A JOB-SEEKING SKILLS CURRICULUM FOR MIDDLE-AGED MALE JOB SEEKERS WITH AN ACQUIRED DISABILITY WHO ARE REFERRED TO THE WORKABILITY III PROGRAM WITHIN THE LOS RIOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

A Project

Presented to the faculty of the Graduate and Professional Studies in Education
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Counseling
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by
Elisher Mary Taylor

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by

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Graduate and Professional Studies in Education
Abstract

of

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Statement of Problem

The purpose of this project is to address and solve the problem of middle aged male participants in the 45-65 age groups who are participants of the JSS workshops. They do not achieve a successful outcome and gain competitive employment in comparison to their female counterparts who do find employment.

Sources of Data

The author reviewed the related literature which consisted of laws and regulations, statistical data and journal articles.
Conclusions Reached

The new curriculum for use in the WorkAbility III Program will support middle aged male DOR consumers/students participating in Job Seeking Skills Workshops at campuses in the Los Rios Community College District.

________________________________________, Committee Chair
Guy Deaner, Ph.D.

________________________________________
Date
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of Problem

This project provides information about middle aged male participants in the 45-65 age groups with acquired disabilities who are consumers/students of the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR). Individuals who are interested in employment are referred to the WorkAbility III Program (WAIlll) by DOR for employment services. WAIlll is a cooperative program between Sacramento City College (SCC) and DOR that was established to provide employment services to consumers/students attending classes at a Los Rios Community College (Sacramento City College Institutional Research Office [SCC] IRO], 2011).

The WAIlll program serves four campuses within the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD): Sacramento City College (SCC), Cosumnes River College (CRC), American River College (ARC) and Folsom Lake College (FLC). Consumers/students are working towards acquiring an AA/AS degree or a vocational certificate at a college within LRCCD. Information about WAIlll is also shared by counselors of the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S). The DSP&S counselors assist consumers/students with accommodations so that they can achieve academic success.

Men and women age 18 and up are referred to the employment preparation program for development of Job Seeking Skills (JSS) to acquire employment. Students
who are nearing the end of their educational programs and consumers seeking job re-entry are referred to WAIII. In addition, some of these individuals may have not worked in years for reasons such as, an acquired disability, limited education, never had a job, or some may have had previous contact with law enforcement resulting in a criminal record. These are some of the challenges they face which are barrier to employment. To gain further insight about the male participants of the WAIII program, a survey was conducted.

The time period in which the survey was conducted by the Job Developer was in early 2014. Although this study is about male participants in the 45-65 age group, both genders were considered to show comparison. The consumers considered for the survey were referred to WAIII during 2011, 2012 and 2013; both male and females. The author randomly selected files of 40 participants, 20 males and 20 females. Factors considered were gender, age, type of disability (acquired during adult work life) and if they completed the JSS workshops and utilized the assistance of the JD to acquire a job, or if they abandoned the Program. The author utilized several methods to obtain participant feedback. The author made behavioral observations while engaged in face-to-face conversations, follow-up telephone calls when consumer/student failed to keep appointments, and by reviewing her case file documentation. Although the female participants are referenced, the data for females is only being utilized to show a comparison.
Over the years, while working as the Job Developer and assisting the Coordinator with facilitating the workshops and providing one-on-one service, the author noticed that upon completion of the JSS workshops, the male participants did not achieve a successful outcome in comparison to women in the same age group, with the same types of disabilities who did experience success. A successful outcome is gaining competitive employment and as per the DOR contract, 2013-2014, job stabilization of 90 days is considered success.

The author believes that individuals who have been out of work for a significant period of time, these workshops are valuable and can enhance the consumer/students ability to overcome deficiencies in job seeking skills. The workshops can better prepare them for re-entry into the workforce. Some may perceive the workshops as somewhat intimidating. The feelings of intimidation can stem from fear, loss, and grief for the person he once was. As reported by A. George (personal communication, April 12, 2015), when he was no longer able to perform his normal job, there was a profound sense of loss of self, and hopelessness. He further stated that his losses were magnified because he was once the family leader, now he is depressed, his thoughts are scattered, and he does not feel like a man. Honkonen et al. (2007) have determined the psychosocial effects of middle aged men may be related to existing stigmatizing effects of mental disorders. Shuttleworth, Wedgwood, and Wilson (2012) have determined that masculinity and disability are in conflict with each other because disability is associated
with being dependent and helpless whereas masculinity is associated with being powerful and autonomous, thus creating a lived and embodied dilemma for disabled men.

After years of depression, anger, bargaining, denial and shock, the person may eventually accept his limitations. People’s grief, and other reactions to emotional trauma, is as individual as a fingerprint (Kubler-Ross, 1969). In addition to working through and adjusting to his physical limitations, individuals are experiencing ageism, stigma, low self-image, and feelings of inadequacy among other things. For the middle aged man who was once a provider and bread winner, the effects of a life altering disability, may take years to work through. Even then, some with an acquired disability may have little or no knowledge of the resources that exist to help them gain or maintain employment (Heidkamp, Mabe, & DeGraaf, 2012). After grieving the loss he may decide to reach out to DOR for vocational assistance to get help finding a job.

In order to gain the skills that lead to competitive employment, the consumer/student is required by DOR to participate in a series of Job Seeking Skills workshops that can range from three to eight weeks. Consumers/students learn new strategies for conducting a job search. Examples are, networking, internships, volunteering, job shadowing, or informational interviewing. They will learn to develop and assemble an employment portfolio, understand workplace protocol, learn and practice interviewing techniques, be able to discern a legal question from an illegal question, proper attire, as well as self-advocacy for workplace accommodations, and acquire knowledge of ADA (Sacramento City College, 2008).
The author of this project was the Job Developer (JD) for WAIII. Upon completion of the JSS workshops, consumers/students are required to meet with the Job Developer once a week to receive one-on-one assistance with job search. The JD makes contact with employers on their behalf arranging actual job interviews, internships, job shadows, informational interviews, and volunteer opportunities. More importantly, the JD negotiated accommodations, saves the job when a consumer’s job is in jeopardy and on occasion, carves out a job specific to the person’s abilities. The one-on-one support has proven to be successful, resulting in offers of employment for those who utilized the one-on-one assistance. Another caveat to their success is encouragement, which leads to increased effort and self-esteem upon receiving help.

The goal is employment. However, depending on the person’s employment goal, skills, previous employment background, commitment level, and functional limitations, it can take as little as one month, to as long as 1.5 years to secure a job. For those who have been out of work for a significant period of time, of those who have little to no work history, while engaged in job search they are encouraged to acquire work experience through volunteering and internships. As previously stated, some may have criminal records which can delay job placement significantly.

The author found that the current Job Seeking Skills workshops provide excellent information to job seekers. However, in assessing the curriculum, it does not specifically address or include the skills that today’s employer’s look for when making hiring decisions. Oftentimes, males do not possess the skill sets that are essential for today’s
workforce. For example, the author believes that technology skills and communication skills are vital skills that increase an applicant’s marketability. Jobs that require the ability to interface with technology and others in the workplace are in demand. Nayab (2014) believes that technology skills helps remove barriers and ensure a level playing field in this aspect for the most part.

According to the United States Department of Labor (2015) website, the use of computers and the Internet in workplaces will become more pervasive and the functions performed using computers will dramatically increase. In addition, the Department of Labor believes that the influence of technology will go beyond new equipment and faster communications. Work and skills will be redefined; therefore, there is a need to integrate technology and communication into the workforce. These statements speak to the need to equip males in the 45-65 age group with skills that will make them competitive in the job market.

**Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this project is to address and solve the problem of middle aged male participants in the 45-65 age groups who are participants of the JSS workshops. They do not achieve a successful outcome and gain competitive employment in comparison to women in the same age group, with the same types of disabilities who do find employment (Sacramento City College, 2014). The author believes that this information is important for the Northern Sierra District Administrators in Sacramento, DOR Workforce Development, DOR Managers and counselors, and the Program
Coordinator of WAIII at LRCCD. Although both genders were considered, this study only reflects the male participants.

The author conducted an independent survey to support her findings. The time period in which the survey was conducted was in early 2014. The consumers/students considered for the survey were referred to WAIII during 2011, 2012 and 2013; both males and females. The findings below represent the results for middle aged male participants in the 45-65 age groups.

**Findings**

Of those reviewed, 20 men completed the JSS workshops and moved on to receive the one-on-one JD assistance. Only six men secured jobs, while 10 dropped out while receiving one-on-one JD assistance. Further, four withdrew entirely, for a total of 14 males who did not acquire jobs. The feedback acquired by the author from the male participants to gain an understanding of contributing factors related to why they did not continue with the Program, revealed a variety of reasons. For example, fear of losing SSI/SSDI, hospitalization, poor mental health, age, gaps in work history, inability to complete the assignments due to lack of access to technology, refusal to work for the $9 minimum wage, and dissatisfaction of working under the leadership of a person one third of his age. In some instances, case closure occurred due to lack of participation and commitment. A few cited personality issues with the former Program Coordinator or the JD.
The conclusion is that, although the males completed the JSS workshops, many did not continue on to receive the one-on-one JD services offered. In addition to the above mentioned reasons cited by participants, the author observed a lack of access to technology, limited computer skills, significant gaps in employment, and limited communication skills. Further, researchers Mann, Belchior, and Tomita (2005) determined that both middle age and older adult groups reported that cost, knowledge of a computer were the main reasons for not using a computer. The authors’ other observations include, participant’s refusal to consider or accept a job that was not his customary job and some desired to pursue an employment goal not defined on his Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) as agreed to under informed choice with his DOR counselor.

Charmaz’s (2005) theory suggests that men experiencing a physical or mental change that threatens his masculinity may undergo an identity dilemma that will have cost. Charmaz further believes that the suddenness of illness, its intensity and timing in the life course (usually middle age and older) pose special identity dilemmas for men and men take enormous risk with their health to remain, active, independent and dominant. Carpenter-Song (2006) believes that work and employment are all part of having a life, which is relevant for anyone disabled or non-disabled. The realization that current workplace skills are outdated, deficiencies in technological ability contribute to how one views himself. Heidkamp et al. (2012) have determined that another stressor is
diminished cognitive ability. In addition, there may be the attitude of discrimination and stigma.

The author believes the existing curriculum was developed and delivered from an academic perspective speaking to individuals in lecture format, rather than offering an interactive component and is career focused. The author further believes that if a person has been out of work for 12 years, the objective is a job; not to say that a job cannot become a career for males in the 45-65 age groups. The curriculum provides an abundance of information related to JSS, however, it does not speak to today’s workplace skills required for success, which are technology and strong verbal communication skills, and is lengthy. Therefore, the author felt it necessary to examine the problem of this specific population to explain the why and offer a solution. Further, the author believes that a solution which is based on hands-on interactive learning is a good option as supported by the researcher Elkington from The Global Research Development Center.

Researchers Angel and Harney (2001) agree that almost every job requires some computer experience and they emphasize the importance of becoming computer literate. A hands-on approach is a good option to consider because researchers agree that middle aged men and women do not always grasp and process information as they did in their early years. Salthouse (2003) agrees that there is a correlation between age and cognitive ability and learning style and ability changes as people age.

The development of the revised curriculum to support the authors’ assessment of the problem and to give the consumers/students an opportunity to acquire new JSS skills
will make male participants more marketable and able to enjoy a better employment outcome. The author believed that hands-on, interactive learning rather than listening to lecture will be a better fit. Kraiger and Ford (2006) suggest that training delivery methods are changing as well, with an increased reliance on technology-based instruction (TBI).

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to improve the employment outcome for middle aged males in the 45-65 age groups who are referred to WAIII by DOR for Job Seeking Skills workshops. The male participants will benefit by developing additional skill sets to enhance their employability. This will be accomplished through the development of a revised curriculum that will address specific areas, for example, technology and professional communication skills. Increased focus on these areas will improve the employment outcome in males attending the JSS Program facilitated at the LRCCD sites.

As previously stated by Kraiger and Ford (2006), training delivery methods are changing as well, with an increased reliance on technology-based instruction (TBI). The author believes a solution to the stated problem is hands-on, visual, interactive engagement. The group will also experience increased self-confidence which will lead to more effort, resulting in successful employment outcomes. In addition, the WAIII Program will have a program that speaks to the needs of males in the 45-65 age group, WAIII will experience a better retention rate in relation to this group, better employment outcomes, and WAIII statistics overall will improve.
Further, the purpose of this project is to benefit the consumers/students, DOR Northern Sierra District Administrator Sacramento office, DOR Workforce Development, DOR managers and counselors, WAIII counselor/coordinator at LRCCD sites, and Sacramento employment service providers when addressing the employment needs of middle aged male participants.

The author discussed the observed problem of the low success rate of males in the JSS classes with the previous Program Coordinator of WAIII. According to the previous coordinator, although the focus of the WAIII program is employment, some male participants are not willing to learn new skills to be able to compete and become fully engaged in an active job search which requires effort on their part (D. Wydick, personal communication, February 10, 2014).

Although the available literature does not specifically identify WAIII, some literature does support the idea that there is a correlation between middle age, gender, disability and services. Abraham and Houseman (2008) have determined that a tailored training program to meet the specific needs of older workers, outreach and better delivery of existing services to older workers is what is needed. Considering the life changes and adjustment individual has to make, the author believes that if given exposure to a curriculum that involves hands-on demonstration, use of video and active participation, new skills can be learned to enhance employability.

Furthermore, researchers’ assertions support the authors’ ideas about the inclusion of technology training among older adults. Koller, Harvey, and Magnotta (2006) have
determined that Technology-based instruction (TBI) is any form of training that is delivered principally by way of technology. Technology-based instruction methods include interactive video systems, computer-based training, web-based training, e-learning, computer-based simulations, and virtual reality training, to name a few.

The added curriculum will focus on:

- Improving the participant knowledge of required skills for today’s workforce
- Teach participant how to navigate social media for job search
- Demonstrate how to navigate the Internet when conducting job search
- Demonstrate how to research a company of interest
- Development of professional communication skills through considerable interactive role play, video and group work
- Inter-active demonstrate on completing online employment applications
- Improving communication through peer-to-peer activity
- Behavioral and situational hands-on activity
- Introduction to local employers to learn first-hand what skills they seek in a worker

Training delivery methods are changing as well, with an increased reliance on technology-based instruction (Kraiger & Ford, 2006). The author believes that lecturing middle aged job seekers, especially males is not the best option; active involvement is the better fit for them. In fact, Koller et al. (2006) also believe that content-centric (learner
engages) with the content rather than with instructors or fellow learners is a good option for older job seekers.

Others echo the same sentiment; that is why it is necessary to include a hands-on component to the JSS curriculum, as it will speak all learners, especially to the middle aged learner. They will experience greater self-confidence through engagement. It will take learners beyond the operation of their cell phones.

**Limitations of the Project**

The project does *not* address or reflect on any activity of participants of WAIII programs at other California Community Colleges only the WAIII/DOR Program conducted within the Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD).

The author believes that the information being presented at this time is significant and appropriate. It is possible that there may be changes to WAIII as a result of the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) which will influence the continuance of WAIII program as it is today.

At the time of this writing, the author was the Job Developer in the WAIII program and firmly believes that middle aged male participants in the 45-65 age groups with an acquired disability can overcome their lack of technological skills and verbal communication deficiencies and experience a positive outcome.

The populations being served are those referred to WAIII by DOR for JSS workshops throughout the LRCCD. The geographic location is Sacramento California and does not reflect other California Community Colleges outside of LRCCD. The
author reviewed the opinions of others and made every effort to eliminate any biases in her reporting and findings.

**Definition of Terms**

*American with Disabilities Act*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA is divided into five titles (or sections) that relate to different areas of public life (Department of Labor, 2014).

*California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)*

The California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) is a California state department which administers vocational rehabilitation services and provides support to independent living centers throughout the state. It provides vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services, and advocacy from over 113 locations throughout California seeking employment, independent living, and equality for individuals with disabilities. The DOR was established on October 1, 1963 (California Department of Rehabilitation, 2014).
Disability

According to the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), the term disability means, with respect to an individual: (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; (b) a record of such an impairment; or (c) being regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, learning, speaking, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, working or the ability to care for oneself. Under the protection of the ADA, a disabled person is ensured equal opportunity to fully participate in postsecondary education (Department of Labor, 2014).

Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSP&S)

DSPS provides a variety of academic support services to students with disabilities. The goal is to provide students the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of college programs and activities through appropriate and reasonable accommodations (Sacramento City College, 2015).

Employment Agency

Companies which attempt to match the employment needs of an employer with a worker having the required skill set and interests. Some agencies are privately owned while others are sponsored by government (Employment Agency, 2015).
Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD)

Los Rios Community College District is a 2-year public college district that serves the greater Sacramento region. Comprised of four campuses and outreach sites: Cosumnes River College (CRC), Sacramento City College (SCC), Folsom Lake College (FLC) and American River College (ARC).

Northern Sierra District Office

Northern Sierra District Office of California Department of Rehabilitation serves the following communities: Chico, Auburn, Susanville, Modoc, Sacramento, Roseville, Woodland, South Lake Tahoe, Woodland, Yuba County, Placerville, Laguna, and Grass Valley

Person with a Disability

The ADA defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. This includes people who have a record of such impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability. It also includes individuals who do not have a disability but are regarded as having a disability. The ADA also makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person based on that person’s association with a person with a disability (Department of Labor, 1990).

Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (SVRC)

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor is a person who provides individualized vocational rehabilitation and supportive services to assist eligible individuals with
disabilities to get and keep jobs compatible with their skills and abilities (DOR, 2014).

**Technology Based Instruction (TBI)**

Technology-based instruction (TBI) is any form of training that is delivered principally by way of technology. Technology-based instruction methods include interactive video systems, computer-based training, web-based training, e-learning, computer-based simulations, and virtual reality training.

**Workability III (WAIII)**

Workability III (WAIII) is a cooperative program between Sacramento City College and California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR). WAII provides employment services for students who are clients of DOR as well as those that are non-client, yet are interested in acquiring employment (Sacramento City College, 2008).

**Workforce Investment Act (WIA)**

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) supersedes the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and amends the Wagner-Peyser Act. WIA also contains the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (title II) and the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 (title IV). WIA reforms federal job training programs and creates a new, comprehensive workforce investment system. The reformed system is intended to be customer-focused, to help Americans access the tools they need to manage their careers through information and high quality services,
and to help U.S. companies find skilled workers. This new law embodies seven key principles. The Department of Labor (DOL) has issued a Final Rule implementing provisions of titles I, III and V of the Workforce Investment Act (Department of Labor Workforce Investment Act, 2014).

*Work Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*

Work Innovation and Opportunity Act was enacted in 2014 and replaces the Workforce Investment Act. To strengthen the United States workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training, and education programs in the United States, and to promote individual and national economic growth, and for other purposes (U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Investment Opportunity Act, 2015).

**Organization of the Project**

The project is organized as follows: the introduction background, problem statement, purpose, limitation of the project, definitions and terms are found in Chapter 1. A review of related literature supporting the authors’ findings, laws and statistical data on the correlation between middle aged male and female participants with acquired disabilities and a summary are found in Chapter 2. The methodology used to research the literature related to the topic and an analysis of the statistical data is discussed in Chapter 3. A summary of why the project is ideal for middle aged participants as well as recommendations are listed in Chapter 4. The hands-on curriculum designed specifically
for middle aged participants is attached as an appendix, which includes a listing of options for further technology training. The final section is the list of references.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature review offers further insight from researchers in the subject area of technology and communication that may lead to a greater understanding about middle aged men in the 45-65 age groups with disabilities. In addition, the development of vital skills to foster a successful outcome when engaged in the WorkAbility III Job Seeking Skills Program will be examined. The literature is divided into five sections. The sections are (a) Male Masculinity and Disability; (b) Technology and Middle-aged Learners; (c) Communication; (d) Statistics WorkAbility III/SCC, Employment Development Department, U.S. Department of Labor Statistics; and (e) Legislation—Fair Employment Housing Act (FEHA), Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Office of Civil Rights (OCR), and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). These laws and regulations will be discussed in relation to employment.

Male Masculinity and Disability

Charmaz’s (2005) theory suggests that men experiencing a physical or mental change that threatens his masculinity may undergo an identity dilemma that will have cost. Charmaz further believes that the suddenness of illness, its intensity and timing in the life course (usually middle age and older) pose special identity dilemmas for men and men take enormous risk with their health to remain, active, independent and dominant.
Carpenter-Song (2006), believes that work and employment are all part of having a life, which is relevant for anyone disabled or non-disabled.

As reported during a personal interview with a male in the 45-65 age group, A. George (personal communication, April 12, 2015), when he was no longer able to perform his normal job, there is a profound sense of loss of self. Not being able to work and continue his role of the head of his family and primary breadwinner, his physical abilities were also diminished. Further, the change to his social and economic status was a major blow to his manhood, in addition to how he felt his family and friends viewed him; as a failure and less than a man. Mr. George stated that all of his life he was expected to work and provide for his family. He further stated that since his physical abilities, mental status, and appearance has changed, he feels he can no longer support his family financially or emotionally. He senses that his family has lost respect for him. Further, he states he feels like he is no longer a man and feels a sense of hopelessness. This sense of hopelessness was exacerbated by periods of depression coupled with alcohol.

Honkonen et al. (2007) have determined that the risk of mental disorders was generally higher among the unemployed and the economically inactive than among the employed. For middle aged men, work defines their status in the masculinity hierarchy and has significance as a site for social production of masculinity. Honkonen et al. further believes that the psychosocial effects of middle aged men may be related to existing stigmatizing effects of mental disorders. Further, Shuttleworth et al. (2012) have
determined that masculinity and disability are in conflict with each other because
disability is associated with being dependent and helpless whereas masculinity is
associated with being powerful and autonomous, thus creating a lived and embodied
dilemma for disabled men. Masculinity matters, and without unique guidelines for being
an older man, men live by and struggle with traditional masculinities that have influenced
them across their life course.

Goffman (1963) calls bodies with disabilities "stigmatized" as they are holders of
a sign or attribute characterized as negative which generate a sub-class of social identity.
Thus, stigma is not only a bodily trait or the generator of a social role but the maker of an
identity, the key attribute to which all other social functions are subordinate (Murphy,
1987).

Goffman (1963) determined that the person that has subsequently acquired a
disability has to face a change in their social status a product of this bodily change,
therefore, they have to learn to manage a new personal and social identity. At the same
time, according to Gerschick (2000), people that were not born with a physical disability
as opposed to those born with one have been socialized into roles with traditional gender
expectations so they also face the task of reconciling these with this new corporeality. In
this sense, body transformation and acceptance of a new image represents one of the most
important challenges that confronts a person with supervening physical disabilities.

Brodwin and Frederick’s (2010) study indicates that such people may have
difficulties positively assuming their new body image and integrating it into their
emotional-sexual life, due to a decrease in self-esteem. Taleporos and McCabe (2002) state that the less time has elapsed since the acquisition of the physical disability, the more negative is the body image of the subject. However, when subjects conceptualize their situation from a critical point of view, according to the model of the social construction of disability, they can integrate bodily difference into part of their identity and build a positive relationship with their body (Galvin, 2005).

**Technology and the Middle-Aged Learner**

The U.S. Department of Labor, Futurework reports that more than 50% of jobs require some degree of technology and experts say that that figure will increase to 77% in the next decade. The use of computers and the Internet in workplaces will become more pervasive and the functions performed using computers will dramatically increase. The Department of Labor further reports that technology will go beyond new equipment and faster communications, as work and skills will be redefined, therefore, there is a need to integrate technology and communication into the workforce. It is essential for middle aged workers to acquire basic technology skills in order to be competitive in the workplace (United States Department of Labor, Futurework, n.d.).

Furthermore, researchers at Microsoft Academy believe that individuals who acquire the latest skills in technology become better collaborators, communicators and critical thinkers (Microsoft, 2013). Similarly, Harrington and Heidkamp (2012) have determined that as people age, they become more likely to acquire a disability or other age-related health condition that may reduce their functional capacity and affect their
ability to remain in the workforce. Likewise, an integration of cutting edge technology will allow aging and workers with disabilities to continue to work.

Lee, Czaja, and Sharit (2009) believe that an increasingly aging workforce and advances in technology are changing work environments and structures. The changes of the work environment of the 21st century have created new knowledge, skill, and ability requirements for workers. For example, ongoing developments in technology are reshaping production processes, and the task content and skills requirements of jobs. Most workers use a computer, the Internet or some other form of technology at work, and this number will continue to grow as will the scope and sophistication of technology.

In the future, the rapid pace of technological change and the transition to a knowledge-based economy is going to increase the demand for highly skilled and well-educated workers. This implies that workers, especially older workers who may not have been exposed to changes in technology, will continually need to engage in training and retraining activities to remain competitive in the work force.

Furthermore, Lee et al. (2009) believe that the continued employability of older adults, particularly those of lower socioeconomic status (SES), requires them to participate in training programs to ensure their competence in today’s workplace. Additionally, Abraham and Houseman (2008) have determined that a tailored training program to meet the specific needs of older workers, outreach and better delivery of existing services to older workers is what is needed.
In fact, by 2050, the U.S. Census predicts that 19.6 million American workers will be 65 years or older, roughly 19% of the total U.S. workforce. In fact, the number of individuals in the labor force who are 65 years or older is expected to grow by 75% while the number of individuals in the workforce who are 25 to 54 is only expected to grow by 2%. By 2016, one-third of the total U.S. workforce will be 50 years or older—a group that may number 115 million by 2020 (Heidkamp et al., 2012).

Successful completion of training for job-related activities requires a broad of perceptual, cognitive, and motor abilities. For example, Nair, Czaja, and Sharit (2007) examined individual differences in performing a computer-based task. The results indicated that age, crystallized intelligence, and fluid intelligence had an impact on both the initial level of performance and amount of changes in performance that resulted from practice and experience. The literature by Salthouse (2003) examining the influence of age on these abilities generally suggests age-related declines. With respect to cognition, many cognitive abilities—such as working memory, attentional processes, and spatial cognition—that are important to learning show decline with age, especially under conditions of complexity or when a task represents an unfamiliar cognitive domain (Park et al., 2002). Despite these age-related changes in abilities, the skill acquisition literature indicates that older adults are able to learn new skills, though it typically takes them longer than younger adults, and they require more practice and more environmental support (Charness & Czaja, 2005).
Kraiger and Ford (2006) believe that training delivery methods are changing, with an increased reliance on technology-based instruction (TBI). According to Koller et al. (2006), Technology-based instruction is defined as any form of training that is delivered principally by way of technology. Technology-based instruction methods include interactive video systems, computer-based training, computer-assisted training, web-based training, e-learning, intelligent tutoring systems, computer-based simulations, and virtual reality training. All vary in the extent to which they are instructor-centric (i.e., an expert delivers the training material), learner-centric (a learner directs the training experience), or content-centric (learner engages with the content rather than with instructors or fellow learners.

Researchers Kanfer and Ackerman (2004) believe that research often focuses on how age-related changes in cognition influence effective training design for older adults. Kressig and Echt (2002) found that when trained on basic computer skills young-old adults, those in the 55-75 age group made fewer performance errors, needed less assistance, and took less time for training compared to old-old adults, those in the 75-84 age groups. Salthouse (2003) further agrees that there is a correlation between age, cognitive ability and learning style and ability changes as people age.

Elkington (n.d.) has determined that adults have a variety of learning styles and learning needs to be presented in a variety of ways. For example, Elkington believes that in addition to using written words, integrating visuals, audio, live action, practice, are all effective ways of presenting information. There needs to be a mixture within every
session. Furthermore, he believes that it is the trainers’ job to help the learners move through the material in an orderly and effective way allowing them time to practice the new skills. Elkington further believes that it is important to determine learning styles and any factors that may cloud the learning process.

Despite the age-related changes in abilities, the skill acquisition literature indicates that older adults are able to learn new skills, though it typically takes them longer than younger adults, and they require more practice and more environmental support (Charness & Czaja, 2005). A hands-on approach is a good option to consider because researchers agree that middle aged men and women do not always grasp and process information as they did in their early years.

In fact, Lee et al. (2009) conducted a study on basic computer and Internet training program design for older adults ages 40-90. Utilizing a checklist and questionnaires they were able to determine the participant’s knowledge of the Internet, experience with computers, their understanding of technology, and type of training they would like to receive, and where would they like to receive the training. Consequently, a training program was developed and designed specifically for the needs of individuals in the 40-90 age groups conducted in different settings.

Span (2013) believes that The Oasis Connection, a program designed exclusively for individuals in the 40-90 age group, stared with a strong commitment to creative and responsive program design. The program design is one that engages seniors as change agents in the classroom, in the community, and at home. The basic computer and general
Internet training program designed for older adults ages 40-90, offers training on Mobile Technology, Microsoft Office, and Social Media. Computer/Internet use were assessed at baseline, post-training, and three months post-training. The data indicated a significant increase in computer and Internet knowledge, comfort with computers and other technology. The program was successful in increasing the computer/Internet skills of the trainees. Further, those who completed the courses reported an increase in both computer and Internet use three months post-training and opted for other trainings.

Communication

Morreal, Osborn, and Pearson (2000) have determined that competency in oral communication, speaking and listening is prerequisite to personal and professional success. The ability to communicate effectively supports sound psychological development. Yate (2013) determined that communication is more than listening, talking and writing. Communication embraces much more than listening and speaking. When the professional world talks about communication skills, it is referring to four primary skills and four supportive skills. The primary communication skills are:

1. Verbal skills—what you say and how you say it.
2. Listening skills—listening to understand, rather than just waiting your turn to talk.
3. Writing skills—clear written communication, essential for any professional career. It creates a lasting impression of who you are.
4. Technology communication skills—the way you communicate and your ability to navigate the new communication media.
The four supportive communication skills are subtler, but nevertheless they impact every interaction you have with others. They are:

1. Grooming and dress—they tell others who you are and how you feel about yourself.

2. Social graces—these are demonstrated by how you behave around others. If your table manners are sketchy, odds are you’ll never sit at the chairman’s table or represent your organization at the higher levels.

3. Body language—this displays how you’re feeling deep inside, a form of communication that predates speech. For truly effective communication, what your mouth says must be in harmony with what your body says.

4. Emotional IQ—your emotional maturity in dealing with other adults in professional settings.

Statistics

WorkAbility III/SCC: Middle-Aged Men 45-65 Age Group

Of those reviewed, 20 men completed the JSS workshops and moved on to receive the one-on-one JD assistance. Only six men secured jobs, while 10 dropped out while receiving one-on-one JD assistance. Further, four withdrew entirely, for a total of 14 males who did not acquire jobs. The DOR counselor may have made the decision to close a case due to lack of participation and commitment by the consumer/student.
Employment Development Department: California

According to the Employment Development Department (2012) statistic, an estimated 2.8 million working-age Californians had a disability in 2011, which was equal to about 9.9% of the civilian working-age population. Among all states, California’s disabled person population was the largest in number. California ranked 46th in the nation for share of working-age population aged 55 or older. California’s unemployment rate for persons with a disability ranked 12th in the nation. In contrast, California’s overall rate ranked second at 11.6% in 2011. The 6.1 percentage point difference between the two unemployment rates (the rates for all Californians and for disabled Californians) was less than the difference experienced in 23 other states.

U.S. Bureau of Labor

According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2011), the unemployment rate for persons with a disability was 15% in 2011, well above the figure of 8.7% for those with no disability. Among persons with a disability, the jobless rate for men (15.3%) was slightly higher in 2011 than the rate for women (14.7%). Persons with a disability who had completed higher levels of education generally had lower unemployment rates in 2011 than those with less education. At all levels of education, persons with a disability had higher unemployment rates than their counterparts with no disability. This data is from the Current Population Survey (CPS) which is a statistical survey conducted by the United States Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The data on persons with a disability are collected as part of the CPS monthly sample survey of about
60,000 households that provides statistics on employment and unemployment in the United States. Unemployed persons are those who did not have a job, were available for work, and were actively looking for a job in the four weeks preceding the survey. The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed persons as a percent of the civilian labor force, the employed plus the unemployed.

**Legislation**

**State Legislation: Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA)**

The Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) prohibits harassment and discrimination in employment because of race, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, mental and physical disability, medical condition, age, pregnancy, denial of medical and family care leave, or pregnancy disability leave and/or retaliation for protesting illegal discrimination related to one of these categories, or for reporting patient abuse in tax supported institutions. You may file a private lawsuit under the Fair Employment and Housing Act. For employment discrimination issues, you are required to exhaust your administrative remedies with the Department by securing your Notice of Right to Sue. Complaints of discrimination must be filed with the Department within one year from the date of the alleged discriminatory act (California Department of Fair Employment and Housing Act, 2010).

Paravagna (2013), a consultant to Title II entities, namely, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) states, under the
FEHA, the definition of working is as follows: “Working is considered a major life activity along with mental, physical and social activity. To be limited in the major life activity of working, an individual need only be limited in performing the requirement of a single, particular job” (M. Paravagna, personal communication, November 22, 2013).

Further, Paravagna states that although laws are in place to protect persons with disabilities, each person with a disability would rather see their own interpretations into the law; that is, what he/she believes to be correct; however, that makes it difficult for the laws to work for them. The Fair Employment and Housing is enforced by the California Department of the Fair Employment and Housing.

This law specifically provides protection from harassment or discrimination in employment because of:

- Age (40 and over)
- Ancestry
- Color
- Religious Creed (including religious dress and grooming practices)
- Denial of Family and Medical Care Leave
- Disability (mental and physical) including HIV and AIDS
- Marital Status
- Medical Condition (cancer and genetic characteristics)
- Genetic Information
- Military and Veteran Status
• National Origin (including language use restrictions)

• Race

• Sex (which includes pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding)

• Gender, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression

• Sexual Orientation

**Federal Legislation: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Employment (Section 504)**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a national law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. The nondiscrimination requirements of the law apply to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any Federal department or agency. These organizations and employers include many hospitals, nursing homes, mental health centers and human service programs.

Section 504 forbids organizations and employers from excluding or denying individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to receive program benefits and services. It defines the rights of individuals with disabilities to participate in, and have access to, program benefits and services.

Section 504 protects qualified individuals with disabilities. Under this law, individuals with disabilities are defined as persons with a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. People who have a history of, or who are regarded as having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits
one or more major life activities, are also covered. Major life activities include caring for one’s self, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, performing manual tasks, and learning. Some examples of impairments which may substantially limit major life activities, even with the help of medication or aids/devices, are: AIDS, alcoholism, blindness or visual impairment, cancer, deafness or hearing impairment, diabetes, drug addiction, heart disease, and mental illness. In addition to meeting the above definition, for purposes of receiving services, education or training, qualified individuals with disabilities are persons who meet normal and essential eligibility requirements.

For purposes of employment, qualified individuals with disabilities are persons who, with reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job for which they have applied or have been hired to perform. (Complaints alleging employment discrimination on the basis of disability against a single individual will be referred to the Office of Civil Rights.) Reasonable accommodation means an employer is required to take reasonable steps to accommodate your disability unless it would cause the employer undue hardship. For this project, only the section addressing employment rights is highlighted.

**Federal Legislation: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is legislation passed in 1990 that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. Under this Act, discrimination against a disabled person is illegal in employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications and government activities. The law prohibits private
Employers, state and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating against the disabled. Employers are required to make reasonable accommodations in order for the disabled person to perform their job function. The ADA is divided into five titles which are listed above. For this project, only the section pertaining to employment will be highlighted.

**Employment (Title I)**

Title I of the American with Disability Act (ADA) refers to employment and requires covered employers to provide reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all aspects of employment. Reasonable accommodation includes, for example, supplying a deaf applicant with a sign language interpreter during a job interview, modifying a work schedule to meet the needs of a person who needs treatment or restructuring an existing facility to make it readily accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, restructuring jobs, making work-sites and workstations accessible, modifying schedules, providing services such as interpreters, and modifying equipment and policies are other examples of supporting a person with a disability in the workplace. Title I also regulates medical examinations and inquires.

Under this law, an employer is not required to make reasonable accommodations if it presents undue hardship to the business and requires significant expenses in comparison to the size of the company. In 2008, the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA)
was passed. Its purpose is to broaden the definition of disability, which had been
narrowed by U.S. Supreme Court decisions.

**Summary**

Based on the review of the literature, the following is concluded. To effectively
equip a middle aged learner with new tools, their learning style must be considered.
Technology skills and strong communication skills are essential in today’s changing
workplace. Technology drives the way work is conducted, therefore, middle aged men
must acquire new skills in order to compete for competitive employment. A curriculum
must be designed to meet the needs of middle aged males and delivery methods must
reach the middle aged learner. Furthermore, skills training should be interact, hands-on,
utilizing audio, video, and practice to reinforce the skill.

Further to determine the effectiveness of training, a pre and post evaluation should be
given to participants. In addition, there are State and federal laws enacted give protection
to workers with disabilities in the workplace.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Method

The idea for this project came to the author when she was performing her duties as a Job Developer for the WorkAbility III (WAIII) Program at Sacramento City College. It was during this time the author observed a trend among middle aged male participants. Male participants in the 45-65 age groups did not experience a successful outcome as did their female counterparts. A successful outcome is acquiring a job.

In 2013, very early into her Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling program at California State University, Sacramento, the author had a conversation with the Program Coordinator about the trend throughout 2013-2015. It was during this time, the Program Coordinator of WAIII at Sacramento City College suggested to her that researching this would be a worthwhile effort to identify reasons and develop a solution to improve the retention rate of male participants and improve their employment outcome.

In fall of 2014, the idea was further expanded upon when the author shared her area of interest with her advisor, Dr. Guy Deaner while she was enrolled in the EDS 299, Special Problems class in spring 2015. At that time, it was agreed that this idea would meet the parameters of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program for a Project as a partial graduation requirements for the Master’s degree in Counseling (Vocational Rehabilitation Concentration). At this stage, the author began gathering and reviewing literature, reading journals and peer reviews, and conducting personal interviews.
The author met with former CSUS Masters Student who had gone through the Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Program for suggestions on organizing my literature and assembling the project as specified in the Master’s Project Handbook. The advice given was very instrumental in assisting the author in moving forward.

In early October 2015, the author met with Dr. Guy Deaner to discuss Chapter 1 of the project. Changes were recommended. The author made the revisions. In early November 2015, the author met with Dr. Deaner to discuss Chapter 2. At that time changes were suggested and the author made the revisions. In mid-November the author met with Dr. Deaner to discuss Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and the outline of the curriculum for the WAIII JSS handbook. Again, changes were recommended and the author made the revisions.

In spring of 2015 to fall 2015, the author continued her research by examining files, reviewing the existing Job Seeking Skills handbook and conducting personal interviews. The existing handbook was developed in 1999 for the WAIII program and was specific to DOR consumers/students in Sacramento who were referred to WAIII. The handbook was last revised in 2008. It was last edited in 2013.

Although the author believed that the existing WAIII training handbook is an excellent source of information for job seekers, it can be improved upon by reducing the content and adding relevant training for today’s workforce; technology and better communication skills. A revised handbook with added curriculum will not only benefit
middle aged male job seekers, but all job seekers can benefit by increasing his/her skills set and become more marketable.

**Sources**

The author started by utilizing various search engines to acquire data for this project. Examples are: Google Scholar, ERIC, Dogpile, websites, JSTOR, Questia and EBCO. Journals were also reviewed; examples are *Men’s Health*, *Psycline*, *Journal of American Medicine*, *Academic Index*, *Oxford Journal*, and Gerontology journals. Also reviewed were several books that addressed technology and communication skills for middle aged people with disabilities.

In November 2015 the author began to review other peer-reviewed articles, laws and statistics as it relates to this project. Further, the author reviewed disability related resources that have been prepared for various educational institutions and community organizations in the past few years. One of the resources was a manual by Mack (2014), which focuses on teaching disabled Veterans Job Seeking Skills to transition into a new career. The author reviewed several projects by CSUS Masters Project students and believes that each projects main theme was people with disabilities and how to better serve them to enhance their workplace success and expand their options.

A Project by Olson (2012) focused on a pre-employment training curriculum for visually impaired adults. Olson’s project also discussed technology and soft skills. Malone’s (2011) Project focused on pre-employment job search instruction for disabled Veterans at the Sacramento Veterans Resource Center. The review of the Project by from
the CSUS Masters Student Shebley (2012), focused on the impact of disability, employment and income.

A Project by Madden (2012) focuses on interactive learning versus independent learning. Wrights (2012) Project focuses on lack of access to computer and the internet. A Project by Burnette (2010) focuses on vocational skills, communication skills and work experience. A project by Hernandez (2014) focused on JSS information for people with disabilities for success. Of all of the projects reviewed, the ones that resonated most with the author are the works of Hernandez and Olson (2012). Primarily because their area of interest is directly aligned with the authors focus of better JSS skills, technology and communication. Finally, a personal interview was conducted with A. George (personal communication, April 12, 2015), a 55-year-old man, focused on his inability to work and resume his role as head of his family, his mental health, sense of loss, and lack of positive self-image. An interview with D. Wydick (personal communication, February 10, 2014), the former WAIIP Program Coordinator, focused on possible reasons for the lack of success and retention of male participants in the WAIIP workshops. A curriculum for the WorkAbility III Job Seeking Skills handbook at Sacramento City College is included in the appendix of this project.
Chapter 4

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this project was two-fold; to provide information about middle aged male participant in the 45-65 age groups with acquired disabilities who are consumers/students of the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR). These individuals, upon completion of the Job Seeking Skills workshops, did not achieve a successful outcome in comparison to women in the same age group, with the same types of disabilities who did experience success. A successful outcome is gaining competitive employment. And, to develop an interactive hands-on curriculum to give consumers/students with disabilities skills in technology and communication which will enhance their employability.

This curriculum was developed in fall of 2015. In reviewing the literature, current laws that are applicable to consumers/students with disabilities for example, FEHA, ADA and Department of Labor all support the rights and needs of working people. As a result of the authors’ efforts in performing the research and reviewing literature, state and federal laws, observations, file reviews, follow-up calls to past attendees, personal interviews, and discussion with the former Program Coordinator and DOR counselors, a new curriculum is now available.
The curriculum for use in the WorkAbility III Program and will be used to support middle aged DOR consumers/students participating in Job Seeking Skills Workshops at campuses in the Los Rios Community College District.

Recommendations

Currently, the Program Coordinator position in the WorkAbility III Program at Sacramento City College is vacant, the author recommends that the new Program Coordinator conduct a Student Learning Outcome Survey to acquire feedback about the effectiveness of the curriculum after one year. In doing so, the Program Coordinator will be able to adjust the curriculum to fit the needs of the consumers/students and to reflect any technological changes that affect the way individuals look for work.

The author also recommends that the new Program Coordinator monitor the retention rate of male participants in the Program and the improved successful outcomes among this group. The author also recommends that the Program Coordinator share the revised curriculum with DOR counselors to get buy-in. The goal is to increase marketability of their consumers and students.
APPENDIX

Curriculum: Job Seeking Skills for Middle Aged Males in the 45-65 Age Group with an Acquired Disability
Curriculum: Job Seeking Skills for Middle Aged Males with an Acquired Disability

By Elisher Taylor
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Introduction

*A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.* Confucius

Chances are if you are reading this, you have already been looking for a job for some time. And if you have been on a job search, chances are that you are pretty tired of it. You have sent out resumes, filled out applications and you may have been lucky enough to have received an interview. Perhaps you have experienced feelings of failure and frustration when you were not selected for the job.

Looking for a job can be very challenging. Even in the best of times, most people have a very limited idea of how to actually get a job. They might make a resume, check out Craigslist, make a few phone calls, fill out some applications, get an interview, and try to answer the questions without trembling.

As you may have already found, traditional job-seeking often does not work well for job-seekers with disabilities. Getting a job can be difficult if you have a disability and are male. You might be facing some barriers in your search. But which is the worse barrier? Is it the stairs you can’t climb, or a fear of unspoken prejudice? Are you afraid no one will hire you, or afraid of what happens if they do? These are natural concerns that a man with an acquired disability may experience daily. The “What if’s” plays a profound part in how people with disabilities make decisions and how they see themselves. Fear, limitations, shame, and rejection are powerful emotions that can paralyze a middle aged man and bring about uncertainty. However, when a man with an acquired disability seeks change and gets some perspective on the barriers, ultimately, he will gain
confidence and a restored sense of self as he utilizes workable solutions and identifies and sets goals. Overcoming barriers can happen and you can be successful at your job search, however, it may be time to try looking at your search efforts with new lens and be open to considering new strategies to improve your job search outcome. This book is not about changing how you get a job, it is about changing the way you approach your job search and developing effective tools and skills. The energy you put into your job search will pay off in countless ways.

Welcome to the first step in a lifelong journey.
How This Book Will Help a Middle-Aged Man Get a Job

Let’s take a look at job search methods that no longer work.

**Newspaper Classified:** The newspaper classified ads use to be the traditional first choice for job seekers. Employers posted ads for available jobs and hundreds of job seekers would apply. Too many job-seekers, not enough jobs. And, some of those ads were scams preying on desperate job-seekers.

**Internet Job Sites:** Websites like, Monster.com, Indeed.com, and CareerBuilder.com attract both employers and job-seekers. These are good sites to search for jobs, however, just as with classified ads, there are hundreds of job seekers using these sites. This leaves little hope for being selected when competing with so many other job seekers. The creation of Craigslist in 2000 created a local online classified community that seems too good to be true, resulting in more job-seekers than jobs. Many of the jobs posted were valid jobs, yet, there were scam offerings.

**Job Fairs:** An opportunity to meet and have access to a large number of employers actively trying to fill positions. The problem with this is that there are thousands of job-seekers all vying with each other to fill 50-100 positions that may or may not be available. In some instances, employers are simply taking applications to build an applicant pool or to spotlight their company or organization. Job Fairs seem like a job seekers dream, but in reality, there are fewer positions available at job fairs than there are qualified applicants who attend.

What do Classified, Internet and Job Fair have in common with each other?
• The vast majority of job seekers use them to find employment.
• They advertise specific positions that may, or may not be available.
• These openings are available for all to see, competition is fierce.

The objective is to focus on conducting an organized, well thought out job search to achieve better results. This book is divided into several sections each with a unique focus designed to empower middle aged male job seekers:

Chapter One, **Know Your Disability** deals with self-examination, barriers, and things to consider when choosing your job.

Chapter Two, **Job Search Strategies** addresses the strategies that will be discussed in the book that will improve the job search outcome.

Chapter Three, **Communication Skills** deals with essential communication skills for workplace success. This chapter provides visual and interactive training. The focus is to bring awareness to middle aged men about the need to have these essential skills.

Chapter Four, **Know How to Get Your Job** addresses the necessary tools to assist you in applying for your job. These tools consist of a master application, resume, cover letter, reference list and thank you letter. Hands on involvement will empower the job seeker.

Chapter Five, **Technology** addresses basic technology skills that are essential for people with disability to succeed in the workplace. Skills such as basic computer operation,
sending email, Internet navigation and utilizing the Internet for job search efforts and researching a company or a job.

Chapter Six, *Interview Skills* addressed how to effectively present your skills and abilities to an employer in two minutes or less and how to respond to interview questions. Interactive involvement will increase interview success.

Chapter Seven, *Knowing The Law and Your Rights In The Workplace*, addresses accommodations, disclosing your disability and transitioning from Social Security.
Chapter One
Know Your Disability

This chapter focuses on you understanding your skills, abilities, strengths, your disability and how it affects you in the workplace. Also, certain factors to take into consider when deciding to seek employment, for example, discrimination, competence, and confidence. Discrimination against people with disabilities in the workplace often stems from an employer’s fear that the disabled worker just can’t do the job, or will perform at a slower rate than a typical worker.

Another barrier for people with disabilities is their questioning of their own ability in the workplace. Will I be able to do this job? Can my body, my emotions, my intellect handle this job? As a disabled person, do I feel like less of a person than one who is “normal?”

These are all valid concerns, and as a job seeker with a disability, it is important to be aware of how your disability relates to you becoming a valued worker. Self-awareness and acceptance will allow you to self-advocate for your rights as a worker and for what you may need in the workplace to become a successful worker. Becoming knowledgeable of a specific law that provides protection in employment, (Americans with Disabilities Act) will allow a person to avoid the pitfalls of discrimination that often plague people with a disability. As a person with a disability you will gain confidences and greater competence as you are given opportunity to work and demonstrate your skills
and abilities which will dispel any concerns that the employer may have about your
ability to perform.

Which is more destructive discrimination against disabilities from an employer, or the
breakdown of confidence from within? We have a significant amount of control over our
thoughts and feelings about ourselves; therefore, as a middle aged male job seeker,
confidences comes when you have developed a new attitude and are ready for a new
approach to job seeking that will have a positive end result. As a worker with a
disability, you will show employers that their fears are unfounded. The employer’s
perception of “disability” can be replaced with admiration of your competence and
skilled work.
Five Things to Consider When Choosing a Job

If you are considering a job offer, there are six very important things to consider:

1. **Education/Training.** Do you know HOW to do this job? Are you competent, licensed, or qualified? Do you need more training? What kind of additional training would you need?

2. **Physical/Mental/Emotional Ability.** Are you physically and mentally able to do this job? Does this job match your temperament? In what ways is your disability going to be a challenge to success in this job?

3. **Money.** Does this job pay enough? Can you anticipate reasonable raises over time? Will low pay eventually influence you to leave this job?

4. **Job Openings.** Is the job you want available here? How often are there job openings in your area? Are you willing to relocate to another city for this job?

5. **Can I get to work?** Can you buy/rent a home near your job? Is this an area you really want to live in? Do you have transportation needs, such as paratransit or public transit?

*The Five Things are important.* If even one of them is not satisfied, you will probably have a tough time keeping this job.
Exercise: 1.1: Develop Five Things to Consider When Choosing a Job

Develop Five Things to Consider When Choosing a Job

Take one of the jobs that you are looking at and match the Five Things to that job. Do you see any “yellow flags” that might be an issue for you? Look at each part with some consideration.

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Exercise: 1.2: Identify Your Barriers to Employment: Puzzle

Considering the previous exercise, use the attached puzzle to identify how your disability affects your ability to work. Also, on the puzzle indicate any other barriers or concerns that you may impact and influence your decision and efforts in getting help to acquire a job.
**Transferrable Skills**

Transferable skills can be defined as skills developed in one situation which can be transferred to another situation. They are sometimes called generic, soft or key skills. They are necessary for effective performance, not only in the workplace and in postgraduate study, but in life in general. Some examples of such skills include team working, communication skills, problem solving, planning and time management.

Transferable skills are the inventory of assets that help you transition into and excel in a new role. They ensure your professional resilience and the robustness and longevity of your career. Moreover they allow you to more easily and readily explore lateral dimensions in your career and acquire added skills and expertise. While highly specialized skills may be essential to building your own personal competitive advantage and ensuring success in a particular role or organization, it is the transferable skills that ensure you do not become professionally redundant or obsolete over the long term.

Transferrable skills can be identified through self-assessment and is essential to ensuring your marketability. There are plenty of sophisticated self-assessment tests that allow you to analyze your own personal strengths and weaknesses. You can also go through a skills checklist and tick all the ones that you are confident apply to you. Enlist the help of your boss or peers or professors or family if you would like a sounding board or external feedback and advice.
While the laundry list of transferable skills is huge, they can essentially be broadly consolidated under five main categories.

- **Soft Skills**: Also known as interpersonal or people skills, these entail the set of skills that allow you to positively relate to, communicate with, influence and inspire others. Some examples: Delegating skills, Coaching skills, Listening skills, Presenting skills, Co-operation skills

- **Analytical skills**: These are the intellectual skills that enable you to identify and analyses problems and find creative, innovative and feasible solutions. Some examples: Research skills, Data gathering skills, Data analysis skills, Creativity, Risk analysis

- **Technical Skills**: These are the practical hands-on skills like computer proficiency, ability to work with specific machinery, software, hardware, ability to build or repair etc. Some examples: C++ Programming, HTML coding, SQL knowledge, Flash, Photoshop, Illustrator proficiency

- **Organizational Skills**: These are the skills that allow you to sort data, plan, arrange projects or resources, maintain accurate, effective and user-friendly records and coordinate multiple resources or tasks. Some examples: Prioritizing, Time management, Task management, Resource management, Coordination.

- **Personal Skills**: These are the set of skills to do with workplace character. Some examples: Integrity, Reliability, Punctuality, Diligence, Decision-making ability.

In the following exercise, identify your transferrable skills and your skill level.

Taken from: Bayt.com, Inc. 2000-2015
Exercise: 1.3: Identify Your Transferrable Skills

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<th>Management Skills</th>
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<th>Would Like to Have</th>
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<td>Data Skills</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td>Tangible Skills)</td>
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<td>People Skills</td>
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<td>Leadership Skills</td>
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Chapter Two
New Strategies

Traditional job seeking methods are still being utilized but have become obsolete. With more and more people looking for work, it is important to consider different strategies to look for work that will better your chances of getting hired. These strategies are designed to put you in charge of an organized job search that is far different from responding to classified ads or announcements on job boards. Utilizing these strategies will do several things. First, you will learn to acquire first-hand information about the job goal you identified. Second, you will research companies and your job to increase your knowledge. Third, you will develop a network of professionals in your field of interest who can help you along the way and open doors for you. Fourth and final, your new job seeking skills will yield better results; a job faster than traditional methods. Looking for a job is a job in itself, why not use these new strategies to organize and enhance your job seeking skills.
The objective is to get you to tap into the hidden job market. These are the jobs that are available but not advertised. There strategies that you will be introduced to are as follows:

- Identifying Your Job Goal
- Informational Interviews
- Job Shadows
- Internships
- Networking

**Job Goal**

A goal is the first step in making your dreams come true. You may think that it is not necessary in regards to finding a job, but it is essential to know what you are working towards, least have an idea and the expected time frame for achieving those goals. Having a clear job goal will help you focus as you pursue your job search, and will help you filter out information and opportunities that do not support your goal. Your goals should emphasize what you want to happen.

Furthermore, choosing a specific job goal forces you to look at your decision critically to develop a well-considered job goal, rather than just keeping your
You will need to investigate the job and learn more about it by talking to people already in the field. This can be accomplished by conducting informational interviews and job shadows. There may be times when you may decide that you want to change your job goal, but don’t look at it as “change”, look at it as “clarifying”.

**Your goal should be Specific.** Your goal must emphasize what you want to happen and should be straightforward. To help you focus on your goal ask yourself:

- What do I want to achieve?
- Why is this important to me at this time?
- How am I going to do it?
- How long will it take me to achieve my goals?

**Your goals must be measurable.** You can track your progress by setting objectives, such as, “by next week I will schedule 3 informational interviews” this will allow you to track your progress.

**Your goal must be attainable.** You should set goals that are important to you will work hard to find ways to make them come true. Avoid setting options open.
goals that are too far out of your reach, you won’t be motivated or committed if you do. For example, include a short-term and long term goal.

**Your goal should be realistic.** Make sure your goal is doable. You need to make sure the goal represents an objective you are willing and able to work towards accomplishing.

**Your goal should be timely.** You should set a time frame for the goal. If you give your goal a projected endpoint, this gives you a clear target to work towards. For example, next week, in 6 months, within the next year.
Exercise: 2.1: Identify Your Job Goal

Identify Your Job Goal

The position I want is ________________________________________________

This is the “next step” in my job goal in ________________________________

The qualifications for this job include ___________________________________

Five specific employers who might hire me for this job might include

1. ___________________________________________________________________

2. ___________________________________________________________________

3. ___________________________________________________________________

4. ___________________________________________________________________

5. ___________________________________________________________________

Write a few sentences on the reasons that you picked this job. Why does this job interest you? Why do you think you are qualified for it?

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Exercise: 2.2: Identify Two Short-Term and Two Long-Term Goals

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<th>Long-Term Job Search Goals</th>
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Informational Interview

The second step towards success is to consider the traditional approach to getting a job usually involves little more than finding advertised job openings, applying for the open job, and going through an interview process. Perhaps one could also tender a few resumes along the way. This has been a standard in the American job market for the past seventy years. And it tends to be a pretty terrible way to get a job. Instead of doing the “traditional” job-seeking approach, try a different approach, one that will actually get you a job.

There are many things that you can do to learn more about the job you want. You can read books, search the internet, read job descriptions, or do some labor market research. Why not talk directly to the people who have the job that you want? They’re the ones who are there, eight hours a day, doing the job that you want to do. Chances are they will have information that will be very helpful to you in your career search.

Informational Interview: This is the process of hearing, seeing, and doing. The purpose of an informational interview is to get information about a field of work from someone who has some firsthand knowledge; someone actually doing the job that you want. When you are on an informational interview you should not ask for a job. This is not to say that an informational interview cannot lead to a job. In addition to helping you learn about a particular career, the informational interview is a way to start building a network. The person who is the subject of your informational interview today may be the first person in your network many tomorrows from now. Here's another way an informational interview
can benefit you. For those of us who are a little skittish about going on a job interview, the informational interview provides a non-threatening forum in which to get some practice. You pepper them with questions about their job and career, and hopefully you will discover things that you never imagined existed.

Why do it? There are two clear benefits of doing informational interviews:

1. You can learn a great deal of information about the job that you want, the work environment, hiring practices, required skills, etc.

2. You get to meet people and they get to meet you. Remember, you may be talking to your future boss!

Another benefit of doing informational interviews is that the employer you are talking with might begin to show an interest in you as a potential employee. Your professionalism, well-considered questions and enthusiasm, along with a little luck, might lead the employer to offer you an interview that may result in a job. Before conducting an informational interview, you need to prepare yourself for the possibility of a real job offer.
How to Conduct an Informational Interview

Most people do not feel comfortable doing informational interviews at first. Talking to strangers and asking personal questions is awkward. The secret is practice. Once you practice your information interview questions with your friend or another professional, it will come much more naturally to you.

Steps to doing an Informational Interview:

1. Have a specific job goal that you want to learn more about (i.e. accountant, group home assistant, repair tech, etc.)

2. Get a referral to a person you can interview. Don’t “cold call” employers may get turned down. However, if you are comfortable, “cold calling” have at it.

   Having a referral by a teacher, friend or family member can be a very good thing. They can make the first call, and then you can call to follow up. The person has already agreed to talk with you, so it’s unlikely you will be turned down.

3. Prepare. Make a list of questions that you can ask in an interview. Practice them, so you don’t sound canned and uncomfortable. And do some background research on the job so you don’t sound like a newbie.

4. Be a pro. Dress professionally for your appointment, and arrive on time.

   Communicate your purpose (you’re here for information, not a job!) You want the employer to see you as a professional, rather than a job-seeker.
5. **Ask your questions**, listen thoughtfully to the answers, and follow up with question based on what they are telling you. This demonstrates that you have good listening skills and this will help them feel more at ease with you.

6. After the interview, send a hand written thank you card, a formal letter, or better yet in the interest of expediency, send an email ASAP!! Do this immediately after your interview!

**Sample Informational Interview Scenarios**

*(Phone Call)*

**You:** Hello, this is Bill Johnson. May I speak to Karli Bush?

**Karli:** This is Karli. Hi Bill, Cheryl told me you would call.

**You:** Great. The reason I am calling is that I am looking at getting involved in the real estate field, and I wanted to talk to people who already have lots of experience in the field. Cheryl said that you were the expert to speak with.

**Karli:** Sounds great. What do you want to ask me?

**You:** I was hoping to meet you in person if possible. Would it be okay to meet you at your office or at lunch, for about 20 minutes or so?

**Karli:** Sure—why don’t we meet at Casa de Bologna near my office, this Thursday at 12:30. Does that work for you?

**Examples of Informational Interview Questions**

One way that you can appear professional is by having a list of well-developed questions that you can ask during your information interview. You don’t need a lot; a dozen questions are enough.
**Closed vs. Open-Ended Questions:** It is important not to ask closed questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no.” An open-ended question asks for detailed information, such as, “Tell me some of the things you like about your job,” rather than “Do you like your job?”

You can use these to help you in making up your list of questions:

- Tell me a little bit about your career, your jobs and your education that led you to the job you are doing now.
- What does a “typical day” look like on your job?
- How many years of education does your job generally require? What kind of specialized training did you do?
- What are some of the things that you love about your job?
- What are some of the more challenging aspects of your job?
- What are the typical steps that a person would take as they progress in this career?
- What would you guess to be a salary range for an entry-level person in this type of position?
- What were some of the things that led you to pick this career?
- How do you feel about the stability and security of a job like this?
- Do you know of anyone in this field who has (type of disability)?
- What kinds of on-the-job training did you experience for this job?
- What are some of the special qualities and skills that an employer would like to see in applicants for this position?
- What was your “luckiest break” in your career?
- What was one of the “toughest breaks” you’ve had in your career?
And, two very important questions:

- Is there anyone that you can refer me to get an additional perspective on this career?
- Is there any opportunity for me to spend a day observing you or another person doing this job? (job shadow)

Exercise: 2.3: Develop Your Informational Interview Questions

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Exercise: 2.4: Your First Three Informational Interviews

Conduct your first three informational interviews, and write up a short summary of what you’ve learned for each one (1 page each). Try to do at least one each week.

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<tr>
<th>Informational Interview #1:</th>
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<td>Person: ______________________  Employer: ________________</td>
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<td>Contacted: ____  Interview: ____  Sent thank-you: ____  Completed write-up ____</td>
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<td>Contacted: ____  Interview: ____  Sent thank-you: ____  Completed write-up ____</td>
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<td>Contacted: ____  Interview: ____  Sent thank-you: ____  Completed write-up ____</td>
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Don’t stop here. Keep doing information interviews until you are employed.

Post Informational Interview Thank You Letter Sample

Make sure that you write a thank you letter or send a thank you email AS SOON as you are finished with the interview. It is crucial to do this to ensure that the employer remembers you down the road. This can be a simple note or a business letter.

November 15, 2015

Dear Ms. Bush,

I wanted to thank you again for your time today. The information you shared with me about a position in real estate will have a large impact on my job search. I also appreciate your referring me to Lisa, I have contacted her, and we will meet next week.

If you have anything that you wanted to add, I can be reached at BillJ@yahoo.com, or at 916-558-5555. Thanks again for your help.

Bill Johnson
### Exercise: 2.5: Develop Your Post Informational Interview Letter

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### Job Shadowing

The third step is doing a Job Shadow, this is a simple idea. Arrange an opportunity with an employer to follow around an employee for a few hours (or a few days, if appropriate.) Job shadowing is also effective for person who may want to test their interest in a job by finding out what happens in a particular job day-by-day. A job seeker gets to gain knowledge and see the job they do, you can observe the environment, and you get to meet other people who may become your bosses or co-workers. Shadowing is an excellent
way to learn about jobs that require a lot of physical interactions (warehouse, retail, maintenance, recreation, teaching, etc.) as there is a lot to see. Shadowing is not as effective for cognitive jobs, like accounting, computer programming, or confidential positions such as counselors and doctors.

Exercise: 2.6: Identify Potential Job Shadow Sites

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<th>Identify Potential Job Shadow Sites</th>
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<td>Contact Notes: __________________</td>
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Name of Company: _______________________________________________
Contact Person: ___________________________________________________
Phone: ___________________________ Email: ______________________
Address: _______________________________________________________

Name of Company: _______________________________________________
Contact Person: ___________________________________________________
Phone: ___________________________ Email: ______________________
Address: _______________________________________________________
The fourth and final step in an Internship. This is where you would actually perform the duties of the job you want, usually as a volunteer, under the training and supervision of a manager or co-worker. Is it worth your time to work for free? Yes! The majority of internships result in job offers, and you will learn many “on the job” lessons that you can’t get in a classroom. This is an opportunity to gain hands-on experience and demonstrate your skills and abilities. Again, is it worth it to work for free? Yes! The chances for getting a job offer go up significantly if the employer sees you as a motivated, innovative and qualified worker, when a position does become available, the employer is more likely to take a chance on a person they know. You can also make contacts through the on-campus Internship Coordinator or Career Center. Your teachers or counselors can also be helpful in setting up an internship. In addition you can utilize the Internet to search various companies for Internship opportunities. Make sure you treat an internship with the same professionalism that you would treat a “real job.” Employers are taking their time and money to show you the ropes of their field. They deserve your energy, commitment and appreciation.

Note: Some employers are hesitant to allow job tryouts and internships for two good reasons: liability for accidents, and the time required to supervise a “free” worker. Bear
this in mind when approaching an employer for a shadow or internship. Often, worksite liability can be covered by your college if you are taking a career development or work experience class. For supervision, be sensitive to this issue: try to make sure you learn fast, and do the job without being either a pest or a bump on a log. Many larger employers have established internship programs you can utilize.

A list of the Work Experience/Internship department for campuses in the Los Rios Community College District is included as an appendix.

### Exercise: 2.7: Identify Potential Internship Sites

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<th>Identify Potential Internship Sites</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Company: ___________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact Person: ____________________</td>
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<td>Address: __________________________</td>
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<td>Contact Notes: ____________________</td>
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<td>Contacted: ____ Internship: ____</td>
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<th>Identify Potential Internship Sites</th>
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<td>Contact Notes:</td>
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<td>Contacted: ____  Internship: ____</td>
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Identify Potential Internship Sites

Name of Company: _______________________________________________
Contact Person: __________________________________________________
Phone: ___________________________    Email: ______________________
Address: _______________________________________________________
Contact Notes: __________________________________________________
Contacted: ____    Internship: ____

Networking: People, Places, Things

Networking is a collection of the people who have the job you want, the places where you can work, and the things that you may need to connect to your job. Developing a network is another key component to making contact with people who can assist you in finding your next job. By networking, you are tapping into the hidden job market and your network will help you to identify people and employers, all of whom will eventually have openings, most will not be advertised. This will eliminate most of the competition in applying for a job there.

It all starts by making a list of your job network.

- **People** who are involved with your job, friends, teachers and friends of friends.
- **Places** where you might work; agencies, employers and businesses.
- **Things** that you can do to increase your network, such as volunteering, reviewing journals, websites, training, associations, social and support groups.

**Exercise: 2.8: Create Your Network: People, Places, Things**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create Your Network: People</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: ______________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Title: __________________</td>
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<td>Phone: ______________________ Email: __________________</td>
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<td>Contact Notes: __________________</td>
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<th>Create Your Network: Places</th>
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<th>Create Your Network: Places</th>
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<td>Employer: ________________________________</td>
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<td>Contact Notes: ________________________________</td>
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</table>
Create Your Network: Places

Employer: ______________________________________________________

Phone: ___________________________    Email: ______________________

Address: _______________________________________________________

Contact Notes: __________________________________________________

Contacted: ____

Create Your Network: Things

These are the things you should utilize or do to connect to your job

Websites relating to your job (not Craigslist or Careerbuilder.com)

1.

2.

3.

Associations:

Journals/Mags:

Training Sources:

Directories:

Public Events:

Volunteer Opportunities:

Other:
Chapter Three
Communication Skills

Good communication skills consist of verbal and non-verbal modes of transferring information to another person as well as active listening skills to absorb what others are communicating. One primary example of good communication skills involves not only hearing what another person has to say but also listening actively with verbal and nonverbal affirmations, such as head nods, agreements verbally and direct eye contact. As society progresses, so will the need for workers to upgrade his/her skills to engage in the workforce and meet the demands of jobs that require technological interface.

Effective communication skills are associated with job-related success. Such skills can be developed and honed. It is likely that success will depend more and more upon our interpersonal skills and our ability to develop effective working relationships with others. This resource aims to give a basic introduction to the area of effective communication and technology and will seek to increase awareness and help the job seeker to acquire information to increase marketability.

This chapter will address several types of communication skills:

- Listening Skills
- Barriers to Listening
- Verbal Skills and Non-Verbal Skills
- Interpersonal skills and Voice Control
- How To Improve Your Overall Communication kills

Excerpts taken from: practicebasedlearning.org/
Listening is often one of the most difficult interpersonal skills to master because the act of listening involves much more than just hearing what another person has to say. Listening, instead, refers to actively understanding what someone is communicating and thinking critically about the message. Problem solving and negotiation skills require individuals to work together cordially with others to meet an outcome or resolve an issue. Developing effective listening skills involves two specific steps (Hartley & Bruckman, 2002).

These are:

1. To develop the ability to recognize and deal with barriers that prevents you listening with full attention.

2. To develop and use behaviors which help you to listen. Such behaviors can also serve to let the other person know that you are giving them your full attention.

   • Stop talking- listen openly to the other person
   • Remove distractions
   • Be receptive to the other person. Demonstrate that you are prepared to listen and accept what is being said.
   • Non-verbal cues can be particularly important here, e.g. maintaining an open posture, appropriate/comfortable eye-contact, leaning slightly forward. These are sometimes known as attending skills.
   • Delay evaluation of what you have heard until you fully understand.

Excerpts from Human Relations Media: retrieved 11/2015
Let’s take a look at a short video about Listening Skills.

**Exercise: 3.1: Listening Skills: YouTube Video**

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture  
B. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDDE4qrYjk0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDDE4qrYjk0)  
C. Interactive Activity: Share key learning from the video and how you can incorporate the knowledge in your life.

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D. Discussion: Peers- to- Peer/Instructor Practice

**Exercise: 3.2: Identify Listening Skills To Be Improved**

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture  
B. Interactive Activity: Identify listening skills that you may need to work on.

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Exercise: 3.3: Define Your Listening Type

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture

B. Interactive Activity: What type of listener are you?

C. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice/Instructor Practice

Barriers To Listening

It’s not what you say…it’s what people hear. Barriers can cause a lack of trust and provide negative reactions and as well as feeling of being excluded. What exactly are
barriers to communication? It is defined as an obstacle in a workplace that prevent effective exchange of ideas or thought. This can be a challenge for people with a disability. Usually because of the disability, anxiety and lack of confidence affects how they express themselves. It is essential be aware of these barriers and try to reduce their impact by knowing what your barriers are and to check your understanding of how these barriers affect your ability to communicate. This can be achieved by understanding yourself and acquiring feedback.
Exercise: 3.4: Barriers to Listening: YouTube Video

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture
B. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8KwCZEODZs&feature=youtube
C. Interactive Activity: Give an example of each of the barriers listed below
1. Jargon
2. Not fully engaged in listening
3. Different point of view
4. Expectations, prejudices and stereotype
5. Cultural difference
6. Tone of voice and body language

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Discussion: Peer-to Peer/Instructor Practice

Exercise: 3.5: Barriers to Listening: Key Points From the Video

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture
B. Interactive Activity: Share key points from the video
C. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice

Exercise 3.6: Barriers to Listening: Examples of When You Exhibited Barriers to Listening

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture

B. Interactive Activity: Give an example of a time when you exhibited a barrier to listening

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C. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice
C. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice
Which Type of Listener Are You?

A good listener:

- Focuses on the person talking and allows him or her to finish talking
- Looks at the other person - to indicate readiness to listen, and to observe the person's body language to learn more about how the speaker is feeling
- Gives nonverbal signals to show he or she is listening - a nod, smile, or frown, for example
- Uses verbal signals to show interest in what the speaker is saying or to give feedback, with phrases such as:
  "Uh huh" or "I didn't know that." (Showing encouragement)
  "I'm not sure what you mean." (Asking for clarification)
  "You said that…" or "If I understand you correctly…" (Showing an understanding of what the speaker said)
- Tries to use the same energy and emotional level as the speaker, to show an understanding of what the speaker is feeling

A poor listener:

- Interrupts the speaker
- Thinks only about what he or she is going to say next
- Looks away from the person speaking
- Pays attention to other things going on
- Makes side comments to others
Exercise: 3.7: Define the Type of Listener You Are

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture
B. Interactive Activity: Define the type of listener you are.

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C. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice

Verbal Skills

Verbal communication encompasses any form of communication involving words, spoken, written or signed. The conversation we have with our coworker at lunch, even the text message you send to your spouse telling him to pick up some milk is a form of verbal communication. Our ability to communicate with a language that is based on an organized system of words, rather than merely sounds, is what sets us apart from lower species. Not only do we have language, but we also have the technology that enables us to communicate with one another no matter the physical distance. Effective verbal communication and clarity of speech are essential for success in all areas.
Let’s take a look at a short video on Verbal Skills

**Exercise: 3.8: Verbal Skills: YouTube Video**

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture
B. Interactive Activity:
   [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAMgV1PSVb4&feature=youtube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAMgV1PSVb4&feature=youtube)
C. Provide feedback on key elements observed in the video
   
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D. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice

**Exercise: 3.9: Verbal Skills: Describe What Effective Verbal Skills Mean to You**

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture
B. Interactive Activity: Describe what effective verbal skills mean to you.
   
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C. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice

Exercise: 3.10: Verbal Skills: Demonstrate Excellent Verbal Skills

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture
B. Interactive Activity: Demonstrate excellent verbal skills.
C. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice

Non-Verbal Communication

Not all communication is done with words. We use non-verbal communication every day. What exactly are non-verbal cues? Defined as, behaviors and elements of speech aside from the words themselves that transmits meaning. Non-verbal communication includes
pitch, speed, tone and volume of voice, gestures and facial expressions, body posture, stance, and proximity to the listener, eye movements and contact, and dress and appearance.

Let’s take a look at a short video on Non-Verbal Communication.
Exercise: 3.11: Non-Verbal Skills: YouTube Video

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture
B. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eN4r8fxhUPg&feature=youtube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eN4r8fxhUPg&feature=youtube)
C. Interactivity: From the video you watched, define some of the key take away points

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D. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice

Exercise: 3.12: Non-Verbal Skills: Demonstrate Non-Verbal Cues That Do Not Require Your Voice

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture
B. Interactive Activity. Demonstrate non-verbal cues can that do not require your voice?

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C. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice
Exercise: 3.13: Non-Verbal Skills: Using Face/Body
Demonstrate non-verbal usage. What does it feel like? How do you believe you are viewed?

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture

B. Interactivity Activity: Using your face/body demonstrate non-verbal usage. What does it feel like? How do you believe you are viewed?

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C. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice

Interpersonal Skills

Having the ability to exchange information, feelings and explain meanings using both verbal and non-verbal communication is a skill that most people use daily however; this does not come naturally for some people. For people with a disability, this can be an area of challenge. Interpersonal skills are the life skills we use every day to communicate and interact with other people, both individually and in groups. Employers often seek to hire staff with strong interpersonal skills; they want people who will work well in a team and be able to communicate effectively with colleagues, customers and clients. Interpersonal
skills are not just important in the workplace, your personal and social life can also benefit from better interpersonal skills.

People with good interpersonal skills are usually perceived as optimistic, calm, confident and charismatic, qualities that are often endearing or appealing to others. Not to worry, as you gain an understanding of what interpersonal skills are, how you interact with others, through practice an interaction, there is room to develop and improve those important skills. The following are the types of behaviors associated with communication that contribute to your success.

1. *Active listening*
2. *Decision making*
3. *Problem solving*
4. *Conflict management*

On the next page, let’s take a look at a short YouTube videos on Interpersonal Skills as well as three exercises.

*Excerpts taken from Skills You Need.com 11/2015*
Exercise: 3.14: Interpersonal Skills: YouTube Video

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture
B. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4FTVyz33ow&feature=youtube
C. Share key points of the video

D. Discussion: Peer-To-Peer/Instructor Practice

Exercise: 3.15: Interpersonal Skills: Examples of the Four Areas Listed

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture
B. Interactive Activity: Give an example of each of the four areas listed on the previous page.
Exercise: 3.16: Interpersonal Skills: Which Need Improvement?

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture
B. Interactive Activity: Define the interpersonal skills that you would like to improve upon.

C. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice
Chapter Four
Technology Skills

Technology and digital media are everywhere and can support earning in many ways. Many jobs require the use of technology to perform a variety of jobs. Technology encompasses the ability to operate a computer to communicate with others. A job seeker should be able to communicate by email, navigating and exploring the Internet, to research a company, to research a particular job. In addition, having these skills will allow you to perform a job search and to apply for an available position utilizing the online application process. Learning basic computer skills can improve your chances of getting a job.

This chapter will provide basic information on the following:

- Internet Navigation
- Email
- How Email Works
- What is a Search Engine?
- Utilizing the Internet for Job Search
- Basic MS Word

Facilitation of learning will be by the following:

- Instructor Demo/Lecture
• Video Demo
• Hand-on activity utilizing a computer
• Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice

An assessment will be given to determine experience level and interest. The assessment will take approximately 10-15 minutes and will be administered prior to reviewing the videos, lecture, demonstration and discussion.

**Technology Assessment Outline**

The assessment is broken up into several sections.

1.0 **Background Information.** Asked to get an understanding of the individuals who are taking the assessment.

2.0 **Access To technology.** To determine what types of technology the user has experience using. For example, laptop computer, cell phone with video capabilities, MP3 player and wireless access.

3.0 **Use of Technology.** To determine how often the individual accesses technology and their skill level.

4.0 **Studying in This Area.** To determine the individuals perceived importance of the use of technology in the workplace.

5.0 **Technologies to Assist You**
5.1 I Want to Use Technology Because ……..

5.2 Usefulness in my Day-to-Day: Utilizing features of technology to communicate with others. Send and receive email, utilize search engines to conduct job search and to research companies. Utilize the “www” to download information, share photos and to interact with other via social media.

*From: University of Melbourne, AU
Exercise: 4.1 Technology Assessment

We are interested in learning about your experience with technology. Your responses to this questionnaire will assist us in providing service utilizing technology to suit your needs. Participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. The questionnaire should only take 10-15 minutes to complete.

1.0 Background Information

How are you enrolled in this course?

☐ Full Time
☐ Part Time
☐ Distance

Date of Birth: _______________________

Sex:

☐ Male
☐ Female

Are you a student with a disability? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2.0 Access to Technology

Please use the table to indicate your level of access to different types of technologies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Technology</th>
<th>Access exclusively for my own use</th>
<th>Access any time I need it, shared with other people</th>
<th>Limited or inconvenient access</th>
<th>No access sure</th>
<th>Not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desktop computer</td>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable computer (i.e. laptop or notebook)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated MP3 player (e.g. iPod)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP3 player with video capabilities</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated digital camera</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone with a camera</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone with an MP3 player</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video (3G) capable mobile phone</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory stick (e.g. flash drive, USB stick)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Technology</td>
<td>Access exclusively for my own use</td>
<td>Access any time I need it, shared with other people</td>
<td>Limited or inconvenient access</td>
<td>No access sure</td>
<td>Not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated video game console (e.g. Xbox, Playstation)</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web cam</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadband internet access (ADSL or cable)</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wireless internet access</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
<td>❑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.0 Use of Technology

Below is a list of different ways in which information and communication technologies can be used.

Please indicate:  
1. How OFTEN, on average, you have used technology in each way over the past year.  
2. How SKILLED you are at using technology in each way.

If you have never used a particular technology please pick NU and do not provide a skill rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways in which technology can be used</th>
<th>HOW OFTEN</th>
<th>HOW SKILLED</th>
<th>NU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use a computer to manage or manipulate digital photos (e.g. using iPhoto, Dig. Image)</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a computer to create or manipulate digital images (e.g. using Photoshop)</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a computer for creating presentations (e.g. PowerPoint)</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a computer for creating or editing audio and video (e.g. iMovie, Movie Maker)</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a computer to play digital music files (e.g. iTunes) without accessing the internet</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a computer to play games</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a games console to play games</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the internet/web or a LAN to play networked games</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the web to access a portal, ‘Course or Learning Management System’</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways in which technology can be used</td>
<td>HOW OFTEN</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the web to look up reference information for study purposes (e.g.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>online dictionaries)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.0 Use Of Technology (cont …)

Please indicate:

1. How OFTEN, on average, you have used technology in each way over the past year.
2. How SKILLED you are at using technology in each way.

If you have never used a particular technology please pick “NU” (Not Used) and do not provide a skill rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways in which technology can be used</th>
<th>Several times a day</th>
<th>Once a day</th>
<th>Several times a week</th>
<th>Once a week</th>
<th>Once /twice a month</th>
<th>Every few months</th>
<th>Once /twice a year</th>
<th></th>
<th>Not Very Skilled</th>
<th>Very Skilled</th>
<th>Not Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use the web to download podcasts (e.g. using Juice, iTunes)</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the web to download and/or share MP3 files (e.g. music, videos)</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the web to share photographs or other digital material (e.g. Instagram, Flickr)</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the web for web conferencing (e.g. using a webcam with Skype)</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the web to read RSS feeds (e.g. news feeds)</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a mobile phone to call people</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a mobile phone to text / SMS people</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a mobile phone to take digital photos or movies</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a mobile phone to send pictures or movies to other people</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td>□ □ □ □ □</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Ways in which technology can be used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways in which technology can be used</th>
<th>Several times a day</th>
<th>Once a day</th>
<th>Several times a week</th>
<th>Once a week</th>
<th>Once/twice a month</th>
<th>Every few months</th>
<th>Once/twice a year</th>
<th>Not Very Skilled</th>
<th>Very Skilled</th>
<th>Not Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use a mobile phone to make video calls</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a mobile phone as an MP3 player</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a mobile phone as a personal organizer</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. diary, address book)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a mobile phone to access information / services on the web</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a mobile phone to send or receive email</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.0 Studying in this Subject

Think about the subject you are taking this survey in and use the rating scales below to give us your opinion of how important each item is for being good at this subject?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important are these for being good at this subject?</th>
<th>Not at all Important</th>
<th>Not very Important</th>
<th>Quite Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills, techniques, hands-on experience</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural-born talent</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste, judgment or a developed ‘feel’ for it</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.0 Technologies to Assist Your Life and Studies

5.1 I want to use technology in my life because:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It will help me get better results in my job search</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It will help me become more competitive in employment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It makes completing work in my job search more convenient</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It will improve my IT / information management skills in general</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It will improve my career or employment prospects in the long term</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Below is a list of different ways in which technology may be used to help you with your day-to-day interactions.

5.2 Please rate how useful each of the following technologies currently is or would be in your life (regardless of whether or not you have used each technology in the past).

In your day, how useful do you think it would be to …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all Useful</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Extremely Useful</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design and build web pages as part of your course (e.g. using Dreamweaver, Photoshop)?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create and present multimedia shows as part of your course requirements (e.g. PowerPoint)?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create and present audio/video as part of your course requirements (e.g. iMovie, Movie Maker)?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Download or access online audio/video recordings of lectures you did not attend?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the web to access school based services (e.g. enrollment, sign up for tutoring, pay fees)?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use your mobile phone to access web-based service information or services (e.g. enrolment, sign up for tutoring, paying fees)?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use instant messaging / chat (e.g. MSN, Yahoo, Gmail) on the web to communicate/collaborate with others?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use social networking software (e.g. Twitter, Facebook) on the web to communicate/collaborate with others?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Please rate how useful each of the following technologies currently is or would be in your life (regardless of whether or not you have used each technology in the past).

In your day, how useful do you think it would be to …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Not at all Useful</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Extremely Useful</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use the web to share digital files related to your course (e.g. sharing photos, audio files, movies, digital documents, websites, etc)?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use web conferencing or video chat to communicate/collaborate with other students in the course?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive alerts about course information (e.g. timetable changes, the release of new learning resources, changes in instructor) via RSS feeds on the web?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep your own blog about an area of interest?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to another blog?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive administrative information about the course via text message on your mobile phone (e.g. timetable or assessment changes, info on new learning resources)?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please list two ways in which you think the technologies that you use in your everyday life could be useful in your job.

*From University of Melbourne, AU*
Technology Terminology

**AOL:** was the dominant online service of the late 1990s. During the height of its popularity, the company was widely used to access the internet through a dial-up connection.

**Blog:** a discussion or informational site published on the World Wide Web and consisting of discrete entries ("posts") typically displayed in reverse chronological order.

**Facebook:** an online social networking service.

**Gmail:** is a free Web-based e-mail service in development at Google that provides users with a gigabyte of storage for messages and includes search functionality.

**Google:** a media player, media library, online radio broadcaster, and mobile device management application developed by Apple Inc. It is used to play, download, and organize digital audio and video (as well as other types of media available on the iTunes Store) on personal computers running the OS X and Microsoft Windows operating systems.

**iTunes:** a media player, media library, online radio broadcaster, and mobile device management application developed by Apple Inc. It is used to play, download, and organize digital audio and video (as well as other types of media available on the iTunes Store) on personal computers running the OS X and Microsoft Windows operating systems.
**Instagram:** an online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos, and share them on a variety of social networking platforms.

**MP3:** an audio coding format for digital audio which uses a form of loss data compression. It is a common audio format for consumer audio streaming or storage.

**MSN:** a web portal and related collection of Internet services and apps for Windows and mobile devices, provided by Microsoft.

**Skype:** an application that specializes in providing video chat and voice calls.

**Twitter:** is a free social networking microblogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short update posts called **tweets**.

**Webcam:** a video camera that feeds or streams its image in real time to or through a computer to computer network

**World Wide Web (WWW):** a system of extensively interlinked hypertext documents: a branch of the Internet (usually preceded by the). Abbreviation: WWW.

**Yahoo:** Probably the biggest hierarchical index of the World-Wide Web. Originally at Stanford University. It allows you to move up and down the hierarchy, to search it and to suggest additions.

**Utilizing Technology for Job Search**

Technology is becoming an increasingly critical tool in conducting a successful job search. From online applications to researching potential employers via social networking
sites, there are a variety of resources out there that can assist you. It’s important to know what tools best fit your needs.

LinkedIn is a professional social networking site that allows you to connect with potential employers and peers. It’s comparable to an online profile of your resume, and it can be a good idea to establish a presence on the site depending on your career field.

If you do create a LinkedIn profile, keep these tips in mind:

- Keep your profile updated to make the best impression.
- Include a headline and summary.
- List relevant skills but not a laundry list of everything you might be familiar with. You want to be truthful and authentic.
- Include volunteer experience.
- Don’t ignore the groups section. Join appropriate groups to network, stay current in your field and also stay in the loop on related job openings.
- Include a photo.

**Dos and Don’ts**

- **Create a professional email address.** Create an account with a service like Gmail and try to create one that includes at least part of your name.
  
  Remember, the key word here is professional; don’t get too carried away.

- **Clean up your social media accounts and update privacy settings.** Understand that potential employers will research your online presence. Log onto all of your social networking sites and delete anything that may be inappropriate. It is also a good idea to update your privacy settings, but remember you are still responsible for what you post regardless of who can see it. If you don’t know what’s OK and
not OK to post, use this rule of thumb—if you don’t want a potential employer to
know about it, don’t put it on the Internet.

**Remember technology is just a tool.** Apps and social media alone will not guarantee
you a new job. Pair technology with other techniques like in-person networking and
practicing before interviews.

**Technology exercises for the following are on the next pages.** Work will be completed
utilizing a computer and printer.

- What is the Internet?
- What is Email?
- How Email works.
- What is a Search Engine?
- How to Use MS Word

*From Palmetto Workforce Connections: Brantly, M. 2014*
Technology Exercises

Exercises will be completed on a computer.

Exercise: 4.2: What is the Internet?

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture
B. [https://youtu.be/Jj6EHgSsx_U](https://youtu.be/Jj6EHgSsx_U)
C. Interactive Activity: Explain what the internet is in your own words.

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______________________________________________________________________
D. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice

Exercise: 4.3: What is Email?

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture
B. [https://youtu.be/o_U6pxVFS1c](https://youtu.be/o_U6pxVFS1c)
C. Interactive Activity: Generate an email message. Demonstrate newly learned skills.

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______________________________________________________________________
D. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice
Exercise: 4.4: How Email Works

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture

B. [https://youtu.be/o_U6pxVFS1c](https://youtu.be/o_U6pxVFS1c)

C. Interactive Activity: Explain key understanding from the video. Demonstrate newly learned skills. Create and send an email.

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___________________________________________________________________
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D. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice

Exercise: 4.5: What is a Search Engine?

How do search engines work?

A. Instructor Demo/Lecture

B. [https://youtu.be/0SIXO4E5Yyg](https://youtu.be/0SIXO4E5Yyg)

C. Interactive Activity: Select several search engines and research your job of interest. Utilize newly learned skills.

___________________________________________________________________
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___________________________________________________________________
D. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice
### Exercise: 4.6: How to Use MS Word

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<td>A. Instructor Demo/Lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. <a href="https://youtu.be/TeI-mFTH37w">https://youtu.be/TeI-mFTH37w</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Interactive Activity: Explain key understanding from the video and generate a paragraph using newly learned skills.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

D. Discussion: Peer-to-Peer/Instructor Practice
Chapter Five
Know How to Get Your Job: Employment Portfolio

There are many fields where a person is required to have an Employment Portfolio, as well as compete in a formal job interview in order to be considered as a candidate. Examples of these are state and federal government jobs, schools and colleges, as well as many large private-industry jobs.

This chapter deals with tools of traditional job-seeking skills:

- Employment Portfolio (master application, resumes, references, cover letter, thank you letter)

An effective job search calls for a well prepared professional Employment Portfolio. Having a portfolio will make the search easier, with less time spent duplicating your effort.

Your Employment Portfolio will consist of the following:

- Master Application (one you can use in many situations)
- Resume
- Cover Letter Cover
- Reference List
- Post Interview Thank You Letter
- College Transcripts (if applicable)

You should purchase a simple folder for copies of your Employment Portfolio information, as well as a flash drive to make sure you can make changes easily. It is also important to order a series of official college transcripts for each college you have
attended to have on hand if needed. This can take a while, so order them ahead of time, however, DO NOT OPEN them

**Master Application**

Most employers will ask you to fill out an application prior to offering you an interview. This is a simple task, yet many people are eliminated from the hiring process due to an incomplete, incorrect or messy application. When you fill out an application, make sure you take the time to do a neat, thorough and honest job of it.

**Six Essentials** for completing an application:

1. **Make a draft** of your application.
2. **Have a professional** proof your draft and make suggestions.
3. **Type** the final draft (never hand-write.)
4. **Proof** the final draft. It must be completely error-free.
5. **Submit** your application with a cover letter, resume, and a reference list.
6. **Follow up** with appropriate contacts on a regular basis.

Some guidelines for doing outstanding applications:

**1. Contact Information**

Make sure your cell phone is active and that you can be easily reached by phone. Have a professional greeting on your voicemail, and check voicemail often. Make sure that your email is appropriate. Make sure that your former employers and references can be easily contacted.
2. **Job Description**

Do not write a long description of your past jobs, just include:

- 2-3 sentences on specific job duties
- A brief description of your on-the-job training
- An accomplishment you achieved on this job

3. **Reason for Leaving**

Let the employer know why you left the position, honestly. “Seasonal position” or “Left position to grow in career” or “Offered position as full-time mechanic” are all good reasons to leave a job. If you were fired from a past job, there’s a temptation to lie about it. Consider how honesty can be more effective.

4. **Truth**

Your application must contain the truth, the whole truth, and at least a reasonable presentation of the stuff you might rather lie about. Lying on an application is fraud.

You may have some work history that you feel is negative, such as a firing, short-term jobs, or gaps between employment. You may feel the need to “hide” details or omit the truth entirely. Instead, consider, developing believable answers. Another option is to be honest with the employer. “I’ve had some real knucklehead experiences in the past, and learned some valuable lessons the hard way.” Employers can see value in your hard-earned lessons.
Finally, an employer is likely to be less-than-impressed if you resort to overly-creative language to embellish your application. Remember that employers who will be interviewing you are experts in their field, and they can spot a poser using phony jargon a mile away.

5. **Don’t Wait**

People *procrastinate* filling out applications. Miss a deadline, miss an opportunity, and miss a job. Type it up now, put together your packet, and turn it in today.

6. **Follow Up**

Once you turn in your application, follow up with a phone call after 48 hours. When appropriate make another phone call after another 72 hours. Remember, employers may get *hundreds* of applications each week; therefore it is up to you to be persistent and reach out to them politely and gently. Remember, it’s the squeaky wheel that gets the grease.

*Hello, this is Bill Johnson. I applied for the customer service position you are trying to fill. I just wanted to call to follow up and see when I can come in for an interview.*

To ensure you are utilizing the most comprehensive document to create you master application, we recommend that you use the application on the State Personnel Board website. This is the best option because you will be able to include important information such as:

- Beginning and end dates of employment
• Complete name of your employer with address, including city, state and zip code
• Name of your supervisor with contact number
• Description of your duties
• Reason for leaving
• Race/Ethnicity, age range
• Disability Status
• Military Status

**Exercise: 5.1: Create Your Master Application**

<table>
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<th>Create Your Master Application</th>
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<tr>
<td>Use the California State Personnel Board application to generate your master application in its’ entirely. <a href="http://www.calhr.ca.gov">www.calhr.ca.gov</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Online Applications

Many employers now use internet-based applications that are electronically submitted to the human resources office. Make sure you type these carefully, as there may not be an opportunity to proof your work.

If you are not computer-savvy, you might want to enlist the assistance of a counselor or employment specialist to help type an online application. You can use your Master Application as a guide, and simply transfer the information to the computer. Make sure you have lots of time, go slowly, and make sure you proof read each page carefully before submitting your application. Once it is submitted, you cannot take it back to make corrections in most cases.

Some online applications also contain a personality assessment, intended to get information about your character, mental health, ethics or decision-making. These assessments can have 65 to as many as 100 questions that can increase stress levels. Although the initial instructions say that there is “no right or wrong answer” it can be a frustrating experience for a person with a disability. Practice these questions with a Job Developer or counselor if you are concerned about how your answers will affect your application.

These assessments allow the employer to determine the best fit. For example, if you are applying for a customer service position, and you do not enjoy having contact with shoppers, this would probably not be the best position for you. Keep in mind that most retail stores give these assessments.
Resumes

A resume is similar to the Two-Minute Skills Statement. You need to summarize your education and work experiences, as well as show the employer that you are an excellent choice for the job you are applying for. You may design several different resume styles to meet the needs of different employers.

Resume Styles

Resumes often fall into two categories: **functional** and **chronological**. Most resumes fuse aspects of both styles.

A **functional** resume is designed to show experience and professional development in a specific career, and usually emphasizes skills and related experience. Functional resumes tend to show how the specific experience the person has will relate to the job you want.

A **chronological** resume shows a progression of work experience and education, emphasizing a consistent pattern of work within one or more careers. Chronological resumes not only show work experience, but can illustrate how the applicant has consistently developed their career in the direction of the job they are seeking now.

Many excellent workers have less-than-perfect work histories. Sometimes individuals with disabilities may have years (or decades) between jobs. Don’t worry much about this. Your value as a worker is reflected by what you can contribute today, rather than the experiences of your past.

For a typical resume, information is divided into six areas:

- Personal contact information
- Goal or objective
- Skill listing (optional)
- Education
- Work experience
- Community or volunteer experience

**Contact Information:** You need to provide your name and a reasonable way for an employer to contact you. Provide a single phone number that you are likely to answer if called. List your email address, but make sure the address is professional.

**Goal/Objective:** An employer should be able to clearly see the type of job you wish to apply for. Be very specific with your goal. “*Seeking a position in retail sales management.*”

**Skills:** You may wish to include a bulleted list of skills that directly pertain to the skills the employer is looking for. Make sure these are objective, specific skills such as, Strong analytical skills, rather than subjective qualities (such as, “Hard-working, honest and effective.”)

**Educational Background:** List your education and training in clear, simple terms, highlighting your degree. It is not necessary to include an AA degree if you have a BA or masters. Include several sentences describing any coursework that relates to the job you are applying for.

**Work Experience:** List, in reverse chronological order, the significant jobs you have had in the past. Where possible, include three sentences for each:
• A brief job description, including pertinent duties.

• Some specific training you completed on this job.

• A notable or valuable accomplishment you achieved on this job.

The information on your resume must agree with the information on your application.

Community or Volunteer Experience: In many resumes, you can include some related (or unrelated) experiences you have had supporting your community as a volunteer. Having this on your resume will accomplish two things: it can showcase the breadth of your experiences, as well as show that you are a community-minded individual who works for more than just a paycheck.

Note: Be conscious of including community or volunteer experience that includes items that may be used to discriminate against you. References to religious, cultural, sexual/gender orientation or political affiliation may endear you to some employers, but eliminate you from others. Use good judgment when including these.

Resume Don’ts

Leaving out the dates. The employer will assume you are hiding something.

• Too much information. This is boring and tedious to read.

• Technical jargon designed to make you sound smart. It won’t.

• Creative wording: “Provided petroleum transfer engineering” (gas station.)

• Poor formatting. This is hard to read, and annoying.

• Use of a resume template. While being aesthetically pleasing, it often interferes with what you are trying to communicate.
Chronological Resume Sample:

Bill Johnson  
(916) 413-1821  
bjohns@gmail.com

Objective: Full-time position in customer service and support.

Skills: Microsoft Office 2010 (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access)  
General office, workplace leadership training, sales closing.

Education

2009  Customer Service Certificate, Sacramento City College  
Completed coursework and training in customer service theory and practice,  
technical applications, sales strategies and organizational systems.

High School Diploma, Oakland Tech High School, Oakland, CA

Work Experience

11/07-1/12  Customer Service Representative, Computer City, Sacramento  
Addressed customer inquiries on computer hardware, software and accessories.  
Completed training on phone and internet sales. Received “Employee of the Year”  
award, 2009.

4/05-11/07  Customer Service Representative, Sears, Sacramento  
Provided information for customers regarding products and warranties. Sold and  
explained extended warranties. Trained in use of system databases for customer  
tracking and sales closing. Maintained highest level of customer service/satisfaction  
on regular evaluations.

2/91-4/05  Station Manager, Shell Service Station, Sacramento
Responsible for operations of full-service filling station. Provided supervision for 8 employees, staffing, inventory and maintenance. Trained in leadership and supervision skills and mentored new shift leaders. Accomplished injury-free workplace for ten straight years.

**Volunteer Experience**

2005 - date **Community Service Volunteer**, Sacramento, CA

Worked to provide meals, shelter, clothing and counseling to homeless families in the Sacramento area.

1999 - date **Voter Registration Volunteer**, Pathways to Success, Sacramento

Registered new voters, collected petitions, worked as Data Collection Agent during elections, applied political surveys.
Functional Resume Sample:

Bill Johnson
(916) 413-1821
bjohns@gmail.com

Objective: Full time position for roadside assistance customer service.

Education:

1999  Goodwill Industries Inc., Sacramento  
Certificate in Clerical Services: Computer applications, filing systems, telephone service, office machinery, copier maintenance.  
High School Diploma, Oakland Tech High School, Oakland, CA

Skills:

Office Skills, Administrative Assistant  
• Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access)  
• Internet and email, Microsoft Outlook, business phone systems  
• Keyboarding 35 wpm, copier use and maintenance  
• Managerial and sales experience

Auto Service Station Manager  
• Customer service, cashier, daily bookkeeping  
• Basic emergency road care, auto and tire repair  
• Business management, supervisory, human resources, payroll, benefits

Retail Customer Service  
• Phone-based customer service skills, problem solving strategies  
• Computer-based sales database programs  
• Certificate in “Person to Person” sales approach, 1997

Work Experience

11/07-1/12  Customer Service Representative, Computer City, Sacramento
4/05-11/07  Customer Service Representative, Sears, Sacramento
2/91-4/05  Manager, Shell Service Station, Sacramento
Marketing Your Resume

A resume is still a vital part of your application packet. It provides a snapshot of your education, skills and work history. Your resume is designed by you to “sell” yourself for the specific job you want. Even today, some employers still solicit resumes to fill job openings and request that resume be sent via “fax: or email” rather than an application packet. When you are developing your resume, try not to use a template. Templates are restrictive and will only allow you to include certain information, whereas, if you utilize one of the formats we have included, you will be able to expand and showcase your skills, abilities and accomplishments.

Exercise: 5.2: Write Your Resume

**Write Your Resume**

Use the guidelines and samples above to create your own resume. Try not to use pre-fabricated resume templates. The best option is to use Microsoft Word to develop a simple and easily-read resume.

Writing a Cover Letter

What is the role of a cover letter? In simple terms, your cover letter is an introduction to your application packet. It summarizes your resume, presents a written “Two-Minute Skills Statement,” and gives an employer an opportunity to judge your writing skills. For
these reasons, it is important that you be able to compose an excellent cover letter regardless of the level of employment you are seeking.

Most people feel that cover letters are hard to start and even harder to finish. Here is a template that you can use to help compose your letter:

Your Name
Your Address
Phone and Email

______________________________________________

Date

Name of Employer, Title (Director of Human Resources, etc.)
Name of Company
Address of Company

Dear Ms. So & So (note: for most females use Ms., for males use Mr.)

I. I am applying for the position of ___________. Enclosed are my application, resume, and a letter of recommendation.

II. Review your work experience relative to this position.

III. Review your education and training relative to this position.

IV. Tell the employer why you want to work specifically for them.

V. Conclusion: Thank you for your time in reviewing my application. I look forward to hearing from you in the future. If you have any questions, I can be contacted at 916-558-2590.

Exercise: 5.3: Write Your Cover Letter

Write Your Cover Letter

Write a cover letter for a job that you are interested in. Use the template above and ideas from the Cover Letter Sample on the next page to help you compose it.
September 31, 2015

Franklin Smith
4980 Florin Road
Sacramento, CA 95823

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am applying for the position of Auto Detailer. Enclosed are my application, a resume and a letter of recommendation.

My training has prepared me well for a general auto detailing position. I attended the Auto Body Certificate program at Butte College and graduated in 2012. I have also completed general education and computer classes at American River College. I have completed training in excellent customer service as well as locating auto parts using online services.

In the past I have worked in an auto paint shop doing prep work and some supervised painting. I have also completed several detailing jobs on private vehicles, including customizing and restoration.

I am very interested in working at Roy’s. Your business has earned a name for quality sales and service. In a field where reputation is paramount, Roy’s has always been honest with car buyers while still offering good prices. I would be proud to restore cars for new owners at Roy’s.

I appreciate your time in reviewing my application, and I hope to hear from you soon. If you have any questions, I can be contacted at 916-558-1212.

Sincerely,

Bill Johnson
Reference List

References are an important part of your Employment Portfolio. These are the people who will stand up for you and vouch for you as a worker and a good person. References are usually used by employers to do an informal background check. In other words, maintain positive relationships.

Rules of Thumb for References:

1. **Always get permission** to use a person as your reference.

2. **Do not use family members** as references. There are two kinds of references you can use; professional and personal. Professional includes your former boss, supervisor or a co-worker. Personal could include a teacher, counselor or friend who knows you well personally.

3. **Never burn bridges**. If you get fired or laid off, or leave a job you hate, try to *exit with class*.

4. Some companies have regulations that will not allow them to provide a professional reference for you. If that is the case for you, see if you can ask a former co-worker to provide you an “off-the-record” reference.

If you had a bad relationship with a former employer who perhaps fired you, you may want to take the time to re-establish a positive relationship with that boss. It is possible to get a great reference from someone who might otherwise have been bad news for your career.
Exercise: 5.4: Write Your Reference List

Write Your Reference List
Develop a Reference List for yourself, using the sample above. You can include three to five individuals on your list. Make sure you ask them for their permission, and ensure that you have current contact information for them.

______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

Reference List Example

Please feel free to contact any of these individuals for references regarding career, educational or personal information for Bill Johnson:

**Dr. Morgan Freeman, Professor**
California State University, Hayward
33422 Mission Blvd.
Hayward, CA 95488
(510) 665-2354
Mfreeman@csus.edu

**Keith Urban, Supervisor**
Safeway Stores, Fremont
3354 Mowry Blvd.
Fremont, CA 95922
(510) 534-2299
Kurb124@safeway.com
Jonathan Maxium, Owner/Operator
Sacramento Quality Limo Services
3322 Broadway
Sacramento, CA 95822
(916) 877-RIDE
Maxmanmot@yahoo.com
Post Interview Thank You Letter

A thank you letter after interview is an important part of the job hunting process. It is definitely worth your time to send this letter, as it will leave you in a favorable light in a potential employer’s eyes. And, the employer sees it as the sign of a detailed employee who understands courtesy.

**What Should Your Thank You Letter Say:** Start your thank you letter by thanking the interviewer for the time to meet with them; you also want to make sure the letter highlights your best qualities. Think of it as another chance to bring your skills and experience into the light. While you do not want to include everything that was in your resume, you do need to make sure you mention those qualities which will best suit the needs of the company and at least two key points from the interview. Make sure you mention keys facts about the company that you are aware of, this shows that you are interested in learning more about the company.

**When to Send It:** You should send your thank you letter after interview within one day of the interview. More and more companies are filling their open positions quickly because there are so many qualified applicants. You want to get your letter in front of the interviewer as soon as possible. It is not going to do you any good if it arrives after the job has already been filled.

  http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/5578-sample-thank-you-letters.html#sthash.QxPMwui9.dpuf
Thank-You Letter Example

Bill Johnson
5898 Madison Avenue
Sacramento, CA 94808
(916) 558-1212
Billj@yahoo.com

Hello Mr. Smith:

This is a brief note to thank you for taking the time to speak with me yesterday about the office assistant position with the Better Business Bureau. It was a pleasure meeting with you, and I truly enjoyed learning more about the position and the company.

After learning what your needs are, I am confident that my skills and experiences are a great match for this opportunity. As we discussed, I believe my strong organizational skills and my ability to multi-task and see task through to completion will serve me well in performing the work that you need performed.

I am very enthusiastic about the possibility of joining the Better Business team and would greatly appreciate a follow-up as you move forward with the hiring process. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or phone. Thanks again, and I hope to hear from you in the near future.

Kind regards,

Bill Johnson.
### Exercise: 5.5: Write Your Thank You Letter

Write Your Thank You Letter

Make sure your letter mentions key facts about the company. Highlight your skills and abilities, and let your enthusiasm shine through.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Write Your Thank You Letter</th>
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<tr>
<td>Make sure your letter mentions key facts about the company. Highlight your skills and abilities, and let your enthusiasm shine through.</td>
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</table>
Chapter Six
Job Interview

In this section, we will look at:

- Why We Hate Interviews
- The Two-Minute Skills Statement
- Basic Interview Prep
- Interview Dress and Etiquette
- Addressing Disability in the Interview
- Interview Thank-You Letter

Why We Hate Interviews

You’ve jumped through a lot of hoops to get to this point, but now you have been offered an interview for that perfect job. GREAT! Now you want to run and hide in fear!!!

Fear and feeling uncomfortable are normal feelings. This fear of interviewing comes from good sources:

- You’ll be on a “stage,” in front of one or several people.
- Your every word and idea is being judged.
- There’s a LOT riding on this! The success or failure of your interview will influence your employment, economic status and self-worth.

The fear of failure creates a chain of events that can derail our chance for a job offer.

Here’s how it works:

1. We get an interview, but we fear interviews.
2. We know we need to practice, but we (again) fear interviews, so we put off practicing for it.

3. We start to freak out, because although practicing will help ease our fear, we have not yet started to practice.

4. We walk into the interview, un-practiced and un-glued, and experience a nerve-wracking thirty minutes of stumbling.

5. Repeat.

The more we practice for interviews, the less fear we’ll have, the more confident our voice will be, and the more likely it will be that we get a job offer.

Engaging in an outstanding interview goes far beyond dealing with your fear. You can learn to do an incredible job at making your skills; abilities and experience stand out above the rest. They way to do this is to prepare.

Preparing for an interview is the most important thing we can do to lock in a potential job offer. The rest of the chapter deals with the different steps you must take to properly prepare and practice for a job interview. You will find that as you go through these steps, your natural fear of interviewing will begin to fade.
The Two-Minute Skills Statement
(Two Minute Me)

One of the most common openings to an interview is the question, “Tell me about yourself.” Without practicing, your snappy answer to that question is, “uhhh, well…, uh…” You response will dictate the flow of the interview.

Most people have a tough time with that question, which is unfortunate. This is your opportunity to make a great first impression. You want to sound so good from the beginning that the employer decides to hire you right from the start.

To give an outstanding opener, you can design and practice the “Two-Minute Me.” This is a summary of your professional life that provides the employer with a snapshot of your education and training, your experience and your passion.

Your Two-Minute Skills Statement should contain three main components:

- Education (college, vocational school, training related to this job.)
- Experience (work history related to this job.)
- Your passion for the work that you do, and how this job that you are interviewing for fits in to the vision of your career.

Your Two-Minute Skills Statement should be positive and delivered with a confident look in your eye. You are just a snapshot of who you are, what you know, and what you will do. You will need to say good things in a short period of time.
Things to Avoid in a Two-Minute Skills Statement:

- Don’t mention anything negative, especially about past experiences. “My last boss was so obsessive; I had to take out a restraining order on him.”
- Don’t share information that people will wonder about.
- Avoid mentioning dates. “From 1998 to 2005, I worked at Cisco, but from 2003 to 2007 I also ran my own business, but in 2006 I started my master’s degree, which I finished in 2010...”

Don’t use trite or meaningless phrases:

- “I’m a team player!”
- “I’m very punctual, dedicated and hard-working.”
- “I would be an asset to your company!”
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G71PCaVAwcM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G71PCaVAwcM)

“Should I talk about my disability in the Two-Minute Me?”

It definitely depends on the situation. If you have a very visible disability that might influence the employer not to hire you, you may wish to bring it up in the Two-Minute Skills Statement, or somewhere during the interview. There is more in this booklet about that.

However, if your disability is not apparent and does not significantly impact how you would do this job, you may decide to leave it out of the interview. It is entirely up to you.

You have the right to keep your disability confidential.
Samples of Two-Minute Skills Statements

I have a certificate in electronics repair from Sacramento City College, which I completed last fall. Prior to that, I earned an AA degree in general education right after high school. I have taken additional courses through the years in graphic design and chemistry.

After I got my A.A., I worked in both sales and assembly positions. I have worked with Circuit City as a salesperson and shift supervisor. I also have six seasons with Macy’s as a Holiday Temporary sales clerk. I worked at Apple Computers as a PC-Board assembly technician and at Hewlett-Packard in a level III cleanroom, doing hard-drive installation.

I enjoyed the work at Apple and HP, especially the times when I was able to troubleshoot the complex problems of assembling sensitive electronics. I realized that I would need additional technical training in order to achieve more in this field. Since 2010, I have been taking classes at Sac City College, where I have specialized in computer repair and network design. I just completed an internship at SMUD, and look forward to the opportunity to put my training to work.

This sample includes information about disability:

I graduated from high school in the early 90’s and went right to work at PG&E, where I worked for fifteen years. I started as a meter-reader, but through training and hard work I was promoted to a backcountry line-maintenance technician. I loved this position, as it required me to spend days at a time walking remote power lines, cutting back tree
branches away from the lines. I learned to appreciate the geography and beauty of the Sierra foothills, and I hope that my work there prevented many catastrophic forest fires.

A few years ago, I had an injury at work (tree-cutting will do that sometimes) that prevented me from continuing with that line of work. I spent a frustrating year recovering and trying to figure out what to do next. Actually, it turned out to be a blessing. My accident gave me the opportunity to go to college and pursue a career that I had wanted for years -- in forestry and watershed conservation.

Recently I completed my B.S. in Forestry at Sacramento State University. I also completed a six-month internship at the State Department of Forestry, working on a pilot program to improve water quality through responsible forestry maintenance. This position you are hiring for is a natural extension of my internship, and it would be a privilege for me to serve your agency in this capacity.
Exercise: 6.1: Develop Your Two-Minute Skills Statement

Develop Your Two-Minute Skills Statement

Compose a Two-Minute Me in writing for yourself. Make sure you include the main components: education, work history and passion/vision. Practice speaking this with and without your notes so you are ready to present to the class. Make sure your presentation lasts at least a minute, but no more than two.
Basic Interview Preparation

The best way to decrease your interview fear and increase your interview skill is by preparation. Here are the steps you can take to be really ready for an interview:

1. **Research the job** you are interviewing for. If you have completed your information interviews, job shadowing, an internship and a job analysis, then you have covered 90% of this preparation. Knowing everything about the functions of the job is critical to giving credible answers to interview questions.

2. **Research the employer.** Have you done an information interview with someone who works at this company? Shadowed for a day? What does the company website have to say? Are there informative articles you can find on the internet? Know as much about the company as you can, before going in. (NOTE: Once you have been offered a job interview, it’s too late to ask for an informational interview.)

3. **Develop a collection of potential questions.** There is no way to anticipate exactly which questions will be asked during your interview. You can however, be ready for the obvious ones. Use 3”x5” cards, and write one question on the front of each card, and a few ideas to cover on the back.

4. **Practice, practice, practice.** Reserve at least an hour per day to practice with yourself, with friends or stuffed animals (unlike friends, stuffed animals don’t complain much.) You can gain confidence from lots of positive feedback.
Interview Questions

You cannot anticipate all of the interview questions that might be asked of you. You can, however, get a good idea of how to handle many interview questions by creating some of the possible questions you might face. And, of course, by practicing thoughtful answers.

General, Specific and Sticky Questions

We will be practicing three different types of questions that are commonly asked during interviews:

**General Questions**—these may be asked at any interview and are designed to get basic personal information, as well as insight to your attitude, experiences and decision-making skills. These include questions like, “Tell me about yourself.”

**Specific Questions:** these relate to the specific job that you are interviewing for. They may be inquiring about your special skills, training or experience related to the job. One example is, “What strategies do you utilize in de-coning the Phoenix 2000?”

**Sticky Interview Questions:** these are questions that will push some kind of a “hot button” for you. Beware, these questions can throw off your confidence, make you angry, uncomfortable and nervous.
A Sticky Interview questions may include:

• Illegal questions: “What kind of disabilities do you have?” or “Do you intend on taking much maternity leave when you work here?” Federal law prohibits employers from asking these—but some well-meaning employers don’t know that.

• Inappropriate questions: These questions may be legal, but are generally rude or inappropriate. “How do you make customers comfortable with your deformity?”

• Tough-to-answer questions: These are the questions that may be perfectly legal and appropriate, but you don’t have an easy answer for them. “Have you ever been… fired, convicted, evicted, detected, connected, ejected, etc.” You may have to strategize how you will be able to deal with your stuff.

Behavioral Questions: Situational and Experiential

In addition to the types of questions above, you may be asked behavioral questions that look into ways that you behave and make decisions on the job. These questions include both situational and experiential questions. Research shows that your answers to these questions give interviewers valuable information on whether to offer you a position.

A situational question poses a hypothetical situation, and asks what your ideas or solution would be. Situational questions usually start with, “What would you do if…” You will be evaluated on your problem-solving skills and ethics you use to answer.
**Example:** What would you do if you realize that your supervisor made a serious mistake on a project? How would you deal with this?

An **experiential** question asks you how you have dealt with a real-life situation. It usually starts with, “What did you do when…” or “tell us about a time when you…”

Again, your problem-solving skills, behavior and ethics will be evaluated when you answer this.

**Example:** Tell us about a time when you were providing customer service to a person, and that person became very angry. How did you resolve this?

In addressing both situational and experiential questions, you would be wise to incorporate the **Problem-Solving Paradigm.** This includes:

- Clearly stating the problem at hand.
- Brainstorming and discussing potential solutions.
- Solving the problem.
- Evaluating the outcome.

Here is an example:

**Question:**
What would you do if two different supervisors asked you to take on two different critical assignments that needed to be completed by the end of the day?

**Answer** (using Problem-Solving Paradigm):

The primary problem I am facing in this situation is a lack of communication between the two supervisors and myself. There are several ways I can address this. I can try to
accomplish both projects, hopefully successfully. Or, I can tell one supervisor that I
can’t take on her project due to the other supervisor’s request.

However, my solution would be to ask both supervisors to talk with me and discuss
their needs and how I can best accommodate them. By dealing with the problem,
which is communication, we will be able to come to a resolution that enables both
critical projects to be completed without tears or human-cloning.

On the following pages, we will show examples of General Questions, Uncomfortable
Questions and Specific Questions.

Sample General Interview Questions

Remember—general interview questions can be asked in any type of job interview. They
are usually asked to solicit an inside look into your personality, judgment, intellect, social
skills and experience.

• Tell me about yourself.
• Why do you want to work here?
• What is some of the experience you have that makes you the best qualified person
  for this job?
• How long do you plan on staying with this company?
• Tell me a situation where you had to work under pressure. How does a high-
  pressure situation affect your work?
• What are three words you would choose to describe yourself?
• What are three of your strengths/weaknesses?
• What types of (bosses, clients, customers) do you like to work with, and why?
• Tell me about a situation in which you had an evaluation from an employer. How
  did you handle getting the feedback? How did you utilize the feedback?
• Tell us about a situation where one of your closely held views was challenged in
  the workplace. What did you do?
• What would your last two supervisors say about your work there?
• Describe your computer and office skills.
• Talk about three of your accomplishments.
• What makes you the best candidate for this position?
• Describe a typical day at your current job.
• Tell us about a time where you assumed a leadership role in your job.
• What steps have you taken in the last two years to improve your skills?
• Tell us about a time when you had a disagreement with your supervisor. What was the disagreement, and what steps did you take to solve the situation?
• What do you love about this type of work?
• What did you think of your last boss?
• What is something that your last boss and you disagreed on? How did you resolve it?
• Do you prefer to work alone, or as part of a group?
• Imagine you are trying to serve an angry, argumentative person. What techniques would you use to help them leave happy?
• What salary/wage would you accept to work here?
• What is your weekly availability for work?
• When can you start?

…and the all-important question you should prepare for…

• Are there any questions you have for us?
  (Have some thoughtful questions about the position ready to ask. Don’t ask, “What’s the salary?” or “When can I start?”)
Sample Sticky Interview Questions

Remember uncomfortable interview questions are the ones you don’t want to have to answer, which is why you need to practice them more! These are the real stinkers, illegal, inappropriate, bigoted, rude questions, or just something that you are embarrassed to answer. By practicing these questions, you take away the harmful power they may have.

- Why have you had so many different jobs?
- Have you ever had a worker’s compensation case? Have you been disabled?
- Do you have a history of drug treatment?
- Do you currently use any illegal drugs? Testing is part of our hiring process.
- Have you ever been fired?
- Tell me a time when you failed in a work assignment.
- What is an example of a mistake you previously made on the job? What did you do wrong, and what did you learn from the experience?
- How long will you be staying in this job? What is your five-year plan?
- Have you been asked to resign?
- Tells us about a time when you “broke the rules” to get something done at work.
- Have you ever been disciplined/written up at work?
- What would you do if your co-worker admitted to you that they called in sick the day before and actually went fishing?
  Have you ever been charged with a felony?
- Tell us three of your weaknesses.
- What is your work history with respect to attendance or tardiness?
- What would your last boss say about you?
- Would you describe yourself as a flexible person?
- Why has it been so many years since you have had a job?
- Your resume shows impressive education, but very little work experience. Why?
- Tell us about the worst boss you’ve ever worked for.
- Your (disability) may make our customers feel uncomfortable.
- It seems that some of your skills in ________ are a little dated.
- We’ve never hired someone who is (disabled, deaf, and black, female, you name it…) I’m not sure that we can do this kind of thing.

Exercise: 6.2: Create Your Interview Questions
**Create Your Interview Questions**

Using 3”x5” cards create a variety of *general, specific* and *stinky* interview questions. Prepare at least 5-10 of each category. On the back of the each card, brainstorm ideas for thoughtful points to address in these questions.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Create Your Interview Questions</th>
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Mock Interview

The best way to master an interview is to practice, practice, practice.

As with every skill you've ever learned, you have to learn the technique and then practice.

A mock interview will not only help you perfect your technique, but it will also allow you to get valuable feedback and coaching on your performance. When a person commits time to prepare and practice, an added bonus is the increase in self-confidence which will yield better results. A mock interview also will enable you to learn where your strengths lie and where you may need work to improve your performance. In today's competitive world, you must be prepared and in top shape.

Exercise: 6.3: Mock Interview Practice with Peers and Instructor

Conduct Several Mock Interviews. Practice with Peers and Instructor

Prepare a summary on your experience and areas that you may need to improve.

________________________________________________________________________
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Addressing a Visible Disability in an Interview

If you have a visible disability, you may want to consider addressing it during your interview. Most people are very comfortable with disabilities, but sometimes you might find yourself in front of someone who does not mask their discomfort. They may compensate with over-smiling, over-kindness, failure to make eye contact, or worse.

For most people, gently addressing your disability and accommodations in the two-minute skills statement or somewhere in the body of the interview will likely put an employer’s concerns to rest. If you feel that your disability may be a bigger target for prejudice, such as a significant deformity, speech impairment or physical limitation, you may want to take bolder steps. Perhaps you should have a statement ready that will reassure the employer of your ability be an outstanding employee and perform admirably on the job.

It’s not necessary to make the whole world supportive of workers with disabilities--but for a job interview, you might want to win an ally in the fight. Feel free to talk about your disability openly, and give the interviewer an opportunity to ask you any questions or share concerns they may have. (Practice this with a disability professional to ensure you
are within acceptable boundaries. Sometimes it helps to talk about the elephant in the room. People are generally less likely to have prejudice against something if they have a better understanding of it.

**Interview Attire**

Appearance is very important when presenting yourself to a potential employer. It is essential that you follow basic guidelines when going on an interview. It is important to dress for the job you want. For example, if you are interviewing for a job in an office, business casual is the norm. On the other hand, if you are interviewing for a job in a warehouse, a pair of Kakis and a Polo shirt will do.

**Clothing for Men**: It’s fairly easy to plan an outfit for a man. For most interviews, go with a button-down shirt, a matching tie, slacks and leather shoes (with a shine). Add a jacket or suit if you are in a more professional situation.

**Clothing for Women**: Interview clothing is more complex, but essential rules still apply. In most situations, a basic suit will work, with pants or a skirt. Wear a neutral-color blouse. Quiet flats or low heels will usually work.

Other suggestions:

- Avoid the use of perfumes or colognes. You may be used to them, but others might even be allergic to them. Use liberal amounts of an antiperspirant/deodorant. You’ll need it.
• Don’t wear heavy makeup or fancy jewelry. Minimalist is best for interviews.

• If you are a smoker, dry-clean your outfit before the interview, and don’t smoke in your interview clothing.

• Don’t over-dress for the environment.

**Interview Etiquette**

An employer has the nearly impossible responsibility of selecting the best qualified candidate to hire based on little more than a 30-minute interview. They will be looking at your behavior, manners, expressions, decision-making skills, and overall attitude. There are some simple things you can do to make the best impression:

The day of the interview:

• Have a leather (or faux) folder with a notepad, copies of your resume, the time/location of the interview, and the name of the contact person.

• If you are doing a presentation, check to make sure you have it with you.

• Sleep well the night before, and have a good meal before. Minimize caffeine—you won’t need it!

Right before the interview:

• Leave your cell phone in the car.

• Check your wardrobe in the bathroom mirror.

• **Arrive a few minutes early** for the interview, and never be late. You will be judged harshly for being late, so check out your directions, transportation, parking etc., in advance.
• **Watch others to pick up on behavioral cues** handshakes, seating, casual conversations. Picking up on people’s non-verbal behaviors in the room will help you to feel more balanced and more comfortable.

• **Try to remember names**, you can write them on scratch paper if you need to. If you are able to address people by name, they will see it as a sign of respect.

• **Accept** an offer for water, nothing more. This is an extension of hospitality, and they will notice you as a gracious guest.

• **Listen!** Most of us don’t listen well when we are uncomfortable. Maintain eye contact with the questioner, and listen to the questions thoughtfully.

Listening skills are one thing that employers look for in an applicant. Relax do your best and enjoy your interview.

***Write a thank-you note*** as soon as you leave. Deliver it asap.***
Your First Day on the Job

Congratulations on getting an excellent job! As every journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step, every job starts with The First Day on the Job.

And let’s face it — while the first day of your new job might be exciting, it will also most certainly be stressful. You will be:

- Meeting and creating relationships with many new people.
- Learning hundreds of details about your new job.
- Taking on duties and deadlines that require you to learn and memorize.
- Taxing your mind and body to the brink.

Many new workers with disabilities are overwhelmed by the experience of the first day of work. Yes, we expected there to be changes and challenges, but...who knew that it would feel this hard??! Sadly, some people decide that the entirety of the experience has had too much emotional or physical toll, and they choose to leave their new job.

Don’t worry. You’ll get there. Tough it out. After your first day comes the second day and it’s a little bit easier. So is the second week. By the end of the second month you’ll be an expert, an artist, a member and a victor in your new job. Hang in there.
Chapter Seven
Know the Law and Your Rights

The Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA is the most powerful law in our time to help people with disabilities access employment, education and daily life. It protects the rights of people with disabilities to work at any job for which they are qualified, and it forbids employers to discriminate based on disability. The law itself is complex, but an excellent description is available at www.ada.gov.

Here are some of the highlights of the ADA as it applies to employment:

**Definition of a disability:**
- Physical or mental impairment that limits one or more life activities, or a record of such impairment, or being regarded as having an impairment.

**Hiring:**
- Employers may not ask applicants about their disability. They can ask if they can perform specific job functions (if everyone is asked.)
- Physical exams are allowed only if all applicants take them.
- Current illegal drug use is not protected by the ADA. A person in recovery is. Currently in California, medical marijuana use is not protected by the ADA.
- A person with a disability cannot be excluded simply because they have a disability. If the disabled applicant can perform the essential functions of the job (with or without accommodations), they must be considered as a candidate for the position. (That does not mean they must be selected.)
Accommodations

- Employers must make “reasonable accommodations” to provide access for people with disabilities in the workplace.

- New and existing facilities must be accessible.

- Accommodations may include job restructuring, changing the work schedule, or reassignment to a similar position.

- Accommodations may include the provision of furniture, adapting examinations, flexing policies, or providing interpreters.

…the rest of the story:

The ADA is **not** a law that requires employers to give preferential hiring to people with disabilities. This means that if you are applying for a job with 12 other people, the employer can hire the “most qualified” applicant. Therefore, as a person with a disability, you have to be the “most qualified” applicant in order to have a good chance at the job.

It is not uncommon for employers to violate the ADA in hiring and employment practices. There are resources to help you ensure your rights—you can file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or the Department of Justice. You can also hire a lawyer and file an individual lawsuit against the employer. However, these options are time-consuming and expensive. Your best bet may be to deal appropriately with infractions directly with the employer, perhaps with the assistance of an advocate or a mediator.
When employers violate the ADA, it is usually because they either don’t know about common ADA regulations, or because they have fears about hiring people with disabilities. Prejudice stems from fear and ignorance, not reality (okay, sometimes reality.) From the employer’s perspective, here are some “rationales” why they don’t want to hire people with significant disabilities:

- “This woman missed so much work due to her illness that I had to fire her—I can’t run a business with absent employees.”
- “Every time I hired an interpreter for the deaf programmer it cost me $200.”
- “That disabled guy had a real chip on his shoulder. He kept threatening to call the Office of Civil Rights every time we had a minor access issue.”
- “The medication he took made him sleep on the job. I just can’t have that.”

With fears and prejudice being an unfortunate reality in our world, there is a certain amount of responsibility that workers with disabilities carry into the workplace. Like any other worker who is a member of a minority group, your actions, attitudes and behaviors may be judged by the majority as being representative of all workers with disabilities. Simply put—your actions will reflect on other disabled workers yet to come. This is neither fair nor reasonable. But it must be kept in mind as you embark your career in a workplace that is made up primarily of non-disabled peers.

The most powerful tool you can have is when you master your disability rights within your career:
• Know your rights under the ADA and state laws.
• Know your disability and the real limitations you have.
• Complete a Job Analysis and create an accommodations plan for yourself.
• Talk frankly with your employer about accommodations that enable you to perform your job duties.

For more information on the ADA, see the following websites:

Department of Justice ADA Page: www.ada.gov/cguide.htm

Job Accommodation Network ADA Page: http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/links/adalinks.htm


Small Business Administration ADA Page: www.sba.gov/ada/
Reasonable Accommodations

“An employer will agree to darn near anything if you can show them it will bring in more revenue than it will cost them.” Denise Bissonnette

The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990, amended 2008) stipulates that employers must make “reasonable accommodations” to enable a person with a disability to perform the essential functions of their job. There are two important ideas to understand here: “reasonable accommodations” and “essential functions.”

A reasonable accommodation is defined as some kind of alteration made in the workplace that allows a person to do a task that does not change the nature of the job itself. A reasonable accommodation for an accountant with chronic back pain might include

- the provision of an adjustable desk and supportive chair
- speech-to-text computer software
- re-designed tasks to allow for some standing/stretching activities.

It would be unreasonable for the accountant to request that the employer hire an additional assistant to drive him to work on painful days. It would also be unreasonable for the employer to require the accountant to lift reams of paper and stock the supply closet (not an essential function of the accounting job).

So what is the “reasonable” in reasonable accommodations? This is a murky area. “Reasonable” is often left up to individual interpretation, but as Supreme Court Justice
Potter Stewart once said, “I know it when I see it.” *(Only he wasn’t talking about accommodations.)*

“Essential functions” of a job have been defined both in the ADA and in subsequent court decisions as the primary duties and tasks of a job, but not the peripheral or “other tasks as needed.” Therefore, an employer cannot force a person with a disability to do every imaginable task that is vaguely related to their job, such as a deaf person who works as an assembler being required to answer the phone when the supervisor is at lunch.

An employer and a disabled worker can narrow the actual tasks of the job to the “essential functions” when designing accommodations, in order to provide a more inclusive workplace. However, like “reasonable accommodations,” there is no clear and absolute definition of “essential functions.” You may need to design a very learned and convincing argument to present to employers who are less-than-motivated to hire individuals with disabilities.
Sample Request for Accommodations Letter

Mr. Jerry Butler
Fab Fabricators
1536 Stone Cold Lane
Smithsville, CA 98532

November 23, 2015

Dear Mr. Butler:
As we discussed last week, I would like to request the following workplace accommodations that will allow me to perform my job here effectively.

For the task of refilling Pepsi dispenser 6578, I would like to request that my co-worker, Paul take on 100% of that duty. In return, I will complete an equal amount of Bovine Tipping that is normally included on Paul’s task list. I have discussed this matter with Paul, and he is willing to accommodate me on this.

For the task of completing paperwork, I would like to request the purchase and use an orthopedic chair. This chair will enable me to sit for long periods of time without pain, and is available for purchase from The Back Store on Arden Way, 916-589-6329. The cost of the chair is $150, and it is a tax educable expense.

Thank you for considering these accommodations.

Sincerely,

Bill Johnson
Exercise: 7.1: Write Your Request for Accommodation Letter

Write Your Request for accommodation Letter. Use the template of the sample that has been provided.
Examples of Reasonable Accommodations

Physical:

- Adaptive furniture, desks, ramps, chairs.
- Break rooms with a place to lie down.
- Padded flooring to prevent back pain.
- Elimination of unnecessary designs such as ornamental stairs.

Mental/Emotional:

- Release time to attend therapy, support groups or Twelve-Step meetings.
- Increased break times. Lower-stress work environment.
- Changes in essential functions to reduce stressful situations.
- Reduced or increased interpersonal contact.

Communicative:

- Provision of sign language interpreters or real-time captioning at meetings and training sessions.
- Use of TTY or text-messaging devices for communication with public.
- Use of alternative media (Braille, large-print, text-to-speech) for individuals with visual or learning disabilities.

Technical:

- Use of computer hardware devices (single-hand keyboards, optical scanners, enlarged screen, specialized cursor-controllers).
- Software programs (screen readers, voice-recognition, and spell-checkers.)
Electronic versions of documents that can be viewed on a tablet or laptop.

**Changes to Job Itself:**

- Sharing the tasks of one job with another person.
- Reduced work time.
- Re-structuring the essential functions of job to match the disabled worker.
- Increased time or frequency of breaks (not decreasing work time.)
- Telecommuting or satellite workplaces.
Disclosing Your Disability to Your Employer

Some workers with invisible disabilities decide that it is better not to disclose their disabilities to their employer, in an effort to avoid potential discrimination based on that disability. This is a normal and rational feeling. The fear is, “If they know, they will not (hire/keep/promote) me.” The same rationale is often used by LGBT workers to not disclose their sexual orientation, in order to not invite prejudice. However, the level of stress created by this “secret” can be detrimental to one’s mental health and positive self-image.

Some individuals are concerned that if they do not disclose their disability in the job interview, they will be fired for defrauding their employer once they are “found out.” They feel that keeping a disability confidential is the equivalent of a “bait-and-switch” that is unwise at best, dishonest at worst.

The Americans with Disabilities Act provides a vital protection for both of these concerns. The ADA protects workers with disabilities by making it illegal to use disability as a consideration for hiring, retention or promotion, as long as the individual is able to perform the essential functions of the job.

Additionally, the ADA provides that a person can choose to disclose or not disclose their disability. A worker can keep their disability confidential from their employer. However, it may be difficult to request accommodations if a person is not willing to disclose at least the existence of their disability.
Suggested Steps for Disclosing a Disability and Requesting Accommodations

1. Establish a trusting relationship with your employer early on.

2. Set up a meeting to discuss your disability and needs. Make sure you take the progress as seriously as you would want your employer to.

3. Discuss your disability frankly, and without shame or embarrassment. Your attitude towards your disability will inform how others hear you.

4. Offer specific accommodations (from your job analysis) that will enable you to perform the essential functions of your job. The employer is responsible for the cost and provision of these accommodations. (Hint: free and cheap is better than costly.)

5. Show the employer how the provision of these accommodations is a win-win scenario for you both.

6. Come to a verbal agreement on accommodations, and then follow up with a letter officially requesting the accommodations that were already agreed upon. (Don’t add any new requests or surprises in the letter.)
Transitioning From Social Security to Work

The process of transitioning from Social Security benefits to work and a paycheck can be a tricky adventure. Many individuals with disabilities give up trying to find work because they fear that they will lose financial and medical benefits, costing them health and home. Some disabilities (diabetes, HIV, kidney failure) are not survivable without medical benefits. To some, risking the loss of medical benefits is not worth going to work.

You may be receiving SSI or SSDI (or both). What are these programs? Know the difference.

SSI—Supplemental Security Income is a state-based program, designed to provide basic subsistence funding for people with disabilities who cannot work. SSI comes with MediCal (Medicaid in other states) for essential medical coverage.

SSDI—Social Security Disability Income is a federal program designed to provide subsistence funding for individuals who can no longer work due to disability, but who have worked long enough to become part of the Social Security system. SSDI often comes with Medicare for essential medical coverage.

The regulations regarding SSI/SSDI are complex, and they vary from state to state. We will look at some general information about going to work with SSI/SSDI, but it is important that you call your local Social Security office for the regulations in your state.
Disability Benefits 101

The most comprehensive and easy-to-use online guide for learning about and managing your SSI or SSDI benefits is www.disabilitybenefits101.org, or www.db101.org. This is an easy website that most people can use to learn details about the complex regulations surrounding disability benefits, medical benefits, and the return to work. As new federal health care laws are enacted, it is important that all SSI/SSDI recipients master the issues that will impact both their income and their health.
RESOURCES

Local Resources for Basic Computer/Technology Training

The following is information about various entities that may offer basic computer/technology training.

Los Rios Community College District

American River College
4700 College Oaks Drive
Sacramento, CA 95841
(916) 484-8011
www.arc.losrios.edu

BUSTEC 125: Office Specialist: This is a course covers the skills for office specialist positions. The content includes computer keyboarding, word processing, and spreadsheet applications: alphabetic filing; office procedures and communications, including telephone, email, and Internet; human relations; employment resources.

Cosumnes River College
8401 Center Parkway
Sacramento, CA 95823
(916) 691-7344
Business Technology
www.crc.losrios.edu

BUSTEC 120: Skills for Today's Office: This is a course designed to build upon previous word processing and spreadsheet training in the computer science/business area, and complete the training necessary to perform effectively and become a skilled employee in the modern, computerized office. The course includes preparing and processing information: word-processing, spreadsheet, and database documents; communicating via fax, e-mail, voicemail, Internet, and telephone; and using copiers and other office equipment. Students will simulate office situations. This course emphasizes activities and techniques that enhance competencies needed in today's office.
Folsom Lake College
10 College Parkway
Folsom, CA 95630
(916) 608-6500
www.flc.losrios.edu

BUSTEC 120: Skills for Today's Office: This is a course designed to build upon previous word processing and spreadsheet training in the computer science/business area, and complete the training necessary to perform effectively and become a skilled employee in the modern, computerized office. The course includes preparing and processing information: word-processing, spreadsheet, and database documents; communicating via fax, e-mail, voicemail, Internet, and telephone; and using copiers and other office equipment. Students will simulate office situations. This course emphasizes activities and techniques that enhance competencies needed in today's office.

Sacramento City College
3835 Freeport Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95822
(916) 558-2111
http://www.scc.losrios.edu

BUSTEC 110: Business Procedures for Professional Success: This course prepares students to perform various information processing procedures and problem solving tasks required to support both today's office systems and those of the future. Students learn critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, supervisory skills, office procedures, and information processing technologies to manage their work, as well as necessary attributes of an office professional. These skills will provide the foundation for advancement to supervision and management positions. Primary emphasis is on processing documents using introductory skills in word processing, spreadsheets, presentation graphics, databases, and e-mail. Also included are managing information storage and retrieval, and coordinating office communications to improve the efficiency of office functions.
Local Companies Offering Computer/Technology Training

AcademyX Expert Computer Training
180 Promenade Circle, Suite 110
Sacramento, CA 95834
(916) 333-5710
www.academyx.com

AcademyX offers a wide range of courses that can take anywhere from one day to 24 weeks to complete. A large number of businesses today need employees with social media skills, and a two-day class in fundamentals could be well worth the $795 cost. People interested in starting a small business might consider a one-day, $395 course in WordPress, a free online tool used to create blogs and websites. Fundamental and advanced courses in HTML are available for $495 and $350 respectively. Individuals who are unemployed may be eligible for discounts of 20 to 40 percent. Contact AcademyX for details.

Learning Exchange
1111 Howe Ave., Suite 115
Sacramento, CA 95825
(916) 929-9200
www.learningexchange.com

Learning Exchange offers classes in a variety of disciplines and interests to students 18 years and older. Courses generally require a $10 registration fee, but those fees may be waived for a full year by purchasing a $29 annual membership. People who are just starting to use a Mac instead of a PC can learn the basics in a $49 class and Excel I and II are available for $275 each. Microsoft Publisher is a versatile and popular tool. Different levels of Publisher training are offered for $375. For those interested in website design, $375 classes using XHTML, HTML and CSS can be taken on several levels.

Microsoft It Academy IT Training, Online
Microsoft Virtual Academy- FREE
https://mva.microsoft.com

Microsoft Virtual Academy provides free, self-paced, online training to help Developers, IT and Data Professionals, and students learn the latest technology.
New Horizons offers training flexibility to work with the needs and schedules of its students. Traditional classroom courses are available but training can also be done one-on-one or in a live or self-paced web format. First- and second-level classes in Acrobat cost $375 each, and the same fees apply for Flash CSF and Dreamweaver levels one and two. New Horizons says that it provides authorized certification exams for Pearson Vue, Certiport and Prometric and has a practice lab available for students as well.

Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services
3333 3rd Ave.
Sacramento, CA 95817
(916) 456-1980
sacramentofoodbank.org

The Food Bank isn’t just about food; Sacramento residents ages 18 and above can get free computer training with no proof of income required. Adults with little or no technical experience can reap benefits from the basic Welcome to the World of Computers class, while program-specific training such as Microsoft Word is also given regularly. The use of an open computer lab and one-on-one training can enhance further skills development. While younger people are exposed to computers in their regular school settings, there may be fewer opportunities for advanced skills. The Family Services program offers a computer clubhouse where students in grades seven through 12 can use software for more creative needs.
Sacramento Works One Stop Career Centers

Mark Sanders
Job Center
2901 50th Street
Sacramento, CA 95817
(916) 227-0301
Typing Certifications: Free

Rancho Cordova
Job Center
10381 Old Placerville Road, Suite 150
Sacramento, CA 95827
(916) 563-5147

Hillsdale
Job Center
5655 Hillsdale Blvd, Suite 8
Sacramento, CA 95842
(916) 263-4100
Typing Certifications: Free

La Familia Counseling Center Inc.
Training Center
5523 34th St.
Sacramento, CA. 95820
(916) 452-3601

Greater Sacramento Urban League
Training Center
3725 Marysville Blvd.
Sacramento, CA. 95838
Phone: (916) 286-8600

Franklin Career Center
Job Center
7000 Franklin Blvd, Suite 540
Sacramento, CA 95823
(916) 563-5151
Typing Certifications: Given daily, Free
Asian Resources, Inc.
Training Center
2411 Alhambra Blvd., Ste. 110
Sacramento, CA. 95817
(916) 324-6202

Business and Technical Training Institute
Training Center
8401 A Gerber Rd.
Sacramento, CA. 95828
(916) 525-4717

Elk Grove Unified School District
Training Center
9354 Elk Grove-Florin Rd.
Elk Grove, CA. 95624
(916) 525-4717

Lemon Hill
Training Center
5451 Lemon Hill Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95824
(916) 433-2620
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Paravagna, M. (2013). *Americans with disability act and fair employment housing act consultant and appointee to commission on disability access (CCDA).* Presented in graduate class at California State University, Sacramento.


