

CAN TRAINING PROGRAMS CHALLENGE THE BARRIERS
THAT LIMIT WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EQUALITY?

A STUDY OF TRAINING, INC.

by

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Colby College

(1983)

Submitted to the Department of
Urban Studies and Planning in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the
Degree of

MASTER OF CITY PLANNING

at the

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

May 1990

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ABSTRACT

An increasing number of single women with children live in poverty in the United States. One strategy to reverse this trend, employment and training programs, has met with limited success, because programs ignore the root causes of women's poverty. The women's economic development movement has the potential to combine the analysis gained through the women's movement and employment and training strategies to create effective training programs. These programs will both empower women through building their self-esteem and by equipping women with the tools needed to challenge existing unequal power relations in the labor market.

I argue that for training programs to be effective, they must meet both the short term needs of women, in the form of wages, benefits, and support services; and also the long-term needs of women to challenge the power relations that women face that keep women at an economic disadvantage. Through my case study of Training, Inc., an office skills training program, I explore the possibility for meeting both these needs, and the tensions inherent for training programs working within the larger economic system in the United States. I conclude with a model program for operating effective employment and training programs.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis could never have been completed without the support, advice, and ideas of a number of people. A word of thanks here at the beginning of this document is but a small token of my gratitude and affection.

I would never have come to MIT without the years of support and love given to me by my parents. They believed I could accomplish whatever I set out to do, and encouraged me every step of the way.

My academic advisors questioned and pushed me all year to take that extra step, make that final connection. Edwin Melendez worked hard with me to shape my thesis proposal last fall and continued to challenge me this spring. Richard Schramm provided constant support, advice, and coffee at Andy's, where many of the ideas in this thesis achieved coherency. I am deeply grateful to both for their ideas and support.

Barbara Neely has been my main source of inspiration over the last three years; her laughter and wisdom have pulled me through many a rough spot, and many of her ideas and philosophies have worked their way into my brain and into this thesis.

My fellow students have made my stay at MIT incredibly rich and worthwhile. Special thanks go to all in my thesis prep class, where we all struggled to understand how to shape such a large endeavor without getting swallowed. Shirley Mark and Andrea Nagel in particular gave me helpful comments and criticisms of my work, pushing me to clarify my thoughts and ideas.

Finally, and most importantly, my thanks and love go to Martha Oesch, for her constant support, criticisms, ideas, laughter, reading of multiple drafts and sticking with me no matter how edgy I got. She helped me make order out of chaos and ideas out of sentence fragments. I could never have written this without her.

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INTRODUCTION

When a visitor walks into Training, Inc., an office-skills training program in downtown Boston, s/he first encounters a receptionist. Not an ordinary receptionist -- this is one of the trainees in the current cycle. Next, a visitor asks about the program, and the receptionist says the visitor may take a tour of the program. From the back rooms, another woman appears to give the tour -- another trainee, not a staff member. The trainee explains every aspect of the program, walks the visitor through each room, and sometimes relates her own story of how she came to TI and what her accomplishments at the program are.

This was my introduction to Training, Inc. in the spring of 1990. I had come to Training Inc. because I was interested in learning about how training programs for welfare recipients operate, and to understand what types of programs are most effective in providing women with opportunities in the job market. This thesis is an exploration of Training, Inc.; of its process, its successes, its limitations, and its place in the larger context of the Employment and Training Choices Program in Massachusetts and labor markets in Boston. Consideration of these relationships points to the components of an effective employment and training program.

Background

The last ten years in the United States have been

especially hard ones for single women with children. The number of female headed households living in poverty has skyrocketed; simultaneously policymakers search for solutions to reverse this trend. Probably the most popular solution is employment and training programs, designed to end "welfare dependency" by placing women in the labor force, either directly or after some training. These are funded primarily by government at state and federal levels.

Many of these programs are misdirected, primarily because they ignore the nature of women's poverty and the institutional barriers that keep women poor. Work is seen as a way out of poverty, yet there are millions of women who work and still live in poverty. Skills training is seen as a way to improve women's earning potential; yet many government-funded training programs continue to train women for dead-end jobs at low wages, and fail to provide women with the skills they need to adapt to a rapidly changing job market.

Current training programs have severe limitations; their ineffectiveness is seen in the high rate of return to welfare even after going through an employment and training program. However, recent federal legislation, the 1988 Family Support Act, mandates the operation of employment and training programs for welfare recipients in all 50 states. Given the enormous number of women in poverty and the attention focused upon training programs, it is important to consider what types of programs are most effective in providing women with the

opportunity to rise out of poverty.

What kinds of programs are most effective? Programs must address not only the individual training and education needs of women, but must also take into account institutional barriers that limit women's opportunities to earn a living wage. I argue that programs must meet both the short term needs of women, in the form of wages, benefits, and support services; and also the long-term needs of women to challenge the power relations that women face that keep women at an economic disadvantage. For employment and training programs to be effective, these two sets of needs, or interests, must be met simultaneously.

While government funded programs are short-sighted on developing programs that adequately address the long-term barriers to economic equality for women, the women's movement in the US is equally short-sighted in addressing poor women's short term needs to rise out of poverty. Middle-class women, the loudest voice in the women's movement, are not as invested in the short-term needs, since their own immediate needs are often met. Therefore, they have focused primarily on power relations. Poor women have to address short-term needs first -- power relations certainly are a concern, but putting food on the table comes first. However, the lack of ability to meet short term needs arises from the unequal power relations; therefore addressing long-term interests is also a key to equality for low-income women. In order to organize

and "empower" low-income women, therefore, both sets of needs must be met.

I argue that a good training program could overcome the respective limitations of government training programs and the women's movement. Like many other people, low-income women often turn to training programs in the hopes of earning higher wages and benefits.¹ Training programs provide the opportunity for broadening the women's movement to incorporate poor women, and the potential to meet both short and long term needs.

While one training program cannot change the world, it can provide women with the tools to build self-esteem on an individual level and to challenge the institutional barriers that keep women in poverty, especially in labor markets. Such a training program will certainly face the constraints of trying to operate in the very system it is trying to change; these tensions need to be examined, understood, and strategized around by programs.

Criteria for effective programs

I argue that programs that focus on three elements will be most successful, both in terms of placement and for the women themselves in building self-esteem and gaining the tools to confront existing power relations:

¹Interviews with welfare recipients in Boston, March 1990.

* Programs that pay attention to the process through which women learn skills, not just the skills learned. Utilizing a self-directed learning approach that respects the adult learner is essential to prepare women for all sorts of job situations. This process must also include an "empowerment" focus that builds women's self-esteem and self-awareness.

* Programs that train women for placement in jobs at wages that allow women to adequately provide for their families. The curriculum and focus of programs needs to train women for jobs that pay women enough to make ends meet. This includes placing women in jobs with the potential for career advancement. It also includes facilitating women's current dual roles as workers and mothers with support services.

* Programs that understand the institutional barriers that women face in the labor market, primarily race and sex discrimination, and that prepare and "empower" women to recognize and challenge these barriers.

Outline of the thesis

Chapter 1 explores the problem of women in poverty and its major causes. These are not due to individual failings, I argue, but systemic in nature, caused by the welfare system and by the structure of labor markets. Both limit women's opportunities and possibilities for changing their situation.

The chapter also outlines government-funded employment and training programs, and the recent rise of a women's economic development movement to address women's poverty. The context within which Training, Inc. (TI) operates is discussed, including discussions of current labor market conditions Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Employment and Training Choices Program.

A gender-based framework of analysis is constructed for thinking about effective training programs in Chapter 2, and criteria for an effective program are outlined. This sets the stage for Chapters 3 and 4, my case study findings. Chapter 3 focuses on the processes used at Training, Inc and their effectiveness, both in terms of placement rates and in terms of individual trainees' perceptions of themselves. The methods used to increase women's self-confidence are explored. Chapter 4 places TI in its larger context and considers the constraints that TI operates within, and the ways in which a training program might prepare women to challenge these institutional constraints.

Finally, the last chapter outlines a model training program, based on my observations at TI and my research of other programs. The model training program is developed in the context of my framework of analysis.

CHAPTER 1: WOMEN IN POVERTY: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

This chapter outlines the overall problem of women in poverty, with a particular focus on single women with children. Economic barriers which constrain women's choices are discussed, both in the working world and with the welfare system. Massachusetts labor markets and the Employment and Training Choices Program are outlined in order to place Training, Inc. within its specific context. Possible avenues for addressing women's poverty are introduced, specifically employment and training programs and the women's economic development movement.

Women and poverty

Women in the United States are an increasing presence in the ranks of the poor, especially women with children. Thirty-four percent of all female-headed households lived in poverty in 1985, as compared with 11.4% for all families¹. A staggering 53.1% of Hispanic women² heading households lived in poverty that same year, as did 50.5% of black female headed households. (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1986) These disturbing statistics point to the difficulties single women with children face in trying to provide for themselves and their families.

¹The 1989 poverty level for a family of four was \$12,100.

² Defined in the 1985 U.S. Census as "Spanish origin families" who may be of any race.

Translated into dollars, the income levels of women in this country are outrageous. The median income for all women over age 15 in 1985 was a scant \$7,217, compared to a mean income of \$16,311 for men. (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1986) The reality that most women must cope with on a daily basis is a world in which there are few opportunities to earn a living income.

The reasons why women live in poverty more often than men are many, and include a lack of skills training, but two main problems predominate in creating a Catch-22 situation for women: lack of opportunity in the job market and the restrictive welfare system.

Women and work

Work is not a guarantee of an income above the poverty level for women. In 1986, 12.4 million women lived below the federally defined poverty line, and of these, 4.4 million women were in the work force. A significant number of these women -- 2.3 million -- had children. (Wider Opportunities for Women, 1987)

Women still earn less than men: in 1989, women earned on average 71 cents to a man's dollar. The primary reason for this is the nature of the labor market. There is evidence of institutionalized discrimination based on gender and race in labor markets, and while it has declined somewhat in recent years, it continues to limit women's opportunities. (Bellar,

1984) Women, especially women of color, are allowed entry only to certain labor markets, usually those that are lower-paying with less stability. An examination of how these labor markets operate lends a fuller understanding to the barriers that prevent women from earning a living wage.

Labor markets for women: left on the bottom rung

Dual labor market theories challenge the neoclassical assumption that labor markets are homogeneous, and posit instead the existence of separate labor markets for separate groups of individuals. These labor market theories are based on the view of a divided economy, with a stable core economy consisting of oligopolistic firms and a peripheral economy containing competitive, highly unstable firms. Jobs in the core economy are usually higher paying, more stable, and have career ladders that enable workers to advance within a firm. A number of economists have conducted research showing that women have been primarily relegated to this peripheral, or secondary labor market, or to the secondary labor market within the core firms (Edwards et al, 1973). In fact, "80 percent of women in the work force are employed in low-wage, low-skilled jobs" (Dujon, 1986:16) The result has been that women consistently earn lower wages and are barred from access to internal job ladders, which are a route within individual firms for promotion and salary increases.

Harrison and Bluestone (1988) document the increase in

subcontracting arrangements and the decline of union power since 1974, as firms try to maintain profits in the face of increasing international competition. This has led to decreasing wages and increasing inaccessibility to fringe benefits such as health insurance. Osterman (1988:85) concurs with this view, noting "the creation of a relatively small-core labor force organized along the lines of the salaried model and a peripheral labor force consisting of temporaries, part-timers, and other employees who are simply not provided with the protections afforded the core workers." Women fall into the latter category.

Noyelle (1987) further notes that employers require increasingly more flexible skills in their workers. Workers must be able to adapt easily to new tasks and responsibilities. Developing decision making and problem solving skills, and the ability to work in new situations are key to job advancement in the next decade. Women's skill training must therefore address this trend.

Women are continuing to be affected by the occupational segregation of the labor market, in which women are concentrated disproportionately in a few lower-paying occupations (Women for Economic Justice, 1987), and are additionally affected by the changing structure of work in the United States, as the number of core jobs decreases. The two sets of dynamics intertwine to create tremendous obstacles for women. First, women face discrimination in the labor market,

often gaining access only to peripheral jobs that pay little and carry few if any benefits. Secondly, within this sector there is an increase in the amount of sub-contracting and part-time work, which will make employment even more unstable. Third, workers now need a more flexible set of skills in order to advance. It appears that there will thus be less access to the core jobs and more instability within the sector women do have entrance to, the peripheral sector. An examination of labor markets in Massachusetts verifies some of these trends.

Massachusetts labor markets

Massachusetts labor markets reflect the changes in labor markets nationwide in the 1980s. The mid-1980s were a time of expansion in some sectors and decline in others.

Manufacturing is disappearing or moving out, and professional and service sector industries are on the rise (US Department of Labor, 1989). Jobs in the professional labor market, including those in the financial, business, and legal sectors pay better wages and are more stable than those in other services. However, service industries, and support services within the professional sector, pay lower wages, have fewer possibilities for advancement, and are less stable.

As in other parts of the United States, labor markets in Massachusetts are sex-segregated, with women crowded into nursing, home care work, and clerical occupations. In jobs that pay more, such as computer programmers, women are not as

heavily represented. (Women for Economic Justice, 1987). In 1988, 28.6% of women working in New England were concentrated in administrative support occupations, including clerical jobs. (US Department of Labor, 1989). These administrative support jobs paid on average only \$314 weekly for women throughout the US in 1989, while men in the same job category earned an average of \$485.

Boston's labor markets are similar to those in Massachusetts. According to a 1989 study of poverty in Boston commissioned by the Boston Foundation, the poor are by and large not in professional occupations. Instead, they are concentrated in the service sector: the hotel and entertainment industry, health services and retail trade, jobs that women have traditionally occupied. (Boston Foundation/Osterman, 1989)

Work related issues for women

To make matters more difficult, single women with children face a double burden. First, in an economy that increasingly requires a two-paycheck household to make ends meet, single women find it difficult to survive (Bergmann, 1987). The family is further stressed because of the lower wages women earn than men. Second, single parent households face additional responsibilities related to maintaining a household and rearing a child, which require both time and financial resources. One key area is available and

affordable child care, which is essential if the parent wants to work. Yet child care is limited in the United States for two main reasons: the number of government subsidized slots is small and the cost of private child care is so high that only upper income families can afford it.

If a woman with children cannot earn an adequate wage to both provide for child care and meet the basic needs of a household, her alternative is welfare. This, too is no panacea; rather, it presents a different set of obstacles.

Women and the welfare system

Aid to Families with Dependent Children(AFDC) is the technical name for the program better known as welfare. The program operates in all fifty states and provides cash assistance to income eligible families, primarily women with children (some states allow two-parent families to receive benefits). The federal government has developed broad guidelines for the program, but leaves much of the more intricate regulations to the discretion of individual states.

In order to receive benefits, a family applies at a local welfare office, and provides documentation of income and household size. Once certified as eligible for the program, families receive monthly checks based on household size. Recipients are required to recertify every six months at the welfare office, and verify income and household size. The bureaucracy related to the welfare system is a major problem

for welfare recipients, who spend incredible amounts of time negotiating their way through paperwork.³ The paperwork, which requires women to lay every corner of their lives open for caseworkers' scrutiny, and the condescending attitudes of caseworkers themselves make the welfare system a degrading and disempowering system.

The program is large; in Massachusetts alone over 85,000 families receive monthly benefits (Mass. Department of Public Welfare, 1988). One out of four children nationwide will participate in the AFDC program before the age of two (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 1989).

The amount of the monthly grant is determined by individual state legislatures and varies widely: from \$118 monthly for a family of three in Alabama to \$633 monthly for the same family in California (Center on Social Welfare Policy and Law, 1989). Massachusetts benefits rank fourth highest in the nation, with monthly benefits for a family of three at \$539.

Benefits are below the poverty line in every state in the nation. This means that women who cannot make ends meet with a paycheck will face an equally difficult or even more difficult time making ends meet on a welfare check. In Massachusetts, despite the relatively high ranking of benefits compared with other states, benefits are far below what families require. A 1990 study by the Executive Office of

³Interview with recipients, 2/25/90, 2/27/90.

Human Services found that a family of three needs \$1100 monthly just to meet basic needs -- twice the current grant.

The work-welfare-work cycle

Many women therefore have few avenues open to them to move out of poverty. Either they struggle on low welfare benefits or they attempt to make ends meet on a low-wage job. This lack of options means that women often bounce back and forth between welfare and work situations. Women will find a job and keep it until some crisis hits the family -- a child is sick and needs medical insurance or day care falls through -- and then quit and go on welfare for a period. They will stay on welfare for a time, usually about 1 1/2 years, until they cannot stand the degradation anymore and the constant crisis caused by the low benefits, and will once again try to find a decent job⁴.

Neither the current welfare system nor simply finding a job, given the structure of labor markets, presents a solution for women trying to raise their children. What, then, can be done? What are the inroads toward changing this situation? In the case of welfare benefits, raising benefits above the poverty level would address the poverty issue. Campaigns like the "Up and Out of Poverty Campaign" in Massachusetts have attempted to do just this, but have met with limited success because of long-standing myths about welfare recipients as

⁴Interviews and discussions with welfare recipients, 1986-90.

lazy and undeserving of higher benefits.

In the case of work, a movement that has sprung up in the last ten years, the "women and economic development" movement, is working to address the obstacles women face in earning an income above the poverty level in the labor force.

Women and Economic Development

Economic development for women "is a process which is sensitive to the circumstances and needs of women's lives, and adapts a wide range of strategies to develop the educational, financial and economic resources needed to create viable options for women to meet those needs and improve their lives."(Cronin and DiMatteo, 1988)

All economic development strategies for women must be examined in light of this definition. Women's economic issues are not often considered in terms of jobs, job training, or self-employment. As Sara Gould and Jing Lyman note:

Womens' economic issues have generally been relegated to a social service framework. Communities often have one set of economic programs to improve and protect the health of the mainstream economy -- which has meant mostly white men -- and another set of income maintenance, social service and training programs to take care of those who have had little or no credibility within the mainstream economy -- which has meant mostly women and people of color. The separation of these two streams of community activity functions as a barrier. Including women in the design of policies and programs that increase their access to, and equity in, productive, well-paying and stable economic activity will begin to lower this barrier, and increase their options for maximum productivity. (Gould and Lyman, 1986)

The women's economic development (WED) movement is attempting

to address this split, and to target economic development activities toward low-income women. The movement grew out of the feminist movement of the 1960s, as analyses of women's position in the labor force revealed the vast discrimination in the job market. There are various types of activities within the movement, all addressing some aspect of women's discrimination in the labor force. On the policy side, WED activities include struggles for higher wages and pay equity. Programs targeted at low-income women focus on two primary types of economic development for women. The first are self-employment strategies, usually through the development of small business or home industry, attempting to circumvent the labor force. The second are training and employment programs targeted at placing women in well-paying, stable positions. Both of these strategies have benefits and drawbacks; but both are attempting to address the institutional barriers that women face in U.S. society.

Employment and training programs

This thesis examines the potential for involvement by the women's economic development movement in employment and training activities. Current government employment and training programs, which constitute the vast majority of all programs, take a number of forms, depending upon the types of programs a state chooses to run. Activities can include skills training, on-the-job training, high-school equivalency

degree programs, direct placement, job search skills and job counseling. Programs vary in their duration; some are only a week long (direct placement), while others can take several months. Monies for the program typically come from myriad sources, including federal, state, city and even private dollars.

A look at the Massachusetts program, widely considered to be one of the most effective in the nation, provides insights into the limitations of employment and training programs.

The Employment and Training Choices Program (ET)

The ET Choices Program began in 1984 in Massachusetts. Originally a response to an attempt by then Governor King to implement a workfare program, the program was developed by a number of different constituencies: welfare recipients, advocates, lawyers, and state officials. The program is a mandatory program designed to offer a variety of choices to welfare recipients. While in the program, recipients receive free child care, partial reimbursement for travel expenses, and Medicaid. These benefits now extend one year after a recipient moves into the work force, in an attempt to help recipients' make the transition to the work force.

All welfare recipients who have children over the age of 3 are required to register for the ET program. Recipients work with an ET worker to develop an employment plan which contains one or more of the following components (Savner, Williams and

Halas, 1986):

- * Career Planning. This provides participants with further job counseling and assessment.
- * Job Placement. Workers work with recipients to write resumes, practice interviewing, and conduct a job search.
- * Supported Work. Commonly known as on-the-job-training, this component places recipients in a job. Wages are subsidized by the Department of Public Welfare during the training period through the monthly welfare grant.
- * Skills training. Participants learn a specific trade or skill.
- * Education. Participants attend classes to further their education, either through English as a Second Language (ESL), high school equivalency(GED), or courses at a state-funded college.

One difficulty with the system here is that ET workers work with recipients when they apply for the program -- at exactly the time when women are obviously not interested in employment, as they are entering the welfare system because of a crisis, a birth, or some other event. When women are ready to return to work, the system is not structured to provide the best in services.

Participation rates in each component vary widely, primarily because of the limited slots in the more expensive components -- supported work, skills training, and education -- which require more time and resources. They are also the more effective components because they add to women's skill base (Amott and Kluver, 1986). A recent Urban Institute (1989) study of ET found that graduates of training and education programs also had a higher job retention rate.

However, most ET participants are placed directly into a job with no skills training or education. The number of slots available for training or education is severely limited, giving women little opportunity to gain the skills necessary to adapt to the new, more flexible market structure that is emerging.

During the first 20 months of the program, over 40% of ET enrollees participated in the Job Placement component, while only 7% participated in the Supported Work component (Amott and Kluver, 1986). In Fiscal Year 1989, the percentage of enrollees placed directly in a job rose to 61% through the Employment Network, with only 2% receiving training through the Bay State Skills Training program and 17% receiving other forms of education and training (Mass. Department of Public Welfare, 1990).

The Department of Public Welfare has set a wage floor for all job placements and supported work placements through ET. Currently, the Department requires that employers pay at least \$7.00 hourly without health benefits, \$6.00 with benefits. (Mass. Department of Public Welfare, 1989) While the average hourly ET wage was \$6.75 in fiscal year 1988, the median wage was only \$6.25, indicating that the distribution of wages is skewed, with fewer higher wage levels than low wage levels. (Department of Public Welfare, 1989) In FY1989 the average wage rate increased to \$7.51 hourly, with the average education and training slot wages paying \$7.53 -- barely above

the average for the whole program.

Racial differences in average hourly earnings exist: in the first ten months of the program⁵ white women earned \$4.86 hourly, black women earned \$4.13, and Latina women earned \$4.46 (Amott and Kluver, 1986). Women are often placed in jobs in the secondary labor market, which are characterized as being dead-end jobs (no career ladder) with low pay and few benefits. In 1989, clerical work and health care services accounted for over 1/3 of the Greater Boston training slots (Department of Public Welfare, 1989).

The unstable economic position is exacerbated by the loss of child care and medical benefits after the first year of employment. Women must suddenly find the money to pay for child care that averages \$200 weekly in Massachusetts. Loss of full medical benefits often means that women must return to the welfare program in order to receive medical benefits to cover their children. While many jobs offer "health benefits," co-payment levels vary widely and some may be so high that women cannot afford them. The Urban Institute(1989) found that availability of day care and medical benefits were significant factors in determining the length of time an ET graduate remained in the labor market. Many women return to the AFDC program after losing their child care and medical benefits, because they cannot afford to replace them at

⁵The first ten months were October 1983 to June 1984. More recent data is not available.

current wages. (Savner, 1989).

The return rate to welfare suggests that employment and training programs do not effectively break the welfare-work-welfare cycle for low-income women. Training programs may not be effective in providing women with the skills and opportunities to earn a wage high enough or to find a satisfying job that places them permanently in the labor force.

The goals of the ET Choices program may in fact be one of the reasons for this failure. The primary goal, according to program documents, is to end welfare dependency and reduce the public welfare rolls through placing women in the labor market. The program is therefore placement driven. In the case worker's manual, in official reports, and other materials, the degree to which the program focuses on placement is evident (Department of Public Welfare, 1990). High goals for placement are set; caseworkers have enrollment quotas which they must meet; and programs receive funding based on placement in the labor force. The result is pressure for placement that trickles down through each level of the system.

While placement must be at a certain wage level which places the former welfare recipient above the poverty level in most cases, there is little recognition of the difficulties women will continue to experience in keeping a low wage job. The loss of day care after a year presents a huge problem for

women. Additional costs for working women and the difficulties in juggling home and work are not taken into account.

Despite these limitations in even the most successful of programs, interest in employment and training programs has grown in recent years. An examination of this interest, and the resulting federal legislation, will help in understanding the current context within which programs like Training, Inc., operate.

Competing interests in employment and training programs

Under the welfare system, employment and training programs are a mandated part of every state's system. Employment and training programs for welfare recipients act as a bridge between welfare and work, and have become a primary focus of policymakers and industry heads in the last several years. First, employers are concerned about the quality of the workforce and the lack of skilled personnel to fill positions. They therefore are interested in the growth of training programs to fill their needs (Amott, 1989). Policymakers are also concerned about this shortage of skilled labor. With respect to women, however, their interest also includes reducing the welfare rolls through employment and thereby saving state and federal dollars.

The result of this concern was the federal Family Support

Act of 1988, which restructured the welfare system to include a greater emphasis on employment and training programs. Unfortunately, rather than structuring a program that provided real opportunity for women on welfare, the bill contains a number of punitive elements that are designed to force women off of welfare without necessarily providing opportunities to earn a living wage (Women for Economic Justice, 1988)⁶.

A great deal of discretion is left to individual states as to the quality and type of employment and training program implemented. In conservative states where a "free market" ideology prevails, little money will be allocated to employment and training programs for women; it is more likely that workfare programs will be offered. Workfare programs require women to "work off" their grant; that is, they perform some sort of labor, often unskilled, to pay for their grant. Job search and job placement are also cheap components that may be used that do little to change the skill level of women. While they may provide helpful job experience, the lack of skill training severely limits their effectiveness in placing women in higher paying jobs. Despite the nature of the programs, women must participate by law, and so may face programs that provide no education or skills training.

One of the few positive elements of the Family Support Act is the allocation of additional federal matching monies

⁶The Center on Law and Social Policy in Washington, D.C. publishes regular critiques and interpretations of the Family Support Act.

for employment and training programs. An opportunity exists here for progressive women's organizations to design and develop effective employment and training programs for women with this new pot of money. Furthermore, in states where there is the potential for more punitive programs to be offered, women's organizations may be able to minimize the damage by offering an alternative to job search or direct placement.

The question then becomes, what is the most effective type of employment and training program to operate for low-income women? Employment and training programs hold the potential to provide women with tools to challenge the institutional obstacles in labor markets. Before considering how this might be done, adopting a framework of analysis will be useful in thinking about what might work and what might not.

CHAPTER 2: CONSTRUCTING A FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

This chapter will lay the outlines for a framework of a model training program. My framework rests on three principal ideas, which I discuss in detail. I began my exploration of training programs with only the gender theory in mind; the second two concepts, "process and content together" and "overcoming institutional barriers" came from my observations at Training, Inc.

Practical and strategic gender interests

Maxine Molyneaux (1985) created a useful framework for thinking about how to change the situation of women in the United States as she considered what types of programs the Nicaraguan Sandinista government should establish. She rightly recognized that the institutional systems that oppress and restrict women must be challenged, but that while doing that women's short term needs and interests must also be met.

Molyneaux distinguishes between what she terms as "practical" and "strategic" gender interests. Practical interests are those that "arise from the concrete conditions of women's positioning within the gender division of labor, [and] are usually a response to an immediate perceived need." For example, the provision of affordable housing, child care, and adequate income would meet practical gender interests. Strategic interests, on the other hand, are those interests that come "from the analysis of women's subordination and from

the formulation of an alternative more satisfactory set of arrangements to those which exist." (Molyneaux, 1985, pp. 232-3). Increasing women's self esteem, changing women's perceptions of their opportunities, creating shared understandings with other women, and giving women the tools and opportunity to take action for themselves to change existing power relations are all examples of ways to achieve strategic interests.

Practical and strategic interests often happen simultaneously; that is, something that is designed to meet practical gender interests may also further strategic gender interests. In fact, focusing on both sets of interests is key to the success of a particular program. Too often attempts to change women's status focus only on one or the other set of gender interests. Organizing efforts usually work to politicize women, fitting into strategic gender interests, while social service programs or employment and training programs, most often have the goal of addressing practical gender interests. By considering both sets of interests when designing or implementing a program, organizations can begin to maximize their effectiveness in changing the economic status of women in the United States.

Process, not just product

In order to achieve both practical and strategic gender interests, it is essential to not only consider the final

outcomes, but the process through which women pass in order to reach the final goal or product. A program could meet practical interests by arranging support services for women, such as day care and transportation, rather than presenting them with options and letting them pursue them on their own. Likewise, in meeting strategic interests, an organizer could go with a low-income woman to lobby at the State House and do all the talking, or the organizer could work with the woman so she felt comfortable talking with state officials.

Translated to training programs, it is not only the office skills gained that are important, but the way in which they gain them -- through methods that build women's self-esteem and self-confidence, and that equip women to challenge institutional barriers. This is the area where "empowerment" takes place. As Bookman and Morgan (1988) define it,

...empowerment is rarely experienced as upward mobility or personal advancement. Rather, 'feeling powerful' is constrained for them by the ways in which their gender, as well as their race and class, limit their access to economic resources and political power. For these women, empowerment begins when they change their ideas about the causes of their powerlessness, when they recognize the systemic forces that oppress them, and when they act to change the conditions of their lives...empowerment is a process aimed at consolidating, maintaining, or changing the nature and distribution of power in a particular cultural context. (Bookman & Morgan, 1987:4)

This is the first part of empowerment, the individual building of self-confidence among women. This step of individual empowerment then leads to the second, and broader sense of empowerment: that of becoming empowered through

gaining the tools and information to challenge existing power relations that disadvantage women economically. Challenging and permanently changing the structures that limit women's opportunities and create inequality is the ultimate measure of empowerment.

Both kinds of empowerment meet both practical and strategic gender interests. On a personal level, increased self-confidence can help women to juggle their multiple responsibilities as they move into the work force, thereby meeting practical interests. Individual empowerment can also give women the strength to question current relations on a one to one basis -- for example, abusive family relationships -- thus achieving strategic interests. Likewise, empowerment through challenging labor market structures may meet practical gender interests through providing greater opportunity for higher wages through unionization, for example, and meets strategic gender interests through achieving economic parity for women in the labor force.

What kind of process will empower women in the aforementioned ways? The work of Paulo Freire and Antonio Faundez (1989) provides some guidance in this area, and sets the context for thinking about employment and training programs. As Freire (1989:64) says, "power will begin in the everyday struggles, in the everyday actions of men, women and children, and teachers..." In fact, employment and training programs, especially the latter, are a continuation of

education for welfare recipients. In training programs women gain additional skills that they hope will provide them with better job opportunities and wages. Braverman (1974) and Bowles and Gintis (1976) note that the US education system prepares workers for assembly line work; that is, to become comfortable with performing rote tasks daily and not to question the production process or one's role in it. Faundez (1989:42) argues, "...they [educators] are reproducing a pattern of thought which propounds an unjust society in which some groups possess knowledge, power, the answers, the ability to think, and so on." As Freire (1989:42) notes, "at bottom, this is education reproducing the authoritarianism of the capitalist mode of production." Women, near the bottom of the power structures in the US along with many other groups, have been the victims of this sort of educational system.

Training programs must therefore change the way in which they provide this "continuing education" to welfare recipients in order to bring in the process of empowerment. How can this be accomplished? Freire argues that the role of educators is to work with students to learn how to ask questions, to begin to look at the world around them and ask questions that will provide information about their situation in society. In Freire's model, educators hold equal power with students, not more, and act more as facilitators.

Adopting this to a training model, teaching skill building can be done in a manner that encourages self-

sufficiency; that is, where it is not the teacher who has the answers, but where the trainee learns where to look to find the answer she seeks. Such a process will build self-esteem in trainees, who begin to see that they can find the answers themselves once they have learned what questions to ask and how to go about answering them. Through this process, then, "individual empowerment" can take place, as well as empowerment in the larger sense, as trainees begin to question the economic structures that define their lives.

To address empowerment in a broader context; that is, in changing power relations in society, it is important to place programs within the larger context to understand the ways in which programs can challenge those power relations. This larger context, the US economy, creates constraints and tensions for training programs that have the goal of creating real change for women.

US economy and employment and training

By looking at the different interests of employers, state officials, low-income women, and feminists, the problems and issues involved in operating an employment and training program in a capitalist economy become clear. Employers want a trained workforce at the cheapest possible price (both in terms of the training program and the wages eventually paid). Policymakers want to push women off of welfare at the lowest possible cost, and also want to cooperate with industry in

training a cooperative workforce. Feminists involved in women's economic development activities, however, want to get women out of poverty -- permanently.

Here Marx's critique of capitalism makes clear the difficulties in running an employment and training program in the U.S. economy. Marx argues that the State is actually a servant of industry, and that the State works to aid capital in the exploitation of workers, rather than protecting them against this exploitation. Employment and training programs in the US are heavily influenced by Private Industry Councils, controlled by industry heads, who often dictate the content of program policies.

The capitalist system in the United States creates significant labor market barriers for women, especially women of color, as discussed in Chapter 1. These economic realities need to be recognized and addressed by employment and training programs in order to achieve empowerment through changing power relations. Programs that accept the status quo nature of labor markets and simply insert women into the labor force as it stands are not changing opportunities for women -- they are not helping women to meet strategic gender interests by challenging current power relations.

Tensions

Within each of these three ideas, there are tensions that must be carefully balanced. First, in achieving both

practical and strategic gender interests on an individual level, there is a tension between providing services for women (practical interests), and creating a forum for women to take the initiative and do things for themselves (strategic interests). While programs should certainly help women in lining up support services, staff should encourage women to find their own solutions, or to work on a plan together. On the other hand, programs should not leave women to find these solutions alone, as that will reinforce the powerlessness that many women feel.

Second, when building a process that is individually empowering, programs must consider the constraints of funding and the need to get content across to women at a reasonable cost. In order to build a thoroughly empowering process, large amounts of money would need to be spent, because effective programs require extra components outside of traditional skill building. Programs may therefore be longer in duration, and will required specialized staff training and curriculum development, also costing more money. Yet process must be included to build women's self-confidence and awareness, thus meeting strategic gender interests on an individual level by giving women the opportunity to begin challenging power relations on an everyday level. Programs must therefore balance the type of program they construct against funding constraints.

Lastly, programs face a tension between equipping women

to challenge institutional barriers, thus achieving empowerment through changing power relations, and maintaining employment networks and placing women in the corporate world. This is probably the most difficult tension to overcome, and is further discussed in Chapter 5.

Based on the above theories and observations about the current institutional structures and the observations of Training Inc. discussed in Chapter 4, I believe that effective employment and training programs, especially those run by feminists, must address three essential items:

* **Training for placement in jobs with decent wages.** Trading a welfare check for an equally low paycheck will not solve the problem of women in poverty. Training programs must gear their curriculum and placement activities toward jobs that pay living wages and provide support services to help women work and head a household simultaneously.

* **Attention to process.** While outcomes in the form of wages are important, the process through which welfare recipients travel to get to that job is key. A process that focuses on self-help and respect for the experiences of adult learners will build the self-esteem so often shattered by the welfare system.

*** Preparation for encountering institutional barriers.**

Trainees must be aware of the current racist and sexist structures that limit their job opportunities. They need to be informed of methods for overcoming these barriers, and methods of recourse should they encounter these obstacles. Strategies for overcoming these barriers should also be present in an effective program.

In meeting these three criteria, practical and strategic gender interests, both on a personal and an institutional level, will begin to be met. With these broad criteria in mind, I will now turn to an examination of Training, Inc., one of the dozens of programs operating under ET Choices. In chapter 3 I will examine the extent to which TI works to build self-esteem, thus empowering women in that sense of the word. Chapter 4 examines the constraints TI faces in empowering women in the broader sense of the word - in challenging institutional structures that confine women in labor markets.

CHAPTER 3: TRAINING INC. PROCESS AND CONTENT TOGETHER

In 1983, Training, Inc.(TI) opened its doors in downtown Boston after a two year planning process. Based on a training model developed by the YMCA, TI offers a fourteen week program in office skills to low-income individuals. My exploration of this program was a learning process about what kinds of programs are most useful in preparing low-income women for future jobs, and in meeting practical and strategic gender interests. This chapter analyzes the extent to which TI "empowers" its trainees, in the individual meaning of empowerment discussed in Chapter 2.

Methodology

I think we as intellectuals...must begin with the actual situation, the actions which we and the people engage in day by day - since we are all involved in daily life in one form or another - reflect on that, and then generate ideas in order to understand it. And such ideas will no longer be ideas that are models, but ideas generated out of real life situations. (Freire and Faundez, 1989: 29-30).

I use a case study to explore what types of employment and training programs are most effective in meeting practical and strategic gender interests. As such, it is not an evaluation of the training program studied; rather, it uses the case study as a springboard for thinking about the types of programs and processes needed in an effective program. While I brought some ideas about a set of criteria that I believed had to be met for a training program to be effective, I also waited until I had spent some time at the training

program to develop a more complete typology of practical and strategic gender interests.

My case study is of a secretarial training program within the ET Choices Program in Massachusetts. Called Training, Inc., the program offers a 14 week curriculum designed to give trainees both technical and life management skills in preparation for work in an office environment (see Appendix B). My information on the program comes from three main sources: written material, interviews, and observations.

Written materials include annual reports, forms used during the course, entrance exams, proposals for funding, and the Training, Inc. training manual. These materials provided me with valuable information about the goals and stated purpose of the program, as well as the philosophy and structure.

I conducted interviews with four separate sets of people. First, I interviewed three welfare recipients who were not in the Training Inc. program to better understand the opportunities and constraints in their lives, the problems they face juggling work and a family, and the types of employment and training programs they would like to see in place.

I then approached the case study with this knowledge. Interviews with nine staff members gave me insight into their teaching methods and philosophies, their perceptions of the strengths and limitations of the program, and their

perceptions of the trainees' experience while in the program. Interviews with five current trainees enabled me to understand what they saw as helpful or not in their preparation for the working world. Finally, interviews with nine graduates of Training Inc. provided valuable information about how well the program prepared women for work, and gave me ideas about how to best structure programs¹.

Lastly, I spent three weeks on site, observing classes and talking with trainees informally. These observation periods allowed me to understand how staff and trainees interact, what a typical day entailed, and to think about what worked and what didn't.

From my case study, I then constructed a "model program" that reflects what I learned from Training, Inc., incorporating some of that program and suggesting other components. This model is based on some of my theoretical readings, especially on gender theory.

Training, Inc. provided me with a forum for understanding and learning what kinds of programs and processes are most effective in meeting practical and strategic gender interests, and to construct a model program that reflects the realities and challenges the barriers that women face in Boston and throughout the United States.

¹The graduates I interviewed had responded to a letter I sent to all graduates of TI. The sample that I interviewed may not be representative of all graduates, as it was a process of self-selection. This may slightly bias my findings.

This chapter focuses on how TI operates. Its goals, teaching methods, curriculum, and effectiveness are outlined. Staff, graduate and trainees dynamics and concerns are detailed². In particular, the methods used to increase women's self-esteem, thereby achieving the first stage of empowerment, are explored. From these elements I draw conclusions about which parts of the program meet practical and strategic interests, and which elements I believe could be included in a model program.

Background

Training, Inc. opened its doors in Boston in 1983. It is located at 294 Washington Street, in the heart of the downtown financial district. TI started its program at a time when the office services job market was booming in Boston. There was a large demand for secretarial and general office skills, which has decreased recently as the job market has tightened. This is important to keep in mind when exploring TI's program, as the state of the job market may be a factor in TI's success.

The program

During the fourteen weeks of each training cycle, trainees learn a variety of office skills, including typing,

²All the interviews I conducted are confidential; a list of the dates of interviews can be found in Appendix A.

word processing, bookkeeping, office machines and office procedures. There is also a focus on developing skills in business math and English. Finally, and unlike other programs I have knowledge of, there is a career development and skill marketing component³. Career development includes time management, budgeting, problem solving, human relations, business ethics, and wardrobe selection. Skill marketing includes practice interviews, resume development, and how to get and keep a job. Representatives from different companies work with trainees in these areas. At the end of the fourteen week period, staff works with each trainee until they find a job. Staff at TI have developed an extensive network of private sector employers who interview and employ TI graduates that facilitates job placement.

For applicants to TI who do not have the skills to successfully complete the regular program in 14 weeks, there is an additional fourteen week pre-training component that focuses almost exclusively on basic English, math, and typing. While there is some training in office procedures, the priority in this program is to develop basic reading, writing and math skills. Once participants have finished this program, which is half-day, they enroll in the full day program.

TI also offers a 28-week evening training program geared primarily toward working people who want to change jobs or

³ I interviewed five other ET programs in Spring 1989. None of them stressed career development or skills marketing.

upgrade their skills. Because I am interested in how welfare recipients view the program and how an ET Choices program works, I did not interview staff or trainees of the evening program, but concentrated solely on the full-day program.

The majority of people in the full-day program are welfare recipients, and most are women. Each cycle enrolls about 40 trainees; in the cycle I observed, only two trainees were men. Approximately half the trainees were white and half black, with a few Latinas and Asians. Ages ranged from the early twenties to the late fifties. All of the women I interviewed were welfare recipients, although each had a different reason for being on welfare and the class backgrounds of the women varied tremendously.

Intake

Most of the women I spoke with heard about TI from a friend, and approached TI before they talked with their ET worker. Potential trainees first come and take a tour of TI, which is always given by a current trainee. They then take an assessment test, which evaluates their basic reading, writing and math skills. If they pass this test, they are then interviewed by a staff member. Questions about former work history as well as current personal issues and problems are covered. Staff then decides if the applicant is ready for the TI program.

The question of creaming arises in the context of any

employment and training program. TI did not seem to do an excessive amount of creaming, that is, taking only applicants with previous job experience. Some of the trainees are displaced workers, and some have in fact already acquired skills elsewhere, but a number of trainees also have little or no work experience. Others don't have a high school diploma or GED, and some haven't worked for years. Desire to gain skills and get a job is one of the most important criteria for entry into the program. As one staff noted, "if their ET worker or family has pushed them to be here, and they aren't interested or ready, then they won't do well." Creaming occurs, then, to the extent that the trainees are motivated to be at TI.

When asked whether intake coordinators could tell during the initial interview if an applicant would be a strong trainee or not, staff answered no. "We do weed out some of the highest risk people. But you can be so sure about someone at intake, and she changes and has a really hard time in the program. Or we have people who look shaky at intake who really shine throughout the program."⁴

Staff noted that trainees have changed over the years in their quality, that they are now seeing a "harder to serve" population. "We're working with people with more issues, or maybe we're dealing with those issues more openly. But people

⁴A better indicator of creaming would be to compare applicants accepted and denied by TI. This information was not available at the time.

aren't as good at problem solving in recent cycles, they don't have as much self-confidence." This may reflect an overall trend in the ET program, that in the first years of the program a great deal of creaming took place because the program was new and had such a large pool of recipients to choose from. Now there are fewer welfare recipients at home who have previous work experience or skills, so they need more training and confidence-building (Amott and Kluver, 1986).

Intake is constrained by issues of funding. Rather than accepting qualified applicants into the program regardless of their current life situation, TI must enroll applicants partly based on the funding sources available to them. For example, in a typical class of 40 there are about 6 major funding sources, each with their own criteria for applicants. While the standard criteria is that applicants must be low-income, some require working people, others require welfare recipients, and still others are based upon where the applicant lives. In order to get enough funding for the program, staff must fit applicants into these slots, requiring a great deal of juggling and some prioritizing among applicants.

Philosophy and goals

While TI's primary goal could be stated as preparing low-income people, primarily welfare recipients, to gain office skills in preparation for employment, there is another

underlying goal that most staff said was as important as the skills training participants received. In its introductory packet to potential employers, TI says:

Our training philosophy is unique--we believe that it is a person's self-image that provides the necessary confidence to learn and accept new challenges. We work with individuals to build a positive self-image and create a realistic professional plan for the future. We also work with employers to foster an openness for people who are traditionally stereotyped, labeled, and tracked into low paying jobs. We are committed to serving Boston's diverse population.

Staff strongly echoed this philosophy, referring back to it as they talked about their teaching methods and perceptions of the program's strength. While all noted that the first goal is to provide office skills training, most continued on to echo the words of one staff member: "We do skills training, but the real purpose is building self-confidence. The program gets them to the point where they know what they can know if they work at it, so they can go out in the work world and move up."

The focus on self-confidence building was most frequently cited by staff as the primary difference between TI and other training programs. It is, as staff notes, the process which women go through that ultimately makes the difference, that leads to "empowerment." The curriculum is carefully designed to build self-confidence; staff use a particular teaching philosophy that focuses on self-help; and a number of extra activities are included each cycle to encourage self-awareness and belief in one's abilities. Staff strongly believe that

other programs omit any such process, and that this limited the effectiveness of other programs in training women for higher wage jobs. I corroborated this through interviews with other program administrators, who did not speak to me about building self-confidence, or "empowerment" but only of the skills participants learned through their programs.

Staff perceptions of program goals validate this individual "empowerment" philosophy. "The basic goal is to build trainees' confidence in themselves," noted one staff. "We work with them to be reflective people, to say, 'Hey, I've been through a lot, and handled a lot, so I can do this too.' It changes their whole lifestyle." Another staff echoed this: "We believe they can make it. We've seen women who have stayed home for 15 years, and you wouldn't believe the fear. But to be at home you need skills -- taking care of children, scheduling appointments, managing the house. Trainees begin to see they have skills they can use in the office."

A majority of trainees said their self-confidence had increased through TI. One said, "Before I didn't believe I could do anything except stay at home. Since I've been in the program, I know that I can learn and do things, and I feel a lot more confident about finding a job." TI thus effectively works to individually empower its trainees, to build their self-confidence.

Teaching philosophy

TI's approach to training is a "hands-on" philosophy -- that trainees learn by doing. The curriculum is structured to provide opportunities for trainees to independently work on their skills, with instructors available only if trainees request their help. Furthermore, staff uses methods developed for "adult learners" that attempt to respect the past experiences and knowledge of the trainees.

In addition to being based on Paolo Freire's teaching methods discussed in Chapter 1, TI relies upon the teaching methods of Malcolm Knowles, who advocates a "self-directed learning" process. He notes,

...there is convincing evidence that people who take the initiative in learning learn more things, and learn better, than do people who sit at the feet of teachers passively waiting to be taught. They enter into learning more purposefully and with greater motivation. They also tend to retain and make use of what they learn better and longer than do the reactive learners. (Knowles, 1975:14-15)

He continues on to note that in a changing work world, such as the one described by Noyelle (1987) flexible skills are necessary. Knowles writes,

The simple truth is that we are entering into a strange new world in which rapid change will be the only stable characteristic. And this simple truth has several radical implications for education and learning...this implies that it is no longer realistic to define the purpose of education as transmitting what is known...the main purpose of education must now be to develop the skills of inquiry...a person must have the ability to go on acquiring new knowledge easily and skillfully the reset of his or her life. (Knowles, 1975:15-16)

TI's teaching philosophy is exactly this, to use a step by

step skills training method that enables people to learn on their own. One staff member said, "We are essentially teaching them how to learn. They can't learn everything here, but we can equip them to learn on the job." Graduates echoed this, saying that TI had prepared them to learn on the job, to ask questions, and to take the initiative.

Staff noted that in many respects, TI attempts to educate its trainees in a non-traditional way. One trainer noted that most teaching involves a teacher standing at the blackboard, with students furiously taking notes -- a very top-down approach. Rather than using this method, staff at TI use a more interactive approach, one that encourages self-learning and peer learning. "It's circle thinking versus hierarchical thinking and learning," said one staff.

One of the most important parts of the program occurs in bookkeeping, where trainees learn not only about bookkeeping, but to read instructions and follow them. One staff member noted, "Most of our trainees don't trust the printed word. They live in an audiovisual society where printed matter has most often meant trouble. Mountain View (bookkeeping curriculum) is designed to give them the opportunity to see that if they follow the directions, they can learn bookkeeping on their own." In Mountain View, the instructor gives an overview of the curriculum, and some initial starting steps, but then withdraws to let trainees work through the packets on their own. "If they follow directions, they'll get it right.

That's what this whole section is about," said one staff. Other staff mentioned the bookkeeping section as crucial to preparing trainees for learning on the job as well. "We can't teach them everything they need to know here, but we can teach them how to learn."

Trainees and graduates had mixed reactions to this style of learning. Some specifically mentioned the "hands-on" approach and said they enjoyed learning in this fashion. Others said that they hated bookkeeping because "whenever you ask for help you are told to 'read the instructions'." Staff corroborated this, noting that in the sketches that trainees perform of staff after the first six weeks, it never fails that the bookkeeping instructor is portrayed as a most unhelpful person. One staff noted that, "our educational system teaches us to believe that the teacher has all the answers. We try to undo that, to show trainees that they too can have the answers if they place some faith in themselves. But we're fighting years of the other method of learning the whole way through the program."

Peer teaching is also encouraged by TI. The structure of the program allows for this to happen, because there is no strict classroom structure. I watched the trainees prepare their resumes, and although staff were present trainees often called out to one another -- "How do you underline?" or "I forget how to center this part." Other trainees were more than willing to take the time out to show others what they had

already learned. All the staff said that one of the most rewarding parts of their work was watching trainees help other trainees learn new skills or work through a difficult problem. Trainees and graduates often cited this as one of the best parts of the program.

In fact, this peer learning is one of the building blocks of self-confidence. One staff member said, "It is wonderful to watch a trainee realize that she has learned something, and can actually teach it to another trainee. It's one of the most obvious ways that we see trainees gain self-confidence." In addition, working with others gives trainees the chance to build networks with others, to learn about the other trainee's lives, and to begin to see the common threads of trainees' lives.

The very structure of the program encourages this independent learning process. While the first six weeks contains mostly structured skill-building time, the second half of the program is very flexible. Trainees have "lab" time, when they can decide what skills they need to practice and then go to that area of the program and work on their own, or with other trainees.

A two-week simulated company exercise, Lester Hill, provides trainees with the opportunity to try out their new skills. Each trainee applies for and "gets" a job in this company, and is responsible for a number of tasks during the exercise. Staff remain very much in the background during

this period. I spent the first morning of Lester Hill with the Accounting Department, and watched the "manager" work with the rest of the department to figure out their responsibilities and set up their department. No staff was present during this time. The trainees worked with each other to make sure that company operations flowed smoothly and that the "work" got done.

Also, trainees have the opportunity to actually "work" at TI. At some point in the cycle, they are assigned to the reception desk, where they answer the phone and perform other office tasks. Trainees often help staff out with other tasks as well.

The structure of the curriculum thus encourages trainees to develop skills in learning and in problem solving. This will help trainees in the workplace, especially in terms of advancement, discussed later in this chapter. Workers need more flexible skills, including problem solving and adapting to new work situations. TI works with trainees to develop these skills rather than simply typing or bookkeeping, which will better prepare them in the long run for advancement and higher wage levels.

Curriculum extras -- building in individual empowerment

An integral part of the program at TI involves not only the skill building components, but a number of extra activities designed to improve self-esteem and self-

consciousness, thereby "empowering" the trainees individually. Two movies are shown, "Stand and Deliver" and "Inside Moves." The first is the story of a Latino high school class in East Los Angeles that learns calculus despite tremendous odds and cynicism on the part of the school. The latter relates the life of a man who tried to commit suicide but then finds a community of friends and begins to believe in himself and his life. Discussions are held after both of these movies with the trainees about discrimination, perseverance, and the difficulties in building self-esteem.

During the fifth week of a cycle, a surprise birthday party is held for all staff and trainees who have a birthday during the cycle. During this party, each "birthday" woman is asked to share one significant event that happened to her in the last year. As one staff said, "For the person telling the story, it enables her to see how she got to where she is. For the others, it's a window into where other people are in their lives. They can see that both staff and trainees have very different stories and complicated lives." Before ending the party, the group says something special about each person. Trainees and graduates that I spoke with enjoyed this party tremendously, saying both that it was a break from the regular routine and that hearing people's stories was interesting.

In the first five weeks of the program a "reflection time" is scheduled every Friday. In this half-hour trainees write down everything they learned during the week. It is

designed as a confidence building tool, to show trainees exactly how much they learn in a week. Trainees and graduates had a mixed reaction to this part. While some felt it was helpful, others said it was a "waste of time." Those who said it was not useful were also those who said they had self-confidence before entering the program.

In 1989, TI established a tutoring program for TI trainees. Staff from local corporations, mostly Houghton-Mifflin, come during their lunch hour and tutor trainees in reading, writing and math. While for some this tutoring is in preparation for taking the GED exam, for others it is a chance to improve their skills and also to get to know professionals. "It's a great chance for trainees to see people out in the working world close up, which makes it less frightening. Some good friendships develop in the tutoring program."

TI also holds a graduate panel during each cycle, where previous TI graduates come and share their experiences and insights about their jobs and the world of work. Finally, TI has a big graduation ceremony and lunch, designed to bolster trainees' self-esteem, especially if they haven't found a job yet. The event takes place off-site at a hotel, is sponsored by an employer, and family, friends, corporations, and ET workers are invited to the celebration.

One of the most unique features of TI is the "human relations" section of the curriculum. In this section, trainees are given time to be self-reflective, and are

encouraged to share their personal life experiences and challenges. Each trainee writes their life story in this section, and is encouraged to write as much as they feel comfortable sharing. Staff reads these stories to the group, which is, according to staff, graduates, and trainees, a powerful experience. Trainees hear their stories legitimized by being read out loud, and also hear what others have been through to get to where they are.

There is also an "auction" in this section, where trainees can bid on different value-based items -- being intelligent, having money, having a family, etc. This is designed for graduates to think about their priorities and values. Trainees and graduates almost universally enjoyed this part of human relations.

The human relations section as a whole is difficult for many, because, as staff noted, "it is hard to be self-reflective when life hasn't been easy." Reactions from trainees and graduates on this section were mixed. Some said it was wonderful and one of the best parts of the curriculum; others said it wasn't helpful and they wanted more skills training. It appears that for those who need self-confidence building and who work at being self-reflective, human relations is a wonderful component. For those who either have self-confidence or resist the process, it is less useful.

Support services: dealing with family

Entering TI creates a whole set of difficulties for

single women with children. Primary is the need for child care. Staff consider a trainee's time at TI as a testing time for their child care arrangements. As one trainee said, "Once you start working, you can't just go home if your child is sick." Staff work with trainees to develop back-up child care plans to ensure that they are covered.

Another difficulty can be the adjustment to fewer hours to take care of children and household details. TI gives a time management workshop to address this change. Staff take a back seat at this workshop; it is more of a time for trainees to strategize among themselves about how to arrange their time in order to get everything done.

Again, trainees have mixed reactions. One said, "none of the staff have children, so what do they know? Children don't go by a time management schedule -- as soon as you have kids, time management goes out the window." Others felt that they were already organized so that a time management workshop wasn't needed. Still others said it was useful to hear what strategies their co-trainees used to get everything done.

Trainees often meet resistance from family in entering a training program. Staff believe it is threatening to family members to see someone change their lifestyle. To help the trainees, TI holds an open house each cycle, where friends and family are welcome to visit TI and see how the program works and what the everyday life of their relative or friend is like.

TI has a full-time counselor who is available throughout the day to either listen to problems a trainee is having or to help deal with bureaucratic obstacles that trainees often have in public assistance programs. Most trainees said they could talk with the counselor and found her to be helpful. She is also responsible for bringing in community groups to talk with the trainees about the services they offer.

When the need arises for group support on an issue, the counselor works to create that group. One significant example was the formation of a battered women's support group after a woman from a shelter came to speak to the trainees. The talk upset a number of women who were battered, and so the counselor formed a lunchtime support group during that cycle. It proved to be very effective, according to the counselor, allowing women to see that they were not alone in their situation. The support group is now a part of every cycle; women are individually invited to go off-site to the group, retaining confidentiality while still creating a support system for the trainees.

TI also recognizes the need for support beyond the program, and as such recently hired a full time graduate services coordinator. The coordinator is responsible for maintaining contact with graduates, working with employers to help graduates advance, helping graduates with new job searches, and creating support groups for graduates.

Trainee networks of support

Within the training program itself, trainees develop relationships with other trainees in a very short time. They rely upon each other both for company and for help in learning the material. These relationships continue outside of the classroom. Trainees often go out to lunch together and see each other on the weekends. When asked what they liked best about the program, most trainees said the people were the best thing. These relationships appear to continue after graduation from the program. Most graduates said they keep in touch with at least one other graduate from their cycle.

Staff talked about these relationships as "family," that each cycle of TI was like a family. Friendships are encouraged and considered to be an integral part of the learning process. One staff noted that TI tries to keep a mix of trainees, some from welfare, some who have worked, and some who want retraining, because, as she notes, "dialogue is so important." Another staff member talked of the importance of learning through conversation that others face the same difficulties that you do, and begin to see that they have done extraordinarily well considering the obstacles they've had to overcome.

All the trainees and graduates I spoke with had some form of family support in order to attend the training program. Some have parents who pick up children after school, some get a rent reduction, and some get rides to go shopping or do the

laundry. Women rely upon this help to manage their multiple responsibilities. Some noted that without the help it would be impossible to either participate at TI or to get a job.

Curriculum difficulties

Probably the biggest difficulty cited by staff was the need to work one-on-one with trainees at some point, but lacking the resources to do so. Trainees are required to take all parts of the curriculum, regardless of their aptitude or interest in a certain area. Staff said that one thing they would change if they had more funding would be to individualize the curriculum when necessary. "Some people are just great at bookkeeping, but they never get typing. It's hard to watch them struggle with those sections of TI that they aren't interested in or can't do well."

Graduates in particular, and some staff, said they would like to see each cycle run for more than fourteen weeks, so that trainees could strengthen their new skills before entering the job market. Graduates felt that there wasn't enough time to practice their new skills; that they had just become acquainted with them and were then supposed to market themselves based on these skills. Some staff felt that with a few more weeks, some trainees would stand a much better chance of getting a job at a higher wage. Program funding constrains expanding the program. Graduates are welcome to return to TI to practice their skills independently, and often do, but this

is all that TI can offer in the way of extending the program.

Program dynamics: staff and trainee interactions

The way in which staff related to trainees, trainees to staff, as well as how staff worked together are important elements of the program at TI.

Staff/trainee dynamics

Reactions by trainees and graduates to the staff varied widely. Most found staff to be helpful, concerned, and always available. Others said staff "had an attitude" or "talked to us like we were children." Again, some of this seemed to be related to the level of self-confidence reported by trainees and graduates. Those who said they already had self-confidence were also those who felt that staff were condescending, while those who said their self-confidence had increased during the program were very positive about their interactions with staff.

Multicultural issues

The staff of TI is predominately white, with two Latina women and one black woman; two staff are former TI trainees. One of the Latina women and the black woman are primarily administrative assistants, so they have less contact with the trainees than the white staff. One staff member raised this as an issue, wondering whether a more mixed race staff would

provide more effective role models for the trainees. She also noted that participation by employers of color in TI would offer trainees role models in the working world; however, most volunteers from corporations are currently white.

While most of the trainees and graduates of color did not perceive the whiteness of the staff as a problem, it is also true that the women of color I spoke with were more disenchanted with the staff as a whole than the white women. This may point to the need for a more diversified staff, or perhaps even a more diversified curriculum. One of the more subtle forms of white cultural dominance is process. Underlying the way a process is structured are values carried in the dominant culture, which in the United States is White Anglo Saxon Protestant. It is therefore possible that the way TI is structured reflects those values and realities, and alienates the women of color, or that TI does not directly deal with racism in the process of individual empowerment.

Staff dynamics

Every staff member noted that the greatest strength of the staff and the reason TI is a good place to work is because of the team approach to training. Every staff member knows all parts of each cycle's process and understand where their piece fits. The staff problem solve together and are very supportive of each other's efforts. In addition, the team spirit encourages creativity. "We are constantly re-

evaluating the program together and figuring out how to do things better."

The solid teamwork may be due in part to the longevity of the staff at TI. Turnover is low, unlike other programs, which may have allowed staff to build good working relationships⁵. The longevity of the staff may also contribute to the overall effectiveness of the program, as staff work well together and are also well-acquainted with the philosophy and mechanics of the program.

Staff split administrative and teaching responsibilities, so that each staff member does some teaching and has contact with the trainees. This helps them in their administrative work. For the intake coordinators, they know the program and can better assess who will do well at TI. For the staff who work with trainees in job search, seeing how trainees progress through the curriculum helps to gauge what type of job the trainee will do well in, and also allows staff to be accurate job references. For the director, "it reminds me why I'm doing all this paperwork -- that there are trainees who benefit from it. It's the trainees who keep me going." Other staff echoed this; that the most rewarding part of the job was watching the trainees gain self-confidence and "win."

The way in which staff works together is in some measure a mirror of how trainees learn to work together. Staff dynamics thus serve as a role model for trainees, who can see

⁵Based on my interviews with other programs in Spring 1989.

that a team approach allows for individual work in a supportive environment, and that ultimately everyone is working toward the same goal with their different tasks. Trainees also observe the dynamics and benefits of good working relationships, which they can reference as they build their own relationships on the job.

Is Training, Inc. effective?

Having outlined and analyzed the program components at TI, it is now possible to discern the effectiveness of the program for trainees. There are two broad criteria to consider: first, whether or not individual empowerment occurs through self-esteem building; and second, whether this empowerment leads to higher wages once graduates are in the labor force.

Individual empowerment through process

According to staff, trainees and graduates, the process developed by TI does in fact change the way individuals view themselves. Staff note this change in self-esteem when trainees begin to straighten their posture, dress more professionally, and above all, begin to help fellow trainees with their work. Phrases like, "I can't do this, I don't want to try" turn into "Hey I'm really getting this, I can really do this." Some even begin to take material home to teach to their children.

Trainees and graduates alike report that the program changed their self-perception: "I didn't think I could do anything, and then I learned at TI that I could." or "I was shy when I came in. The program made me a completely different human being." All but one of the graduates I spoke with have recommended the program to friends and family, which appears to be the major source of recruitment for TI, and is a testimony to how women feel about the program.

It is important to note that some trainees and graduates said TI did not change the way they thought about themselves, because "they already had confidence." Interestingly, these same people by and large didn't like some of the "extras" - movies and discussions -- and also were the ones who found the staff to be condescending. For some women who come to the program strictly for skills training and already possess self-confidence, the built in empowerment process seems to irritate more than encourage them.

Wages, benefits, and staying on the job

Training, Inc.'s placement statistics are impressive, and speak to the effectiveness of the program. It must be noted, however, that most of the placement statistics available are from periods when Boston's job market was expanding. Staff noted that in the last cycle (#18), trainees had a harder time finding a job, and the wages weren't as high. For example, trainees are now placed in banks and hospitals, which pay a

relatively low salary, whereas during the boom trainees landed jobs in finance where salaries are higher. Trainees no longer have easy access to state jobs because of the budget crisis, causing further problems in finding a job.

TI conducted a survey of its first year graduates five years later, in 1988. Sixty-one percent of the graduates responded to the survey; with promising answers. Eighty-three percent of the first year graduates continued to be employed in 1988; 65% were still employed by the initial employer. 100% had received raises, and 87% received promotions. Graduates reported life changes, including participating in community activities, registering to vote, opening checking and savings accounts, learning to drive, and finding better housing. The results of this survey indicate that graduates have continued to move forward since leaving TI.

Placement statistics for the last four cycles, from December 1988 to December 1989, indicate that TI graduates are finding employment at wage levels higher than the average ET wage. Average and median wages for the last four cycles are⁶:

⁶Based on job placement statistics kept by Training Inc. Graduation dates for the four cycles were: Cycle 15, 12/88; Cycle 16, 4/89; Cycle 17, 8/89; Cycle 18, 12/89.

	% placed of enrolled	ave.hour wage	med.hour wage	ave. week wage	med. week wage
Cycle 15	70%	\$8.31	\$8.10	\$303.75	\$300.00
Cycle 16	56%	\$8.24	\$8.21	\$279.21	\$295.56
Cycle 17	70%	\$8.12	\$7.85	\$302.33	\$284.20
Cycle 18	63%	\$8.38	\$8.24	\$311.59	\$317.17

Average ET wages for Boston for July 1989 through January 1990 were \$7.88 -- lower than the average hourly wage for all four cycles at TI. This indicates that TI graduates do in fact earn a better wage than participants in other training programs. More significant evidence of the success of TI is evident when TI wages are compared with wages earned after completing similar office skills programs in Boston:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Ave. hourly wage⁷</u>
ABCD	\$6.50
Chinese American Civic Assn.	6.50
Oficina Hispana	6.75
Sociedad Latina	6.50
United South End Settlements	6.25
Training, Inc.	7.50

It is clear from these numbers that trainees are earning substantially more than participants in other programs. While a direct comparison is difficult because the other programs may not teach exactly the same set of skills, it does appear that TI's method is effective in getting a higher paying job. It is also unclear here, however, whether language and race

⁷Program summaries, Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training.

play a role in the lower wages of the other programs. Three of the five other programs work primarily with Asians or Latinas, which could account for the lower wages. However, TI graduates still earn higher wages than ABCD trainees or United South End Settlements trainees, indicating that overall the program does appear to be more effective.

One last caveat on gauging TI's success by these numbers. One of TI's assets is its extensive connections with employers in the Boston area. I did not gather information on other programs' contacts with employers. These contacts may in part be responsible for the higher wages. In the "underclass" debate on persistent poverty in the US, a lack of access to job networks is one of the theories put forth as to why poor people cannot escape poverty. It is possible that part of TI's role is not only to empower its trainees, but to provide them with the contacts they need to get a job.

Who doesn't get placed?

"There are some who don't get placed," noted one staff member. "We work with them as best we can to find a job, but some become disheartened or disinterested, and stop calling us or stopping in." Personal crises arise for others which prevent them from looking for a job. Others continued their education; still others called TI a year later to say they'd finally found a job. There didn't appear to be a particular type of trainee who didn't find a job; each trainee had her

own set of circumstances to cope with which in part determined her employment future.

Evaluating the reasons for people not getting placed was difficult, and requires more exploration. Staff lost touch with those not placed, and did not always know why someone stopped coming to TI. All of the graduates I spoke with found jobs directly after graduation from TI. This area therefore remains unclear; however, information gathered on this subject would provide a rich source of information for understanding the effectiveness of the program.

Summary

The philosophy, goals, and processes that structure TI are quite effective in building women's self-esteem while simultaneously transferring office skills. The program does in fact "empower" women on an individual basis. In this sense, the program meets Molyneaux's practical and strategic gender interests, and is a successful training program. Women with children who have been forced to live below the poverty line on welfare benefits, gain skills that give them more access to wages that are above the poverty level (this varies depending on the number of children in a family). Materially, it is easier for women to meet the immediate demands of the household, thereby meeting practical interests.

In addition, most women who complete the TI program have

more self-confidence in themselves: believe they can perform tasks that previously they thought were out of their reach, believe that others take them seriously, believe that they can learn. This boost in self-esteem contributes to achieving strategic gender interests on an individual level -- with more self-confidence they can better handle situations that arise, cope with family and work issues, and stop blaming themselves for being on welfare or for their life situations.

The networking among trainees also contributes to strategic gender interests. Women have the opportunity to share life experiences and discover that the issues they face are shared by others, which lessens the amount of self-blaming that often occurs.

Overall, the TI meets its own goals and works in an effective manner. In exploring effective employment and training programs, however, it is important to examine TI in the larger context of the ET Choices Program and labor markets. Through this examination, the extent to which TI works to empower women to challenge institutional power relations can be seen. It is to these issues that I now turn.

CHAPTER 4: CHALLENGING INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS

This chapter explores the constraints that TI faces in providing its trainees with opportunities in labor markets. Two levels of constraints are discussed. First, the difficulties in operating a training program within the ET Choices Program are explored, and secondly, the problems of running a training program in a capitalist system are discussed. TI's goals are in fact limited by the system within which it operates. Possible strategies for overcoming these issues follow in Chapter 5.

Working within the ET Choices Program

TI receives the majority of its funding from public sources. All in all, the program is responsible to 22 different funders. ET Choices is one of those funders; though the money goes through various channels before it reaches TI. One channel is the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services for the City of Boston, another is the Bay State Skills Corporation, and still another is contracted services, primarily through the public housing authorities and Department of Employment and Training agencies outside of Boston.

The problems of dealing with a complex bureaucracy are evident when examining an individual program. More than one staff member at TI noted the tremendous amount of time the director must spend in fundraising and contract negotiations.

One noted, "It's an utter waste of time. The public sources already know about TI and how we work. In fact, they already know how many slots they're going to give us. But we still have to spend weeks preparing 150 page proposals for each public funding source, every single year. And they are all on different timetables and have different terms for placement."

Once a woman is enrolled in TI, there are numerous forms that staff must fill out, and again each is different, depending upon the funding source for the particular slot. Staff complained about the amount of time required to fill out the required paperwork, saying the time would be better spent reworking the curriculum.

Tight budgets

One of the most disturbing aspects of the complex funding system is the amount of money used for administrative overhead. As monies filter through the various levels of the employment and training system, from federal to state to another state level to local, each level takes their cut of the money for administrative operations, leaving only about 35% of the original monies for the actual training. TI itself takes about a 10% cut of the money for administrative purposes. Programs like TI are then forced to create an effective program on little money. This means that equipment is scarce, salaries for staff are lower than necessary, and resources for trainees are limited.

Why is this complex system in place? At least one of the layers exists for political reasons. When ET began in 1983, top level administrators agreed that after five years, ET monies would be administered not by the Department of Public Welfare, but by the Department of Employment and Training. Thus, money that once went directly from the welfare department to training programs now funnels through yet another layer.

TI currently spends about \$²8,000 per trainee. Funding difficulties were noted by every staff member as a major problem, and all said that the program could be improved if there was more money available. Streamlining the administrative money system would reduce the amount of politics involved and also reduce the administrative overhead costs, allowing more money to flow directly to the training programs.

One-quarter of TI's funding is private, from the YMCA, foundations, and corporations. This funding serves as a cushion on the public monies, allowing TI more flexibility in the type of program it runs and the trainees they accept. TI would eventually like to have half private and half public monies to fund the program. Each cycle there are some "private" placements, trainees who do not qualify for public reimbursement but still require skills training. The private money also eases the pressure on placement a little, as there is some extra money that will cover the costs of a trainee who

doesn't find a job and therefore bring in public monies.

Driven by placement

The structure of the ET Choices system and of the payment process has a significant effect upon operations at TI. The constraints put upon TI ultimately mean that TI is driven not by ensuring that each trainee is ready to find a job at a high wage, but that each trainee is placed in any job in order to get the funding to continue the program at all. In this sense, it is no different from other training programs in Boston.

The goals of the ET program and TI are actually in conflict with each other to some degree. ET focuses on getting women off of welfare in order to save money. TI's primary goal is not to get women off of welfare, but to provide them with skills and more self-confidence to find and keep a job. So while ET simply wants women to get a job, and therefore places pressure on placement, TI is concerned with the quality of the job and creating a supportive and individually empowering process. The problem for TI is that although these are their goals, they need money to reach these goals, and so they often must respond to ET's priorities.

In Fiscal Year 1990, TI only received money for training a welfare recipient after a trainee was placed in a job and remained there for 30 days. This created cash flow difficulties at TI, and increased the pressure upon TI to

place their trainees, regardless of the job (as long as it met ET wage and benefit requirements). All of the staff felt the pressure of this arrangement. Previous to FY90, TI received a third of the money for a training slot when a woman entered the program, another third half-way through the cycle, and the final third upon placement (with 30 day retention). Under this old system, staff could focus more upon process, knowing that at least part of the funding for the slot would come through. If a woman wasn't quite ready at the end, it wasn't as much of a difficulty. Staff commented about this new system, saying it put them under much more pressure to "whip the trainees into shape" and make sure they got placed.

The ET program gives TI 90 days after the end of a cycle to place a trainee. Most trainees are placed during this period. If a woman is placed during this period, TI gets the full money for the slot. If she finds a job after this period, however, TI cannot get the money for her training. Staff said, "We work with them intensely until this 90 day period is up. After that, we are still willing to work with them, but it must be at their initiative. We have to focus on the trainees for whom we can get reimbursed for their training instead." One graduate noted this trend, saying that staff's attitude changed as soon as they got payment for a slot. The constraints of funding are evident here. Placement, the goal of ET, becomes the primary goal of TI over process or empowerment.

In addition, funding from public sources makes no allowance for downturns in the economy. One staff noted that trainees had no problems in the last few years finding jobs because Boston job markets were expanding. In the last cycle, however, the economy began contracting, and it has become harder for trainees to find jobs that pay enough to survive. Trainees are now competing with numbers of laid-off workers who have more skills and experience. While some of the trainees are laid-off workers themselves and therefore have a better chance in the job market, many of the trainees have little or no experience that matches that of laid-off workers. Despite this, TI must continue to reach its placement goals in the same amount of time.

The constraints of public funding have forced TI to look to the private sector for funding. This private funding is leveraged against the public funding, giving TI more flexibility in who they accept into the program and the kind of program they run. In fact, the dream of one staff member is a learning-centered workplace in the private sector, where workers are given the time to learn on the job, in a supportive environment.

The politics of funding

Funding is driven by politics in many cases. For example, TI staff worked with Senator John Kerry's office to learn the political ropes of funding for a year in order to secure the

needed funding.

Politics drives much of the time of the Executive Director as well. She must decide which meeting she needs to appear at and which she can afford to pass up. "Each funding source thinks that I should always be there when they call or need something. It's like I have 22 bosses."

The situation in Boston is even more complicated in terms of politics. According to the executive director, some of the funding sources in Boston have played games with the training programs in Boston, often pitting one against the other to try and get concessions on funding or other aspects of program operations. Through this competition, the directors of various training programs felt isolated and vulnerable to the whims of the city administrators. Programs didn't share information with each other, and "looking out for my own program" was the rule.

Job Training Alliance

This changed two years ago, under the initiative of Elsa Bengel of TI and Jay Ostrower at Action for Boston Community Development(ABCD), another office skills training program. Both directors realized they were being manipulated by city administrators, and that they were playing the role of the victim. As Elsa Bengel said, "We were giving them the power. In fact, together we all had the information they had, we just hadn't been sharing it." The training programs came together

to form a network called the Job Training Alliance (JTA). While not directly connected to the actual training that occurs at TI, it is important to explore because the effectiveness of the JTA in fact gives TI more leverage and power in seeking funding for its program.

The JTA now serves as a vehicle for training programs in the city of Boston to band together and develop some power in the job training funding process. It is an arena for each training program to share information about funding, requests for proposals, conversations with administrators, and support work among directors.

The rule of the JTA is, "Don't lie to each other. Everyone else lies to us." Members meet before meetings with commissioners to develop strategies and discuss any new information that has been gathered. While nothing concrete has changed, Elsa Bengel is confident that the group has more power to define the terms of contracts, to try and create less funding-driven programs that get by on bare bones budgets.

In some ways, the JTA mirrors some of the processes in place at TI for the trainees. Like the trainees, directors have found that mutual support is essential in their work. A more important lesson might also be transferred to TI: power in numbers. The JTA provides valuable political leverage to directors dealing with funding sources which traditionally hold the balance of power. Trainees entering the downtown working world face similar power imbalances; creating

alliances with other workers may give them the power they need to gain better wages or working conditions. Providing information on unionization, lobbying, and organizing to trainees may help them later when they come up against the brick walls of sexism or racism on the job, or if they want to fight for higher wages.

Training, Inc., like all training programs, does not operate in a vacuum. It provides its services in the context of the Boston corporate world and the prevailing economic climate. A closer examination of some of the tensions it presents provides insights into the dilemmas training programs face.

Tension between empowerment and employment

One of the building blocks of TI's philosophy is the importance of building self-esteem and self-confidence in trainees so they are better prepared to enter an office environment and succeed. "You can do it if you try" is the predominant theme at TI, and is one that on many levels seems to work.

However, a question arises here: what happens when these women enter the world of work? As noted in Chapter 1, labor markets do not provide equal opportunity for women, especially women of color. Segmented labor markets place invisible barriers in the career paths of white women and all people of color. The danger in the "you can do it if you try"

philosophy, when applied to the working world, is that TI graduates may think it is their fault when they fail to move beyond a certain level in the company, rather than knowing that it is the system stopping a woman from advancing.

The tension here is in empowering women to enter the office job market with confidence that they can perform well and move ahead, and presenting the realities of labor markets that in fact restrict their opportunity. However, without some education about the nature of these barriers, and the development of skills to deal with them, the solid training and self-confidence building that occurs at TI may be undone at a later point, when a graduate who unknowingly comes up against the barriers says, "I must be doing something wrong -- I can't seem to get anywhere."

A workshop on the economy, its structure, and the role played by women and people of color would be a first step toward overcoming this problem. A balance between providing encouragement and relating reality needs to be struck, in order to fully equip trainees to enter labor markets. In addition, workshops on discrimination (both race and sex), and avenues of recourse would give trainees the tools to analyze a situation and take action if necessary. One graduate said, "I had to deal with being sexually harassed at work, and I didn't know what to do. I think that kind of information should be given to us at TI."

Working within the system

The introduction of these kinds of information workshops would certainly be useful to trainees, but they also point to another tension that TI faces: the constraints of operating a program in a capitalist economic system. TI wants to place graduates in good jobs, yet it is only one source of personnel for employers. As such, it has to work closely in developing relationships with employers so they will be interested in TI graduates for their job openings.

Marketing TI is an essential part of the entire program. As both staff and graduates noted, TI's best promotional material is the graduates themselves and their job performance. A hard-working graduate is a tribute to TI, and may well encourage employers to consider hiring other graduates. In a tight labor market such as Boston's in 1990, this kind of networking is essential to TI to maintain placement rates and therefore continue to receive program funding. TI has developed a huge network of over 150 companies which they are rightfully proud of, as it speaks to the quality of the graduates, which helps to ensure this placement rate.

However, introducing union workshops, discrimination education, and "state of the economy" workshops may well produce a different sort of graduate, one that is not as passive in the long run, who actually may raise issues at work. Employers want a cooperative labor force over which

they have control. If TI's graduates become more vociferous as a result of these workshops, employers may be less willing to hire future TI graduates.

Without these workshops, on the other hand, training programs are replicating the status quo that limits women's access to decent jobs and wages. In this sense, strategic gender interests, those that change power relations in the long run, are not met. The tension between working within the system and trying to change it at the same time is probably the most difficult tension to resolve, and is one that arises for progressive activists in many different arenas.

This points to the overall question of the role of employment and training in the US economy. The state is functioning as a servant of industry, helping industry to accumulate more wealth through improving the labor force at state expense. Employment and training programs are primarily designed not to improve the condition of women, but to serve the employer needs of capital, at the same time reducing public expenditures that require a large tax base. A recent Dollars and Sense (1986) article on the ET program noted, "Employers complain of a labor shortage. ET is deliberately marketed to companies with low-wage, low-level jobs, which are plentiful in the state, providing a steady flow of workers to private companies strapped for labor. In this way, the ET program continues to fulfill the role of providing labor for the secondary labor market-jobs paying near subsistence

wages."

As it is now, staff at TI noted that business is often given credit for public relations reasons that they don't deserve. For example, although a particular company with hundreds of employees has only hired one TI trainee in a year, they receive special recognition for their work in providing opportunity to welfare recipients. In fact, staff said they should be held accountable as to why they aren't hiring more workers. The question posed is, "how to get companies to invest more in poor people?"

The women's economic development movement may be able to play a significant role in employment and training programs, shaping programs that attempt to overcome the dominant role of the private sector. Programs must be developed that both train women for work in the existing labor market structures, while simultaneously equipping women to understand the larger power structures they will face in the real world. Such programs can organize women to challenge existing labor market inequalities. Again, a balance must be struck between the need to work within the existing system and the need to challenge these structures.

The tension could be mitigated by efforts by training program directors to form groups like the Job Training Alliance. Employers need a trained workforce, and the current state of the educational system ensures that people need more training to prepare for office work. The JTA gives individual

programs more power to challenge the current ET system. Currently it is challenging the pricing system for services, but the group could also use its power to institute the workshops and still maintain relations with employers. While it would be by no means easy, it certainly provides more of an opportunity and/or possibility for challenging the status quo.

Training, Inc., while quite effective in individually empowering its trainees through building self-confidence, is constrained in its ability to challenge labor market structures. Tensions between running a program that places women in corporations, and empowering women by equipping them with tools to challenge the power of those corporations over their workers, are difficult to resolve. However, there are some strategies, noted above, that TI might implement to empower women in the larger sense of challenging these existing power relations.

The last two chapters have detailed the possibilities and limitations of running employment and training programs that meet practical and strategic interests. What lessons can be gleaned from this study? In the final chapter, I develop the components of a model employment and training program that meet both sets of interests.

CHAPTER 5: A MODEL PROGRAM

The program at Training, Inc. provides useful insights into the structure of a model employment and training program that both trains women for employment and provides them with the tools they will need to survive. There are many program components and processes at Training Inc that are rare in employment and training programs, such as the focus on self-esteem building and self awareness. While TI should serve as the basis for a model program, there are elements missing as well. These missing elements pertain to incorporating the reality of the larger context of labor markets in a training program.

TI effectively works to individually empower low-income women through its curriculum and process. However, its ability to equip women to challenge institutional power relations in the labor market is limited; it is constrained by the need to survive within the capitalist system. In this sense, it does not prepare women to change existing power relations, the more permanent form of empowerment.

What would a model training program look like? Following is an outline of the components of a training program that would meet practical and strategic gender interests. It is based on my observations at Training, Inc, and on readings and countless conversations with program directors, economists, academics, feminist activists, workers, and welfare recipients. A model program will accomplish five major

things. First, it will challenge the sex-segregated nature of labor markets and prepare women for the world of work, and provide jobs at decent wages. Second, it will include a process that builds women's self-esteem and self-awareness. Third, it will provide information about the institutional structures that constrain women, and give information on strategies to cope with and work to eliminate those barriers. Fourth, a successful program will build solid workplace and community relations for women that empower women and build alliances across race and class lines through network building and providing a forum for creating shared understandings. Lastly, it will assist women in integrating and managing the worlds of home and work.

In meeting these goals, an employment and training program would begin to meet practical and strategic gender interests for women. Following is a chart that outlines the components and requirements of a model program and the extent to which they meet practical or strategic gender interests. Looking at the chart, it is evident that many elements meet both practical and strategic gender interests, though some meet primarily practical and some primarily strategic interests. This points to the old adage, "the personal is political"; that is, that elements designed to meet immediate needs often have the potential to address longer term needs and vice versa.

Using practical and strategic gender interests provides a

useful way of thinking about structuring programs that will simultaneously meet women's needs and challenge oppressive structures. A discussion of each of the components follows the chart.

PRACTICAL AND STRATEGIC GENDER INTERESTS: A CHECKLIST

ACTIVITY	PRACTICAL*	STRATEGIC
Preparing women for good jobs		
non-traditional jobs	x	x
high paying jobs	x	
flexible skills training	x	x
benefits (health)	x	
program connections to labor markets	x	
Attention to process		
self-esteem building		x
multicultural training		x
multicultural staff		x
self-help philosophy	x	x
Challenging institutional barriers		
support groups	x	x
networking	x	x
voter registration		x
economy workshop		x
union workshop	x	x
workplace rights workshop	x	x
discrimination workshop		x
Work and family issues		
day care	x	
community resources workshop	x	
time management	x	
program connections with state service agencies	x	

* In many cases, a program component will meet both practical and strategic interests. I have noted the primary benefit of each component; where I indicate it meets both, the stronger benefit is bolded.

Training women for decent jobs

Training programs must address segmented labor markets that restrict women's access to jobs that pay a living wage. There are several ways to address these barriers. First, programs can focus on training women for non-traditional jobs that pay a higher wage because they are in fields dominated by men. Women at TI faced a certain labor market that offered a restricted range of wages; rarely did a woman earn more than \$10 hourly. Jobs in male-dominated fields pay more and therefore training in these fields would open up opportunities for women to earn higher wages. Second, programs can target training toward higher paying jobs, and create networks that ensure access to those jobs. TI's program provides an average wage over \$8.00 an hour, with benefits. While the office/clerical field is still dominated by women, TI staff have developed connections that place women in jobs that pay above poverty wages.

Preparing women for jobs that continue to have career ladders is also an effective strategy. However, because these ladders are rapidly disappearing as firms restructure their jobs (Noyelle, 1988), programs should also prepare women to advance by transferring more flexible skills that can be used in more than one context, and by learning how to continue building on current skills. For instance, while programs may offer skills specific to one job, like typing, they must also include skill-building in such areas as decision making,

problem solving, and interpersonal relations. Equipped with these skills, women will have more opportunities to explore other types of employment that may pay better wages and have more advancement opportunities.

Programs can set a wage floor and then target their training to place women at wages above that level. This strategy is especially helpful in the design phase of program planning, as it will help planners to focus on the types of jobs that will pay an adequate wage. This wage floor must reflect the true cost of living for a typical family. In Massachusetts, for example, the wage floor should probably be set at \$17,000 annually for a family of three. This is based on the amount the state says a family needs to meet basic needs, plus \$3,000 to cover work expenses. At these wages child care must be subsidized, otherwise wages need to increase by another \$10,000¹(EOHS, 1990).

In addition, programs should place women in jobs that offer full health benefits. While even partial benefits look attractive, the monthly premium charged may prohibit women from using the benefit, and therefore is often not useful. Benefits should cover the whole family and not just the individual worker, as one of the primary reason that women leave jobs to return to welfare is because they need Medicaid coverage for their children. Programs should also provide a workshop on how to calculate the worth of health and other

¹ Based on child care costs of \$200 weekly in Boston.

benefits, so that they can make informed decisions about the real worth of benefits in future jobs.

Paying attention to process

Training women for jobs is not enough. Programs must pay attention to the process through which women learn new skills, as exemplified by the success of Training, Inc. in placing women in jobs that they keep. A training program that creates and reinforces a negative power dynamic between teacher and trainee, that places trainees in a powerless position, will only perpetuate women's feelings of worthlessness.

Curriculum should be based on a self-help philosophy, one that encourages women to question and to take the initiative for their own training. Paulo Freire's work in this area provides an excellent set of considerations for constructing training programs that focus on self-learning and empowerment through an interactive process of questioning. Training programs should also build in non-technical skill related processes that build women's self-esteem. The extra components at Training, Inc. (human relations, movies, parties, etc) are good examples of the way in which a curriculum can be structured to provide fluidity between the skill building and self-esteem building components of a program.

Support groups and network building are also essential pieces of a training program. Support groups provide women

with a forum to share their experiences and to begin to understand that problems they have are shared by other women; that forces external to them are causing some of the difficulty. Network building reinforces these support groups and can be a valuable resource after graduation from the program. In addition, most people hear about jobs or land jobs because of their network of friends and acquaintances. Developing networks with fellow trainees during the program may lead to career advancement in the future.

Training, Inc. recognized the importance of these types of networks through the development of a graduate services coordinator. This points to the need for a staff person to work with women after they have left the program; to set up support groups and continuing education programs, to help women in the job market solve daily problems, and to connect women up with community resources.

Preparing women for the real world

Self-esteem building and process are extremely important, but must be constructed in tandem with a component that equips women to understand and challenge institutional constraints in the labor market. Without this understanding, women may believe that it is their fault that they cannot advance to a higher wage or position ladder, rather than the structural sexism and racism of labor markets.

Programs must therefore include a number of components

that impart this knowledge to women and that provide them with resources to fight against these structures. For example, all training programs must include a section on worker's rights, detailing workplace rights and what avenues of recourse are available if women believe their rights are being violated. Information on sexual harassment and redress for not being promoted based on sex or race must be strongly emphasized.

Equally important are workshops on the economy and the problems women, particularly women of color face, in labor markets. While the information about barriers is depressing, it is essential to prepare women for the reality of work, not for golden opportunities that will never come true. A black woman who doesn't get a job promotion needs to be able to realistically assess whether she did not get the promotion because of a lack of skills or because of the color of her skin or gender. If she believes it is one of the latter, she then needs to know what mechanisms are at her disposal to challenge this.

Voter registration drives and information on the legislative process will provide women with the knowledge and means to affect government. More than one staff member at TI said that one of the next projects was to have a voter registration drive, not only among current trainees, but among all graduates as well. As one staff noted, "We have about six hundred graduates. Now, if they all vote, that's a significant voting bloc." Plans are also in the works at TI

to create a workshop on lobbying and the legislative process. With these tools, women can voice the need for improved services for themselves and their children to their elected officials.

Finally, training programs should work to provide networks of support among women, so that women can work together for personal and collective justice. Information about women's community groups and other political groups in the area will provide women with the opportunity to connect up with these groups. The graduate support coordinator at TI has the potential to provide such a group, where women can continue to make connections among themselves, understand their commonalities and differences, and use this knowledge to work toward changing the systems that restrict them.

These will be difficult components to include and still enjoy the support of the business community for training programs; however, it is precisely the absence of these components that points to who is currently ultimately benefitting from training programs. The inclusion of this component turns a training program from a program that is feeding women into segmented labor markets into a program that is truly equipping women to work within that world but challenge it simultaneously.

Juggling work and family

The transition from welfare to working outside the home is a difficult one primarily because women must juggle one more ball in the air. Previously a woman took care of her children, coped with the welfare system, and ran the household. Once in the labor force she now adds 40 hours of paid work for someone else onto that load. Training programs should be constructed to facilitate this transition, and to work to bridge these two worlds.

First, staff at the training program should work with women to find accessible, affordable day care that women are comfortable with. Using the training period as time for testing out day care arrangements will provide more stability for women when they move on to find a job. At Training, Inc., for example, the counselor works with women not only to find child care, but to develop a back-up system if their regular arrangements fall through. More than one staff member at TI mentioned that having a day-care center on-site would greatly ease child care problems and the stress that mothers with young children often feel when leaving their children with a caretaker.

Informing women of resources in their community can also be an important part of preparing them for their additional responsibilities. Information about social services, programs for children, transportation systems, and other community resources will provide women with the knowledge of additional resources from which to draw if they choose. In addition,

providing information about different support networks in the community will give women access to emotional support.

Finally, working with women on time management skills -- working out when women will accomplish all their tasks in a given day or week -- can help women to prepare women mentally for their dual roles.

Consideration of differences

Women enter training programs from many different backgrounds and races. The diversity of women on welfare must be appreciated and built upon. The current tendency in training programs is to ignore cultural differences, or for differences in background. One woman may be recently divorced but with a work history, and another may have never held a job. A white woman and a black woman may have different ways of relating and learning. These differences must be discovered, acknowledged and respected; if they are not, power differentials that exist will be ignored.

The process itself must be carefully examined for cultural bias. Women from different backgrounds hold different values and have different ways of approaching the same task. What appears interesting to a white woman may be alienating to a black woman, and vice versa. When constructing a process, staff of training programs must ensure that the process reflects the diversity of the population it works with.

Diversification of staff

One key element of any training program is that the diversity of the trainees should be reflected in the staff. A diversified staff can provide role models for trainees, as well as make staff more aware of the complexity of various cultures and ethnicities. This sensitivity is essential to building women's self-esteem.

A training on multiculturalism for the trainees will prepare them to work alongside people of different races, cultures, and backgrounds. This preparation can begin to break down barriers between women, and provide a further basis for mutual support and understanding.

Institutional connections

Osterman (1988) notes that one problem employment and training programs have is that they are isolated from other institutional structures, especially labor markets. Training programs must make sure they understand the nature of the labor market for which they are training welfare recipients, and should make some connections within that market to facilitate women's entry to a job.

Here however, is where the tension arises between providing women with access to a job through working with employers and providing women with information about their rights to fight employers if necessary. This must be

carefully thought out; however, the emphasis on worker's rights must remain.

Connections to other structures, such as social services and the welfare department are also essential. Staff should develop positive relations in these areas to help women work their way through the bureaucracy in as easy a manner as possible. Staff networks are therefore very important here. A welfare worker who likes the staff of a training program will tend to do much more for them than one he/she dislikes.

Putting it in a larger context: the ET Choices Program

The very goals of the ET Choices Program are short-sighted and do not reflect a vested interest in the women they hope to train. Moving women off of welfare to reduce the public welfare creates a program that tries to push women into jobs, often without adequate training or education. This in turn helps to perpetuate the vicious cycle: since many women who pass through ET have gained no new skills, as soon as their day care and medical benefits end they must return to welfare. Changing the goals to make the primary goal ensuring that women find stable, decent jobs would shift the focus and probably the content of the program. This would also change who the ET Choices Program answers to -- toward welfare recipients and away from industries and corporations.

The first entry point for a welfare recipient into

employment and training programs is the welfare department itself. The way in which a recipient is treated at the welfare department may influence whether she chooses to participate in an employment and training component, and the way in which she approaches the program. It is important, therefore, to also consider changes in the larger ET Choices system to facilitate women's entry into programs like Training, Inc..

Most importantly, the ET Choices Program should be as voluntary as possible within federal restrictions. Staff at Training, Inc. reported that those women who were not coerced into entering the program are the most successful in completing the program -- they are the ones with "ganas" (desire - from Stand and Deliver).

Since the majority of women on welfare would work if they believed they could make ends meet with a job, there should be little need for a mandatory training program or for the quotas that ET workers must currently meet in placing clients. This quota system places pressure upon the ET worker to place a certain number of AFDC recipients in jobs within a given period. Meeting the quota becomes the goal, rather than working with the client to develop an employment and training program that might begin to change her economic situation.

In fact, an evaluation and placement system in ET should place an emphasis on quality, not quantity. By considering the quality of a job training program, its effectiveness in

preparing women for work, the ET program could become more effective overall. Rather than churning women through the welfare-work-welfare cycle, attention could be placed on a longer process of training and education that ended that cycle.

ET workers should also receive training on working with AFDC recipients. Many of the women on AFDC I spoke with said that their worker treated them like children, were condescending and often judgmental. Training along Freirian lines, where ET workers work with clients to discover what the client wants to do through questioning and support, would be a big step in creating a better atmosphere for the client. Decreasing the caseload per worker is also key to the ability of an ET worker to spend the time needed to effectively work with an AFDC recipient.

Within the ET program components, more opportunities must be provided for education, and more efforts must be made to develop training programs that place women in non-traditional jobs. Given Noyelle's analysis that workers need flexible skills in order to advance in job markets, ET must provide women with opportunities to develop those skills. Post-secondary education slots must be funded to allow women to earn a college-level degree. In general, the types of programs ET funds should reflect an attempt to break out of the sex and race segregated labor markets structures.

Finally, a streamlined administrative process would

decrease the amount of time that an ET worker spends on paperwork, would mean less detail work for welfare recipients, and would decrease paperwork for staff at training programs. A recipient going through a training or education program is already coping with many small details, both at home and in the program. At Training, Inc., AFDC recipients sometimes have to lose a morning of training because they have to take care of some administrative business at the welfare office. A streamlined process would prevent this from happening and make for a more dignified system.

For staff, the number of forms that must be completed for each trainee, but often requesting the same information, the bureaucracy is also frustrating. Paperwork takes time away from their work with trainees. Less paperwork and fewer details would greatly improve the paper flow among state agencies.

One clear problem for all single women struggling to work and maintain a home is child care. While ET offers child care for a year after recipients leave the program, it does not solve the problem that arises after that one year ends. Child care should be available at a low cost to all low-income parents. Workplaces should pay a certain amount per employee into a funding pool, from which day care centers can draw funds based on the number of low-income children they have. Such a program would provide the next step for women after losing their child care extension benefits.

A similar problem occurs with medical care. Universal health care would eliminate this barrier to employment.

Constraints

Creating effective employment and training programs is extremely difficult within the constraints of the current system. Effective programs require a long initial development time, with extensive curriculum development and staff training. Most important and limiting is the availability of funding for programs. Staff at Training Inc., for example, cite funding as one of the major difficulties they face in running an effective program. To build in many of the components listed above, a significant increase in funding will be necessary. However, it is also true that such funding is a long term investment that may prevent costs to the state further down the road. Careful planning today and the structuring of opportunity will decrease costs in the future in emergency services.

While there is certainly a focus in 1990 on training the workforce in the U.S. by industry itself, it is important to be careful about this priority. Employment and training programs should not be training women only to fit into slots needed by companies; they must be equipped with skills and knowledge that allow them to assert themselves as workers, not just as cogs in a machine. This will certainly bring employment and training programs into conflict with industry,

who do not want a workforce educated in workplace rights. However, employment and training programs must be clear in their goals what they are working towards -- self-determination for women, not to satisfy corporations.

The ups and downs of the US economy are a further constraint. As such, welfare benefits should be set above the poverty level so that in times of tight job markets women have a temporary fallback that provides some stability. Current welfare benefits are so low that they set women into a tailspin, scrambling to make ends meet, often ending in homelessness. Benefits above the poverty level would ease this problem.

Fitting it into the women's economic development movement

While this thesis has focused on employment and training programs, the implications and programmatic recommendations have implications for the larger women and economic development movement. I found in my study of Training Inc. that process is as important as the skills learned in a training program. All WED programs should carefully consider process. Whether the program works on self-employment for women or starting a woman's cooperative enterprise, thinking carefully about process can significantly change the way in which a woman experiences the program.

Considering the larger context is also crucial for WED programs. Women rarely receive a fair shake in the economic

world. Programs must begin to challenge the institutional barriers that exist, whether in creating a small business or in training a woman for office work.

The dual roles women play as workers and mothers must also be addressed in any effective WED program. This is a major source of stress for many women, and programs must develop strategies for working with women on juggling both sets of responsibilities.

These considerations can be evaluated in the framework of practical and strategic gender interests. WED programs must have as their goal ensuring adequate income for women over the long term. To do this, they must not only provide opportunities for changing women's immediate circumstances and income, but must also challenge the segregated labor market, women's lack of access to credit, and other institutional barriers. If they omit this, they will replicate a system that oppresses women, and while they may help a few individual women, it will not pave the way for long term change for all women. It is in considering and working on both sets of interests where the potential for effective WED programs lies.

AFTERWORD

In my exploration of TI, many questions were answered, but many new ones arose as well. These questions provide direction for future research on effective training programs. Major questions include:

* How do people of different cultures and ethnicities learn and what kind of process do training programs need to construct to incorporate these differences?

* How can training programs more effectively work with trainees to empower them to challenge current labor market barriers while continuing to operate in that same system?

* What are the long-term benefits of building self-confidence in terms of earnings, and how can that be measured?

* Can training programs be used as an organizing tool in the women's economic development movement? If so, how?

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW DATES

For reasons of confidentiality, names of staff, trainees and graduates of Training, Inc. will not be listed here.

Staff interviews

6 March 1990
15 March 1990
16 March 1990
20 March 1990
21 March 1990
26 March 1990
27 March 1990
29 March 1990
2 April 1990
9 April 1990

Trainee interviews

16 March 1990
19 March 1990
21 March 1990
27 March 1990
2 April 1990

Graduate interviews

20 March 1990
21 March 1990
25 March 1990
26 March 1990
27 March 1990
28 March 1990
29 March 1990
10 April 1990
20 April 1990

Appendix B

Training, Inc.

FULL DAY CURRICULUM CHART

WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	90 DAYS
LEVELS	SKILLS BUILDING					SKILLS INTENSIFICATION			SKILLS APPLICATION		S K I L L S M A R K E T I N G				
TYPING	KEYBOARD LEARNING & REVIEW		PRODUCTION OF MAILABLE COPY			TYPING SIMULATION			L E S T E R H I L S I M U L A T I O N S I M U L A T I O N R O T I O N	BUSINESS MACHINE APPLICATIONS SPEED AND ACCURACY RESUME PRODUCTION JOB INTERVIEW PREPARATION GETTING AND KEEPING A JOB	S K I J O L B L R E A R C H E M E N T	S U P P O R T E D S E J O B A R C H C O N T I N U E S U N T I L P L A C E M E N T			
BOOKKEEPING	MOUNTAIN VIEW ACCOUNTING CLERK SIMULATION				INTRODUCTION TO LOTUS 1-2-3										
OFFICE MACHINES	CALCULATOR		COMPUTER - DATA ENTRY AND INTRODUCTION TO WORD PROCESSING												
OFFICE PROCEDURES	RECEPTIONIST SKILLS		FILING SYSTEMS FAX MACHINE POSTAGE METER PHOTOCOPIER		HUMAN RELATIONS										
BUSINESS ENGLISH & MATH	SPEAKING		WRITING			READING		LISTENING							
	FRACTIONS				PERCENTAGES								DECIMALS		
CAREER DEVELOPMENT	TIME MANAGEMENT		PROBLEM SOLVING			BUDGET WORKSHOP		BUSINESS ETHICS					WARDROBE SELECTION		BUSINESS EXCURSION

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRES USED AT TRAINING, INC.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAFF

all staff
Name

What are your responsibilities?

How long have you worked here?

What are the goals of the program, as you see them? How would you rank them in importance?

Do you think the program meets its goals?

What parts of the program do you think are most useful for the participants in preparing them for work? Why? Which are the least useful?

Overall, do you see participants' self-perception change during the time they are here or not? How do you notice this? Why do you think that is?

Do participants enjoy certain components more than others? Which ones do they enjoy and why do you think that is?

Do you think the program prepares participants for their jobs? Does it prepare them for their work lives, that is, both working and caring for their family? How? If you could, are there other components you would add?

Do you think that the actual skills gained or the process through which they gain them are most important? Why?

If you are short on time in a week, what are the priorities that need to get done?

Do you think this is a typical ET program? If not, what is different about it? Why? What difference does it make?

If you could have more funding, what would you do with it? How would you expand the program?

If a participant's child is sick, what happens? Is she allowed to stay at home, or does she make other arrangements?

Why did you decide to work at TI?

What do you like most about the job? Least?

teachers

How many hours a day do you teach?

Describe your class -- what happens in a typical class hour.

What are you trying to achieve in your work with students?

Are there things you would like to do in class that you don't have the time or resources to do now? What are they?

placement

How are you connected to job markets? How do employers know that you have skilled graduates?

What are the components of your placement program? Are there components you would like to add?

How do participants learn about work options?

How do you prepare participants for their work life, both in terms of an actual job and in terms of working and raising a family?

What is the average wage placement? the median?

What percentage of graduates receive health benefits?

What percentage of graduates remain in their jobs for more than a year? What percentage advance in their careers, that is, get a promotion?

What is the easiest type of participant to place? The hardest? Why?

What do you do if you can't place a client?

What is the hardest part about trying to place a client? The easiest?

financial

Where does the funding for the program come from?

What parts of the program are hard to fund, and which are easy?

What does ET ask for in an RFP? What parts of Training, Inc do they fund?

If there was a budget crunch at TI, what would you cut back on first? Why?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Name

Where do you live?

Entering the program

Why did you decide to enter a training program? What did you think you would get out of it?

Did you approach your ET worker or did she/he approach you to enter a training program?

Is this the first time you've participated in ET? If not, what was the other time(s) -- was it referral, training, or what?

How did you hear about Training, Inc. (TI)?

Did you consider other programs? Which ones? If so, why did you choose TI?

What did you have to do to apply for TI? Please describe it for me.

Was there information about TI available at the welfare office? Did you receive any assistance in applying for the program, from either your ET worker or someone at TI? Did you come into TI for a tour? What did you like the best about it, when you first saw/heard about it? What did you like the least?

Being in the program

How long have you been in the program? What stage are you at?

Describe a typical class to me. (PROBE) What do you do in class
-do you work in groups or individually?
-do students or teachers do most of the talking?
-do you practice exercises in class?

What classes do you like the best? Why?

What classes do you like the least? Why?

What do you think of the staff? Why?

Most of the staff here is white. Would you prefer a more diverse staff racially? Why?

Besides the skills you learn in class, what do you like best

about the program outside of class and why? Least? Why?

Is there anything that you wish the program did that it isn't doing at present? Is there anything you would add to the program?

Is there anything you would drop from the program? Why?

What do you do in reflection time on Friday? What do you think of it?

Do you see other women in your program outside of class? Is it time that the program has set up or is it on your own? Do you eat lunch together?

If you have a problem, either in the program or at home, is there someone at TI you can talk with? Is there anyone who works with you to hook you up with programs in your community?

What kind of a job do you want to get? What salary do you think you will need to earn? How do you think it will affect your life? Will being employed make it easier or harder to raise your children?

Managing home and work

I'd like to ask a few logistical questions about taking care of your family and home while you are in the ET program.

How many children do you have? How old are they?

What child care arrangements do you have? Who made the child care arrangements? Are you happy with the child care?

Where is the child care? How far from your house or TI is it? How do you get there? Will you be able to continue with these child care arrangements after TI? What will the payment arrangements be?

If you need someone to watch the kids, or need a lift, is there anyone you can call? Who?

Do you have family living nearby? Do they help you out with watching the kids, the shopping, or anything else? Do you have friends nearby that do the same?

How has being in the TI program changed your daily activities? (Describe a typical day to me before and after the program)

If you could arrange your life right now, how would you like it to look? Would you work, or stay home, or do both? Why?

Has your experience in TI changed the way you think about yourself? Has it changed what you want to achieve in the world of work?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROGRAM GRADUATES

Name

Where do you live?

When did you graduate from TI?

What is your job now? How long have you been there?

Entering the program

Why did you decide to enter a training program? What did you think you would get out of it?

How did you hear about Training, Inc. (TI)?

Did you consider other programs? Which ones? If so, why did you choose TI?

Being in the program

What classes did you like the best? Why?

What classes did you like the least? Why?

Besides the skills you learn in class, what did you like best about the program outside of class and why? Least? Why?

Is there anything that you wish the program did that it wasn't doing when you were there? Is there anything you would add to the program?

Is there anything you would drop from the program? Why?

Did the program have reflection time when you were there? What did you do and what did you think of it?

What do you think of the staff? Why?

Most of the staff here is white. Would you prefer a more diverse staff racially? Why?

After the program

Do you think TI prepared you well for working full-time? When you look back, what was most helpful? Least helpful?

Are there things that you wished you'd learned that you didn't?
Things you learned that you don't need now?

Have you gotten a raise or promotion in your company yet?

Do you stay in touch with TI? With any of the women who you went through the program with? If you do, how often do you talk to them or see them? What do you like best about that?

What were your career goals when you entered TI? What are they now?

Where do you see yourself in three years?

Managing home and work

I'd like to ask a few logistical questions about taking care of your family and home while you are working.

How many children do you have? How old are they?

What child care arrangements do you have? Who made the child care arrangements? Are you happy with the child care?

Where is the child care? How far from your house or job is it? How do you get there? How do you pay for it now?

If your child is sick, what do you do? Do you go to work or stay home? What are your employer's policies?

Do you have medical benefits at work? Do they cover your children?

Describe a typical weekday to me (from the time you get up till you go to bed).

Is it hard or easy to get everything done in a week? What do you do if you don't have enough time?

Are there activities you've added or dropped since you've been working? How do you feel about that?

If you need help, someone to watch the kids or to give you a lift, is there someone you can call? Who?

Do you have family living nearby? Do they help you out with watching the kids, the shopping, or anything else? Do you have friends nearby that would do the same?

If you could arrange your life right now, how would you like it to look? Would you work, or stay home, or do both? Why?

Did your experience in TI changed the way you think about yourself? Did it change what you want to achieve in the world of work?

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