About two years ago, we asked the superintendent if
the schools would be interested in the Chamber
running some kind of 'World of Work' program in the
schools. He felt it was terrific. He felt that
you really had the schools over here and the
business community over there, and no bridges, no
communication between them. And so we established
the Chamber's education committee. The education
committee put together and executed last year an
entire 12-week program at a middle school. That is
until the School Committee decided last week that
we were 'a meaningless social service program' and
threw us out. We've been put on hold while the
School Committee determines whether we are worthy
to have anything to do with our schools.

Fowler has initiated his own partnership plan that
focuses on the future needs of his company's anticipated role
in the global economy:

Back in the 1960's vast majority of our output
went here in New England. We viewed California as

the end of the world. There was a strong, unspoken belief that California was too far away for us to really conduct business sufficiently. So we didn't have any representation out there. Today, California is like going to Chicopee. We've got a full-time person out there. We sell millions of dollars into the California market.

We're very much interested in extending our sales into foreign countries. It's in Central and South America that we feel our real major potential for increasing our sales is. So we have set a task of the growing Spanish as a capability seamlessly woven into our operation. I want a bilingual workforce here in the office, and I think in this community I can get it, if I develop it myself over time. As a consequence I am working now with the Holyoke Public Schools to develop a program where Spanish-speaking students would start to work here.

I'll give them a summer job between their junior and senior year, I'll give them a part-time job during their entire senior year, and when they come out of that, if we're still agreeing, if we still like each other, then they become full-time employees and come right into my college program.

We have here a tuition reimbursement program. Actually, it's a full scholarship program. It says

that any employee of this company who is qualified
for higher education can get all of it that they
need and want, and the company pays for it 100
percent.

Frank Lovelock, Senior Vice President of Human Resources
at the Springfield Institution for Savings (SIS), was
responsible for running the nationally recognized Adopt-A-
Student Program which had been conceived and funded by SIS.
He described the program:

> Each employee would match up with a student in
> the seventh grade and commit to stay with them
> through the ninth grade. So there was a three year
> commitment. They would meet with them for an hour a
> week, and the object of the program was drop-out
> prevention. They weren't there to tutor the
> student, or to help them with their grades, but
> rather to provide a role model, an adult role
> model, to help the student understand that there is
> a purpose to education. It helps one achieve self-
> sufficiency and other goals in life. And the
> program simply put adult role models together with
> students, fostered a relationship. And because of
> that attention, helped these students to make the
> choice not to drop out, but to stay in school. The
> students had been identified by the school as
> having a high potential for dropping out. Other

components involved, once they reached the ninth grade, giving them jobs during the summer and after school for a limited number of hours at the bank.

I got to play the role of guiding the evolution of the program. I worked closely with the principal of the school. Together we really brought about a number of changes that we learned through experience. I think those changes, the ability to adjust the program in progress to changing conditions, to learn from our experiences, and to make adjustments, helped that program to be very successful.

First we created the program with mentors providing a role model. Then we realized we needed a coordinator at the school. Then we realized we needed a coordinator at the bank. Then we realized that what could really help them would be to get them into the workplace. That came from the students' growing curiosity about where and how their particular mentors work. Then we got together supervisors and talked about doing it, which brought home the point that it's not as easy as its sounds. You have to provide training and think about it. And so, that's how it evolved.

I do find that programs have to evolve and change, and it's hard to keep them exactly the same

for too very long. But I was moving in the
direction of more teacher and parent involvement.
We were getting to the point where each student
would have a team around them, made up of our full-
time program coordinator, the school's full-time
program coordinator, the teacher who was most
closely associated with the guidance of the student
at the school, and the student's parents. That was
really the team we were building to support each
student.

The program was very successful because,
unlike many programs where businesses are involved
with a school, it put people into the effort rather
than dollars. So we had thirty or so involved,
mentoring students, and had achieved a significant
reduction in the dropout rate among those students
through this program.

It did two things that were great. It helped
the students who were involved in this particular
program in a terrific way, and any program that
does that is worth all of the effort you put into
it. You could argue that if it helped one student
to have a better life it was worth it. And this
helped many students

Of the students in the program, maybe a third
of them chose to go into the work component. Of

those who went into it, I would say half were
successful. The other half had difficulties and
would not stay with that part of the program.   Of
the half that was successful, a small portion,
maybe a third, became long-term employees with us
and are still with us today.

The second thing it did, is it provided a
model that I can talk about, and some lessons were
learned from it. And there is a chance that that
will go on and become a small part of the total
resource of knowledge available for this sort of
thing, and help programs that come about in the
future. So I feel very good about it.

It also, I might add, was a very positive
thing for the employees who worked in it. They all
were enriched by it. It enriched our workplace.
When a student was in an area, the department sort
of adopted them, and felt a responsibility for
them, and enjoyed working with them. And so it was
a very positive thing for us. It also gave the
bank a demonstrated commitment to the community
that we could talk about. For us, as a bank within
the Springfield community, it was something we
could point to, to say to our customers, we are a
part of the community, and we do have an interest.

Adopt-A-Student ran for a good six years, and has just stopped this year. We still have a relationship with the school, but because of the bank's condition, we have an earnings problem due to some bad loans. We have had a serious management change as a result of that. The Chairman of the Board who brought that in is no longer with the bank. We have a new Chairman. His role is to turn around the earnings situation, to help us work our way through some bad loans and get back to profitability. And so it's harder for us to allocate money to that program, or especially to allocate employees to the program. It represented about eight percent of our workforce that were released on worktime. We've really reduced our workforce a bit in order to cut expenses.

Lovelock offered an intriguing analogy on the nature of partnerships in the following exchange:

One of the great frustrations with programs is that they work in the particular situation where they're set up. Then like our program, they grow, they flourish, they work well, they accomplish great things, and then they gradually fade. And if other entities do not pick them up and use them, they provide a great example to be studied by subsequent parties who are interested, and have

then provided a kind of laboratory. But they

really haven't fostered similar partnerships at the

level where they could. And I compared that to a

mule, where when you create a mule, you take a

horse, and you mate a horse with a donkey, and the

resulting animal is a mule. But if you take two

mules, they cannot mate and create more mules.

Mules can only be made one at a time. So many of

our programs are like that. Your bring parties

together and you make a mule. And it is a

wonderful thing that serves the purpose. But it is

missing the ability to regenerate itself. And we

should look, when making programs, to find a way to

structure them so that they won't be like mules and

simply terminate when they die. They should be

like, like new animals. Like when you create a new

breed of dog. That's a great example because it

happens so frequently. You can then mate two of

that breed together, and in fact come up with

another one just like it. And that's the thing we

want to try and do with programs.

Common Issues

A number of experiences are common to school/business

partnerships. Certain of these raise concerns that should be

considered as education moves into more comprehensive school-
to-work initiatives. The business and educational leaders
interviewed in the previous division generally supported
direct observations of this researcher on the characteristics
of partnerships. Although this testimony is limited to the
small range of partnerships being considered in this study, a
number of significant commonalities arose. Since the
interviews were conducted separately, no specific consensus
was reached, but agreement on four shared observations can be
constructed from their accounts: (1) Schools and businesses
are not easy partners, (2) Partnerships are worthwhile and
beneficial, (3) Partnerships rely on individuals, and (4)
Partnerships don't last under present practices.

Not Easy Partners

The first common observation asserts that schools and
businesses are essentially different. As Robert Fowler cites
in the previous section, ". . . schools [are] over here and
the business community [is] over there." Peter Negroni
expands on this precept:

> The danger here is to try to compare these
> institutions called schools to profit making
> businesses. While I think many of the practices
> that businesses use are affective, and can be used
> in the schools, I think the one key ingredient in

school, and Antonucci says it best when he talks about schools being communities, where they are bound by sharing, by caring, by those principles and those values. If a company is bound by those principles and those values and is profit making they are very, very unique. There are very few. Generally the goal is to make money.

Schools are concerned with students. Frank Lovelock emphasizes the interests of educators, "School-to-work transition programs will depend upon teachers to support and carry them out, they are the ones primarily interested in the students." Businesses are concerned with profits. Mentor M. confirms their motivation, "I know there are people in the community who would like to support a program like this. If it takes special funding, that might be a problem."

With the distance that exists between education and business because of the inherent differences in their primary purposes, it is difficult to bring them into successful partnerships. Although it might appear that there should be a natural, even symbionic, relationship between schools and businesses, there is evidence of mistrust between the two entities.

When this researcher first approached potential business partners to form the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program, she was simply an educator and found no encouragement. After she began to operate her own retail business, and was recognized at the

Chamber of Commerce breakfast, she was no longer perceived as only a teacher, but also as a fellow business person. She was then able to establish a number of locations that would accept students.

Mentor C. thought that teachers should come to the workplace. She said, "I think maybe the teachers should be involved, should come into the office atmosphere, wherever the [student] is going to be working, to see the person who's going to be training them."

Mentor M. added, "I think it would be beneficial if teachers had some training. I guess we just assume that they know what's going on, and that isn't necessarily the case."

As counterpoint, Frank Lovelock cautioned workers who would be working with teachers:

> I found the teachers to be very, very
> interested, but you had to work with them in a very
> careful way. You have to try very hard not to
> convey a patronizing approach. Teachers are very
> sensitive to people from business coming along and
> assuming they're some gift from heaven.

Worthwhile and Beneficial

There was enthusiastic agreement on the second shared observation. Partnerships work. Partnerships enrich students, enrich workers, and enrich institutions. They

generate new understandings, new friendships, and new outlooks. They create a sense of accomplishment, a sense of unity, and a sense of social responsibility.

Rely on Individuals

The third observation expresses that the establishment and maintenance of partnerships depend more on individuals than on organizations. The term actually embraces two levels of individuals:

(1) The initiators. In each school/business partnership that was reviewed, key individuals energized the plan. Peter Negroni implied that Charlie Gibson motivated the Boston Compact. Gordon Oakes was the prime mover in City Lights. Frank Lovelock's predecessor created the Adopt-A-Student program, and Lovelock and the middle school principal saw it through. Robert Fowler is identified with the middle school program, World of Work, and is specifically responsible for the Hampden Papers, Inc. plan. This researcher established the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program.

Typically, partnerships grow out of one person's idea. That person has to have the stature or the personality to commit his/her institution to the idea, and the character to convince a willing partner and his/her respective institution

of the value and validity of that idea. Together, they can form a partnership and develop a program. As Frank Lovelock would say, "You make a mule."

(2) The sustainers. Partnerships are created by a few select individuals, but they are sustained by the many individuals who participate at the primary operational level. They are equally key individuals. The most carefully conceived program must rely on the teachers and the employees, and in the case of the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program, the mentors and, ultimately, the students. Without all of these individuals, partnerships do not flourish.

Don't Last

All of the partnerships that have been addressed in this paper were short lived. Partnerships that proved to be mutually beneficial, that filled everyone with pride and pleasure, did not persist. The nature of partnerships are volatile and by their very nature cannot survive as originally conceived. Partnerships can not and do not remain static. The reasons that the established programs cited in this study did not continue can be shown. Edward Dooley said, "Every time the superintendent of the Boston Public Schools changes, we have to start again. In fact, if any key Compact member changes or drops out we have to re-group. It

is not the same Boston Compact that we originally designed."
Peter Negroni explained why the Boston Compact was revised,
"it did not work as planned."

Referring to City Lights, Kendall Walsh related:

These were very influential people and they
were genuinely committed to the program, but within
two years they were all out of their jobs. I
remember one of our teachers said, 'All of those
$600 suits that were on the stage with you, where
are they now?' Monarch Capital was in financial
chaos, the bank merged, the newspaper closed, even
the president of UMass was gone.

Frank Lovelock said that Adopt-A-Student was suspended
because of "the bank's condition." World of Work was
canceled by the school committee and the HHS 20/20 Co-Op
Program was folded into school-to-work. Even within the four
years that the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program was active, there was
attrition. It lost business partners: one bank merged with
another, one bank's mentor retired and no one else was
willing to take on the additional assignment of being a
mentor and working with a student worker, two companies went
out of business, one business kept the student worker upon
graduation and did not have another opening for an incoming
student, and one business was installing a new computer
system and did not have time to mentor a student worker.

Downsizing, mobility, mergers, and the overall economy have taken their toll on personnel and resources. When a key individual departs or a business entity closes, a partnership is lost.

Participants

The HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program was a student-centered activity. In the partnership between the schools and business, the essential, most immediate daily interaction was between students and the worksite mentors. Representative profiles of students and mentors will be expressed in their own voices. These personal expressions highlight the backgrounds and life experiences that have shaped their individual lives and influenced the way that they respond to new experiences and to other people.

Mentor Profiles

The mentors who served in the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program ranged in position from bank officer to filing clerk. They included owners, managers, supervisors, and department heads. Individuals who were representative of this range of positions, who mentored several different students, and served in a similar office environment were selected to be profiled in this study. Each was representative of the

dominant characteristics of all of the mentors; they were women, white, married, and successful in their occupations.

Profile of Mentor J.

At the time of the first set of interviews Mentor J. was Administrative Assistant to the president of the bank. She was asked to talk about her family of origin, her present family, her education and her job. She began:

> Well, I come from an Italian family, and I'm the middle of three girls. Typical middle child. I have one older sister, who is about four years older, myself, and a sister who is four years younger than me. [Being the middle child] you get the brunt of everything. You get blamed for everything that the older sister doesn't want to take the blame for, and anything that the younger sister thinks she can blame on you and get away with. Always in the middle of everything. Just like Wednesday's in the middle of every week.

> I was born and raised in Springfield. We've lived in Springfield all our lives. I'm a product of the Springfield school system. We really never even moved, so I was able to go through the same elementary school from kindergarten through grade six. When I went to junior high, three junior high

years at the same school. I went to the High

School of Commerce, which is a business school. At

the time my mother and father thought that was just

the greatest thing to have this business school in

your community, because that meant that you would

be prepared for a career. . . . That's all you

needed. This particular high school had a very,

very good reputation for preparing students to meet

the needs of the business community.

School meant everything to me. The quality of

my work was very important . . . and that message

came from the teachers, and came from the guidance

counselor, and came from the principals. We were

taught from elementary school that school is

serious, and it's important, and if you're going to

do anything at all with your life, you have to be

here and you have to give your best every day. Let

me just preface that. A lot of that started at

home. I had parents who were very hard-working

people, very driven. Both of them had their own

businesses at various times. We were always taught

that, and I'm quoting my parents, 'Never do this

much when you can do this much and do a better job.

Always do a little more than what's expected.

Don't ever just settle for doing what's expected.

Push yourself. Go far beyond what's expected of

you.' So that started at home. When I got into
the school system, I always had teachers who would
preach the same thing. Why just be mediocre when
if you push yourself this much more, you can be
great? I was blessed with really terrific
teachers, very dedicated, loyal teachers. Some of
whom, my elementary teachers, I still hold in the
highest regard . . .

I wanted to be a teacher. I was so impressed
with the job that they were doing, up until the
time I got to junior high school, I thought that I
was going to go into teaching. They had done such
a great job of keeping me interested in school,
and, you know, conveying that message that this is
the most important thing you're going to do for
yourself in your life . . . I was getting the same
message at home, too.

[Getting back to wanting to be a teacher] my
teacher left to have a baby. She held the class's
attention at all times. There was no funny stuff
in her class. So we must have had all this energy
and everything all pent up. When she left on
maternity leave and her substitute came in, all
hell broke loose. I just looked at that substitute
teacher and I thought, oh, that could be me some
day up there in this classroom, with complete

mayhem going on around me. I think it was just
around that time that I decided that maybe this
wasn't for me. [laughs]

     I remember I had to get surgery one time, and
my Spanish teacher calling me up saying, 'I'm going
to get the book to you, because I don't want you to
fall behind because you have an A average.' I
mean, I wonder if the teachers would even have time
today to do something like that. She didn't send a
student. She came to my mother's house with my
Spanish book, and said, 'Here's the new
pronunciations we're working on.' And she made
this effort to help me. She was a devoted teacher
. . . Everybody from the Spanish teacher right down
to my gym teachers were dedicated and loyal . . .
They were all outstanding; they all showed us kids
respect.

     My big glorious moment. In the sixth grade,
[my favorite teacher] was Miss M. I just was
always in awe of her. I think she was one of the
best humans to ever walk the earth. She always made
every day so interesting, so exciting. Even the
simplest task was fun. And she had such a sense of
humor. She could captivate the classroom. She
loved to read, and she loved to promote reading.
So one day she gave me this big blue book, and it

was thick. Remember how big the manuals used to
be? You had this reading story, and then there
were all the questions at the end of the story?
She gave the book to me, and this was probably
halfway through the school year, and she said, 'I
have to go [to the principal's office], and I'd
like you to run the reading group.' And she said,
'Here's the guide over here, but you can have your
own format.' That was the first time I ever heard
the word 'format.' And I thought, 'Oh my God,
she's put me in charge,' You know, of reading,
which I loved. I thought reading was the only
thing I liked to do. I'll always remember that. I
mean, that was such a feeling. 'Oh my God, she's
entrusted these minds to me, you know?' I was
elated.

But then I remember another moment later, in
junior high school. This was a literature class,
and we had to read <u>Alice in Wonderland</u>, and we had
to read it out loud in the classroom. She called
on each student to take a turn to read a couple of
pages or so. Now this was a big thing, to have to
read out loud in front of your seventh grade
friends. That called a lot of attention to
yourself. So it was my turn to read. I don't know
how long, I felt like I read forever. At the end

of the passage she asked me a question about what I had just read. I couldn't answer it. I just got so involved in my pronunciation, diction, and the sound of my voice, and the fact that my voice was cracking, and the fact that I was sweating. There were boys in this class. I lost my train of thought, I couldn't comprehend anything for the moment. She stood . . . up there with her long fangy red-painted fingernails, and said, 'Well, what's the matter? Don't you understand anything that you just read?' I just felt this huge wave of humiliation. She was so rude. I thought how rude to pick on me, and I hated her for the rest of the year. Here I was so excited about reading, and I enjoy reading aloud very, very, very much. Even now I love to read aloud. So she took this real fun, positive thing for me, and made it so awful. It was just, oh, it was so humiliating. But just her posture and the tone of her voice, and those glaring black eyes, the way she was looking at me. I was crushed. I mean, I still can remember, here I am 40 almost, and I'm still thinking about that English class. I hate <u>Alice in Wonderland</u>. Wonderful literature . . . and I hate it.

Respect was ingrained in me in my house. You didn't even have to necessarily like everybody, but

you had to respect everybody. Young people, old

people, kids, dogs. You had to respect their

opinions, and their right to have those opinions,

and their moods, their privacy. It was just an

unwritten law that what the teacher said went. You

could disagree with them, but in a humane way. You

just couldn't be disrespectful to them.

In the business school setting, we were

expected to dress in business-like clothing. When

we were in the classroom the teacher was a

professional, and she treated us with a great deal

of respect, and in turn we were supposed to treat

her as a business professional. We were taught

that this is what things were going to be like in a

business setting. This is how we expect you to

look, this is how we expect you to act, and this is

how we expect you to . . . this is the attitude

that we expect you to have about the work that

you're going to be doing. This is not the time to

be silly and to have fun. We're running a business

here, and we expect you to act accordingly.

My mom, she did not go to college. My mother

ran her own [business]. She was a seamstress.

When we were growing up, she branched off from

clothing to draperies and slipcovers, because that

was work that she could do in her own home. She

set up a sewing room for herself in the basement.
She only went down there to sew after we were in
bed or while we were in school. When we got off
the bus, my mother was there always in the kitchen,
making sure that we weren't hungry; second, that we
did our homework; and third, that our beds were
made and that our hands and faces were clean and
that we had clean clothes for the next day. Then
after supper, when we were watching TV or getting
into bed, then she would go into the basement and
do her sewing.

My dad was an immigrant with a fifth grade
education. My dad did not graduate from high
school. He was a contractor, so he had to work out
of the house. He also ran, for a long time, a
furniture making business as a hobby. He ran it
out of our garage. We got to go in the garage and
work with dad, or you know, help dad. They were
hard-working people.

Education was always very important to the two
of them, at least a high school education. College
was always something that was available to me. My
parents always said that if I wanted to go, and I
had the grades, they would find a way to get me
there. Money would never have been a problem.
We're talking about 21 years ago, and we're talking

about, you know, somebody with a fifth grade
education and my mom with a high school education.
And college to them wasn't, uhm, . . . if I wanted
to fine, if I didn't that was fine, too. But It
wasn't important to my parents, and they didn't
push, and neither did I.

There is a funny story connected with that.
All my friends were going away to college, and I
thought that was so attractive. Oh, wouldn't that
be great to go away and live in a dorm and meet all
new friends. That's what I was going to do. So
behind [my parent's] backs, I borrowed the
application fee from my grandmother, and applied to
a medical university in Virginia. I knew I had the
grades for it, and I was going to be accepted. I
thought I wanted to be an Occupational Therapist,
because I liked the sound of that. I thought,
'Well, I'll teach handicapped people how to type,
and how to play the guitar, and how to take
shorthand and . . . I was going to save the world
with therapy.' And unbeknownst to me, after
forging my parent's signature and putting the money
order in the envelope, a couple of weeks later they
responded to me at my home address. Unfortunately,
my mother got the mail. That opened a whole can of
worms. She said, 'Well, if I had known that you

were serious about going to college,' and 'Why did
you do it behind my back? Because there's no way
you're going to go to Virginia to be educated in a
program that you can get right at UMass.' There
was some discussion, and I had the option of going
to the University of Massachusetts. I would have
to come home every night and live with my parents.
I think that that's the European background, the
European influence . . . I had to sleep in their
house every night. There was no such thing as
living away from home. That didn't seem attractive
to me at all.

    There was pressure for me to find someone [a
husband] . . . the thinking behind that was, you're
probably never going to need a college education
because you're going to get married, and then
you're going to have children, and you're going to
be like mom. You're going to be like Mrs. Cleaver,
you know . . . Why invest your time, and our money
in a college education if you're going to be home.
They were even willing to buy me a car for trans--
. . . Can you believe I turned this deal down?
They were going to buy me a car. I was going to
have to come home every night. I had to live home.

I am married. My husband runs his own contracting business. I have worked ever since our marriage. If I had not had a child, I would still be working. When I found out that I was going to have a baby, I thought, oh, talk about a career change. This is great. I had been working for . . . oh gosh, my son was born in 1982, and I had been working since 1971. I thought there was no way that I was going to be able to leave this newborn baby, and go to a job eight hours a day. I just didn't think that would be fair to my employer, I didn't think it would be fair to my son or my husband. So my husband and I came to an agreement that I would leave my full-time job when my son was born and not return . . . I had been with the same company since the day I left school. I had a very good position there. I was secretary to the president.

Before [I] got married I had my own place. I was beginning to grow up. It was the '70's, and then it was the '80's. Things were changing . . . I was very well compensated for what I was doing. I saw no reason why I needed to live at home. I was taking care of myself, I was able to stand on my own two feet. I had a friend who was in a similar situation, and we decided to get together.

We had our own place, our own cars, we took nice
vacations. Everything was fine until I met my
husband. [laughs] . . . Well, all that changed.
Then the reality set in, you know, living that way
was fine, but . . .

My husband and I knew that we were serious,
and that we were going be married. He was
operating his own business at the time. He's a
ceramic tile contractor. His business allowed him
a lot of flexibility in that he didn't have to be
in an office to punch a clock at any particular
time of day. He was in a partnership at the time.
He decided that he would be better off breaking the
partnership and going out on his own. That would
give him greater opportunity for more work and more
income. And it did for a while. The only problem
with that is we had no opportunity to buy health
insurance. I had been providing his health
insurance by working full-time all those years.
Now here we are with a new-born baby, and my
benefits were going to expire shortly. We were
paying more than most people were paying for their
mortgages at that time for health coverage. I
stayed home and had this wonderful baby, who began
to grow up and get more and more independent. And
every month, not having that second income, we

really began to rethink the decision of my staying
home. . . . We had goals. We wanted to own a home,
we wanted to provide things for our son that we
didn't have. Maybe we wanted to have another
child. We weren't going to achieve those goals
with my staying home, no matter how many hours my
husband worked or no matter how well his business
did. The economy had just gotten out of whack,
there was just no way that three people could do
the things that they wanted to do on this one
income. I began to think maybe I should start to
look for something part-time. But part-time wasn't
going to solve any of the problems. I was so
absorbed with this child. At that point, 15
months, he was walking and talking, and very
verbal. I could see that this kid is not going to
need me forever. And there was a day care center
opening just around the corner, it was a brand new
day care center. So we checked out the day care
center, and we thought well, we'll enroll him, and
that way he'll have a place, and we'll see how it
goes for four or five weeks. Well, put a fifteen
month old baby in a room with eight other children
all the same age, he's going to adapt.

My husband is still working 9 to 3. My son
gets off the school bus at ten minutes after 3, and

he knows that dad is waiting for him there in the
house. Dad puts him on the bus in the morning, and
dad's there when he gets off the bus in the
afternoon . . .

I hated myself for not having a college
degree. I was embarrassed to tell people that I
didn't have a college education. I do have some
college under my belt, only because of my exposure
to banking. Once I got in the door there, young
people were begging for employment there. These
people would come in with Master's degrees, and
they would be willing to work as tellers to get
their foot in the door. I realized how stiff the
competition was. Thanks to [my boss at the bank],
I did take several courses at Holyoke Community,
and did wind up with a Certificate of Banking
diploma, whatever that means. What that did for me
was made me realize how much I had missed by not
going. I wonder if I wouldn't be on a totally
different track had I gone on to college and
pursued the four year, gone into a four year
program. I wonder if I wouldn't be president of
this institution today instead of him.

[My husband and I] don't have a common bond
there when it comes to our careers. We have a
tremendous amount in common, but we don't have a

lot in common, obviously, when it comes to what we do. So when I try to share with him what our, what our Board of Directors has planned for the next ten years, it's tough to get him excited. He'll just sit there and listen and roll his eyes. Well, it makes the dinner table conversation very exciting. [laughs] The people I hang out with are going to wear three-piece suits, or business suits. The people he hangs out with are going to go bowling every Wednesday night, you know? It's not a problem. It certainly isn't a problem. I wouldn't say that it's been an obstacle or anything. We kind of try to live with it. He knows that I'm happy doing what, what I'm doing, and I know that, if you can believe it, he's happy doing what he does.

I had a marketing position at [another bank]. This was right smack in the middle of the recession. My marketing budget began to dry up, and I was involved in fewer and fewer special events. If there was no budget, no money to spend, there was really no need for me to be there. I made the decision to leave. I moved from banking, a very conservative industry to the fair industry. I worked in an [exposition industry]. I worked for the president. It was a very small office, it was

just the president and myself. You worked fifteen

weeks to prepare for this huge two week event, the

biggest marketing event I had ever worked on. But

the rest of the year, was very quiet. I was as one

with this president, and as I found out how much he

traveled, how much time he spent on the road, I

felt like a widow. You weren't servicing customers

when you were not involved in the twelve days of

the fair. It was just routine administrative work.

That's when I began to feel this big void,

something missing. Whether it was the contact with

the public, maybe the organization itself was too

small. I was used to being around a big number of

people, and I was used to being in a downtown

metropolitan area. In downtown Springfield, it was

busy, a bustling place.

    [My former manager at the bank] was promoted

to president. I had been in touch with him still

during the two-year period that we were not working

together. He said to me, 'Oh, you know what would

make this perfect? Have I got a job for you. I

would love you to be here. We just worked very

well together.' We were a real good team, we had

the same work ethic. Again there's something about

this industry [banking] that I thought was fun, and

rewarding, and new every day. Now I'm going to

have to tell these people who brought me into their home . . . it pretty much was a real close-knit company. They welcomed me, and they made me feel good. Now I'm going to have to tell them that there's something out there that I would rather do. I thought about it, if I approach it honestly, that this is an opportunity for me to go home really, go back into something that I probably was destined to do. How can they be upset with me?

Mentor J. was asked to talk about the position she held at the bank and what was expected of her. She began to talk about her work day:

I don't think I've had a typical day since I got here. I will come in in the morning and grab a cup of coffee. [The office is] open when I get here [laughs] . . . usually. There are people here before me. Most often I'm using the keys at night to lock the doors.

I have a thirty-five minute drive, so I like to use that time to organize myself before I even get in. On the way to work, I make that little mental outline of the things that need to be done, or conquered as I call them . . . things that need to be conquered during the day. . . . I'm a great list-maker at home, but not on the job. I know

what I have to do at work, I'm able to keep it in my mind, better than laundry and grocery shopping and all that other stuff. [chuckles]

I'm a morning person. My peak performance hours are in the morning. So I try to do anything that absolutely, positively has to be done in the morning. If I have to meet someone, or attend a meeting, or really think about something that requires a lot of concentration, I get those done first, so that I'm not tired and I still look relatively fresh.

My primary responsibility being the president's [assistant], I would check with him first to see what he has on his agenda. What does he need to accomplish today, and what can I do to insure that he's going to get it done. So once I've done that, I'm pretty much on my own. I kind of envision [the president] as the creative . . . Did you ever see those fellows on the Ed Sullivan show years ago that had all the plates spinning up on sticks in the air? Well, I'm the kind of person that just runs underneath them, to make sure that none of them come crashing down. So, he gets a brilliant idea to add a product, and all he has to say is, 'I would like to add deposit-to-deposit overdraft protection for our customers by such-and-

such a date.' He'll maybe make a few comments

about how he sees the product being added, why we

need it, how he's going to sell it, and then I just

walk away and now it's my turn to take that

information and get it going. He'll give me an

instruction and say, 'Do it' and be confident that

I can get it done. I'm off and running. That's

not to say that I don't have an opportunity to be

creative or to throw a few pie plates up in the air

myself. I'm given that freedom to do that whenever

I want.

Mentor J. began to speak about how the staff members

were asked by the president of the bank if they were

interested in being involved with the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program.

At a staff meeting [our president] said that

we had an opportunity to have a student come in on

a part-time basis and kind of help with whatever we

could give her to do. He asked the staff to think

about what tasks could be assigned to this student.

He explained it was some kind of school co-op. So

the staff had the advantage of having some time to

think about it, decide and prepare. I was the one

who was all excited about it. 'Well this will be

great. This will be good for the bank, and it'll

be good for us, and it'll be good for the student.'

This bank had never had a student here before. I

will be honest with you, it was less expensive to have a part-time student [than someone else]. And this was a way to get some more community involvement.

Here's a kid who was probably born and raised in the area, gone to school in the area, educated in the area. Why shouldn't she [or he] have an opportunity to work in a local business in her [or his] own community.

[My staff's] reaction was a look of, a sigh of relief. [chuckles] I think everyone thought we were getting this youngster who was going to come in and literally walk on water for us. They were going to get some relief. Some of them were clerical tasks that they had been doing on their own. Now, you have to keep in mind that this bank had begun to grow and grow and grow and grow. The workload every day became larger and larger.

Everything became larger and everything was growing, except the size of the workforce. Nothing had been done to increase the number of people out there. So we had the same number of people doing this increased volume of work. The hours of the bank had been extended. These people were tired. They were tired, and they were looking for a little bit of relief. It was a very welcome thought that

we might have somebody come in to help us file

checks and do other things. Someone to help us

out.

A small portion of our customer base is

Hispanic. I think you did mention that Student E.

[student worker] was Hispanic. We were thrilled to

think that we were going to have someone here who

was bilingual to help us out. When I heard that

she was coming, the first thing I thought was,

'Remember my first day at work?' I remember how I

was treated, and how I was welcomed, and how badly

I wanted to fit in with everybody else. So I tried

to remember that on Student E.'s first day, and

made sure that she felt comfortable and not out of

place. At the same time, I wanted to be mindful of

the fact that she was to be treated as an equal.

We were paying her for her service. You have to

balance the fact that she's a student, but she's a

worker as well.

I had some concerns about the student coming

in, I see students walk by me every day. I see

them walk by, some of them students who have

families of their own already. I have students in

my family, and there's just something missing

today. All of us were a little reluctant of who

this person was, and the quality of work that she

was going to be able to do. However, within fifteen
minutes, when we saw how she presented herself, and
how serious she was. . . . By the end of the first
day, we all kind of looked at each other and went,
'Wow! Geez, she completely turned our thinking
around.' We were wrong, to have those notions. I
suppose it's only natural that you might in today's
environment, that you might think that you're going
to get someone who's not exactly going to fit the
bill.

I don't know if this is true of all the
students that you place, but Student E. just seemed
to pick up [the routine] immediately. She
developed a little regimen for herself. She came
in, she greeted everyone with a smile or a wave.
Whatever, she made her presence known. She hung
her jacket up, put her books away, went immediately
to her desk. I mean immediately. She knew, from
the previous day, what she had left to do the
following day. Had she not had a task left over,
there would have been one sitting on her desk with
a note for her. So she got immediately to the job.
She's very result-oriented. She sat right there,
tackled it. As she was approaching the end of the
task, she was not shy about going to the person who
gave her that task and saying, 'I'm almost done.

What's next?' As I said, she just fit in very well
with the regimen. She seemed to sense that there
is a schedule here, and if I don't do this project,
if I don't complete this project first, I'm going
to hold up someone over there. Or, this is a
project, well, it's just typing labels. I can put
this off, work at my own pace, use this as a filler
in between doing this project I have already given
her to do. She seemed to have a real good
understanding of priority, number one. What needed
to be done. Or if she didn't, if she wasn't clear,
she would ask, 'Should I stop what I'm doing here
and do this for you first, or can I complete it
when I'm done with this?' But she was very result-
oriented and just really seemed to fit right in
with the flow.

We had a place for her . . . she sat at her
desk. The tasks were put in front of her [with]
very minimal instruction. [A project had to be
filed] alphabetically by the customer's last name.
There's the filing cabinet. If you have any
questions call me. It wasn't handholding, there
wasn't time for it. Not a tremendous amount of
instruction or handholding.

Check filing is probably the biggest thing
that she's been involved with. She was also doing

some verification on statements. She did several

mailings for me. Very mundane, but saved me a

tremendous amount of time. A thousand envelopes,

and fold a form letter, insert it, and mail it.

Even something like that she . . . I told her that

these mailing labels were alphabetized. And all of

a sudden, right in the middle of the label run,

there would be 20 or 30 out of sequence. They were

a different type of account. The names were run

alphabetically by account type. I didn't even

think to tell her. She had them all separated, in

three or four piles, and said to me, 'Now by the

way, these are segregated for some reason, and I'd

like to know if you'd like me to interfile them so

that we have one big alpha listing, or should I

keep them . . .' I wouldn't have even thought of

that and I was just surprised that she even thought

of it. And even ahead of time she would . . . I

just thought this was so amazing, that someone who

had no work experience at all, after having this

job explained to her, would sit back for a minute

and say, 'Now are these all going to be 29 cent

postage, because we ought to check the meter to

make sure we've got enough postage on it.' I was

just really surprised at her thought process,

never having this exposure before. How did she

know what problems could come up while she was
trying to get this done? 'Are you sure you have
enough envelopes? Do we have more of these
envelopes in case I run out?' Just simple things,
but things that because you're busy and bogged
down, just things that you don't have the time to
stop and think about, but she did.

It was Easter. I had just bought bunnies for
my co-workers. I included Student E. Whether or
not she was a student, she was a co-worker, she was
on our team. It was just like a little bunny this
big, 99 cents, and she was just elated. . . . She,
you know, I think she felt accepted.

Twenty weeks. That time has expired, and
she's still here [school has ended and it is June,
summer work]. We're not able to keep her full-
time, but we want to keep her temporarily until she
goes off to college. She has been such a
tremendous help with our bilingual customers, that
we're really reluctant to let her go.

A follow-up interview with Mentor J. informed this
researcher of several changes that had occurred at the bank,
since our first set of interviews. The president for whom she
left her marketing position in industry had left the bank.
There was no acting president in his place. At the time the
bank was being taken over by a bank merger. She was staying

until that was settled, and then told me that she had a very

inviting offer to go back into marketing. She ended with this

closing statement:

> I should have taken my parents' offer, just
>
> bitten the bullet, and gone to UMass. Whether I
>
> lasted there a semester, or whether I went through
>
> the whole program, at least I would know . . .
>
> When I look back at it now, I probably would not
>
> have done as well in college in 1971 as I'd do
>
> right now. I wouldn't have given it the effort,
>
> but I would be a college graduate.

Profile of Mentor C.

Mentor C. was working at a local insurance company as a

clerical assistant. In August of 1992, we did our first

series of three interviews and two years later, May of 1994,

we did a closure interview. In the first interview, Mentor C.

was asked to discuss her family of origin, education, and life

in general until starting work in her present position. She

talked quite candidly about herself. She said:

> I'm the oldest of six. I have four other
>
> sisters and one brother.
>
> My father came from a dysfunctional family.
>
> He was an only child, his father was a drunk, and
>
> his mother was mentally ill. She was in and out of

mental institutions. My father was a drunk. Not

since his heart attack, but up until that point he

did have an alcohol problem. I never [liked] my

father . . . my other siblings . . . well, I know

where to draw the limit with him. He could be

violent at times. He's only slapped me I think in

my whole life maybe three or four times. He used

to really bother my sister, who's a year younger

than me. He hit her because she was very mouthy.

With me, I knew when to shut up and don't push it.

He hit my mother a few times. He was violent. Not

all the time, but there were these times.

My mother came from a very functional family,

very stable. She was next to the youngest of

seven. . . . I don't know what, what happened to

her. My grandmother . . . I love my grandmother

dearly. I love her so much, she's my mother's

mother. She always says, 'I don't know what

happened to her. I don't know where I went wrong

with her. She's not with it.' I don't know, I'm

not a psychologist or psychiatrist or anything, but

I think she might be a little mentally unstable.

I don't think my mother should have had

children. She didn't really know what kids needed.

When I got old enough to be responsible, I knew

that the house shouldn't look like [it did]. It

shouldn't be a mess. I mean, the sink would be full of dishes, the stove would not be cleaned for like a month. It would be disgusting. The laundry in the basement was piled up unbelievably; she just would not do it. She didn't have a dryer but she had a clothesline, but she just was very lazy. My grandmother would come over, I remember, and start yelling at her, and say, 'You know what you are doing?' My grandmother would clean the stove, and she would tell her, this is wrong.

My mother slept a lot. She slept all the time. She would embarrass me because if she came to something, a function at school, she would fall asleep. If she took us to the doctor's, she'd fall asleep in the waiting room. [chuckles] I was embarrassed by her. I was embarrassed inviting people over, my friends, because the house was a mess, and she was a screamer, and she swore a lot. You know, she always yelled, or she'd bang things.

We moved upstate [New York], I was about 13 or 14, my father was working on a farm. He had to get up at 4:00 in the morning. [He would] come home for breakfast at 9:30, and then come home for lunch at about 1:00, and then come home for the night about 6:00 or 7:00 . . . [they were] long days. You know, half the time she wouldn't be home, or

she wouldn't take something out for supper, and
then she'd blame me. 'Why didn't you take
something out?' She always said things like, 'I
can't stand you kids. I got to get out of here. I
got to get away from you.' She could take off for
the day. She would leave in the morning, and I
would wake up and she would be gone. I don't know
where she is, when she's coming back.

We lived on a dairy farm. The guy [owner] had
three barns . . . he had so many hundreds of cows,
I don't even know. He had about, I'd say, eight
families. He owned all these houses, and he would
give them a house. When a house got empty, he'd
hire a new guy. Up there on the farm . . . you
didn't have to pay any rent, you didn't have to pay
electric, you got your milk free . . . your pay was
under $100 a week. Your money was for food and to
maintain your car. If you had a car, we didn't
have a car. We didn't have a phone. We didn't
have hot water for five years; we had to boil our
water to take baths or wash hair. We still didn't
have enough money to live.

The kids needed shoes . . . I mean, the kids
were really raggy in their clothing and things that
they needed. My mother would take the money and
she would buy Avon, or buy Tupperware, or she'd buy

copper. Go to, you know, these parties people had.
She'd spend like $40 or $50 on this kind of stuff.
Or she would take people out to lunch, and blow her
money. Then it was, like well, we don't have any
food in the house. 'Oh well, do the best you can,'
you know.

So . . . I kind of took the mother role. Then
she would criticize me and say that I'm trying to
take over the household, I was trying to take over
the kids, 'cause I would discipline them.' They
kind of looked up to me.

She would go to her friends' house, sit down
and have coffee. She always seemed to give more
attention to someone else's kids than she did her
own. She also had affairs with men right under my
father's nose. That was another thing. My father
almost consented. He knew what was going on, but
yet he wasn't man enough to, you know, stop it. I
think my father needed my mother to take care of
him. Like he would yell at her and scream at her
and rant and rave, but then he would go in his room
and stay in his room.

My mother having affairs with other people's
husbands, and also, you know . . . it was like a
little Peyton Place, where we lived on the farm.
Mentor C. went on to talk about her schooling:

My schooling. Well, it's kind of
unconventional I would say, because I never
graduated high school. I had a strange background
growing up. Being the oldest of the six, I was
held responsible for everyone. I think I would
have went on to be a B+, maybe an A student. I
certainly have the intelligence. I just didn't
have the interest. I didn't want to learn, I
didn't want to remember. I don't care about what
happened centuries ago. I don't care about
science. How was that going to serve me being at
home? . . . I had no interest in school. I hated
school. I felt like, what am I doing here. I
should be at home where I'm needed. Somebody has
to take care of these little kids, my little
brothers and sister. I would purposely stay out of
school so that I could get the kids dressed, and
they would look good when they went to school, and
so that they wouldn't miss school . . . my mother
would sleep and not wake up, and they would miss
the bus and they wouldn't go to school. I felt
responsibility at home. I just didn't concentrate
on school.

They had a school psychologist. I remember
him calling me down to his office. He kind of must
have known something was going on, because I wasn't

in school a lot. He said, 'Are there any problems at home?' and I said, 'No, no, no,' and I denied everything. 'I'm just sick, I'm sick a lot,' you know, and I lied. Well, how do you start telling a stranger about what's going on at your house, what's going on with your family.

I met my husband when I was 13, just about to turn 14. My mother's family always told me, 'You are very responsible. You are much more mature for your age than anyone would be at that age.' So when I met my husband, I fell in love right away. I felt like, I'm not just 14 years old doing this. I know what I'm doing. He was 20, he was seven years older than me. It just happened. It developed from a friendship into something. He said he would wait for me till I was 18. We had been together for about 2 1/2 years, almost three years. He was from Brooklyn, New York, and he would come back and forth to see me. Then things started changing at home, and my parents were going to move back to Westfield. He wanted to marry me, and he asked my parents' permission. He said, 'Why do I have to wait till she's 18? She's responsible, she's ready. I'm responsible, and I'm ready for her.' So they agreed, for me to get

married. I had already quit school. I was 16. I
was in my 11th year, halfway through my 11th year.

We had made arrangements at the church and
everything. I got married, and my parents moved
back to Westfield and I moved to Brooklyn with my
husband. I was not pregnant when I got married. I
did not have to get married. Nine months after I
got married I got pregnant.

[My husband] had never been to Westfield
before . . . he's a city boy, but he loves the
country. We came to visit my parents, and he loved
Westfield. He said, 'This is a great place to
raise a family.' So we moved to Westfield, and
we've been here for 18 years.

Mentor C. discussed a convenience store business her
husband decided to open and her experiences in its operation.

My husband opened up a convenience store in
1975. I was totally unprepared for it. I didn't
have any experience at all. It was one of those
deals where I thought it was going to be his store
and his business, and I come in and be kind of his
secretary, and help him set it up and everything.
He has a retail background. And the first day the
store opened, he said, 'Okay, get behind the
counter,' and I was totally shocked. I ended up
getting more experience from him and being there

every day. I did everything you can imagine, about
having a convenience store. Handling the books,
the checking account, the vendors, the customers.
I thrived when I was doing it. I was running the
whole business.

Two months after the store opened, I became
pregnant with my third child. So that was really
interesting; being pregnant and running a business.
It started out very small, and we ended up adding
more and more to the business. A deli, and fast
foods, hot dogs, and hot foods to go; everything.
People really liked us, and I believe personality
took us a long way. In that experience, I did work
with teenagers. I hired teenagers, I fired
teenagers, I trained . . . I did all the training,
I did all the firing and hiring. There were some
successes and there were some failures. I really
enjoyed doing it. I had fun doing it. The only
thing I regret was leaving my son when he was a
baby with sitters. I did set up a little cot in the
office when he got old enough to come and he could
walk. It was a family business, and people came in
and they saw that, and they liked it. We kept the
store clean, what people want in a business. Fast
service, friendly service, clean, we cared about
the customer, and they appreciated it.

After 5 1/2 years we had to close. The landlord sold the building. Things went down from there, because we were also living in the apartment upstairs in the building. The person who bought the building wanted to make offices out of the apartments; there were two apartments upstairs, so the other tenant and myself had to leave. We had to close our doors within 30 days because he doubled our rent, and there was no way.

All of a sudden you're out of your business, you have no income, you have no place to live. When we lost the store, we hit bottom. We had no income, we had to do something. This was when my husband decided, am I going to get a job, or am I going to go to school? Well, if you go to school, we can stay on welfare. Well, I didn't and I still don't like welfare. I don't like living on it, and I don't want any part of it. Yes, you have the Medicaid coverage, which you definitely need. You have the food stamps. I hate food stamps, I hate using them. I feel embarrassed doing it, but I'll do it because I have to feed my family. I had the little baby, so I knew that I could not work [outside the home] for at least five years. [but then] I don't care if I have to get three jobs to get off of it [welfare]. [Mentor C. eventually did

work three jobs: with the insurance company, as a waitress, and as a banquet hostess]. We managed to get through the bad times.

My husband went back to school . . . he was working in construction after we left the store. He had a knee injury . . . and he started thinking, 'You know, I'm 40 years old, and I can't be doing this stuff for the rest of my life. I'm going to go back to school and get a degree. Do something that I can do with an education.' And he loves [working with children], especially teenagers. So, he went to [college].

I stayed home and I did baby-sitting, and I took it, 'cause I love kids, too. But, after five years it got very tiring, I was really burnt out. You don't really get treated the way you want to get treated, and it's not an income that you can depend on, it's always flexible every week, and I couldn't live like that anymore.

I was doing other things, trying to keep myself busy. Even though I was baby-sitting, I was kind of feeling, 'Well, he's off to school, and he's with people, and I'm home all day with little kids and babies.' I kept myself busy being involved in the kids' school. I was on PTA, and I worked in the library three times a week. I loved

working in the library. I liked helping the school. I was really very pleased with my children's elementary school and the principal there. I learned a lot working in the library about putting books in order, kind of like filing, and I really liked doing that. I took pride in things getting where they were supposed to be, and things looking good.

Then I got involved with the church youth group and I was the leader in the youth group. I got my husband involved, and through the youth group I met a man who was president of the insurance company. His children went to our church, and his children were involved in the youth group. One day we had a pizza party and a movie for the kids, and his wife had mentioned, 'Oh, my husband and I own an insurance company.' I said, 'Oh, I didn't know that. Oh, that's nice.' and I said, 'Well, if you ever need part-time help, let me know. She said, 'I'll keep you in mind.' Then about two months later I was still baby-sitting, I hadn't even looked for anything else, but out of the blue his wife called me and said, 'Are you still looking for something part-time? We need somebody in the Holyoke office part-time to oversee the high school girls that come in the afternoon.'

I came in for an interview. The office manager said, 'How are you going to feel about doing filing?' I said, 'I have no problem with that at all. Doing the library for so many years, I definitely know my alphabet, and I know about having things in order.' and he said, 'Well, it may seem like a menial job, but it's very important.' I said, 'I understand that' and he said, 'Okay.'

My position was supposed to be overseeing the high school girls that come in and do the filing and the clerical work. When I got here, on my first day, there were no high school girls. On the table in the back room there were piles about a foot and a half high. They were all policies and individual papers. And they were in no specific order. I was told that these papers have to go in these file cabinets, and I have to find the files, and put them in order. So I did that for eight hours a day, five day straight.

Filing never bothered me. I realized, being here all day, how important it is, that those files are in the right spot. I felt it was an important job that I had. I didn't feel at any time that it was menial. At my store, I would never give my help jobs that I haven't done, or I wouldn't be afraid to get down on the floor and do it myself.

When we did personal lines drop filing, we had
this accordion file folder. And when the mail
came, all we would have to do, because the files
are sideways, was open the file and slide it in. It
had no specific order. And that bothered me. You
just stuffed stuff in the file? It just didn't
seem right to me. As time went on, I started
looking at what it was I was filing, you know, what
are these papers, what is this, and as I became
more interested in it, I realized these are claims,
and these are cancellation notices, and these are
reinstatement notices. So instead of just stuffing
the files, I would go through them, and I would
find all the cancellation notices and paper clip
them together. So maybe the file would have a bit
of order. That was appreciated by the girls
downstairs, and by our office manager.

Other duties were to answer telephones. I was
really nervous at doing that, because I had never
been a receptionist. After I did it, I was fine.

But by filing, I learned a lot of things. A
lot of it was the names of the insured. I knew
whose accounts were whose. I was shown how to use
the computer. I also learned how to do
certificates, and I became in charge of that.
That's a process of going into the computer, doing

a whole system of commands and calling up certain
certificates that you wanted printed, and printing
them, taking copies that had to go to the other
insurance companies, and then mailing out the right
copies to the right person. Then I became more and
more interested, and I learned a lot more. I
learned processing, I wanted to get into
processing, dealing with policies, and putting them
into the computer, and learning, well, what is this
coverage for, and stamping registrations. My goal
is to be a Customer Service Representative (CSR).

She discussed how she found out that her company was
going to participate in the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program and that
she had been selected to be the mentor:

It was the manager's idea to get into this.
Then he came to me and said you're going to be the
trainer [mentor]. When I started training them, I
was in processing. I used to be the filing person
and the kind of gopher around the office, and I
would be the one most able to train the kids coming
up, allowing them the time to learn what they have
to learn, and to have the patience enough to do it.
I thought that my job, number one, when they first
came, would be to train. [However since the first
few placements] . . . right now the agency is
undergoing a lot of personnel changes. People are

leaving. There's no time for a person like myself
to train at this time. The office manager is the
trainer right now. His problem is that he doesn't
have time for that. He should have left it to me.
I could handle it. I would be an overseer,
coordinating the students' assignments,
communicating between the employees and the
students.

Meanwhile her family situation was also evolving:

My husband did his first years [of college] at
a two year community college, and he's on the
alumni there, and he goes back every year to do the
orientation. They just think the world of him;
everybody loves him. They want to snag him up for
a job, and so does [a local four year college]. So
he's very much in demand. He's on the Dean's List
every year. He's majoring in special education.
He's very good at it. He directed the summer
reading program for [a special needs center]. He's
around all those professionals; psychologists,
psychiatrists, doctors, who adore him. He has an
excellent future. No matter what he does he gets
to the top.

I was so intimidated being at home and he was
out there. Out there socializing, being with
college-age students. He was in a drama class

where he has to participate with other females in plays and things. Well, I admit, I have a jealous streak, I want to hang onto my man. He's very attractive, so I know other people see it.

. . . [But now that I'm working and have my own credit and my own car] I feel a little more independent, and I think that's a big problem there, too. I went out there and I got the jobs that I wanted. I didn't sit around and wait for him to do something for me. It bothers him, I know it does. You see, he's going through changes, too, being in college. I mean, he's 43 years old, and he does not want to be 43 years old. He wants to be a lot younger. He looks a lot younger. He tells me he's changing, and he doesn't know what he's changing into yet. He doesn't know what he is going to be. So, we're having our problems. He's moved out of the house. He has a room at school. He still has his scholarships and everything. But it's difficult, the whole situation. He comes home. He's back and forth. We've been married, it's going to be 20 years, and I still feel serious about my marriage.

. . . [by 1992] I have two teenagers, and two little ones, I have four children altogether. I'm 35 years old with a responsible job . . .

My brother [also] lives with me. He's 25 and
single. I love my brother very much. He works in
construction. He needs somebody to look after him.
He doesn't expect me to do anything. That's what I
like about him. He comes and goes when he wants.
I always make sure there's enough supper for him if
he wants to eat, and he has the option whether he
wants to or not. . . . [Along with my brother] my
father lives with me, too. I have [laughs] a
houseful. My parents divorced. They got divorced
after 20 years of marriage. My mother lives in
Springfield. I don't associate with her. We don't
get along; we never really did. My father, I
don't . . . it's probably hard to admit, he's my
father, and I have to take care of him. He had a
massive heart attack about six years ago. He was
in a coma for a couple of months, and they didn't
think he was going to come out of it. But a
miracle, one day he woke up, and he needed someone
to take care of him and look after him, and I got
elected.

We have a beautiful house we rent. We don't
own a house; we don't have money for a down
payment. Between my brother and father, they're
not living there for free. You know, I said,
'Yeah, I'm taking care of my father, but I don't

enjoy doing it.' So between him and my brother,

they pay the rent and I pay everything else,

including utilities, the gas in the car, taking the

kids places, buying them clothes, doing things like

that.

My daughter just graduated high school, and

she's going to a local community college, and I'm

so proud of her. It was like such a moment when

she got her degree, I was just so excited for her.

And I was like, oh, that could have been me, you

know, 20 years ago. [laughs]

At the time of the follow-up interview, Mentor C. had

been offered a job at another insurance company with a

substantial pay raise. "I'm a customer service representative

now. I have had three promotions since we last talked." She

said she planned to accept the offer.

During this interview Mentor C. also discussed what kind

of education she might have had if she had come from a more

"normal" family. She elaborates:

I think if I had come from a 'normal,' quote,

family, that I would have went on [in school] . . .

because I wanted to be a teacher. I thought of that

as a goal when I was very young. I could see

myself graduating from high school and going to

college, and getting an apartment and having a car,

and being the normal person, being out there in the

world, and being successful. But at that time,
with my background and everything, I felt
successful in being a mother, and raising the
children the way they were supposed to be. And
having my own children and raising them up the way
I wanted them to be raised. The way I and my
brother and my sisters should have been raised.

Profile of Mentor M.

Mentor M. was 62 at the time of our initial sequence of
interviews in 1992. She came from a family of six with three
older siblings: two brothers and a sister, who were four and
five and seven years older than she.

Starting off, I was pretty much alone at home,
with mother. Due to my birth date, I did not start
first grade until I was six. We didn't have
kindergarten at that time. For a whole year,
sitting at home and being able to see the
schoolyard was very frustrating, because I knew I
belonged there. I didn't belong just playing
around at home.

I never objected to going to school. I liked
it. I was probably talented, but never encouraged
at home. Of course, even in school at that time
girls were not encouraged and that became more

evident in high school. So you had your own little

competition between friends and also between male-

female, as far as subject matter was concerned.

I came from a small town, rural. Took college

courses in high school, and probably would have

been better off taking a combination business and

college, to be prepared for something, 'Oh well,

I'm not going to go to college.' Because my

family, financially, couldn't afford that. Plus, I

had a father who was very male chauvinistic, and

girls didn't need to go to school anyway. Didn't

give you any kind of guidance. That meant then

nobody . . . of course you didn't have guidance

counselors either at that time . . . but no

teachers especially promoted the girls. Some girls

were ambitious enough, they pushed themselves. But

if you were just a good student, nobody said, 'Come

on, you can do this or you can do that.' Whereas

the boys always got channelled, whether they were

smart or indifferent or what. Efforts were made to

make them progress, for example, different subject

matters they might excel in more. When it came to

sports, and I guess this is still true today, the

equipment for the boys was well taken care of, and

they were much more organized. And the girls, 'Oh,

the girls don't care about gym anyway, they are

just going to sit back and not attend,' and, . . .
you know, we did care. Some of us did care. But
the support wasn't there.

The schools in the town I went to were
excellent. I graduated from high school in '48,
going to college for a couple of years, by my
working and saving, the tuition at that time was
minimal. And a little help from my father, but no
encouragement. I actually paid for most of my own
education. I attended what was called a teacher's
college at that time, which was in Lowell, you
could either go for elementary education or major
in music. I had no intentions of becoming a
teacher. Because of my mother I began to study
music, the major was music. Mostly my mother's
influence, because that's something she would have
preferred in her life, and I had taken piano
lessons, and I was pretty good at piano. But as
far as performing, that wasn't for me. So that was
the wrong thing right there, to be channelled out
to something that I didn't really feel comfortable
with.

Not knowing what I really wanted to do, I
dropped out of college, and of course took the
route of getting married and having my own family.
I had two girls. The oldest one went into nurse's

training. They both married young, and both
divorced. The oldest one, the nurse, eventually
went on and got her Bachelor's degree from the
University of Massachusetts, on her own; she didn't
have financial help from us. Then she went to
another University and got her Master's degree.
Now she does have a good job in her field. My
other daughter had one child by the first marriage.
The boy is 19 now. In between years, she went to
junior college and took accounting or business
courses. Really, she has only had one successful
year of working in that field. Then she remarried,
had a little girl, who is only 6 1/2, and she has
been at home with that child, divorced a second
time. If she can get this little girl situated in
first grade, get her comfortable. . . . A lot of
problems there with the little girl
psychologically. She was abused by her father. So
my daughter has taken the route, it was better to
stay home, take help wherever she could get it, and
try to get this girl through. And she's doing
pretty well now, she's quite a fighter.

My husband is deceased now. He was on medical
disability for 4 1/2 years. He had a pacemaker.
He passed away in '81. Four and a half years he
wasn't working. Now you know why I feel now, and

my feeling when I was much younger, too, was it was more important for the girls to have the education than the guys. The guys can always pick up a shovel, they can always earn a decent salary somehow, much more than girls can. So the girl needs the education to get something that she can exist on.

After I had my children, I did dressmaking at home; I was talented in that area. And that's probably the field that I should have headed for, was designing, dressmaking, and I would have been happy with it. When my children were old enough, junior high school, then I decided, hey, this staying home here, isn't working out too well, and you're not really getting very far, and you don't feel like you've accomplished anything. You better find a way to get out to work. So I decided to take the route of going to an employment agency here in Holyoke. I lived in Holyoke. This wasn't my home town, my husband's home town. The gentleman that ran that employment agency said, 'Have you ever thought of banking?' I said, 'Oh, no, why would I think of it? I'm not, I don't have any training in that,' you know. So he sent me down here to the bank, I applied, was hired that evening. I had a phone call, 'You're hired,' and

then I said, 'Oh, do I really want to go to work?'
You know, then you start, 'Oh, boy!' But I did
come in, and things progressed. At first, I worked
part-time. I felt when the kids don't need that
much support, then I'll go full-time.

I married a school teacher. He would say,
'What the heck are you working for?' The male
chauvinist idea. 'I don't see why you have to be
out there working.' And little did he know, you had
to do that for your own confidence, and to make it
through the rest of your life. They don't
understand [laughs] . . . So for four years, the
good old mom who thought she had to do everything
at home, keep everything just the way it was, as
well as perform and progress in a job. After about
four years I said, hey, nobody says thank you for a
clean house, nobody cares what goes on as far as
the laundry. I've got to forget that, and just do
what I can and make a career out of this. Which I
did. It worked out well because the times were
right for women to make progress in different
fields, and this bank recognized that.

I can type . . . I think some of the
capability there is from playing the piano. I
never learned to type without looking at the
keyboard. I said I wished I had some business

courses. But I can do a minimal amount of it. The
accounting? I was just always good at math. I had
no problem understanding math. Also computers, I
had no problem understanding what the computer was
doing, and why it was doing it. If they had
computers when I was in high school, that probably
would have been a field I would have gone, 'Oh,
boy, great!' But, I just had to conquer any
hesitation I had of them. I didn't hesitate to
learn about them. I wasn't uncomfortable learning
about them. Just by being interested, and not
being content to stand still. Being willing to do
things on your own. If somebody else didn't make a
decision to clean out a particular desk, clean up
the area, throw out things that had to be thrown
out. Somebody's got to make that decision or
you're up to here. And I didn't seem to have any
problem making decisions like that. And there was
a lot of hard work, because when I first came, we
weren't on computers. Everything was manual.
Manual posting. I was here about six months and
they went into their first computer system.
Through the years we've had a lot of changes.
Different data centers, different types of
terminals. Every time there was a change, my
interest was greater, and learning as much as I

could, and helping to straighten things out. Just

that type of learning, to delve into things, and

not just stand there and say, wait on a customer

and that's it.

When my husband became ill with heart problems

and all the rest of it, and I finally said to my

boss, the vice president, 'Look, I'm not here just

to work, to take up time up here, because I'm going

to have to work.' And that, to me, seemed to be

necessary to let your superiors know that that's

your intention. If you don't let them know that,

they'll let you continue to do a good job and say,

that's a terrific job, and let you stay right

there. You have to let them know I want to do more

than that. That is how things evolved.

I went from Teller to Head Teller. Probably

stayed with that title quite a long time. Then it

evolved, I was made an Assistant Treasurer. By

that time I had gone to Savings Bank School, which

involved independent work for two years. The first

year you went to the school for two weeks and they

reviewed subject matter and so forth, then gave you

your first assignment. You probably had a total of

five assignments that you had to work on,

complete, mail in, be judged by other bankers,

marked. Then you went back the second year for

another two week session, and more or less

graduated with that. I guess, I got the impression

that if you were chosen to attend this Savings Bank

School, that the intent of the bank to pay for

somebody to do that was to eventually make them a

officer. So I felt, some day I'll get a title.

That took a little time, maybe about three years or

so, and then I was made Assistant Treasurer.

I have five Customer Service Reps., I have a

Manager, an Operations Supervisor, all directly

under me. The Operations Supervisor, she in turn

takes care of my tellers. There's usually eight

tellers at the main office. Then I'm in charge of

overseeing part-time tellers, and floating tellers.

We have utilized college students here for quite a

few years, that will work part-time for us, maybe

14 or 15 hours a week, to fill in certain time

periods that we need somebody like that. Then

those, we call auxiliary part-time people, those

college students work full-time in the summer when

our vacation periods are heavy.

We've had two girls from [a local four year

college], two sisters. One has remained with us,

and just became a junior supervisor. We have two

young men that worked all their college years part-

time, and came with the bank full-time when they

graduated. One is an officer and one is in a management training program.

Four or five years ago, they decided that the Branch Managers, who hadn't been required to do this schooling at all, they're just capable people that had worked up to branch manager, they felt times being what they were, that those people needed a title as well. Because most other banks did reward work, Branch Managers would be an officer title, that level. They wanted to call them Assistant Treasurers, so then my title had to be changed, because I was a little beyond just their duties. So that's when they changed it to Vice Treasurer. I was happy with Assistant Treasurer. It sounds better. I have no ambitions to be a Vice President or President. I've been here 23 years, and when they made me an officer, actually I was only the second female officer ever in this bank. Now we have many more.

My husband was against my staying at work. I think there was jealousy. I think he had fears. If you're successful, boy, are you going to stay here at all, or are you going to take off and go somewhere? I think they have a lot of fear in that respect. I guess some fear if the wife is making more money. They can't quite accept that.

Initially, I wasn't making more money than he.
Certainly over the years, I far exceeded what he
would have been making. He finally realized, when
he saw me trying to get ahead, what a battle it was
for a female to get ahead. He finally could
understand what you had to give up at home, and
what you were dealing with when working in a pretty
much all-male, all your bosses were male, let's put
it that way, what you had to compete with. He
finally could understand that in the end. I give
him credit that he could come around and see that.

Mentor M. learned that the bank was going to participate
in the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program:

I learned of what was going to take place,
just by way of [the vice president] saying, we are
going to participate, and personnel told me, that
we were bringing in a student and they decided my
department would be the better area to put a young
person. They thought we'd have things to keep this
person busy, and be able to teach certain things.

That was not a problem. We have certain
duties that have to be done, and because we deal
with customers constantly all day long, you get
behind on certain tasks. I know I'd always have
work that somebody can do to fill in and catch up.

I brought together the Customer Service Reps., because this is the area where I anticipated using [the student] most. Didn't feel I could put [the student] in with the tellers, because there would be so much to learn . . . to operate the computer system, to learn all about the numbers of accounts, savings and loans, and to know what we were doing. There was too much room for error to have [the student] learn the computer system, and process those works. Because you would be training that person to be a teller, and that's not our intent. So the best area was . . . in the customer service representative area, where there's more clerical work to do, to learn something about savings accounts, and things that go on business-wise when we take new customers into the bank. I thought that would be beneficial. So I brought together the customer service representatives and said [a student] would be working with them. The student was assigned to one girl in particular. I chose a girl who is very flexible, has a very good personality, is patient, does not get flustered, and has good rapport with the customers. So I felt she wouldn't object, and I think she enjoyed working with high school students.

Subsequent discussion about the experience of having student workers at the bank proved to be positive. Working with the students proved to be enjoyable and informative:

It was of interest to us to get some of the younger viewpoints, to hear some of their conversations about their school activities and their school relationships, and some of their relationships on the street. Many of us don't have that opportunity to see young people in action.

Even Mentor M., who was always very professional in her demeanor, responded to students on a personal level:

[Student R.] had a little problem sometimes getting a ride home, and she lived in an area which you wouldn't quite want a young girl to be walking in. On more than one occasion I gave her a ride home. I mean, she's only a high school student, and doesn't drive herself, and I couldn't very well just let her flounder, [chuckles] and, uhm, she deserved that extra little input from us.

When I last interviewed Mentor M., she had three more weeks of work before her retirement.

Upon reflection, Mentor M. considered what she might have done differently:

I would have found a way to fight through and complete the education. Which is what I really wanted to do. So many of us fell into that same

category. . . . There were no support systems at
that time to make you realize you didn't have to do
that [quit school and get married]. You didn't
have the monies available at that time. You
couldn't apply for a student loan; there was no
such thing.

I think I would have worked all the years in
between. I had enough energy to do that. I feel
those years, from the time I left college until I
did go to work, I didn't come until I was 39, was a
lot of time wasted. In terms of just daily living.
Because I had a lot of energy, and I could have
handled both. I know I could have.

Student Profiles

Student profiles were selected for inclusion in this
study as they were representative of the spectrum of success
on the job. Student A. was eminently successful at two sites.
Both students N. and K. received perfect ratings at their
first location and more qualified, although favorable, ratings
at their second site. Student S. was "unacceptable" in her
only assignment. An additional consideration in the selection
of these particular students was that they served in the same
general work environment as the mentors whose profiles have
been presented. In fact, each was assigned for a single term

to the same office at which one of the profiled mentors was employed. No specific attempt was made to match occasions on which a particular mentor and a corresponding student interacted. The overriding intention was to select individuals who were representative of all students who participated in the program. The majority of those students were female, Hispanic, from low income families, and with no prior work experience. Three of the four featured students are female, all are Hispanic, from limited income families, and lack previous work experience.

Profile of Student A.

At the time of the interview she was a 17 year old junior high school student who had been selected to be a participant in the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program. Of Hispanic origin, Student A. was born in Puerto Rico and attended school there from kindergarten until the seventh grade. Her parents are divorced and both have new families. She is the only child of that union. She has a boyfriend who was also born in Puerto Rico who is presently working in banking. She feels very secure about her situation and seems to have a clear picture of what she wants. She explained it like this:

> Well, I live with my mother, stepfather and a
> little four-year-old brother. I have my father in
> Puerto Rico with two little sisters. I'm the one

child of the marriage. My parents are divorced.
I'm pretty much happy with that because I see my
father and I see my mother. They care a lot about
me. That helps a teenager nowadays, the loving of
their parents. . . . I don't see my father on a
regular basis, but like at least once a year. Her
mother and stepfather moved to the United States
because her mother needed special medical care that
was only available here.

She reminisced about her early days on the island:

Down in Puerto Rico, at every single school
you have to a wear uniforms. A code where you
would have to wear certain type of uniform during
the school year in order to identify you as a
school student. I miss that. . . . I remember when
I used to take out my little skirt so it wouldn't
get wrinkled. And the shirt, I would make sure it
wasn't dirty. And it was, it used to be, so much
fun. But I feel I am learning more here.

I came here four years ago. I started as an
eighth grader. We were the first eighth graders to
graduate from junior high, and the first ninth
graders [to enter the high school] as freshmen.
That was when they started that new program
[district restructuring from junior high to middle
schools] . . . I spoke no English and I didn't know

much English. [Puerto Rican schools] did teach English, but not in a way to prepare you to have a full conversation. Just the basic stuff. 'Mother,' 'father,' 'the places of the house,' little words here, little words there. But they never try to focus on conversation. I never thought I would really need it till I came here. I learned the little bit I know with interest and hard work, and here I am (said happily).

I went through eighth grade all in TBE (Transitional Bilingual English) classes. When I came to high school, I spent the first half of the year, in my freshman year, in all bilingual classes; in my English classes, my TBE and my English as a Second Language. My counselor called me over [down to her office] and said, 'Do you want to change to mainstream classes? Do you think you can handle it?, I said, 'Yes, just have me go for it, just let me try it, and if I see I can't, then I'll let you know. (pause) It's a challenge. I'm willing to take chances. That's the way I go.' So I started the mainstream, and I just went so good in it, I stayed in it.

Student A. was selected in January, 1992, to be placed at an insurance site, a family owned and operated business. She discussed the site placement in the following way:

They treated me good. I learned a lot about
insurance. I learned about insurance policies, how
it works. I learned about working with other
people. Because I wasn't just working [by] myself,
I was working for others. I would help everybody
in the office. There are one, two, three, four,
five, six, seven, eight people that I work with,
including my boss. They treated me so good. I
never thought that working in a business [could be]
so much fun. I would never go into [the office] in
a bad mood and get out in a bad mood. I would
always come out smiling and laughing. Especially
with the girls, oh my God! We had so much fun
times. You know we're still doing our work but
we're having fun.

There are all like so friendly. If you would do
something wrong, they won't yell at you for no
reason. They would just tell you, 'Try to do this
right, because if you do it wrong, then I'll get
yelled at.' . . . And it's much better because you
don't feel that bad.

There were some times that a customer would
call or get there, you're just not in the mood for
that kind of customer, but I learned that the
customer is always right. I learned that the
customer always has to be, how should I say,

satisfied. And that is very, very, very precious

thinking when you want to work in business.

Because if you don't satisfy a customer, you're not

going to make money. That's just the way it is.

I also learned the phone techniques. You

learn to be courteous on the phone. You learn to

be patient. You learn to remember, which is hard

for me. You learn to speak clear so that the other

person on the line can understand you. Some times

you would get five and six [telephone] calls at the

same time. You have to learn how to get at least

three without letting it ring, four or five times,

because you cannot let it ring a lot, the customer

will hang up. There's a lot to learn. There's a

whole new world out there.

Student A. had difficulty enunciating the name of the

insurance company clearly:

Oh, yes. I do have an accent, and to say,

'Good morning [and the name of the insurance

company]. Can I help you?' that took me a long

time to get used to saying. To say it nice and

clear. Because I would say it so fast to get it

over with. I remember my boss called me over and

said, 'Listen, I called the other night, do you

remember? And I didn't understand a word you

said.' And I remember he said . . . he always used

to call me 'kiddo' . . . 'the only thing I
understood [was],'Good afternoon, [and he
mumbled].' I was so ashamed. So from there on . .
. and he would trick me. He would just go out to
the office and call, just to have me answer the
phone and see how am I doing. Before I left he
told me I made good progress on that.

Before I left I did a project to get [a major
municipal] account, to insure them. But there's
three other insurance companies that are trying to
get [the bid]. So it was, Wednesday, Thursday, and
Friday that I would get to work at 2:00, and they
had me do a lot of typing . . . that work [on the
bid], those three days. I mean, that experience
was just so good. I'll tell ya, it was really
really busy. I left a week after that because my
twenty weeks were up, and I believe two weeks
later, the girl called me up, one of my workmates,
and said, 'We got the account,' and I was so happy
that they called me. That they didn't forget about
me, they thanked me, and that feels good. That
really does. It feels good that you could help,
that you feel wanted.

It was just the fact that they would need me
so much, that I did so much work, being so busy.
Then to be acknowledged, and get the account after

all! It was very much maturing. I learned a lot

on working with customers, working with other

people, and receiving orders. Just the fact of

working with a business. It feels really good when

you know that adults actually trust you to do

something in so serious a business. It feels

really good. You actually learn a lot about

behavior, work, and, I don't know, maybe emotional

situations. You do learn a lot, cause I did.

Student A. started working at the second site in

September of the following year. She is now a first semester

senior. She compared the first placement to the second

placement:

> Well, it's pretty different. At the bank I'm
>
> working with a lot of customers. I do banking
>
> business. It's not as busy as [the insurance
>
> company]. Sometimes I have to look myself for
>
> something to do.
>
> I have to change departments. I started with
>
> the Customer Service, moved to ATM, Automatic
>
> Transaction Machines, and now I'm with IRA,
>
> Investment Retirement Accounts. In the Customer
>
> Service department, I update books, I do paperwork,
>
> I open accounts, wait on customers. I deal with
>
> money when I open an account. I did not need a lot
>
> of training. They give me the money, I go to the

service teller, and I bring moneys back from the
checks. In the ATM department I print cards for
the records. I file the applications, file the
papers, order the cards, and there's a process that
they have to go through. In the IRA's what I'm
doing now is opening the accounts, making sure the
folders are all set, and pretty much paperwork. I
do not wait on customers with the IRA's. I guess
they are for people with a lot of money.

Student A. discussed her mother's influence on her life:

My mom has been a great influence in my life
and so supportive. As soon as I was a teenager,
she explained to me, there's things that may happen
to you, now you're going to start dating guys. You
gotta be, you know (pause) . . . I can't think of
it in Spanish. Temptation. Temptations come your
way. Drugs, alcohol, sex. . . . Those are the
three main words when you get to be a teenager.
And peer pressure. She gives me so much
confidence, and I would feel so guilty if I ever
did something that would hurt her. My parents
trust me. Trust is a strong word for me. Trust is
confidence. Trust is able to say something and
know that you're going to get that from that
person. I have trust from my parents.

Responsibility is very important in my life.
I consider myself responsible and challenging, like
I said before, an activated person. I am the type
of person that, I volunteer for everything I can
possibly volunteer for. I like to help people, I
like to work with people. I like numbers. I want
to be an accountant. I love sports, any kind of
sports. I am a sensible person, funny . . .

I don't really feel the sense of a traditional
Hispanic girl. I see myself as a woman, or a
teenager, who would like to be something, who would
like to do something of myself. Anything that
would try to stop me, just get it out of the way.
I don't see myself as a typical housewife that will
stay home and take care of the kids. I want to
work. I want to have my own business if I can. I
want to be as much as I could be, and then worry
about family, and then worry about everything else.
I'm going to apply for this new program called
InRoads. If I'm acceptable, it's a really strict
program. They pay most of my college fees. In the
summer they get me a job in the field that I want
to be. If I want to be an accountant, they'll get
me a real accounting job. If I start from right
now, as a freshman in college, I'll have four years

in the same company, which will lead me most likely
to a guaranteed position in that company.

The 20/20 Program is a good experience. It
gives opportunity to students to know what business
is all about. How you have to behave, what to do,
what is correct. It gives businesses the
opportunity to know that not every student is the
same. That who comes from Holyoke High School, is
good.

It did [me] a lot of good, because when I say
I work in a bank to business people, they look to
me, and they're interest[ed] in what I have to say.
When I say I work in an insurance company, being a
junior in high school, they're interest[ed] in what
I have to say.

I tell them that I am in this program, the HHS
20/20 Co-Op Program, I don't know if you've heard
about it in the news, because it did come out in
the newspaper. I tell them that it's this program
where I work. Businesses get together with
students, to prepare them [for] the outside world.
It feels so good having an adult asking you
questions, and being interested in what you have to
say. 'You work in a bank?' That builds interest
in me, and that makes me look good. 'And what do
you work on?' And just knowing what I'm talking

about, and just being able to answer their
questions, and describe what I do, it make me feel
good.

Site Evaluation Student A.

In her first placement, Student A. was hired as a
bookkeeping/clerical clerk. Her rating in all categories was
outstanding: "She is very efficient and very friendly with
those she come in contact with."

She was hired as a clerical assistant in her second
placement. Her rating in this position was as positive as
that of her first placement. She met expectations: "Was able
to follow directions and complete tasks without constant
supervision. Was comfortable with the use of computers and
with typing. Worked well with other employees. Even
temperament."

Follow-up on Student A.

Upon graduation from high school, this student attended
a local four year college. Her family moved to that city, in
which the college was located, so she could live at home while
attending college. She enrolled in the School of Management
to continue with her business studies.

Profile of Student N.

This student was a second semester Hispanic senior and had experienced two sites when she was interviewed. She was seventeen when selected for her first site and her mother would not give her permission for the interviews. She offered to be interviewed when she became eighteen. She lived with her parents, her brother, and three children from her mother's previous marriages.

> My mother is 50 and my father is 21 years older than her, which is 71 years old. Me, my brother Emilio, my brother Angelo, my brother David, my sister Maria, my mother Lucy, and my father Emilio. Before I was born, it was David, Maria, which was from my mother's first marriage. And her second marriage she had Angelo. Then her third one, and last one, she had me and my brother Emilio . . . mother was married three times. My father was married before, too. Before my father met my mother, he had seven kids, which was Beverly, Sammy, Junior, Johnny, Carmine, Blanca, and Millie. Then when he got married to my mother, which was his last wife, he had me and my brother, which was nine. Before that my mother had three, and that made five for her.

I only know three of my other siblings. The
other ones live far away. We only talk on the
phone.

We're in a home, a two-family home. My father
was a carpenter. He worked for the owners of
properties. I mean, they had lots of properties,
and he worked for them. My mother is a nurse's
aide. We never been on welfare.

I was born in New York. It was mixed.
Hispanics, blacks, whites, everything. I moved a
lot. First I went to school in New York. Then I
moved over here to Holyoke. I entered kindergarten
again, because I was just entering kindergarten in
New York, but then we decided to move out here. So
I really could say I started school out here. My
parents felt they wanted a better place for us to
grow up in. And then we moved back to New York,
and I was going to start first grade there, but
then my parents moved back to Massachusetts, and I
went to school here. Then I went back to New York,
and I was in like the fifth grade over there. Came
back over here and finished my fifth grade over
here. We moved to New York and Massachusetts like
four times, or five. Then finally we stayed here.
Even though I'm Puerto Rican I don't speak . . .
'cause I grew up speaking English a lot. You know,

my parents taught me English, well my mother. My
mother speaks both English and Spanish. And my
father, he speaks Spanish. He speaks broken
English, like he can't speak it too very well.
Speaking to my father, I have to speak to him in
Spanish all the time And I know how to speak
Spanish, but how do you call it, the slang? We
call it slang. I'll start off in Spanish, go to
English, go back to Spanish, go to English, back-
and-forth.

I take Spanish [in high school]. I think I'm
on Spanish III now. Well, I took French and
German. Yeah, I speak a little bit of French.
German, I can read it and write it, but I can't
hardly speak it that good. But I speak French
pretty good.

We don't go to church. You know, we believe
in God and stuff, but I don't know. It's just . .
. I feel, the church, the Pentecostal church that
we were at, I find it's too strict. It's too
strict, the Pentecostal religion. 'Cause I like to
wear my pants, and I like to wear my earrings and
my makeup. And I like to, you know, trim my hair
sometimes. I like to wear necklaces and bracelets
and rings and stuff. There you cannot do that.
You can't wear pants, you can't wear earrings, you

can't wear necklaces, you can't wear bracelets.
You can't dance. You can't go to the movies.
They're too strict.

My mother brings us up to be good. She's been
with my father for a long time. She showed us you
got to stick together, be a family, work your
problems out, you know, discussing and not
fighting. My parents love me a lot, and they
strive me to do my best.

I feel that my education comes first. My
family does, and so does my education. So I feel
that I want to become something, make something of
my life. [My goal is to] go to college. Entering
college as a freshman. . . . I'm undecided right
now, cause I have so many different experiences
that I don't really know what field I'm going to go
into, so I'm going to go into liberal arts. I
always wanted to become a pediatrician. But I also
like business, so I'm not sure. But see, just in
case it doesn't work for me in the medical field I
have that to fall back on. So, I'm just saying, if
I can't make it in becoming a pediatrician, I have
my business skills, you know, to go into business.
It's something I also enjoy.

Student N. explained how she became aware of the HHS
20/20 Co-Op Program during her junior year in high school:

I heard about [the 20/20 program] last year as a junior, during the last couple of months of school. [The school coordinator] spoke to the juniors and seniors who wanted to join [apply for] the program. She called a meeting and the kids who were interested went. [The coordinator] explained the job positions, what we needed, what experience. She then gave us each an interview. Told us what we had to do on the job, and gave us a test. We each got our interview privately. She shut the door of the office.

Student N. began work at her first site, a local insurance company:

I thought I had to write forms and answer telephones. I thought I would do work with customers. I feel they'd teach how to work what they were doing. But . . . well, when I entered at 2:30, I would have to pick up the mail. Then I will have to file away files. Then I will have to pull files, and drop filing, and FAXing, any FAXes that they have.

As soon as I finished my job, I would go up to them and ask them to give me anything. They would just give it to me and I would get it done.

[The office manager] gave me a separate project, which was to work on the computer, and

cancel each of the names he had canceled out on the sheets, which was a 500 page book which I did in a day or two days. Also, . . . once they didn't find anything else for me to do, they put me in the back room, which they had a table full of files, of canceled, dead files we called them. They had me file. Which took me like, about two weeks, or three weeks to do.

Well, I expected to do more. I thought I had to type letters and answer phones and stuff like that. But it was basically, well, it was easy for me. I found it easy.

I found that the people there were so friendly, they were very nice to me. They made me feel comfortable, they didn't push me. If I asked or needed help they were there for me. I just enjoyed working with them.

I think [the pay] is good. It puts some money in my pocket. I can't always depend on my parents, 'cause they got bills and stuff. Even though my parents are there for me, it's good to have your own money sometimes 'cause when you wanna buy something, you have the money. I put some money away and I keep some money for myself. You know, it helps to have money of your own. It's nice.

Student N.'s second assignment was at an area bank:

Again, I thought I was going to answer the phones, do more typing, more challenging jobs. Because what I find to be doing at the bank is not challenging for me. To be direct, it is boring. 'Cause like what they give me isn't challenging, and doing things that are simple, after a while it gets tiring.

They look over me, yeah, they do, but they don't keep a close eye on me 'cause they know I can do my work. I like that, they trust me and now they can see how I work, they trust me more, knowing that I know what I'm doing. So they're not over my shoulder.

My mother asks me all the time what I'm doing, and if I like it. And I tell her, 'Yeah.' She says, my mom and my father says, you know, 'That's good.'

[The experience] teaches you a lot. It teaches about the real world and gives a lot of experience on how it is to work in jobs, and how to work with people, how to work with everyday life. It gives me also something for my resume, for school and my other jobs. [It] gave me a chance to prove my work, prove what I can do, and show who, you know, who I am. It's meant a lot to me.

I worked, at [the insurance office] on days
off from school and I've worked through every
vacation in the bank. [The insurance company]
invited me back to apply for a job for summer work.
They offered me a job for the summer. Well, I want
to go to college but if they offer a full-time job
I'll take it. I'll try to make a schedule around
it cause I'm not going to give up college. That's
my goal, to go to college.

Site Evaluation Student N.

She was hired as a clerical clerk in her first
placement. Her rating in all categories was outstanding: "N.
aims to please. Very adaptable to changing situations, highly
motivated, quick to learn, very respectful of others, and
confident in her abilities. A pleasant disposition and very
mature for her age."

Student N. had received a commendable evaluation from
her second placement after the first ten weeks. However, she
did not complete the second ten weeks. She told the program
coordinator that she could not keep up with her school work.
Her senior term paper was due and she needed time to complete
it. She told the site mentor that her family was moving out
of state immediately, and resigned that day. She worked a
total of thirteen weeks at the second site.

Follow-up on Student N.

Upon graduating from high school, Student N. moved with her family to Virginia.

Profile of Student K.

Student K. was a sixteen year old second semester junior at the time of the interviews and was working at his second site for about seven weeks. His first placement had been in a health environment and the second was in insurance. He was first asked him to talk about himself, where he was born, and about his family background.

> My parents were both born in Puerto Rico and I
> have an older sister. I was born here in Holyoke.
> I've been in the school system in Holyoke for all
> my years. My parents just put me right into the
> English, they didn't put me into any ESL courses,
> so it was more difficult for me to learn English.
> Both of my parents can understand and hear English
> and sometimes they can carry on a conversation.
> They're not fluent in it though, and they might
> have trouble sometimes understanding what you're
> saying. When I'm at home we speak Spanish. So I
> consider myself very bilingual. I can function
> really well . . . speaking, writing, and reading in

both languages. I have taken three years of
Spanish in high school all at advanced levels.

I'm a Jehovah's Witness. When I was first
born that was the religion that was my parents.
And then my parents stopped going to that religion.
But throughout the years I did learn more about
that religion, and then my sister and I both
rejoined that religion again. It seemed to be a
pretty good one for us, and we've enjoyed being in
a religion. I think, as long as you're in a
religion, somehow it'll help a student growing up.
That's how I feel, because being in a religion,
I've learned a lot of different things. All of the
religions that I know of never teach anything but
how to get along with other people. So I think
maybe a religious background for a lot of students
might help them.

Since I was young . . . my first thought was
that I wanted to become a lawyer. I used to study
a little law on my own, just going out just to see
what it was like. Not working with law or
anything, but just reading up on it, and seeing how
lawyers work. I think I learned a lot just from
watching the lawyer episodes on TV. And from the
lawyers you could say that that's where I got that
leadership ambition from. Then as I went along

researching different aspects of different fields,
I learned to like management because I'm a person
who likes leadership and I liked directing. I
really get along with people, and I enjoy talking
with people. So I really think I can help the
community in different ways.

I feel that the Holyoke public schools have a
lot to teach students. At a junior high level, I
don't think they get to the students as much, and
the teachers don't really promote the business
aspects of the world. They just sort of tell you
to take courses that'll continue your education.
But they don't really give the students an idea of
what kind of education to continue. So the
students, once they're in school, they might take
business courses, but they don't know . . . there's
so many aspects of business.

My parents always told me to take a rewarding
course, that I would learn something in and to get
along with people, because one of the most
important aspects as you're growing up is to get
along with different people and different cultures.

I figured that in the world you're going to
end up using computers, and it would be good to
learn the skills. That way, if you do get into a
position like manager, I told you that I wanted to

be a manager, that way when you go to your workers,
they can respect you because they see that you also
understand how to use a computer yourself. So in
order to gain the respect of your co-workers, you
would have to show them that you also know what
they're doing, and that you're keeping your eye on
them just in case they're trying to pull anything
on you.

I first heard about the 20/20 Program when I
was in my Keyboarding I class. The fact that [the
department chair] came into the room and talked
about that program made an impact on me.

She told us that if we kept up in the
Keyboarding programs and took the Computer
Application programs, that in the future she was
planning the program called HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program
for students who did well in those courses, and
that it would be a co-op job between students and
workplaces in different environments. That's when
I first learned of it, and that's what first
brought my interest into it. I was a freshman at
the time.

[The following year] I showed an interest in
it, and I let my teacher know about it. She let me
know about the program and how it was going. And
then she arranged for an interview date, in which a

lot of students showed up. And they took a mini-
test and a typing [computer] test just to see if
our skills were up or not. And then we went
through a mini-interview process.

Student K. was selected for a position with a major
health service organization. He described his experiences in
that assignment:

Well, nervous on that first day and walking in
there and talking with a total stranger that you
don't even know is quite an impact. Especially
when you're going to a nursing home, you're
expecting for a lot of old people to be there, and
you always have that environment where you see old
people nagging and bothering. But it isn't true
once you go in. It's a totally different
experience. It's something where you go in and
they treat you like an everyday employee. When I
walked in they greeted me warmly and they took me
into their office and they explained just about
everything that would be going on in the nursing
home, and who I had to report to. And they
explained the process, and they gave me a mini-tour
of the facility and what it was like. They
explained to me that if I did get the job, I would
still have to go to one of their orientations,
which explained everything about the facility.

Because a health facility is dangerous in some
aspects, where if something were to happen, you
would have to know what to do.

So I was required to go to a mini-orientation.
And of course they did write a letter to the school
letting them know that I would come out of school
early to go to the orientation. For me, I never
thought that they would have such a thing as an
orientation for you to sit through a meeting for
nine hours listening to different people talking,
and saying different things about a nursing home.
I really learned a lot of things during that
orientation, very informative. . . . One of the
things in the orientation that was covered, that
you always had to be friendly and smiling at other
people. Especially at a nursing home where there's
a lot of older people, and any small gesture might
get them upset. It's all information that's useful
and might even be useful later on in life.
Everyone has to go through that process, and if
they don't go through that process, then they will
automatically be terminated from their position.

Well, after the first day in which they
introduced me and gave me a tour of the nursing
home, the next day they started showing me how the
different things worked. Basically, they

introduced me to everyone, and made sure that I

knew everyone's name. I liked it because they

always offered candy. That was one of my personal

favorites. But as I went along, they showed me the

computer, and introduced me to different programs.

They entrusted me with certain codes that you need

to get into the computers. That was where the

confidential part of my job took place, where I

wouldn't be able to reveal any of their codes or

anything like that. For example, the new copying

machine that they did get in, you would need a code

just specifically for the copying machine to get

into it and make copies for each department. I was

entrusted with certain codes and how to get into

the computer.

One of [my assignments] was data entry, where

I would go into the computer and enter data from

different sheets as I received it each day. I was

also put into the accounting department, I'd handle

their accounting filing, where I'd put files away.

Then I'd work on the computer, writing in the exact

amounts as to how much people had to pay, or how

much they were getting back from a certain place.

So I did [have] some accounting experience. And

along with that I learned a little about management

because I worked with the quality management

coordinator. She did teach me a few of the different aspects that a person does have to put up with, because she did run the nurses in the nursing home. She would explain to them how to manage themselves in case of an emergency or anything like that. So I learned a lot of different skills.

I worked with [the] medical records department. In the medical records department, I would again work with confidential files, where I'd have to enter a certain person's data, and how their physical condition was, if they were getting better or worse. I learned how to do data entry in the medical records, which I thought was interesting. And the people, of course, were always nice.

I also worked with the resource coordinator. She was another one where I had to learn confidentiality, because the door in her office would usually be closed. And she would entrust me by letting me stay in the office while she conducted certain interviews for the nursing home. People who they were thinking about getting. She'd call other sites and she'd find out how this person worked, and if they got along with other people. And one, for example, one of the things that I learned is that a lot of people think that people

who are a little slow, or are in special ed
courses, or anything like, that really can't work.
But she changed my whole mind around about that,
because as she was talking, she did come across a
few people who did have slow disabilities in which
they learned a little slower. But that didn't deny
them the right to work there. They were always
given equal opportunity. And if the person looked
good in their background, then she'd call them in
for an interview. So I did learn that the nursing
home wasn't a facility where they'd have any sort
of racism or anything like that, which I thought
was probably the best part for me. I was happy to
hear about that.

Another skill that I think that could have
been helpful was learning to ask questions.
Because I was nervous to ask questions because
you'd think that if you did ask, you were going to
get in trouble for it . . . to go up to the person
themselves and not be scared to talk with the
person, and ask them how to run the program and not
feel embarrassed about asking the person.

Well, it came about because one day I did
accidentally erase a column in the computer, and I
really didn't know how to call the column back up
after you've already entered for it to be deleted.

I was nervous about asking the lady, and telling her. Because, I mean, this is something she confided me to do and make sure that it all ran, ran smoothly and without erasing anything, because these were major records. I really didn't know what to do. So I went to my supervisor, and my supervisor told me, 'Well just talk to the person and I'm sure that they'll help you out' and I did go to the person. To my surprise that person told me, 'Oh, I've done that hundreds of times before. All you have to do is . . . ' this and this. And they called the program back up. So I did get some experience at that, and I felt a little more brave as to going up to the person themselves and asking questions.

One of the hardest things that I've probably been through was getting too much work at once. Getting too much work at once is something that a lot of people face in their jobs, I'm sure. But sometimes for a student, it just, sometimes it gets out of hand. When you get too much work, you really don't want to go up to your supervisor, thinking that, [they will], tell you, 'Well, that's what we're paying you for'. I did have to approach my supervisor and talk to her about it. And of course she did understand. Because like I did say,

I did work for like five different departments
there. And so, it did get a little out of hand and
frustrating.

After twenty weeks at his site, Student K. was scheduled
for a new assignment:

I did feel bad the last day when I did have to
tell them that I wasn't going to go to work for
them anymore, and that I would have to switch to
another facility. It's always hard because you've
already learned the routine by the end of the
twenty weeks, and you feel like, I already have
this down pat. Just as you've learned it, that's
when you have to go. So it was kind of a difficult
transition, already knowing the people there and
how they were going to treat you, and going there
every day. So, if given the choice, at that time I
wanted to stay. But now, now that I think . . . I
wanted to stay because, because of the people.

I was one of the jokers there. But I kept
everything in perspective. The good thing about it
is that they all laughed. You think that business
people are always going to be serious. But they
were always joking around just as much as I did.
People would treat me nice, offer me things, they'd
give me candy and buy me sodas. I'd come into work

they'd have a soda on the table. 'That's for you.'
They even got me presents before I left.

For his second placement, Student K. went next to an
insurance company:

Well, I can tell you this much, I wasn't as
nervous that day because I had already gone to the
other place. So I sort of expected the same
greeting and the same type of people to be there.
The first day the person who was supposed to show
us what to do wasn't there, and so he had another
person take [his] place. And then the process all
began again, where the'd give you a tour of the
facility, and then they'd explain to you and they'd
make you feel at home. It was a smaller facility.
I really didn't mind that it was smaller, because I
figured, you know, people are all the same, and it
really doesn't make a difference. It depends how
you find the workplace to be, and what you make it
your goal to do there.

My tasks at this site now are basically filing
and FAXing different documents, which I find kind
of boring as I work there. At one point in time I
thought they were never going to teach me to do
anything else. Then they tried to teach me how to
do the mail and how to run it through the slot and
weigh it and things like that. And now they'll

trust me a little more and send me on errands, like down the street to the Post Office.

Well, now that I've had the site change, I'm glad I did change because now I'm learning more about how different companies work and how they're run. I feel that just changing sites you can learn a lot from different businesses, and what you want to go into.

A certain amount of weeks, I had to stay longer at work. When I had to stay a little longer, it would give me less time for doing my homework. Sometimes I'd come to school the next day really tired. Even one of the teachers brought it to my attention. I'm glad he did, because that's what really got my attention.

At that point in time I was thinking, well maybe I might have to get out of the program in order to continue my schoolwork, because my grades did drop.

My parents told me, as long as my grades didn't continue dropping, that they wouldn't mind. But if they noticed that there was a change in my grades, during the white report cards, that then they might tell me to get out of the program. I managed to get a schedule to coincide with everything, and I talked with the people at the

site, and they understood perfectly. And especially the [second] supervisor at the site where I worked, because the supervisor told me that she had kids of her own, and that she understood exactly what I was going through. So she would just tell me when you feel that you have to leave work to get your homework done, feel free to do it, and just let me know.

You learn how to manage yourself and your time, and how to keep up with everything. Because you will in the future face problems where your schedule won't allow you to do everything. And you learn how to coordinate different things. So you learn coordination.

I did make an adjustment in my schedule, and I got everything to fit in, and I noticed that my grades did go up this semester.

I've always had a thing when I'm determined to do something, or set a goal to do something, I'm determined automatically to do it, and that determination is one of the things that helped me. Because I was determined to get through the job, and I was determined to change my schedule in a way to get it done. Then while I was doing that, I was thinking, if I can do this, then in the future I won't have any problems as a business manager.

Because, I believe, if you have a determination to get something done, you'll get it done. I believe that.

[The office manager] is the person [for whom] I work directly every day. But he's not there every day. He goes in sometimes like every other day. It depends, because there's different branches, so he has to go to other work. And then my second supervisor would be [in charge]. She was particularly nice, and she was the one who talked to me.

Well [the office manager] sort of trained me. He didn't, he did in a quick manner. [He] didn't even show up on the first day, and I had to learn everything on the second day. And I think one of the things that helped me in FAXing was [that my second supervisor] taught me how to FAX documents. Even with that FAX machine. She's showed me, she's showed me some of the different things, and in those things I've excelled. I feel that [the office manager] would teach me how to do some things, but it wasn't something where he'd sit down for a couple, a couple of minutes, and get into your mind exactly.

He's constantly on the phone, and you can't talk to him . . . When he isn't on the phone and I

do ask him for another job, he'll just give me anything like miscellaneous filing and say, 'Well, here do this.' or 'Pull these files and put them back in.' I felt it was very unprofessional, and I was just very unhappy doing that over and over.

The people were always nice, that was the good thing about it. I mean, the people there are great. I can tell you that much. The people are always nice. They're always laughing and joking, and they're like the same. And a lot of them treat me exactly like an employee, which makes me feel good.

I would say that [the total work experience] has been a teaching tool. You learn that the language that you might hear in school is not used in the workplace. You have to be more formal about [the way you speak]. You learn communications.

They told [me], we expect you to be just like an employee. You have to dress like an employee, and you have to look like an employee. They said you're always to be considered an employee of this facility, and as long as you're working here, you'll be entrusted like an employee, and you're going to be treated like one. So learn a lot of responsibility in the workplace. It's like an

education away from an education, because you learn
things that you might not have learned in school.

As a career choice? I feel that a health
facility isn't a place where I'd like to be. I
told you, my intentions were to be a manager one
day, and I don't think I'd want to be a manager of
a health facility or an insurance facility, seeing
how everything runs. I'd like to find a more
active job where you are more on the go and you can
get in contact with your employees and, you know, a
job like that.

Site Evaluation Student K.

He was hired as a clerical assistant at his first
placement. His ratings in all categories were outstanding: He
is very conscientious. He asks appropriate questions. He is
only in high school and I find myself giving him brief
instructions with the confidence he can exceed the
expectations of a particular project.

Student K. was hired as clerical clerk for his second
assignment: His evaluations ranged from "commendable" to
"meets expectations" after the first ten weeks. This student,
because of communication problems with his immediate
supervisor, felt that the evaluation was "totally unfair" and
wanted to quit. After discussions with the coordinator of the

program about "problem solving," "appropriate ways to give

notice," and " how to survive in the business world," Student

K. decided to complete his twenty week assignment.

Follow-up on Student K.

This student was the first choice out of eight selected

for Robert Fowler's Hampden Paper Program. Student K. turned

it down. He was offered a full scholarship to go to college

days and full-time work during vacations and summertime. He

is pursuing his interest in business management.

Profile of Student S.

This student was selected to participate during the

second semester of the first year in the HHS 20/20 Co-Op

Program. She was selected to work in one of the insurance

companies participating in the program. This placement did

not work out. She was the first placement at this site. She

was seventeen years old, Hispanic and a senior. She told me

she was born in Holyoke, and lives with her family in a

housing project. Her oldest brother is married with a son.

Another older brother, age 23, and a half-brother, age 8, are

both living at home. She discussed her background:

> I've been living here all my life. I live

> with my mom, and my stepfather, and three brothers.

My mother was like 11th grade when she moved from
Puerto Rico to come over here with my father. My
mom got married very young. He was like ten years
older than my mother . . . she was pregnant when
they got married, and they came. My real father is
dead.

[My stepfather] keeps to himself, and I keep
to myself. He's a real nice guy though. He treats
me nice, and he treats my mother nice. They have
been married for ten years. My mom told him before
she got married. I got three kids, and before
anything, goes my kids. If you see them doing
something wrong that you know is going to hurt
them, you have the right to tell them no. But
don't you go touching my kids. The way I treat
them, well, that's between me and my kids. Don't
get in between our lives.

Student S. expressed that it was hard having older
brothers and being the only girl in the family:

Both my brothers started college but they
didn't finish it. Now one of them is working in a
factory, and the other one works at an auto sales
place. . . . It's not good having older brothers.
I'm the only girl. They're over-protective, very
over-protective. They don't want no guys going
over the house, and they don't want me to go out.

. . . When I was in kindergarten, my favorite teacher was really nice to me, and I got along with her. I still see her, we talk, I still go visit her. She really encouraged me to do a lot of things. I don't like to do anything. I like everything to be easy, to get away with everything. I was like teacher's pet in class [laughs] and I used to get away with everything. I used to like kiss up to her always, and now I hate that. Growing up in a Hispanic family, you learn how to kiss up to everyone.

When I was in fourth grade, a friend of mine was being raped by her father. She just told me that at that time all she needed was a friend. Two days afterwards, they took her into a foster home because she spoke to her school counselor and told her that [her father] was raping her. Her mom didn't believe her.

I think I grew up too fast. They teach us things when we're too young to really understand what they mean. That issue about sex. You know, they were telling us what it was when I was in fourth grade. At that time I was still playing with dolls. I was just thinking about dolls. I wasn't thinking about sex. I was young.

About drugs. When you're around them [adults]
you can't act like a kid. You have to act mature,
and you're still, a kid. You still want to play
around, and act immature at times, but you can't.
My cousins are really hooked onto drugs. They all
come from New York. I see what they're going
through, and I don't want to be going through the
same thing. I never tried dope. I just don't want
to end up like a lot of people I know, I want to
be somebody, and I don't think drugs are going to
be the way to get me somewhere. My mom tells us, a
lot, not to use drugs.

[On a typical day] I get up at 5:30, take a
shower, and then I get dressed. I eat breakfast
sometimes. I come to school, and then after school
I go home if I don't go to my boyfriend's house.
Sometimes I eat and go to sleep, or if not, I'll
just sleep and when I get up, I'll eat. Then I'll
just watch some TV, do some homework, and then
sleep. Sometimes I go out with my friend. I'm
just home. I do nothing. I bother my mother. She
says I'm driving her crazy, but then again if I go
out, she'll start talking. I just bother her
'cause I don't have anything to do. She does all
the work. I'll just go by her and start playing
fighting with her 'cause there is nothing else to

do. If she's cooking I'll turn off the stove on her. I'm going to drive her 'crazy pretty soon.' She tells me that.

I do this to get my way, plus her attention or to get out of the house. I'm going to go crazy if I stay in that house. My mother, she's too strict. She has no trust in me, so there's not much I can do. I want to get out.

[When I was going out with my boyfriend] sometimes we'd rent movies or we'd go out. Go out to a movie, if there's a party we probably would go. Sometimes a house party. I go there to dance. Some of them go for drinking, getting high. Not needles. It's just like marijuana and cocaine. You see that a lot. Snorting coke.

It's expensive, too, but a lot of people are selling it. Young kids. There's a lot of it going on. It's sad. My mom, well with me she's strict, but with other people from out of the street, she'll try to help 'em out

I rarely go to church. [My mother says], 'It's up to you.' She don't make me go to church, because last time I started to go, and I was really into church, and then they started criticizing about how I dye my hair. So I never went back.

My mom, it's like, she don't want us to leave her. Whenever we needed money she'll give it to us, whatever we need she'll give it to us. So what's the use of working. My brother he bought a new car and sometimes he can't pay for it and my mom just goes ahead and pays for it. She does that same thing to my older brother, and he's married. She takes care of the baby, she buys him clothes, she's the one that feeds the kid, and she's the one that does everything for that kid. [If my brother says] 'Oh ma, I can't pay the rent,' she goes and pays the rent.

My mom gets me a haircut, pays for the color for the hair, pays for makeup and everything. I don't mind. [laughs nervously] Uhm, I'm really lazy, you know. She makes my bed, she does the laundry, irons, cooks meals, cleans house. My mom cleans [my room]. It is spotless. She's very picky.

Sometimes, my mom tells me that in her house it wasn't like that. Her mother was going crazy when my mom was only six years old. So as soon as my mother turned ten years old they had her cooking for everybody in the house. She had to wash the clothes for everybody in the house. Her older sister would do the shopping and clean the house.

Then as soon as my mother started growing up, she
had to do everything in the house. So she says,
you know, she don't want us to go through what she
went through. My grandmother died just two years
ago. She had been crazy for a long time. And we
keep her at our home. So all the while growing up
my sick grandmother was in the house. She couldn't
move. At the end, you know, I'd say that my mom
was like, . . . she had my nephew to take care of
and everything.

Well, that's what it was being a kid. I was
always around older people, so I grew up too quick.
That's probably why sometimes I act so crazy,
'cause I want to be a kid again and be able to do
the things I wasn't able to do when I was younger.
If I could go back and just play. That's all I
would want to do is play anything. I didn't get to
do much. Play with dolls. I used to love that,
but I didn't do that much, 'cause I was the only
girl in the house so . . . I wasn't able to play
with my grandmother. She wasn't, you know . . .

When I got to [junior high school], I started
hanging out with the wrong crowd and was always in
trouble. They would always leave school, so I
would. I would try to do the same thing they would
do. My grades were really bad, I was always

getting suspended. As time went by I knew I had to change, because, if I didn't, I knew I wasn't going to get anywhere. Now that I'm in high school, I'm going better. I have gotten my act together. I want to be somebody, I want to get somewhere in life. I want people to look up to me. Not like the Hispanic community right now. Their thing is the girls to get married so they go on welfare. I don't want to do that. I want to go to four years of college for travel and tourism, and after three, four years, get my own business going. Own a travel agency. That's what I want to be able to do.

I had never tried working, so I didn't know what the experience was going to be like. At that time I was going through a lot of problems with my mom, so I was trying to get out of the house. My mom was being silly. She was getting on my nerves. Everything that we do would be wrong. I just come home and sleep, so I don't have to put up with her. I thought I was going to go crazy. I was planning on just running away from there. So I was like going to get some time out of my house to see if things would settle down, would straighten up. I just thought of it as an escape out of my house.

It was probably to get out of the house. I never

thought of it as like a job, a responsibility.

Students S. did not like her job:

They would leave the files on top the table,

and I would just go and take a stack, like 10 or

15, and go around and put them in where they

belonged. I got tired at times, because they had

files all the way at the bottom, next to the floor,

and you had to keep on getting down and up and I

didn't like it.

They have stacks of files, and you have

people, like, I need you to do this and I need you

to do this. I had to do that and I had to hurry up

and do the other things, because I had to get it

finished before I left work. Because those might

be files that they were going to use the next day.

I just had to be doing everything in a rush, and I

didn't like it. [Co-workers] used to criticize a

lot, and they used to go up to [the office

manager], too. At times I felt like I was their

slave, too, 'cause they were just putting files and

files . . . It was beginning to be a real drag.

[Work] was the same as being in my house.

Sometimes I feel out of place in my own house. In

my house, everything is just the boys, not me.

Girls are different. In my family they're like the

guys could go ahead and do whatever they want, but we can't because they say were going to end up pregnant. So I feel like I don't belong there.

I felt the same way at the job. I did not fit in with the crowd, I felt out of place there. I didn't think it was worth getting a job to get out of my house for, feeling the same way that I feel at my house. And [my mother] would tell me, why was I working when I didn't have to work, that I had everything in my house. Well, I didn't like the job, so I just preferred to stay home. I didn't feel like I belonged to any of them places, so I was better off at home than at the job. So . . .

What did [that experience] mean to me? I really don't know. I wouldn't like to do it again, that's for sure. I don't think it meant anything. [long pause] I would come out of school and I'd be like, oh, I have to go to work and I was like being miserable. I thought I was better off in the house.

Student S. discussed quitting:

My mother kept telling me, 'If you don't like it, just quit'. So I quit. I told 'em I was moving to Pennsylvania. I wasn't.

Like you had given me the job, trusted me that I would keep on the job and I had let you down. I

didn't want to do it. I was sort of embarrassed.
I didn't tell you at the beginning that it was just
to get out of my house. I didn't want to confront
you about it. It worked out better than I thought.
Because I thought you wouldn't understand, and when
I did tell you, you just told me I should have
talked to you before. So I thought, you did
understand

.

Site Evaluation Student S.

Student S. was hired as a clerical assistant. Her
evaluation ranged from needs improvement, to unsatisfactory.
Mentors' comments on her performance included: "She seemed to
lack energy. Inconsistency is the biggest problem. We often
found errors that needed correction. Seemed to feel burdened
by workload. Required very close supervision. Seemed to lack
ambition. Did not seem interested."

Follow-up on Student S.

Upon graduation from high school Student S. joined the
Air Force. About a year later the coordinator of the HHS
20/20 Co-Op Program received a letter from her. She was
discharged from the service due to an injury and was then
attending college where she is majoring in travel and tourism.

She is still unsettled. In her letter she writes, "There aren't many Hispanics in this place, it makes me feel like I don't belong here, like this is not the place for me."

Recurrent Issues

This division on recurrent issues in the work experience explores the on-the-scene realities of the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program partnership, again, primarily in the voices of the participants. The topics were selected because they were issues often repeated in the interviews. The selections were made because they provided balanced illustrations of each issue, and represented salient insight into the persons and the program. Although the topics addressed are specifically drawn from the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program, which dealt exclusively with urban students whose concentrations were in business subjects, this researcher believes that they do apply to a broad range of similar work situations.

Diverse Backgrounds

Students in the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program were drawn from an inner city public high school population. These were students who were often tracked in curriculum that concentrated in business subjects rather than academic programs, with the assumption and likelihood that they were

not college bound. The majority of these youngster are poor
(73% on free or reduced lunch) and minority (60% Hispanic)
(Chicopee-Holyoke School-to-Work, RFP, 1995). These students
came from unconventional, often unstable, households.

       Mentor C. There's so much, that comes from
home that affects how they are. You have a kid who
maybe comes from a bad home and doesn't even give a
crack about anything. Then you might have a
student who comes from a bad home who wants to get
themselves out of the hole.

Mentor M. "You can appreciate the difficulties they
face. . . . Things that are going on in the family certainly
can affect them."

       The students related what is going on in their families:

       Student V. I am Puerto Rican. My family,
it's my mom, my brother, and I have a stepdad. We
don't live with him because he's in the Navy. My
real father, I don't know anything about. My
stepfather, has two other children. My mom and my
stepfather, they separated.

Student I. "My dad right now is out of work. He
recently got an operation in his stomach. He has diabetes. My
mom is working, but my dad is collecting."

Student C. "[I'm] half black and half white. I live
with my mother and stepfather. They are supportive of me."

Student A.   "My parents are divorced, my father got married and gave me two sisters. My mother didn't exactly get married, but gave me a brother with who I live."

Student S.   When I was six my mother and father decided to move to Puerto Rico. My father died three days after we got there. . . [My uncle has had a hard life], his mom left him and his father remarried and forgot that he had five kids. And they all ended up on the street and on drugs.

Mostly everybody in my neighborhood is on welfare. I see these girls coming out pregnant. It's usually young girls doing that just to live off welfare. The father of the kid ain't even with them and they're stuck with a kid. And some of them aren't using the money for the kids, they're going and wasting it on drugs or going out dancing and their kids are home, have no food.

Student L.   I live with my sister. She is twenty. We grew up alone, my father just used to come and go. He stayed for a few months, then he'll leave again. He's sick. He has HIV. AIDS. He got it from doing drugs. That's why he's back, I think. When we were small, they used to drink on weekends. It was a fight, punch. We used to be in the kitchen, and we heard 'pow, pow, pow' and then

we came outside and see my father was trying to
throw my mother out the third floor window.

Students don't feel safe in the streets:

Student L. We live on Main Street. I'm
afraid to go out. Somebody might do something to
me. I've had like people follow me. I got grabbed
once, and I just get scared to walk. It's getting
dark and I get scared. I'd be walking fast, and
looking back, looking around and everything, cause
I get scared.

Home situations are often exacerbated by constant
uprooting. Several students moved back and forth from Puerto
Rico to other parts of the United States and back. Many of
the students this researcher interviewed have moved more than
once.

Student N. "Moved between New York and Massachusetts
four times, or five, although, we have been in Holyoke the
longest."

Student R. "We've been moving around a lot, from here,
Chicopee, and Puerto Rico. I've known Holyoke for a long
time. It's just that I haven't really lived in Holyoke for a
long time."

Even being white, middle class, and living in one
location in a permanent home was no guarantee of a nurturing
family situation for many of the student participants:

Student J. I come from a family that's kind

of never together, because my dad works during the

day, and my mom works at night. I rarely see my

mother. And my father is always sleeping when I

get home. So I don't really talk to him.

Parental Influence

Some parents had a negative influence on their child's

engagement in the program. Student S's mother encouraged her

to "just quit" her job. In another instance, parental concern

and protection impeded the ambition of their child. Student

I. discussed this:

My parents didn't want me working alone in the

office after dark. Once they picked me up, and

asked, 'Are you here by yourself?' and I was like

'Yeah'. And they said, 'Then you are not working

here no more because we don't want nothing

happening to you.' Then I was like, 'No, let me

stay, let me stay.' Then they picked me up again,

and they said, 'No, you're not working here no

more. It seems like your boss is always leaving

you by yourself.' I would have stayed. I can't be

living the rest of my life being scared.'

This behavior and other statements the student shared demonstrated how they influenced their child's entire social viewpoint:

One thing my parents never did is raise us as having trust in people. I have a hard, hard time trusting anybody. I was never taught to trust anybody, One wrong move and you can get pregnant, you can get caught with drugs, you can end up in the streets. You can end up with a boyfriend that beats you. Look what's going on.

My parents believed the only person you can trust is a dollar in your pocket because your right hand can always chop off you left hand.

Student A's profile reflects a more typical example of parental support. In spite of home circumstances, many students were given positive family encouragement to succeed in the classroom and on the job:

Student K. "My parents will encourage me to continue studying hard, and be determined to do whatever I plan to do."

Student A. "I might be a teenager, but I have a lot of goals. Might be from the way my parents raised me."

Student B. I do my homework. My mom makes me. Because of my mom I took business courses. My mom says, 'you never know when you might need the experience. That is how it's developing today, mostly everything is built on computers, and

typing. Secretaries are needed everywhere. You can
never lose out on having that business experience.

Student H. "At home when I say I had a chance to get a
job. Everybody was happy."

Student J. "My mother thought this job would be good
for me. She told me it should help me decide what I want to
do with my life. So she's glad I did it."

Student C. "My mother asks me about where I work and
what I do and do I like the people I work for. She asks me If
I like it."

Parents often displayed great pride in their childrens'
accomplishments:

Student L. "In my family, nobody graduated. They all
expect me to graduate, 'cause I'll be the first one. And
that's what I want to do."

Student Experiences

Students anticipated the work experience with a mixture
of apprehension and enthusiastic expectancy. A number of them
expected to utilize their accounting and computer skills.
They expected to work in a challenging, mature, office
atmosphere:

Student I. "I took the job to get more responsibility.
I felt I could take some responsibility because . . . I had
computer skills and because I was going to be an adult soon."

A few students held a more realistic expectation:

Student C. "I'd be doing filing and office work and helping people that work there."

Often their actual jobs were routine:

Student J. "I'm filing every day, drop filing almost every day, copying every day, too. Certificates every day, mail every day."

Student V. "I filed and run off copies. I use the copy machine. I do typing. I filed."

Student I. " . . . doing paperwork and organizing, cleaning up the place, keeping it neat."

The reaction to routine tasks was usually determined by the student's overall attitude. Filing was the task that was most common, and often the most frustrating. Mentor C. began her career as a part-time filing clerk. She considered filing as important and faced it with pride and attention. Students had a different perception of that assignment:

Student N. "They put me in the back room with a table full of files, dead files they called them. They had me file. It took me two or three weeks to finish."

Student K. You just continually did the same thing

day after day; filing and filing and filing. . . .

The most unpleasant day was the day the files did

get stacked up, and I couldn't get to them because

I had other tasks to perform. I want to finish my

work. I don't like not doing what is expected.

Student S. "That wasn't for me. They kept on throwing files on top of the table and files and files, and when I thought I was done there was more and more."

Most students found work satisfying and valuable:

Student S. "Working on the computer, was interesting, but not filing."

Student C. " They don't treat me as if I'm a kid. They treat me as if I've worked there for a long time."

Student N. "It taught us how to work in the real world. How you should act in a work environment, and how to control yourself."

However, at times a couple of students proclaimed:

Student S. "It was a drag."

Student L. "It got boring."

A common complaint was that they were not fully occupied:

Student L. "Some of the times they didn't know what to give me, they didn't have anything [work for her to do when she arrived] . . . I'm the type of person that likes everything. I'm active. And when there's nothing to do I get bored."

Student V. "Sometimes there wasn't anything for me to do, and it got boring."

Student J. "They didn't really have anything for me to do, so I helped pack boxes. The fun days are when I have tons of work to do, because then I'm not bored."

The actual workload varied by the nature of the site, the attention of the mentor, and the number of employees who "fed" tasks to the student. Some sites were very demanding:

Student V. "I had too much work to do."

Student B. "She just gave me more work that I was used to."

While some students thought that they had too much work, others perhaps had too many bosses:

Student C. Monday and Tuesday I work in the Business Office. Wednesday I work in Human Resources. Thursday I work on the computer. Friday I'm not scheduled to work with anybody, but I go around and I ask other people that I work for if they have any work to do. So I end up somewhere on Fridays, but it's not the same place every Friday.

Student K. "One worker demanded my time, another worker demanded my time, an Assistant Manager demanded my time, and the Manager demanded my time. So sometimes they did expect too much, for what you can do."

Utilization of Time

Students, in most cases, have enormous demands on their time. They have to do their school work, they want to participate in various school activities, and they may have responsibilities at home. It is important to them to spend

time with their friends. Adding an after school job consumed the rest of their day. This meant that they were "working" a 10 hour day with only 20 minutes for lunch:

Student J. "It made me realize that I don't have much time, and I've got to conserve my time much more. Having a job is a responsibility."

Several students expressed having difficulty balancing the demand of both school and work:

Student L. "I can't go to work and go to school. Because sometimes I have like a lot of home work."

Student J. "My grades did go down for the last ten weeks. I was never home."

One girl did not continue in the program because she had to do an extensive term paper. Another left to play for the high school varsity softball team. Student A. was able to include academic responsibilities, school activities, and a social life with her work. She apparently flourished under what had to be a most demanding schedule:

Student A: Oh! I'm busy . . . actually compared to the other years it's been the busiest of my life. [This year] there's a lot of courses. I have seven periods a day with a 15 minute lunch. Three minutes between periods.

I'm the vice president of the bilingual club. I'm a peer educator. Two days before Halloween we're going to the YMCA to have a little haunted

house for the kids. Between courses and
activities, I'm really 'hooked up' in school.

But I love it. I have Advance Accounting II,
the lab for accounting. I have College Algebra II.
I have U.S. History. I have Chemistry and
Chemistry Lab. I have English. I have a lot of
hard courses in which I'm doing pretty well, to
tell you the truth. I didn't think I could handle
it well, but I am.

I am an office aide during my study period. I
help the vice principal with office tasks.

I work from 2:00 to 4:30, I go home, do my
homework, and then do whatever else I have to do.
I take care of my brother. My mom is sick, so I
take care of her, too.

On weekends I like volleyball. I love
dancing, I love Spanish music. That's like my
favorite. I don't go out a lot. But, I spend a
lot of time with my boyfriend on the weekends. I
don't see him during the week. I like going to the
parks when it's summer. In winter, I'm going to
try skiing and ice skating, which I haven't done
before. But, it's challenging, and I'll go for it.
Even Student A. withdrew from the program after
completing two assignments in her junior year:

I have decided not to continue [in the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program]. It's my senior year, and I want to enjoy school. It's been really hectic for me getting out of school at 1:45 and getting to work at 2:00. The fact that I have to dress up every day. It's not letting me experience a lot of things that I had a chance to. I could have been representative of my homeroom. I could have been an officer of my class. A lot of those things I couldn't do because I don't have time after school. So I decided for the rest of the year, I'm just going to enjoy my year.

I have the experience. I learned so much. I have the references, I know what it's all about. I had an awesome great time. So why not let somebody else get the opportunity, too.

Orientation

Mentor C. recognized the importance of proper orientation when she entered two new schools in the same year:

I remember entering junior high in seventh grade [in Massachusetts]. They never gave you a tour or showed you around or did anything. You just show up and that was it. I was very intimidated. We moved to upstate New York, in the

middle of that school year. I finished 7th grade

there. They had one girl come and show me around,

and she kind of stuck with me for the whole year I

loved it, it was great.

With that early experience in mind, she conducted

orientations in a careful and sympathetic manner:

On their very first day of work I would take

them to meet everyone, I would give them a full

tour of the whole place, tell them where everything

is, make them feel at home and comfortable. Then

start going over what an insurance agency does. Go

through the whole routine of what's expected of

them, and this is how we do things . . . these are

our commercial accounts. Explaining to them the

importance of the job. I would go over everything

with them. Starting with the very first job that

they're going to learn. The first one would be how

to copy something. How to use the copy machine,

how to use the FAX machine. How to answer the

telephone . . .

Orientation at some locations was casual and informal,

but the process at the large health complex was thorough:

Student C. The orientation was from 10 in the

morning until 4:30 in the afternoon. They gave us

a sandwich with chips, and we had pie after and a

juice break. They even paid me for the day. It

dealt with mostly what they do for the elders that live there, what rules and regulations they have to go by, and policies they have to know. It helped me to know more about what kind of work these people do, and that it's not easy. The videotape showed way back when [the facility] was founded, who was the founder, when it was built, how many locations they have.

Student G. First they offered me something for breakfast, gave me a folder with lots of papers in it. After that we saw a movie about their first hospital. We saw another movie that explained how to move residents when they were in the bed. Then came the man that is in charge of the equipment. He gave us a tour of the whole building. We saw every single one of the fire alarms, and a little room that indicates which floor has the problem.

After that, the president of the Nursing Home came. He said that the most important thing were the patients. For us this is the place that we just go to work, but for those people it was their home.

We got out around 6:25, but we still have some papers to sign like forms. It was a long day but it was very good because after that you think more about those people.

Training

Frank Lovelock had a very professional training model

for the Adopt-A-Student program:

You can't just approach an employee and say,

'Here's a student, and I want you to provide a work

experience.' You've got to provide more framework

and guidance. You have to structure a program, and

create a role for the employee, which has specific

requirements, and then provide training that they

may need to do it. It's easy enough for an

employee to do their job. And if you're bringing a

group of students in, it's not hard to prep an

employee to talk to the students on what their job

is and what its requirements are and how it works

and what it's like to work there. But when you

want that employee to coach a student, and provide

a real on-site experience for them, you have to

teach them how to do that. You have to sit down

and think about it, structure a program, and then

identify the role of the employees [the mentors],

and teach them how to do it. And professional

trainers in business know how to do that. They

would consider that course development and course

delivery. This particular course would be showing

students what it's like to be at work and giving

them hands-on experience at doing it. And a course
developer in business would create a program to do
that, and then they would create a training program
to teach the employees who are going to implement
it just exactly how to do it. They would provide
materials to them, and they would break it down
into pieces that they could understand and grasp,
so that they would be able to effectively deal with
that. But just giving them the general direction,
unless you have an extraordinary employee who
happened to be gifted in that way, it would be
unfair to the employee and the student, and would
not result in anything positive. When we had
students working here, our full-time coordinator of
the program had developed materials and training
programs for them. And we would bring them in and
give them training sessions on what you could
expect of the student in terms of their behavior,
how you could motivate the student to work, what
kinds of work you could give them and what kinds
you couldn't. How to do a performance evaluation
at the particular level of performance expectation.
We had a very thorough structure around that, and
it made it work.

Training on-site for the students workers in the
partnership ranged from vague to explicit. In one instance,

[Student A.] "The girl that used to be there the semester before, trained me a little." Some students were pleased by their training:

Student C. They would just explain it to me, and they would show me an example, and then I would do it. It really helps me to really work on a computer, and to really do something, and to not have my teacher stand there and help me.

Other students were frustrated:

Student N. At [my first assignment], they told me what I had to do. So once I got in there I was just going on the flow. But here I have to go always, ask what I have to do, once I finish that, go back and ask what I have to do. I would like it more if they told me everything I have to do at once so that I could do it.

Mentors often found their role as challenging:

Mentor M. "It was difficult to find duties for these students to perform."

Mentor J. Maybe the person giving the student instruction was going over things too quickly. It's hard for someone who's done a job over and over for ten years to sit and explain to someone who's never done it, piece-by piece, you know, step-by-step, what to do. I could see where this

situation could have turned out to be very
burdensome on a supervisor.

Mentor C. I think, from an office point of
view, they change too often [every twenty weeks].
Just when you're getting to know them . . .
teaching them things, they're leaving and we're
getting someone else. 'Oh, this person was great;
now we got this person.' You've got to, in turn
teach everything again, train all over again, and
go through that all over again. You have to be
willing to do that. I think it gets frustrating to
the other employees, who just want to get this work
done! I don't care who does it!

Mentor C. then offered a constructive suggestion:

I think that they need a key person for
training. I think it should always be that one
person. Someone who wants to do it, who wants to
be involved, who likes teenagers. Someone who
understands what they're going through, because
this is a hard learning experience. Some of them
are coming from never having a job to being
demanded upon, and that's a big step for some of
them. But I think the training should definitely
come from on-site. They should learn their
principle things in school like typing,
alphabetizing, numbers, using a calculator, using a

computer, then there's other things, their
mannerisms, the way they dress. And all that
should be a part of the training. What's expected
of me when I come to work. It should be stated
right then and there what's expected of them.
Because some kids don't know any better unless you
tell them. And the way you tell them makes a big
difference to them. I think everything should be
up front, right from the beginning.

Student K. put it more succinctly when he said, "They
should have somebody set aside, already trained, and have that
person train."

Value of Program Students' Perspectives

For all of their adventures, the vast majority of
students concluded that the overall experience was positive:

Student L. "It's a good program. You can try out this
job to see if you like it"

Student C. I like the experience I've had.
It will help me in the future, and it will help me
make a decision of what I want to take in college,
and to know what other people do, and kinds of jobs
there maybe for the future.

Student N. "It gave me a lot of experience, and opened
my horizons. I really was glad I had this chance."

Student V. "I learned how you should really act in a work environment. What to expect and how people should act towards one another."

Student J. It's making me deal with a whole new atmosphere. I'm learning how to deal with people outside of school. I get wicked nervous. I was always wicked scared to go places. Cause I don't even talk in classes usually. They made me more friendly towards people. Without it . . . I think I'd be still wicked shy.

Student E. "Most of my friends are not working in banks. They're working in fast food places, or in warehouses, or in bakeries. And here I am working at a bank. See what you can do if you apply yourself?"

Business Education Skills

Office Skills

One of the central purposes in establishing the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program was the anticipation that businesses would inform the schools. This "work-to-school" contribution was expected to help the Business Education Department staff learn what additional office skills needed to be taught and what skills needed to be taught better. However, there was no

evidence that school instruction was deficient. Several mentors commented on the students' preparation for work:

Mentor J. "You can't get this quality work from people that you're paying $12.00 an hour from Kelly Girls. To get this kind of quality out of a high school student, who has no previous work experience, is absolutely astonishing."

Mentor C. "The primary training that the teachers do in school is fine."

Mentor M. "The students who came in to us had good basics. And the students that came in to us were able to follow directions. That shows good teaching somewhere along the line".

These mentors have used the terms "training" and "teaching" interchangeably. On most occasions the mentors refer to themselves as "trainers." Although many definitions of teaching and learning or of education and training overlap, for the purposes of this study, as an operational definition, mentor instruction at the worksite will be considered training, specific instruction on office skills by teachers in the classroom will be considered teaching, and schoolroom instruction in thinking will be considered education.

Students believed that they had learned the essential office skills needed to be productive on the job:

Student J. "I knew everything that I had to learn for the sites [placement]. Everything I needed to know was all right there. It was all handed to me before I started."

Student B. "What [the business education teachers] taught me definitely was exactly what I needed."

Student C. "What my business teachers teach now is what they're doing at work."

In fact, students' skills in keyboarding and in computer applications were often superior to those of co-workers and in some cases their mentors:

Student A. Things that I'm using right now at work, in the outside world, I learned in my business classes. . . . I love typing. [One of my co-workers said], 'You have better skills than I do'. . . . I even taught everyone there how to use a computer, the right format for business forms. Even after I left the job, they called me once to ask me how to log on the computer, because everybody had forgotten. . . . and I taught them the right format for letters. [We were] taught that Massachusetts was no longer capital M, lower case a. It was capital M and capital A. Well, they still do it the old way, and I told them there's a new rule in the mail system, that it goes this way. All that fun stuff. I actually taught it. And that's amazing, I find that amazing.

Student N. I feel what I have learned is good enough to just go start working in a business office. I find I had so much experience when I

went out there that they couldn't keep up with me.
I would finish my work so fast, and they would try
to look for something else for me to do.

Thinking Skills

Business courses at Holyoke High School attempt to
foster critical thinking:

Student A. In computer Applications I, which
I took last year, we learned Microsoft Works. In
Computer Applications II we were learning
WordPerfect using office simulations. In this
class, along with learning a new program we had to
decide which of the two programs we should work
with to get the job done best. . . . The teacher
wouldn't tell us the answers. We would have to
think about it, work on it ourselves, work in
teams, and try to teach ourselves as well as teach
others. I really loved the experience . . . 'cause
I don't think a teacher is a person to tell the
answer. I think a teacher is to show you how to
learn, and to make you believe that you can do it.
To make you have confidence in yourself. I learned
to experiment, and be curious, and say, 'hummm.

Student N. "I feel that this [teaching style] is
challenging us to think for ourselves. I found I sat back and

I thought about it, and I used my knowledge and everything that [our instructor] showed us. Doing that helped me find [solutions]."

Student S. "I think it's good, because you get to find out for yourself. You have to brainstorm, and you have to do critical thinking. But at first, well it felt weird."

The classes in the Business Department encourage initiative and problem solving:

Student L. My boss asked me to set-up a data base for a store inventory. They had just purchased a new computer and program for the store. When my boss made this request, I had only been on the job for two weeks. I got out the manual and familiarized myself with the word processing portion of the program. After a couple of days, I felt confident to try to learn how to start building the data base for the inventory. After some time, I felt that this program did not have a database capability. To make sure I asked my business teacher. She asked me to bring in the manual the following day back to school, with the permission of the store owner of course. She said, 'I was right.' The program did not have the capability. This made me feel good. I knew what to look for. I had the right answer.

Both Computer Applications II and Administrative Office Procedures are organized around office simulations and team-work concepts. A number of students reflected on this training:

Student G. We often worked in groups in Computer Applications II using a business simulation about a marketing division department of a company. Everybody liked the idea of advertising. We had an advertisement promotion contest. Everybody did theirs on the computer; drawings, expressions, and phrases. I really learned a lot because we worked in teams and because we had to figure out how to create an ad for ourselves.

Student J. "I like how [the teacher] leaves it to us as a team to figure out [the solution], because if we figure it out as a team, then we're helping each other."

Student V. It makes you feel good because, you know, you can actually help other people. I've learned when you get out to the workplace there's different way to do one thing. And [the teacher] showed us those different ways. I learned how to work with others because before I came here I was never expected to work with other students before.

Student L. "The Administrative Office Procedures class is a good class to take because it's like you were in a real

job. Like, you weren't in high school anymore, you were
working and you were a secretary and know what you're doing."

Business Expectations

The chapter "Is There a Skills Shortage?," in America's
Choice: High Skills or Low Wages precisely reflects on a
national level the expectations from student employees of
local business people:

> . . . While businesses everywhere complained
> about the quality of their applicants, few talked
> about educational skills. The primary concern . .
> . was finding workers with a good work ethic and
> appropriate social behavior--'reliable,' 'a good
> attitude,' 'pleasant appearance,' 'a good
> personality' (p. 24).

Similar sentiments were expressed, echoed, and
reiterated throughout the interviews with mentors and business
persons. Mentors defined what business wants:

Mentor M. "I think the first concern when we think high
school student is how reliable the student might be . . .
doing something in a timely and a professional manner . . .
knowing what is expected in the business place . . . how to
relate to and communicate with the people that they meet."

Mentor C. "What I would look for in a high school [student] is an outgoing personality, and enthusiasm. Willing. Willing to work, willing to learn, friendliness."

Dedication

Mentors agreed that dedication to one's work is a primary qualification:

Mentor M. "You're looking for that dedication or that extra effort or that dependability of, 'I'm going to be here to do my job'."

Mentor J. "Quality. An individual who cares about the work, the quality of the work that she's doing."

Communication

Another concern of business was in the area of communications. Mentor M. said:

She would need good communication skills. She would need to be able to follow directions explicitly. If she had any hesitation about understanding what she was told, she was not to proceed with her own interpretation but to question. [One particular student] could work with anybody. She could follow anybody's direction.

She didn't need much interpretation. She was not

afraid to speak up and ask questions when needed.

Many of the students, however, were reluctant to speak

up. In the Hispanic culture it is a sign of disrespect to

look directly into the eyes of an adult when they are speaking

to you. This behavior is often misunderstood as either

rudeness or shyness. One student was an exception to this

pattern of behavior:

Student N. "I'm the kind of person who is up for

anything. I'm not shy, I'm very bold and forward."

Most students were hesitant as they entered the work

situation:

Student J. "I was really scared at first. . . . I was

just quiet."

Student V. "I was kind of nervous."

Student S. "I get embarrassed talking in front of

people. I used to be afraid to talk to [my supervisor]. I

don't like talking to older people usually. I'll talk, but

not very much. I just don't feel right."

Some students were uneasy about being left alone in an

office or leaving work after dark:

Student I. "I really didn't like it when she left,

because it was always dark. I really didn't feel safe."

Student L. "Because at 4:30 it gets dark, and I had to

walk down the hill alone. I was scared."

Workplace Acceptance

In spite of early student apprehensions, they were genuinely welcomed at the work sites:

Student J. "Well, the people there were really friendly to me. They were very nice people."

Student V. "I went to work, and they had a chocolate cake for me. I was like, oh my God! I couldn't believe they bought me a cake. I was like shocked. They went in and they sang "Happy Birthday" to me,. It was nice, I liked it."

Appropriate Dress

Both in volume and density, the issue of appropriate dress was paramount. It was a primary issue at the banks. At one of the banks, when jackets with matching shorts became the latest business women's fashion statement, it became the concern of senior officers, the subject at the annual meeting, and a topic for review in the personnel manual. It was a concern expressed by mentors and students alike:

Mentor M. It might have been a little

difficult for some of them to meet our dress code.

I believe they tried the best they could with what

they had, and certainly I didn't end up having to

send anybody home because their dress was that

inappropriate. But, if they were to take a

position permanently at the bank, then they would

have to make more effort to dress more business-

like.

Mentor J. "Grooming certainly is a very important part

of one's overall image. A person can change how they dress.

They can put a couple of outfits together and wear them over

and over. And you can tell someone that they need to tone

down their makeup and their jewelry."

Mentor C. Are they dressed appropriately for

working in an office? Are they coming to work in

jeans, sweatshirts, sneakers? Are they wearing

funky hats and sweatpants? Things that are just

not acceptable in an office. For example, one

student would come in with shirts hanging off her

shoulders. She'd come in with her jeans and

sneakers. I didn't feel that it was appropriate

dress.

Student R. "I felt a little self-conscious because all

the girls here were dressed so nice."

Student N. I had to go around and buy some

new clothing. Because they didn't allow you to

wear jeans. I have jeans, but if I was to dress it

up, you know, I thought it would look good. I

didn't wear sweatshirts or sneakers. I'm the type

of person, if you go in my closet, that's all I got

is jeans. Black, brown every color. I feel more

comfortable in them. I felt that nobody's going to
look at me because I'm sitting behind a desk. I
had to buy some clothes. Not many, I tried to pick
out clothes that I could use for school and for
work so that it wouldn't really go to waste. It
worked out well, because I did kind of need some
clothes. Some nice fancy clothes, to get out of
the jeans habit. If I could, I would wear jeans.
It's a very big company, and you have to be very
presentable.

Student A. "I like to have different styles at school.
I have to dress up every day because of work, but when I get
to wear jeans, I really like it."

Student Z. Another reason was the clothes I
wear are not the same as the ones I would have to
use to work. The job required me to wear a blazer
or jacket and a tie. Wearing a tie was not a
problem because I usually wear a tie to church, but
I don't wear dress pants. I only wear jeans and on
special occasions, I wear a suit. Another is that
between school and work the times were too close.
I could not stay after school because I would be
late to work. I could not risk the chance of
failing my classes but I also [did not want to]
lose the job. So I was forced to make a decision.

Prejudice

Because of the number of minority students involved in the program, the issue of prejudice in the workplace was a sensitive one. There were no references to racial discrimination toward student workers in any of the transcripts. Students confided other personal, even intimate issues with this interviewer, and prejudice was never one of them. Both mentors and students clearly stated that it did not exist:

Mentor J. "Race? It wouldn't be a factor here. No. Absolutely. No!"

Student Z. "The people there were just like me; colorblind."

Student N. discussed it this way. "Me being Hispanic, and them white American, they were very sweet, they treated me nice. They weren't racist at all. I'm Hispanic, it still doesn't bother them, because they enjoy who I am. I find it doesn't matter."

Student I. I would hear a lot of racial remarks when I was in my middle school over in Chicopee. [My sixth grade teacher] said, 'Don't ever cross the bridge towards Holyoke. Those are all bad people. You'll end up with your life all messed up' Here, I don't find any at all.

Students C., who is of mixed race, has faced biases in her life, but declared that there was no prejudice at her work site. However, she did offer a poignant insight into the human impact of intolerance:

Not all kids are the same. Not every kid is violent and walks around with a knife or steals your car. I'm a good kid, and I do what I'm told, and I don't start trouble with anybody. I'm not that kind of person that everyone might have thought . . . I'm someone who goes to school every day, and goes out to work, doesn't start an argument or a fight with anybody. I'm a good kid.

Mentor J. Seventy percent minority in school? That's incredible. Those kids come from families. Where do those families bank? Where do those families have their insurance? Where do those families go to the doctor? Where do those families buy their clothes? In the community where they live. Why shouldn't those people who send their children to school, why shouldn't they have an opportunity to work in their own community? That minority, that is [our] customer base. Those are the people, the customers, that [we] are supposed to be serving. How can you serve them if you don't have any of them employed? Take their language for example, we could use bilingual speakers.

Language

Bilingual ability was one of the selling points of the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program. Robert Fowler saw the advantage of this asset. The focus of his partnership program is to recruit "a kid with some manners and some academic promise. But I want a kid who's absolutely fluent, even eloquent, in both English and Spanish."

A number of our students were not equally eloquent. Student A.'s accent when answering the telephone was a concern in one office. Student C. was mistaken for Hispanic, but didn't speak Spanish. Some students spoke Spanish in the vernacular:

Student A. "When you come to the United States, you change your language completely. The language which you speak is not Spanish, is not English, it's Spanglish."

Several institutions used bilingual students as translators. Others, as a company policy, never did:

Mentor M. "Even though we have Spanish-speaking people employed here, we don't encourage interpreting from them, because we can't understand both sides of the conversation."

Workplace Competencies

The 1992, SCANS Blueprint for Action: Building Community Coalition, includes a key section on skill

foundations. It lists workplace know-how and is specific on what work requires of schools in the area of foundation competencies. The report states that workplace competence requires: (a) <u>Basic Skills</u>: reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics, speaking and listening; (b) <u>Thinking Skills</u>: thinking creatively, making decisions, solving problems, seeing things in the mind's eye, knowing how to learn, and reasoning; (c) <u>Personal Qualities</u>: responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management and integrity (p. 5).

Business people and educators recognize the distinctions among these three competencies. In the interview with Frank Lovelock he said:

> Skills really fall into two categories. One
> is academic skills, the other is workplace skills.
> So those two worlds kind of collide. Society may
> accept a broad spectrum of opinion on morals and
> ethics, but as an employer, we have hard, fast
> requirements that we must apply, having to do with
> honesty and integrity and commitment.

Mentor J. also had this to say about competencies, "Someone may be performing very well in one arena, but that same person can perform totally different in another arena."

Kendall Walsh gave his view on this:

> There's school work and there's work work.
> The two are not necessarily compatible or even
> complementary. Schools provide businesses with

aptitude and they want attitude. Actually, they want both. They want our valedictorians to sweep the floors . . . with dignity and decorum.

The sections on student skills, above, would seem to indicate that the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program has provided businesses with students who are well prepared in both office practices and thinking skills. This is the domain of the schools. The schools have not produced students with all of the personal qualities that business requires.

Is There a Skills Shortage? states, "The problem of producing young people who are reliable, presentable and who communicate well on the job should not be taken lightly." (p. 25).

Student Z. reflected the preferences of business, as well as his own concerns, when he prepared a list of ten questions that students entering the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program for the first time should ask themselves:

1. Can you make it on time to work after school?

2. Can you dress properly to work?

3. Are you doing good in school, such as grades?

4. Are you responsible, will you go to work every day?

5. Do you have to stay after school and if yes is it going to interfere with your job?

6. How do you feel around older people?

7. Do you own a tie, blazer, or dress shoes?

8. Do you feel comfortable dressing up for work?

9. How would you feel speaking in front of an
   audience?

10. How are you going to get to work and [home]?

Value of Program Mentors' Perspectives

All the mentors offered positive feedback on the
program:

Mentor J. "It really is a nice partnership, it's a nice
thing to be involved with. The whole experience was very
rewarding."

Mentor M. It's a great program. It was very
helpful to the department. There were some things
that needed to be accomplished. From the viewpoint
of this bank, it was enjoyable and helpful, because
we are oriented to serve the public. [On a scale of
1 to 10] I would give the program an eight. I
approve of this type of thing. I think it's
beneficial to the schools and to the employer.

Mentor C. "I'm all for a program like this. I just
think it should spread throughout the country."

Mentor E. "I think it's an excellent program. I would
recommend it to anybody that inquired. As a matter of fact, I
have asked two people in real estate and one in a local
utilities company to join for next semester."

CHAPTER   V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is presented in three stages. The first
stage will offer conclusions and recommendations in direct
response to the specific issues that emerged from the
Recurrent Issues division of the Participants' section. The
second stage will offer conclusions and recommendations on
partnerships from the Common Issues of the Programs section.
Finally, conclusions and recommendations will be presented on
the broader issues that have been drawn from the totality of
the data and from the experience that this researcher has
gained through working in schools and in business, and from
working with students and with business personnel.

Recurrent Issues

The intent of this case study has been to broaden the
understanding of the challenges faced by participants in a
school-to-work partnership. The people who work at the
operational level play a significant role in any program.
The reason that extensive profiles of mentors and students
were included in this study is based on the theory that life
experiences shape people, and people shape institutions.
Hopefully, these profiles were adequate to provide a sense of

familiarity, and that the readers' understanding of these people's lives served as a standard of reference by which to judge their many citations included in the issues section of this report. The issues that emerged from their workplace experiences were significant to them, and therefore, must be considered critical to the successful operation of school-to-work partnerships. Additionally, this presentation has been shaped to mirror the phenomenological foundation on which the research was conducted.

Research must respect the evidence that it uncovers. Consequently, in response to the issues raised in the area of work experiences, the following recommendations are offered:

(1) Parents must be drawn into the process and educated to the importance of their support.

(2) Students must be familiarized with work opportunities beginning in elementary school and developing throughout the grades. Career exploration workshops, visitations, and job shadowing should supplement a career awareness strand that is integrated into their entire educational program.

(3) Students need time to learn, time to study, time to explore, time to work, and time to play. Schools must examine and then revise their scheduling to provide all of these opportunities.

(4) Just as teachers must be taught, trainers must be trained. Supervisors and mentors of students entering work

for the first time need to understand how to motivate students and to plan appropriate work experiences.

(5) Business divisions of schools must remain on the cutting edge of office technology.

(6) Critical thinking must be respected, encouraged, and developed in both the classroom and worksite venues.

(7) It can no longer be assumed that schools will teach, that businesses will train, and parents will model behavior. Schools must foster deportment and accept broader responsibilities for the personal qualities of its charges.

(8) National trends toward school dress codes. Society has shaped the liberal expectations of the schools, and society must be influenced to reshape them. Independently, schools should promote appropriate dress in the advanced courses within their business divisions.

(9) Stakeholders must oppose movements that encourage English Only legislation. Multiple language ability is a prerequisite for entering the world market.

(10) Future researchers are encouraged to further investigate the interactive dynamics of initial work experiences. It deserves attention.

Common Issues

On the strategic level, the fact that project leaders who were interviewed expressed consistent understandings on

issues of partnerships must be recognized. Their viewpoints, too, are fertile grounds for further research.

In concurrence with the issues they identified, the following recommendations are offered:

(1) To be viable, partnerships must create a shared vision and a common mission. A single purpose must be forged that embraces distinctly different interests of each.

(2) Partnerships must invest all potential members, all stakeholders, into the common commitment.

(3) Partnerships are fragile. They must be carefully maintained and consistently nurtured. They must be steady, yet flexible.

(4) Adequate funds must be available in face of the fluctuations of the market and governmental expenditures. Partnerships must be considered as both a capital and human investment.

(5) This researcher's overriding recommendation is that all stakeholders must, with a universal voice, insist that the concept of school-to-work become an inherent part of the core culture of both schools and businesses. It must become an institution in their thinking.

Broader Issues

This researcher's broader conclusions are based on careful re-examination and thoughtful reflection upon the

materials presented in this document, upon extensive involvement with other partnerships and student work programs, and upon the direct and continued contact with the participants in this one partnership program.

Through this research on the experiences of the participants in the HHS 20/20 Co-Op Program, it became even more clear that the direction of School-To-Work Opportunity Act and Education Reform is not only timely, but necessary if the institutions that we call schools are to prepare our students for a good life and a realistic place in America's workforce.

Education must become more holistic if we are to produce the kind of students whose knowledge of the world is appropriate, whose education enhances their innate abilities, and whose understanding of the world and their place in it is encouraged as each student is motivated to work and use his or her own special abilities. Teachers and parents, in fact, all stakeholders must find ways to validate all students if our goals are to have a healthy community, a productive economy and an able workforce.

This researcher understands that this quest will not be easy because of the ever changing circumstances of our existence. That no two things are exactly alike, that no one thing is ever the same, and that reality is to be seen as a process. In Johnson (1946) he makes this point clear:

Heraclitus [the Greek] was over two thousand years ahead of his time. He made the observation that 'one may not step in the same river twice, not only because the river flows and changes, but also because the one who steps into it changes too, and is never at any two moments identical (p. 23).

With words like excellent, perfect, the best, poor, failing, or not acceptable, educators are constantly trying to assign some rigid evaluation to measure students' progress . . . Ed Reform mandating standardized testing. In this researcher's opinion, we live in a world blinded by the thought of perfection. As teachers, we expect only 100's on every paper and give the message to be perfect to our students very clearly, even though we know "perfection only 100's" is not possible for all students in all circumstances.

It does not begin for our students with teachers, however. It begins for them for the most part as children whose parents praise the perfect child and scold the other. Children learn early the concept of being perfect. It is too often learned and reinforced by the advertisements in magazines, radio, and TV shows. Children see perfect people leading perfect lives every day on TV or in the movies, as if they are free from the difficult realities of living everyday in an imperfect world. Our youngsters soon learn to seek the perfect grade, the perfect job, the perfect friend, the perfect life, and like the carrot on the stick, all of this

seems perfectly attainable. We push our best to succeed first at home, then at school, and then at work, all of which are often measured by the illusory standard of perfection. The rest are like the "middle child" discussed earlier. The drive for perfection seems to be prevalent, but the push for "perfection" is exclusionary and damages the development of a healthy, productive young person. Only one student can be the "best" in class, but the entire range of students must be validated as the wonderful human beings and great contributors to our society that they can become.

The character of a young person is determined by the culture of which he/she is a part. A child's parents and teachers play important roles in determining the nature of the student's environment.

It is not up to parents and educators alone, however. It is also up to businesses. These stakeholders must stop talking about what they think schools should be doing and what they are willing to do, stop putting it on paper and making speeches at the local "civic clubs." This researcher challenges them to do what they say. Give students who are interested and ready an opportunity, not as volunteers, but as paid employees. They also must understand that the mentor on the job must be carefully selected and thoroughly trained. CEO's have to understand that implementation in training a productive workforce is a grassroots process. In the unfamiliar world-of-work, students frequently need an

advisor, a confidant, an anchor. This role may be provided by a parent or a mentor, but is perhaps best provided by a teacher who understands both adolescent and business behaviors; who possesses a balance of deep professional concern for the student, an appropriate knowledge of business, and an objective distance from the actual work situation.

Our political leaders need to comprehend the fact that grant writers are not the people who implement the grants. Therefore, these papers of dreams once awarded must be monitored, not quarterly, but weekly, or monthly, at the very least.

Only if all stakeholders work together and really communicate with each other will these new programs guide all of us through the difficult and complex challenges that we are facing now in educating our students for work and as life long learners in the coming century. Johnson (1949) points out, "At any particular time, . . . the character of a person's behavior changes as he [or she] grows up and moves about from place to place, and as different people exert varying influences upon him [or her] (p. 412)."

We must all be aware, responsible, and sensitive to the power our varying influences have. We must all work together to become real partners.

APPENDIX A

TWENTY ELEMENTS--STWOA

The federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994
(STWOA) defines specific components of programs that can be a
part of the statewide system of school-to-work transition.
Three core elements--school-based learning, work-based
learning, and connecting activities--are each comprised of
additional components. A school-to-work program is required
to have all of the program components.

A program must:

1. **Be designed, operated, and managed by a "local
    partnership**--a local entity that must include
    employers, local educational agencies and local post-
    secondary institutions (including area vocational
    schools); local educators (teachers, counselors, or
    administrators); labor organizations or nonmanagerial
    employee representatives; and students and that may
    include other entities such as employer organizations;
    community-based organizations; national trade
    associations working at the local levels; industrial
    extension centers; rehabilitation agencies or
    organizations; registered apprenticeship agencies; local
    vocational education entities; proprietary institutions
    of higher education; local government agencies;
    parentorganizations; teacher organizations; vocational
    student organizations private industry councils;
    federally recognized Indian tribes, Indian organizations
    and Alaska Native villages; and Native Hawaiian
    entities.

2. **Provide students with strong experience in and
    understanding of "all aspects of the industry"
    that the students are preparing to enter--**
    including planning, management, finances, technical and
    production skills, underlying principles of technology,
    labor and community issues, health and safety issues,
    and environmental issues that are related to such
    industry or industry sector.

3. **Provide all students with equal access to all
    program components--"all students"** (See APPENDIX A)

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4. **School-based learning: career awareness and career exploration and counseling**--programs (beginning at the earliest possible age, but not laterthan the seventh grade) that pertain to the body of subject matter and related techniques and methods organized for the development in individuals of career awareness, career planning, career decision making, placement skills, and knowledge and understanding of occupational , educational, and labor market needs, trends, and opportunities, that assist individuals in making and implementing informed educational and occupational choices, and that aid students to develop career options that surmount gender, race, ethnic, disability, language, or socio-economic impediment to careers and options in non traditional employment.

5. **School-based learning: career majors**--the initial selection by interested students of a career major not later than the beginning of the eleventh grade. The career major is comprised of a coherent sequence of courses or field of study that prepares a student for a first job and that: integrates academic and occupational learning, integrates school-based learning and establishes linkages between secondary schools and post-secondary educational institutions; prepares the student for employment in a broad occupational cluster or industry sector; includes at least two years of secondary education and at least one or two years of post-secondary education; provides the student, to the extent practicable, with strong experiences in and understanding of all aspects of the industry the students are planning to enter; results in the award of a high school diploma or it equivalent--a certificate or diploma recognizing completion of one or two years of post-secondary education (if appropriate); and a skill certificate; and may lead to further education and training, such as entry into a registered apprenticeship program or to admission to a two- or four-year college or university.

6. **School-based learning: high academic standards**-- a program of study designed to meet the same academic content standards that the state has established for all students, the requirements necessary to prepare a student for post-secondary education, and the requirement necessary for a student to earn a skill certificate.

7. **School-based learning: "all aspects" curriculum tied to a career major**--a program of instruction and curriculum that integrates academic and vocational

learning (including applied methodologies and team-teaching strategies) and incorporates instruction, to

the extent practicable--in all aspects of an industry, appropriately tied to the career major of a participant.

8. **School-based learning: regular assessment-**regularly scheduled evaluations involving ongoing consultation and problem solving with students and school dropouts to identify the academic strengths and weaknesses, academic progress, workplace knowledge, goals, and the need for additional learning opportunities to master core academic and vocational skills.

9. **School-based learning: transition link and services**--procedures to facilitate the entry of students participating in a School-to Work Opportunities program into additional training or post-secondary programs, as well as to facilitate the transfer of student between education and training programs.

10. **School-based learning: work experience**--experience that may be paid work experience, job shadowing, school-sponsored enterprises, or on-the-job training

11. **Work-based learning: a planned program of job training and work experiences**--including training related to pre-employment and employment skills to be mastered at progressively higher levels, that are coordinated with learning in the school-based learning and are relevant to the career majors of students and lead to the award of skill certificates. A "skill certificate" is a portable, industry-recognized credential issued under a state plan that certifies that a student has mastered a skills standard.

12. **Work-based learning: workplace mentoring**
    (See APPENDIX A)

13. **Work-based learning: instruction in general workplace competencies**--including instruction and activities related to developing positive work attitudes and employability and participative skills.

14. **Work-based learning: broad instruction**--to the extent practicable in all aspects of the industry.

15. **Connecting activities: job match**--matching students with the work-based learning opportunities of employers.

16. **Connecting activities: school-site mentor--** employer at a school, for each student, a school site mentor (designated as the advocate for a particular student) who works in consultation with classroom teachers, counselors, related services personnel, and the employer of the student to design and monitor the progress of the student and who acts as a liaison among the student and the employer, school, teacher, school administrator, and parent of the student, and, if appropriate, other community partners.

17. **Connecting activities: providing technical assistance and services to employers and other parties in**--designing school-based learning components, work-based learning components, and counseling and case management services; training teachers, workplace mentors, school site mentors, and counselors; providing assistance to schools and employers to integrate school-based and work-based learning and to integrate academic and occupational learning into the program; and encouraging the active participation of employers.

18. **Connecting activities: post-program placement and services**--assisting students who have completed a program in finding a appropriate job, continuing their education, or entering into an additional training program and linking the students with other community services that may be necessary to assure a successful transition from school-to work

19. **Connecting activities: collecting and analyzing information**--regarding post-program out-comes of students on the basis of socio-economic status, race, gender, ethnicity, culture, and disability and on the basis of whether the participants are students with

    limited English proficiency, school dropouts, disadvantaged students, or academically talented students.

20. **Connecting activities: linking youth and adult learning**--linking youth development activities with employer and industry strategies to upgrade the skills of their workers.

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APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ALL ASPECTS OF THE INDUSTRY--includes planning
management, finances, technical and production skills,
underlying principles of technology, labor and community
issues, health and safety issues, and environmental issues,
related to an industry or an industry sector. (The Chronicle,
ERA Key Strategies and Components Affecting School-to-Work
Transition - July 1994 - prepared by Bay State Skills
Corporation - p. 19)

ALL STUDENTS--means both male and female students from a
broad range of backgrounds and circumstances, including
disadvantaged students, students with diverse racial, ethnic,
or cultural backgrounds, American Indians, Alaska Natives,
Native Hawaiians, students with disabilities, students with
limited-English proficiency, migrant children, school
dropouts, and academically talented students. (STWOA Public
Law 103-239--May 4, 1994 p. 572)

CAREER MAJOR--means a coherent sequence of courses or field
of study that prepares a student for a first job and that
integrates academic and occupational learning, integrates
school-based and work based learning, establishes linkages
between secondary schools and postsecondary institutions;
[or] prepares the student for employment in a broad
occupational cluster or industry sector... (STWOA Public Law
103-239--May 4, 1994 p. 572)

CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCED MASTERY-- [secondary or post
secondary education]--(CAM), to be designed and approved by
the Board of Education, is a credential that will be based
upon a determination that the recipient has demonstrated a
mastery of a comprehensive body of skills, competencies, and
knowledge comparable to that possessed by accomplished
graduates of high school or equivalent programs. Eligibility
for potential receipt of the CAM will extend to all secondary
students residing in the Commonwealth. Like the COP, the CAM
will be competency-based and will be available to all
students at comprehensive schools [all schools], vocational
schools, and post-secondary institutions. The cam is
currently scheduled for implementation in the 1997-98 school
year. (The Chronicle, ERA Key Strategies and Components
Affecting School-to-Work Transition - July 1994 - prepared by
Bay State Skills Corporation - pp. 14-15)

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CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPATIONAL PROFICIENCY--means under the ERA, a (COP) is to be awarded to students who successfully complete a comprehensive education and training program in a particular trade or professional skill area and will represent a determination that the recipient has demonstrated mastery of core skills, competencies, and knowledge. The Board of Education is charged with the development of the COP, which is currently scheduled to be in place by the 1996-97 school year. The COP should be a major component of state and local plans for the elimination of the general track. In accordance with the federal STWOA, the state Department of education should ensure that career majors leading to COP successfully integrate vocational and academic instruction, school-based and work-based learning, and--in the appropriate instances--secondary and post-secondary instruction. The COP should be based on core skills and knowledge in a particular trade or professional skill area and should include some work-based learning requirement, depending on the student's orientation to a chosen pathway.

In order that the COP becomes a well-regarded option for all students, it should be available at comprehensive schools [all schools], vocational schools, an post-secondary institutions, and all students should have the option to earn one. During FY 95, skill standards groups should be established to begin to outline the necessary skills and competencies for key Massachusetts clusters as well as the related "career majors" and curriculum frameworks. Standards, when possible, should be based on national and international skill standards so as to be portable. (The Chronicle, ERA Key Strategies and Components Affecting School-to-Work Transition - July 1994 - prepared by Bay State Skills Corporation - pp. 14-15)

COMMON CORE OF LEARNING--a process intended to set standards for students in k-12 grade and to specifically identify the skills, competencies, and knowledge that all students are expected to master by the conclusion of individual grades or clusters of grades. In addition to developing academic standards for the core subjects of mathematics, science and technology, history and social science, English, foreign language, and the arts the Common Core of Learning will likely include a career awareness component in the primary and secondary grades that provides students with exposure to productive work habits, informal exposure to the workplace, and understanding of career applications of academic subject matter. The Common Core of Learning must span all disciplines and encourage the kinds of broad-based competencies outlined in the report of the federal Secretary's Commission on Achieving the Necessary Skills (SCANS) including problem solving, resource management, teamwork. The Common core is being developed by

the special commission of "stakeholders," which reports its
content recommendations to the Board of Education.
Preliminary results will be published the summer of 1994,
with final contents established in subsequent years. (The
Chronicle, ERA Key Strategies and Components Affecting School-
to-Work Transition - July 1994 - prepared by Bay State Skills
Corporation - p. 13)

COMPETENCY DETERMINATION [10th grade]--students will be
assessed to measure the attainment of basic academic skills
at the tenth-grade level--successful assessment will be
"credentialed" with a competency determination. The Board of
Education is in the process of developing this standard. The
competency determination will be based on the new academic
standards and curriculum frameworks for tenth graders in the
areas of mathematics, science and technology, history and
social science, and English and will certify that a
particular student has demonstrated mastery of a common core
of skills, competencies, and knowledge in these areas. The
establishment of the competency determination provides an
opportunity to ensure that all students achieve a high and
comparable level of academic proficiency, regardless of
whether the student is through to be on a "college
preparatory" or a "career" pathway. The competency
determination itself should be the kick-off point of a
student's career major. If competency has not been achieved
by the end of the tenth grade, a student should be encouraged
to pursue his or her major, but it should be augmented with
courses that reinforce the core academic skills and will lead
to the eventual achievement of the competency determination.
(The Chronicle, ERA Key Strategies and Components Affecting
School-to-Work Transition - July 1994 - prepared by Bay State
Skills Corporation - p. 14)

CONNECTING ACTIVITIES--include intermediary services that
create linkages across local partners as well as support
services for students, which include: matching students with
employers; providing a school-site mentor to act as a liaison
between employer, schools, teachers, and students; giving
technical assistance to employers and others in designing
school-based learning, work-based learning, and counseling
and case management services; providing technical assistance
to schools and employers in integrating school and work
learning; recruiting the active involvement of employers;
providing post-program services to students (job search,
counseling, and assistance related to further education and
training); linking with community services that can help
students; providing program evaluation; and linking youth
skill development with general skill upgrading by an
employer. (The Chronicle, ERA Key Strategies and Components

Affecting School-to-Work Transition - July 1994 - prepared by
Bay State Skills Corporation - p. 38)

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS--in accordance with the ERA, the
Commissioner of Education must institute a process for
drawing up curriculum frameworks for the core subjects that
present broad pedagogical approaches and strategies and
assisting students in the development of the skills,
competencies, and knowledge related to established academic
standards. The curriculum frameworks will provide sufficient
detail to guide and inform processes for students assessment
as well as the education, professional development,
certification, and evaluation of teachers. Thus, the
redesign of curriculum frameworks provides the opportunity to
develop curriculum frameworks that incorporate, to a greater
degree, such things as team teaching, career awareness,
workplace competencies, critical skill instruction, industry-
based standards, and general employability skill instruction.
Draft frameworks for math and science were published in early
summer 1994, with additional subject matter frameworks to be
developed in the coming years. (The Chronicle, ERA Key
Strategies and Components Affecting School-to-Work Transition
- July 1994 - prepared by Bay State Skills Corporation - p.
14)

ELIMINATION OF THE GENERAL TRACK--The ERA calls for each
school district to submit to the Board of Education, by
September 1994, a plan to eliminate the general educational
track in all district schools. Based on the plans, the
Commissioner of Education must then submit an action plan by
December 1995 to the Board of Education and the Legislature
to eliminate the general track in all school districts in the
Commonwealth. This directive provides an opportunity for the
state to encourage the creation and/or expansion of program
options in which the academic and vocational components are
strengthened and better integrated than is the case with the
current general track
     The Commissioner's plan should rely heavily on the
establishment of flexible career majors for all students--the
approach supported by the federal STWOA. A resource guide--
prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Education for use
by school districts seeking the to eliminate the general
track--should include a clear outline of the state's vision
for school-to-work systems. In addition, districts should
expand and enhance existing programs in order to better serve
students who have been considered a part of the general
track. (The Chronicle, ERA Key Strategies and Components
Affecting School-to-Work Transition - July 1994 - prepared by
Bay State Skills Corporation - p. 13)

GENERAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS--a School-to-Work
Opportunities program shall: integrate school-based learning
and work-based learning, integrate academic and occupational
learning, and establish effective linkages between secondary
and post-secondary education; incorporate all school-based,
work=based and connecting activities components as defined in
the Act; provide students experiences in an understanding of
all aspects of the industry; and provide all students with
equal access to the full range of such program components.
(The Chronicle, ERA Key Strategies and Components Affecting
School-to-Work Transition - July 1994 - prepared by Bay State
Skills Corporation - p. 22)

LOCAL PARTNERSHIP--means a local entity that is responsible
for local School-to-Work Opportunities programs and consist
of employers; representatives of local educational agencies
and local post-secondary educational institutions (including
area vocational educational schools), teachers, counselors,
or administrators; representatives of labor organizations or
nonmanagerial employees and students; and may include
employer organizations, community-based organizations trade
associations, industrial extension centers, rehabilitation
agencies and organizations, registered apprenticeship
agencies, vocational education entities, proprietary
institutions of higher education (defined as a school...),
local government agencies, parent organizations, teacher
organizations, vocational student organizations, private
industry councils, federally recognized Indian tribes, Indian
organizations, Alaska Native villages, and Native Hawaiian
entities. (The Chronicle, ERA Key Strategies and Components
Affecting School-to-Work Transition - July 1994 - prepared by
Bay State Skills Corporation - p. 20)

SCHOOL-BASED LEARNING-- is specifically designed to
include: career exploration and counseling, beginning no
later than seventh grade; the selection of a career major by
the eleventh grade; a program of study that meets high
academic standards, prepares students for post-secondary
education, and helps students earn a skill certificate;
periodic evaluation to identify the need for additional
learning opportunities to master core academic skills; and
helping students enter further education and assuring the
ability to transfer between programs. (The Chronicle, ERA Key
Strategies and Components Affecting School-to-Work Transition
- July 1994 - prepared by Bay State Skills Corporation - p.
38)

SCHOOL-TO-WORK OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAMS--means a program
that meets the requirements of the Act. (The Chronicle, ERA

Key Strategies and Components Affecting School-to-Work Transition - July 1994 - prepared by Bay State Skills Corporation - p. 21)

SKILL CERTIFICATE--means a portable, industry-recognized credential issued by a School-to-Work Opportunities program under an approved State plan, that certifies that a student has mastered skills at levels that are at least as challenging as skill standards endorsed by the National Skill Standards Board established under the National Skill Standard Act of 1994, except that until such skill standards are developed the term "skill certificate" means a credential issued under a process described in the approved State plan. (STWOA Public Law 103-239--May 4, 1994 p. 575)

WORK-BASED LEARNING--is specifically defined as: a planned program of job training that is coordinated with school-based learning and leads to the award of a skill certificate; work experience (with a preference that the work experience consist of paid positions); workplace mentoring; instruction in general workplace competencies; and broad instruction in "all aspects of an industry" (planning management, finance, technical and production skills, underlying principles of technology, labor and community issues, health and safety and environmental issues related to the industry). (The Chronicle, ERA Key Strategies and Components Affecting School-to-Work Transition - July 1994 - prepared by Bay State Skills Corporation - p. 38)

WORKPLACE MENTOR--means an employee or other individual, approved by the employer at a workplace, who possesses the skills and knowledge to be mastered by a student, and who instructs the student, critiques the performance of the student, challenges the student to perform well, and works in consultation with classroom teachers and the employer of the student.   (STWOA Public Law 103-239--May 4, 1994 p. 575)

APPENDIX C

TECH PREP OVERVIEW

<u>Definitions</u>:

FEDERAL

Tech-Prep is a federally funded initiative under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act of 1990. Under this Act, Grants have been made to consortia of local educational agencies and postsecondary institutions for the development and operation of four-year programs leading to a two-year associate degree or a two-year certificate. In FY'94, the U.S. Department of Education allocated $103 million to Tech Prep programs across the country.

MASSACHUSETTS

Tech Prep is a program of study which begins in high school, parallels the college prep course, continues at a post secondary institution and culminates in an associate degree or certificate in a particular field of technology, health or business. Tech Prep in Massachusetts is delivered through a statewide network of eleven consortia, each composed of secondary schools, postsecondary institutions and industry. Collaboratively, secondary schools, postsecondary institutions and industry develop and implement an integrated curriculum in applied academics, vocational/technical training and workplace experience. Massachusetts has received $1.863 million for FY'94.

PRINCIPLES OF THE MASSACHUSETTS TECH PREP PROGRAM

The following are the key elements of a Massachusetts Tech Prep Program:

Business and Industry Partnership with Secondary and Postsecondary Schools and Colleges

Applies/Contextual Learning in Math, Science, Communications and Technology

Competency-based Curricula

Integrated Curriculum: Integration of Academic and Vocational Education

Non-duplicative Sequence of Courses in Grades 11-14

Support Services for Special Populations: Assessment,
Retention and Placement Culminates in an Associate Degree,
Two-Year Certificate or Apprenticeship in a Specific Career
Field

Articulated Agreements in which College Credit Is Awarded (no
fees)

Preparatory Services: Recruitment, Counseling, Outreach, and
Career Awareness
_____

U.S. Department of Labor

EVALUATION FORM

HOLYOKE HIGH SCHOOL 20/20 CO-OP PROGRAM

Name:_____   Position:_____

Period Covered by this Evaluation - From_____to_____

Name of Company:_____

Key to Ratings:

OUTSTANDING: Consistent level of performance that is
                 demonstrably and significantly beyond
                 expectations.

COMMENDABLE: Performs all assigned job responsibilities in
                 conformance with established criteria and
                 exceeds in job responsibilities. Shows
                 special talent or ability. If new to the job,
                 learning progress exceeds expectations.

EXPECTATIONS: Performs all assigned job responsibilities in
                 accordance with required criteria. If new to
                 the job, learning progress equals
                 expectations.

IMPROVEMENT: Meets some expectations but has some aspects
                 of performance where improvement is needed.
                 If new on the job, needs much supervisory
                 support.

UNSATISFACTORY: Fails to fulfill responsibilities to a degree
                 which cannot by allowed to continue, and
                 improvement must be noted after discussion.

PERFORMANCE FACTORS:	4	3	2	1	0
Indicate (*) how staff member of the factors listed below. When performance is identified as Out-standing, Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory, reasons and/or examples must be provided.					

PERFORMANCE FACTORS	4	3	2	1	0
1. QUANTITY OF WORK - Volume of acceptable work produced; goes beyond normal requirements.					
2. QUALITY OF WORK - Thoroughness and accuracy of work; level of work standards; frequency of high quality results; concern to get the job done correctly.					
3. ORGANIZATION - Uses time effectively; makes logical and timely decisions; meets deadlines; establishes priorities.					
4. INITIATIVE - Initiative in starting and following through on assigned work; works without close supervision; reacts to and accommodates necessary operational changes.					
5. JOB KNOWLEDGE - Proficiency in methods, techniques and skills required to perform work; knowledge and understanding of related duties.					
6. INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS - Relations with co-workers, tact and understanding in dealing with clients and the public; effective communication.					
7. SELF-MOTIVATION - Drive to succeed; interest in work; builds on personal strength; works to improve deficiencies.					

OVERALL ASSESSMENT:

Based on the analyses contained above, evaluate the level of overall performance. Refer to the definitions in the Key to Ratings.

		Meets	Needs	
Outstanding	Commendable	Expectation	Improvement	Unsatisfactory
28	21	14	7	

Check: Eligible for salary increase _____
         Not eligible for salary increase _____

NARRATIVE:

Describe the creative abilities or special skills this person has which enhance the department. Include your perception of the strengths and weaknesses in performance.

STUDENT'S COMMENTS:

The (STUDENT) being evaluated may comment on any areas concerning this evaluation or developmental recommendations.

I have reviewed this evaluation and discussed it with my immediate supervisor. My signature means that I have been advised of my performance status and have reviewed a copy of this evaluation; it does not necessarily imply that I agree with this evaluation.

Student's signature and date   Evaluator's signature

Student I.D. number

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