GOING TO WORK:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE MEANING OF WORK IN WELFARE TO WORK

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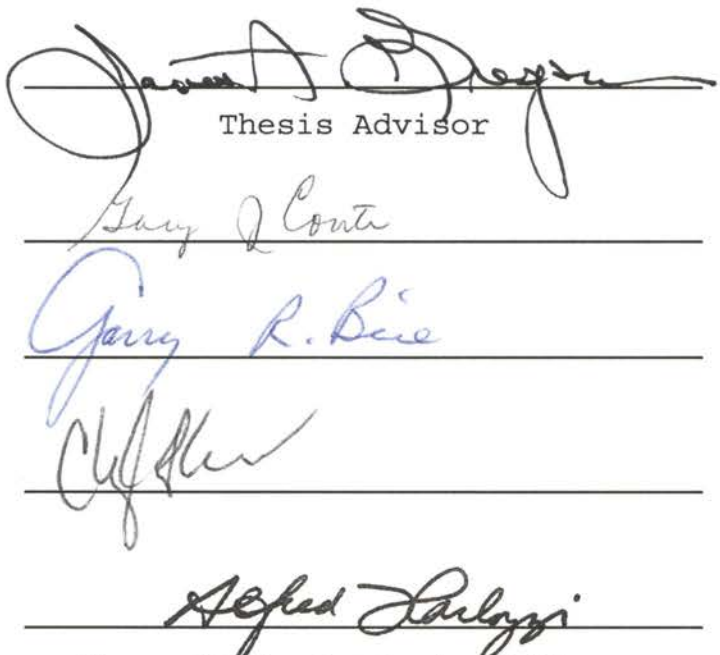

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

With the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (P.L. 104-193) of 1996, also known as the Welfare-to-Work Act, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was abolished and replaced with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). The AFDC legislation had been passed under the Social Security Act of 1935 with its original mission to provide financial aid to children not being supported by a parent. By 1940, one million recipients were receiving funds and by 1996 this figure had risen to more than 12 million. Cash assistance was provided for a diverse population of Americans which included Caucasians, Hispanics, African Americans, Native Americans, and immigrants with great emphasis on educational opportunities such as Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) to help transition welfare recipients into the workforce.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act halted many of these educational opportunities. A new system of block grants to the states for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) was created, changing the nature and provision of welfare

benefits in America. "Work First" initiatives were enacted in most states with the primary focus being centered on getting welfare recipients to go to work--"any" type of work. Cohen (1998) argued that what has occurred with the new legislation is a shift away from the "human capital approach" to a "Work First" approach:

> Some welfare experts and policymakers advocate providing education and training to prepare welfare recipients for jobs that will eventually help them leave poverty—often called the human capital approach. Others advocate placing welfare recipients immediately in jobs whenever possible, even if these jobs pay wages below the poverty level. These "Work First" proponents argue that welfare recipients learn more from an actual job than from any educational program. (p.1)

The intent of this case study is to examine how one Welfare-to-Work program in Oklahoma is preparing welfare recipients for work and how the various stakeholders involved in the program understand the meaning of work and recipients future as workers.

Background of the Problem

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (P.L.104193), more commonly known as the Welfare Reform Bill, was enacted in 1996. The thinking behind this legislation was to put welfare recipients to work.

Statistics gathered since 1996 indicate that welfare benefits are being greatly reduced as people are being moved off welfare rolls to work (Newman, 1999). For example, the 1996 issue of the Welfare-to-Work newsletter listed Oklahoma with a 34% decline in its caseload for TANF. However, the missing component in the Welfare Reform discourse is any critical analysis of the meaning of work in the "Welfare-to-Work" legislation. Such an analysis is imperative if the purpose of welfare reform is to create opportunities for welfare recipients to become lifelong economically productive citizens.

Statement of the Problem

In 1995, President Clinton announced that his administration was going to "end poverty as we know it," hence laying the groundwork for the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act. Four years later the Welfare-to-Work legislation has being touted by both Republicans and Democrats as a success. However, the

perceived success of the Welfare-to-Work legislation has been solely measured by the statistical reduction of the welfare rolls. Little study has been presented concerning the meaning of "work" "in this legislation. The problem to be investigated in this study is the lack of any critical analysis about whether the jobs participants are acquiring in Welfare-to-Work programs reflect "good" or "bad" work.

This study will demonstrate multiple definitions of the meaning of "good work," from academic theories to the voices of welfare recipients. For the purpose of this study, the minimum standards for "good work" will be defined as work that is enjoyable, rather than demeaning, leads to upward mobility, pays a wage necessary to maintain a "decent" living, and provides health benefits. This dissertation attempts to provide an understanding of the meaning of work and "good work" in the welfare-to-work legislation, and how these meanings affect the TANF population at one particular site.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to describe and analyze the meaning of work as perceived and enacted by the various stakeholders (i.e., welfare recipients, administrators of TANF programs, and teachers in job training programs) involved in a TANF program in Oklahoma.

This study is significant because it addresses a gap in the Welfare-to-Work literature about the meaning of "good work" and the implications of the meaning of work in the Welfare-to-Work legislation on the lives of welfare recipients. Welfare-to-Work programs need to take seriously what kind of "work" is being espoused in the recent legislation. Such an examination can contribute to a better understanding of how to create a more socially just democratic society in which all members have the opportunity to engage in "good" work and hence have an opportunity for a "good" life.

Research Questions

The following four research questions provided the parameters of this investigation of a Welfare-to-Work program:

1. What are TANF participants understanding of the Welfare-to-Work legislation?
2. How do TANF participants and the teachers and administrators in the TANF program define "work"?
3. What are the perceptions of the various stakeholders involved in a TANF program regarding the meaning of good work and how do these meanings differ?
4. What is the meaning of "good work" in the practices (e.g., career guidance) and programs (e.g., job training) associated with the Welfare-to-Work legislation?

These four research questions were designed to provide a holistic picture of one particular Welfare-to-Work program. The first two questions helped to focus on describing how the administration understood the meaning of work and preparation for work and how participants involved in the program understood work. The third question aided me in focusing my attention on the nuances of difference concerning work as reflected in interviews and observations. The fourth question was a constant reminder that the original impetus for my research was to represent the different ways in which work is understood and articulated by welfare recipients - the people who have the most to lose and to gain from the Welfare-to-Work reforms. These four questions were designed to help me in focusing my research in ways that move us beyond thinking about success in terms of numbers only (i.e., how many people have left the welfare rolls) to an understanding of how the discourse of work shapes policies and practices. For example, does the meaning of "work," as being articulated in the program, designed to move people from Welfare-to-Work offer people opportunities for "good" work (Kincheloe, 1999) or does it reproduce a stratified, unequal work force in which some people have the opportunity to engage in "good" work while others are relegated to unstable, emotionally unsatisfying, low-skilled, low paying jobs?

Rationale for a Qualitative Design

Research which seeks to include those voices typically silenced in discussions about benefits and effectiveness of Welfare-to-Work initiatives requires one to move beyond traditional positivistic research studies to research methods that tell the stories of those people who have the most to gain and to lose from recent welfare reforms.

A qualitative case study provides one method for including these voices. As Yin (1989), Merriam (1998), and Gall, Gall and Borg (1999) have asserted, the purpose of a case study is to describe, explain, or evaluate a program, an event, a process, an institution, or a social group. Case studies are appropriate when the researcher cannot manipulate relevant behavior (Yin, 1984).

Case studies allow the researcher to study a phenomenon in its natural context (Merriam, 1998). This research characteristic is extremely important in studying Welfare-to-Work programs because far too many claims about the success of these programs have been based on decontextualized, quantitative studies that pay little attention to the lived experiences of real people. Case studies also allow the researcher to represent both the emic and etic perspective (Gall, Gall & Borg, 1999). This component of case study research was important in this

study, for it allowed me to include the voices of various stakeholders involved in a TANF program while situating their stories within a theoretical framework based on critical theory and notions of "good work."

This case study allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the Welfare-to-Work legislation by focusing on one particular case while providing an avenue for the voices of welfare recipients to be heard. It is my hope that Merriam's (1998) assertion is correct: "insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research" (p. 19).

Conceptual Framework

Critical Theory

The ideology of good work has its roots in critical theory. Critical theory began with the Frankfort School of Social Research in Germany after World War I. The war had left Germany with economic depression, inflation, and high unemployment. Max Horkheimmer, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Leo Lowenthat, and Herbert Marcuse, a group of writers connected to the Institute of Social Research at the University of Frankfurt, struggled to make sense of the post-war traumas and devastations by critiquing the negative forms of domination and power that accompany capitalism. Forced to leave Germany because they were Jewish,

Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse moved to California. In America, these writers were shocked by the contradictions between the progressive ideal of egalitarianism and the horrific practices of race and class discriminations. It was in the United States where they produced most of their major works. Horkheimer and Adorno eventually returned to Germany and re-established their work there. Marcuse stayed in the United Stated and later was embraced by the social activists of the 1960s (Kincheloe, 1995, 1999).

The intent of critical theory can be summarized with three main points: (a) the need to make visible the dominant social constructions and the interests they represent, (b) the need to understand and analyze societal forces and practices with the goal of transforming them, and (c) the need to empower people to free themselves from oppression and domination (Anderson, 1989). Hence, critical theory offers a useful theoretical lens for analyzing notions of good and bad work in a capitalist society.

To understand the connection between work and critical theory, one must look at the work of Karl Marx. According to Noddings (1995), Marx's theory of structuralism focused on the alienation of workers in a capitalistic society in which workers no longer work for themselves, but rather for the capitalist. In Working: Conflict and Change, Marx (cited in

Ritzer, 1977) discussed characteristics of work in a capitalist society:

1. Work is external, not part of a person's nature.
2. People do not fulfill themselves in their work. In fact, they deny themselves.
3. Work is so horrid that people feel at ease only in leisure.
4. Work is not voluntary. It is imposed.
5. Work does not satisfy an end, but it rather serves more a means to an end.
6. In their work, people function like animals.
7. People sell their life activity (their work) in order to acquire the means of subsistence.
8. Labor is a commodity to be bought and sold like any other.
9. People do not produce for themselves, but for wages.

Marx makes no distinction between good work and bad work in a capitalist society. On the other hand, Kincheloe (1999) believes good work is possible in a capitalist society. He lists 10 characteristics of good work:

1. Self-direction
2. Job as a place of learning
3. Work variety

4. Workman cooperation

5. Individual work as a contribution to social welfare

6. Work as an expression of self

7. Work as a democratic expression

8. Workers as participants in the operation of an enterprise

9. Play is a virtue that must be incorporated into work

10. Better pay for workers in relation to the growing disparity between workers and managers (pp. 65-70)

Kincheloe (1999) goes on to define the characteristics of bad work:

1. Social Darwinism: Workers must operate under the law of the jungle. Those who succeed at work are the fittest.

2. Nature as enemy: One of the most basic of human struggles involves man vs. Nature.

3. Science as a fact provider: Positivism covertly shapes the nature of the workplace.

4. Efficiency as maximum productivity: worshipping the bottom line.

5. The supremacy of systems-efficiency and cost-benefit analysis models, or the effectiveness of

standardized inputs in the quest for agreed-upon outputs.

6. People-proof jobs: designing work so that no matter how dumb a worker might be, the job can still be done.

7. Short term goals: the absence of ethical vision.

8. The contingency of human happiness and human motivation on the acquisition of better consumer items (pp. 70-73)

This idea of good work-bad work is particularly relevant to any discussion about the recent Welfare-to-Work legislation, which has adopted an uncritical use of the word "work." Typically when used in the context of this legislation, "work" simply means a job - even if it is a job that perpetuates a person's impoverished status. The idea behind the legislation seems to be the belief that being engaged in any kind of work is the means to social mobility.

Kincheloe's (1999) differentiation between work and job is important in understanding the meaning of "work" in the Welfare-to-Work initiatives. He asserts "a job is simply a way of making a living; work involves a sense of completion and fulfillment. In a job, items are produced for consumption, whereas work produces items that are put to use in people's lives. An individual's purposes and meanings are

engaged in work, but they are repressed in a job" (p. 64). Clearly the notion of "good work" must include more than simply the attainment of a job. Furthermore, the assumption underlying the Welfare-to-Work legislation that placing people in jobs automatically makes them feel better about themselves, leading to personal responsibility (hence the name of the legislation "Personal Responsibility Act), economic independence, and social mobility conflicts with the economic realities in today's society. We are a society defined more and more by economic disparities. For example, by the end of the 1980's, the average CEO earnings were seventy-two times more than a teacher and ninety-three times more than a factory worker (Kincheloe, 1999). A recent study in South Carolina indicated that three out of every five former welfare recipients were working an average of 34 hours a week at a rate of $6.34 an hour (Albelda, 1999). This annual wage of less than ten thousand dollars still leaves these recipients well below the level of poverty.

Kincheloe's (1999) version of "good work" will probably not be readily embraced by the business community which typically operates on a "maximize profit by minimizing cost" mentality. However, his ideals are worth striving for if we believe that in a democratic society all members should have the opportunity to engage in work that has the potential for both personal and social transformation. This means that

workers are actively involved in decisions which affect the workplace. Workers have opportunities for creative and autonomous expression. Workers should share in economic benefits.

Because of the work-first approach to welfare reform, vocational and adult educators have been faced with the tremendous responsibility for training a large number of people for jobs in a much shorter period of time. In vocational education, educators such as Gregson (1994), Lakes (1994), and Schultz (1997) have pioneered the need for adult and vocational education to be based on notions of critical theory. Lakes (1994) talked of the importance of equipping students with the skills they need not only to name the sources of injustice in their lives but also the analytical tools needed to interrogate and change the basis for such oppression.

Paulo Freire's (1973) work is helpful in understanding how educational programs can become the avenues by which people are empowered to change the social conditions of their lives. Working with Brazilian peasants, Freire advocated a dialogic pedagogy which validated the voices of the poor while teaching them the necessity of reading their world in order to change the oppressive forces of their lives.

A critical approach to vocational education is not a new one. John Dewey, although typically categorized as a progressive, embodies a critical orientation in much of his work. Dewey (1916) believed that preparing students with only entry-level job skills was insufficient. In order to enjoy a life of adaptability and self-reliance, Dewey advocated a transformative curriculum which allowed for integration of vocational and academic subjects and placed the needs of the students before the needs of the employer. Dewey asserted that learning does not take place just by thinking, but rather by living and by doing. Education should be dynamic and have some type of relationship with the learner. Dewey was also highly concerned about the socioeconomic class divisions and the inequalities of the status quo. Writing in 1916, Dewey stated, "it is the aim of progressive education to take part in correcting unfair privilege and unfair deprivation, not to perpetrate them" (p. 13)

Significance of the Study

Most of the current research being conducted about the new Welfare-to-Work legislation has centered on the question "does it work"? Ample evidence can be found to suggest that it does work: People are getting off welfare rolls and finding jobs. Ample evidence can also be found to suggest that Welfare-to-Work is not working. People are only

temporarily getting off welfare and their lives, even after finding a job, are not improving. Poor people "on" welfare continue to be poor people "off" welfare. However, missing from the discussion about Welfare-to-Work is a critical analysis of the meaning of "work" itself. To thoroughly assess the success of Welfare-to-Work, we must move beyond traditional measures of quantitative fact-finding. Before jumping to any conclusions about the effectiveness of Welfare-to-Work, we must interrogate the discourse of work that underlies the legislation and how that discourse is being played out in the TANF programs designed to move people from Welfare-to-Work. Rather than asking "what is the success rate in moving people from Welfare-to-Work," we should be asking "what is the success rate in moving people from welfare to good work?"

Limitations of the Study

1. Because of the high attrition rate, the voices of many welfare recipients who began this program are not included in this account. One could argue that the women who had the least voice remained voiceless.
2. This study does not include the perceptions of employers who hire TANF participants. Further study is warranted on this topic.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

A Parable- The Ant and the Grasshopper

Classic Version

The ant works hard in the withering heat all summer long, building his house and laying up supplies for the winter. The grasshopper thinks he's a fool and laughs and dances and plays the summer away. Come winter, the ant is warm and well fed. The grasshopper has no food or shelter so he dies out in the cold.

Modern Version

The ant works hard in the withering heat all summer long, building his house and laying up supplies for the winter. The grasshopper thinks he's a fool and laughs and dances and plays the summer away. Come winter, the shivering grasshopper calls a press conference and demands to know why the ant should be allowed to be warm and well fed while others are cold and starving. CBS, CNN, NBC, and ABC show up to provide pictures of the shivering grasshopper next to video of the ant in his comfortable home with a table filled

with food. America and the world are stunned by the sharp contrast. How can it be that, in a country of such wealth, this poor grasshopper is allowed to suffer so? Then a representative of the NAAGB (National Association of Green Bugs) shows up on Nightline and charges the ant with "green bias," and makes the case that the grasshopper is the victim of 30 million years of greenism. Kermit the Frog appears on Oprah with the grasshopper, and everybody cries when he sings "It's Not Easy Being Green." Bill and Hillary Clinton make a special guest appearance on the CBS Evening News to tell a concerned Dan Rather that they will do everything they can for the grasshopper who has been denied the prosperity he deserves by those who benefited unfairly during the Reagan summers, or as Bill refers to it, the "Temperatures of the 80"s." Richard Gephardt exclaims in an interview with Peter Jennings that the ant has gotten rich off the back of the grasshopper, and calls for an immediate tax hike on the ant to make him pay his "fair share." Finally, the EEOC drafts the "Economic Equity and Anti-Greenism Act." Retroactive to the beginning of the summer, the ant was fined for failing to

> hire a proportionate number of green bugs and, having nothing left to pay his retroactive taxes, his home is confiscated by the government. The story ends as we see the grasshopper finishing up the last bits of the ant's food while the government house he's in, which just happens to be the ant's old house, crumbles around him since he doesn't know how to maintain it. The ant has disappeared in the snow. And on the TV, which the grasshopper bought by selling most of the ant's food, they are showing Bill Clinton standing before a wildly applauding group of compatriots announcing that a new era of "fairness" has dawned in America.
>
> (E-mail, Yahoo,3/30/99)

These two different versions of the parable of the ant and the grasshopper illustrate the emotional tensions embedded in public discourse about welfare, work, and poverty. Such debates about personal responsibility, the cyclical nature of welfare, the lack of a proper work ethic among the poor, the merits of hard work, and the economic costs of Welfare-to-Working Americans led to the passage of the 1996 Personal Responsibility Act, which is best known as the Welfare-to-Work legislation.

As Congress was deliberating on welfare reform, Newt Gingrich (1996) articulated what many felt was the problem with welfare as it had developed since the 1930's:

> Captain John Smith's 1607 statement," If you don't work you won't eat," is the complete opposite of today's redistribution ethic that subsidizes idleness. Nothing could be less traditionally American than the modern welfare system. It violates the American ethic that everyone should work hard to improve both their own lives and the lives of their children. If you are not prepared to shoulder personal responsibility, then you are not prepared to participate in American civilization. (cited in Sidel,1996, p.58)

During the welfare reform debates in March of 1995, a representative from Wyoming expressed a similar sentiment about the poor, welfare, and work, using an analogy comparing the poor to wolves:

> The Federal Government introduced wolves into the State of Wyoming, and they put them in pens, and they brought elk and venison to them every day. This is what I call the wolf welfare program. The Federal Government provided everything that the wolves need for their existence. But guess what? They opened the gates and let the wolves out, and

> now the wolves won't go. Just like any animal in the species, any mammal, when they take away their freedom and their dignity and their ability, they can't take care of themselves (Sidel, 1996, p. 7).

When the Welfare-to-Work legislation was finally passed in 1996 (under a Democratic president and a Republican Congress), "work" became the rallying cry of the proponents of the new legislation who viewed the reform as a way of ending the vicious cycle of poverty and of reinstilling a work ethic in today's poor. However, missing from most debates about welfare-to-work is an understanding of the meaning of "good work" in a post-industrial society. Towards that end, I discuss in this chapter the history of welfare, the implications of the Welfare-to-Work legislation on work education, the reality of work in a post-industrial society, particularly as it relates to the meaning of "good work," the connection between good work and technology, and the socio-economic aspects of work in today's society.

Historical View of Welfare

In the late 1590's over one-fourth of the population in English towns were not working. Many were starving and freezing to death. To maintain civil order, the Elizabethan Poor Laws of 1601 were passed and were vastly important in that they put welfare as part of the National Labor Policy

(as did the Social Security Act in 1935). Ginsherg(as cited in Leiby, 1978) explains the importance of this law in establishing the first "welfare system":

1. The local government was given the duty to provide relief for the poor
2. Overseers of the poor to relieve poverty were established. These were among the earliest social workers.
3. Overseers were given the power to raise funds and use them in poverty relief.
4. Government relief was viewed as a last resort, after family and friends assisted the poor.
5. The worthy poor (hence the ones who could receive aid) were defined as those who were ill, feeble, old, orphaned, and disabled.
6. Workhouses and other solutions were established (pp. 124-127).

One solution advocated by the Poor Laws was the deporting to the colonies "sturdy beggars," often as indentured servants. These people were perceived as being capable of providing for themselves. Hence, many convicts, beggars, and orphans, were sent to America in slave like conditions on crowded ships. Many did not survive the journey, and the ones that endured had a great

> chance of arriving in a sickened and weakened condition. Upon arrival in the New World, they found laborious work available; however, many could not perform the physical requirements of the job. Many became beggars; some were taken care of by churches and relatives; others turned to crime; many simply died (Jansson,1993).

The early Americans used the Elizabethan Poor laws for guidance in dealing with the poor. Although most colonists' religious convictions about the sacredness of human life afforded them the obligation to care for members of their community unable to do so, Calvinistic ideas about virtue and hard work convinced them that all able-bodied men should work. Olasky (1992) explained the theological beliefs of the early colonists:

> 1. The belief that God was not merely the establisher of principles, but a personal intervenor.
> 2. It was important for the better off to know the poor individually, and to understand their distinct character.
> 3. The belief that God's law overarched every aspect of life.
> 4. The emphasis of withholding charity at times.
>
> (p.6)

Relief was given at the community level and non-community members needing aid were banished. This idea is captured in the following quotes from the Cotton Mathers in Puritan Divine who stated, "The poor that can work and won't, the best liberality to them is to make them" (Brenner,1988)" For those who indulge themselves in idleness, the express command of God unto us is, that we should let them starve" (Trattner, 1974, p.14). In Colonial America, the able-bodied who did not work could be sold, indentured, whipped, run out of town, or put in the emerging poorhouses while the "worthy poor" were taken care of by their home community and family.

Despite the lack of money in the early colonies available for social welfare, there was some private philanthropy (Day, 1989). Benjamin Franklin became a proponent of volunteerism and self-help and The Great Awakening, a religious movement beginning in the 1720's, advocated philanthropy not only to the elite but to all classes of people. Brenner (1988) asserts that this period brought a great transformation of "do-goodism" from the upper class. Until this transformation, upper class charity had been a mixture of responsibility and recreation, but now had evolved into a broadly shared and genuinely popular avocation.

From 1740 to 1850 the Industrial Revolution gained strength in the United States. Agriculture gave way to

technology and the increasing number of people moving to cities caused social problems. In 1796, the Speenhamland Act was passed which broadened relief making aid available when wages fell to poverty level (Day,1989). This resulted in industrial leaders lowering wages since workers could still receive welfare. To support these relief payments (known as outdoor relief), taxes had to be raised. From 1601 to 1832, taxes more than tripled, requiring the passage of the Poor Law Reform Act of 1834 which prohibited any outdoor relief to be given to able-bodied workers since it was a widely held belief that only through starvation would the able bodied be forced to work (Kern, 1998). This poor law was intended above all to make relief to the poor less desirable than the least attractive job (Wood, 1998).

As outdoor relief declined, indoor relief (also known as poor houses) developed. In trying to diminish the increasing costs of poverty, proponents of the poorhouses rationalized that it would be much more cost efficient to keep all beggars, poor, insane, orphans, disabled, and old together. Typically, these people were kept apart from mainstream society. This proved to be a problem to merchants because these were some of the people who had been providing the low-waged labor (Day, 1989). It was believed that once the poor knew that they would no longer receive any outdoor relief, begging would end; thus, poverty would end.

Furthermore, it was believed that poorhouses would provide a structured life (free of alcohol) and this discipline would enable them to rejoin society as a working member (Day, 1989). Proponents of poorhouses also believed that the life of children in impoverished homes would be improved as a result of their subjection to the structure and discipline of the poorhouses (Jansson, 1993).

According to Katz (1996), the poorhouses finally failed due to a myriad of reasons. These included:

1. The poorhouse was a total contradiction. It was to be a refuge for the helpless and a deterrent for the able who would not work. It would supposedly care for the poor humanely and discourage them from applying for relief. The "one" house was both a voluntary institution for relief and a penal institution for beggars.
2. There was widespread corruption in the system.
3. There was a lack of organization and effective administration. Most of the administrators and overseers had no education and were farmers who had lost their land. Poor people in power were delegated control over the other poor without the advantage of experience and educational know how.
4. There was little to no system of accountability of the exact population. For the most part, it was

an open door policy where people came and went at will.

5. The poorhouse was too many different things. It was a workhouse, an almshouse, and a penal institution.

6. Many poorhouses became a hellish squalor of filth.

(p.26)

Katz (1996) described the report of commissioners upon inspection of a poorhouse in South Carolina:

> The Yard was uncleaned-the surface drains filled with offensive matter-the privies in a most filthy state-the floors most unwashed, many of the windows obscured by apparently many months of accumulation of dust and cobwebs-nearly all the beds in a disgustingly neglected state, and in some localities, swarming with vermin.(p.26)

From the 1870's to the beginning of the 20th century, the United States experienced three depressions. These depressions coupled with the failings of the poorhouses resulted in the re-introduction of outdoor relief, much to the disdain of government officials. In order to combat this, social welfare and philanthropy became rationalized, specialized, and scientific. As a result of this, scientific charity, a new form of poor relief, emerged (Katz, 1996).

The reformers of this ideal wanted not only to purge the able-bodied from welfare relief but to make all relief payments primarily coming from the private sector. These reforms wanted to teach the poor that there was no "right" to poor relief in the America, only charity.

However, as Handler (1995) argued, embedded in scientific charity were these pervasive beliefs:

> 1. Most of those who were on relief did not need aid.
> 2. Indiscriminate relief became a way of life
> 3. Relief ensued a loss of independence and self-respect as well as the spread of vice.
> 4. Relief interfered with the proper functioning of the labor market. (p.95)

During this period of "scientific charity," private charity was favored over outdoor relief. It was thought that "relief" in this manner would force able-bodied to continue to work.

It must be noted, however, that many people objected to any form of charity. Drawing from the writing of Herbert Spencer, Social Darwinists believed that scientific charity imposed unnatural laws on society:

> The unfit must be eliminated as nature intended, for the principle of natural selection must not be violated by the artificial preservation of those

least able to take care of themselves (cited in Olasky, 1992, p.67).

From the late 1880's up to the turn of the century, America was caught in the spread of industrialism. During this time, labor for industrial production was scarce. Machines were constructed to replace unskilled labor, thus freeing up the scarce manpower for the jobs involving more skill and complexity (Cobb & Sennett, 1973). However, the huge influx of immigrants coming into America quickly solved this problem for the industrialists. Jansson (1993) reported that between 1880 and 1914, 69% of industrial labor was foreign born. With this over abundant labor supply, it now became cheaper for industries to pay unskilled labor to replace the skilled workforce with machines, causing hostilities toward many immigrants by the "old" Americans (Cobb & Sennett, 1973). Many lived in squalor housing due to the low wage work, however; the major concern to these workers was safety. Roughly 35,000 workers were killed and 536,000 injured every year during the early 1900's (Jansson, 1993).

Although the early 1900's still held onto the beliefs of scientific charity and social Darwinism, another philosophy of reason was beginning to have a modest impact. This progressive movement questioned the thinking of scientific management and the inhumane working conditions in

the factories. Led by William James and John Dewey, they were openly critical of the popular 18th century liberalism which suggested that individuals naturally pursued pleasure and avoided work unless bribed (Leiby, 1978).

The 1920's brought the ideas and production of the Henry Ford assembly lines. This period, commonly referred to as Fordism, brought about mass production, relatively high wages for these workers, and consumption through a liberal credit system became the ideal for many Americans (Aronowitz & Difazio, 1994).

In the spring of 1933, about 15 million men, or about one third of the work force, had become jobless (Cloward & Pivin, 1971; Dunkerley, 1996). More and more people were applying for relief. Many Americans of this time period viewed poverty as an individual fault brought on by laziness, but with changing economic times, that view was forced to change (Cloward & Pivin, 1971). With the Stock Market Crash of 1929, voters, not just "beggars," were now living in poverty. The Emergency Relief Act of 1932 was passed which allocated 300 million dollars to supplement local relief efforts. Three weeks after Roosevelt took office, he called for the creation of several initiatives (e.g., Civiliam Conservation Corps and Pubic Works Program) which would give Americans jobs.

Unwillingly, Roosevelt put the national government directly into the business of relief for the first time. This is ironic in that initially President Roosevelt and his administration viewed outdoor relief with disfavor. Pivin and Cloward (1971) summarized Roosevelt's beliefs about welfare:

> Direct relief was viewed as a temporary expedient, a way of maintaining a person's body, but not his dignity; a way of keeping the populace from shattering in despair, discontent, and disorder, at least for a while, but not of renewing their pride, of bringing back a way of life (p.8)

Davies (1996) showed an even harsher stance by Roosevelt concerning relief in his budget address on January 4, 1935.

> Continued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fiber. To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit(p.1).

Roosevelt and his administration, reared in a life characterized by discipline and hard work, believed that discipline had to be restored in the general population.

During this historical period, Roosevelt adopted subsidized projects to put this perception into practice. These projects included the Civilian Conservation Corps, Public Works Administration, Civil Works Administration, National Youth Administration, and the Works Progress Administration (Cloward & Piven, 1971).

The Social Security Act passed in 1935 was an extremely important piece of legislation during this period. It set up the modern U.S. Old Age Pension, an unemployment program, and a program to aid families with dependent children (ADC). Although many argue that "relief" was not a major concern of this legislative act, for the first time it provided a modicum of income security to working class families and a minimal safety net for the poor (Noble, 1997). Until this legislation, most poor relief was handled at the local and county levels. This program was the dominant policy for welfare distribution until the 1996 reform.

Critics such as Gans (1995), Davis (1997), and Pivin (1999) have argued that the Social Security Act excluded Blacks and minorities from all of its programs. They concluded that this was racially motivated by the wealthy southern Democrats who were determined to block any type of welfare system that allowed Blacks to reject extremely low-wage labor and exploitation as agricultural laborers and domestic servants. Piven (1999) further concludes that these

benefits afforded by the Social Security Act were for workers with long and stable records of employment, not domestics and farm laborers, who were primarily Black. Nevertheless, its importance must be acknowledged since it represented the first attempt by the federal government to institutionalize aid to the poor at a national level. The Social Security Act is important not only for its economic contribution to the needy of this period, but also for its impact on history. This act marked an end to the Poor Laws which had been in existence for centuries and made relief a permanent fixture in the federal budget (Trattner, 1974).

Another important piece of legislation of this period was the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1937 which established the minimum wage and minimum work week, outlawed child labor, and gave workers power they had never held before (Collins, 1996). In 1944, Roosevelt unveiled his "Economic Bill of Rights" in his State of the Union message. These rights that were to be guaranteed to all American citizens included:

1. The right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries, or shops or farms or mines of the Nation.
2. The right to earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation.

3. The right of every farmer to raise and sell his products at a return which will give him and his family a decent living.

4. The right of every businessman, large and small, to trade in an atmosphere of freedom from unfair competition and domination by monopolies at home or abroad.

5. The right of every family to a decent home.

6. The right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health.

7. The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment.

8. The right to a good education

(Collins, 1996)

This Full Employment Bill of 1945, which was to provide for governmental intervention in the guaranteeing of jobs, was defeated by House conservatives in 1945. In its place, the Employment Act of 1946 was substituted which made no mention of the right to employment. These policies survived throughout the 1940's and 1950's with minor revisions. Collins (1996) surmised that due to consumer demand brought by war, new markets for American products, the G.I. Bill, and the Interstate Highway Program, the 1940's and 1950's

also proceeded without any major focus or emphasis on equality.

With the election of John Kennedy in the 1960's, the plight of the poor was politicized and once again gained national attention. Scholars such as Collins (1996) and Zarefsky (1986)have suggested that this may be due to the president's reading of *The Other America,* which was one of the most significant events in making the general public aware of poverty. In his book, Harrington (1962) proclaimed that the number of poor Americans was somewhere between forty to fifty million. During this era, many reforms were passed with the intent to aid the poor. The Manpower Development and Training Act was passed in 1962 which authorized funds for training and retraining of unemployed and underemployed (Patterson, 1994).

In 1963, Kennedy was assassinated and Lyndon Johnson became president. Johnson continued the assault on poverty and in his state of the Union Address on January 8, 1964, issued a declaration of "war on poverty." His use of the metaphor of "war" was designed to rally public support around the common "enemy" of poverty, rather than the poor. During this period, often referred to as "The Great Society," many reforms to aid the poor were passed. From 1964 to 1965, the Economic Opportunity Act, the Food Stamps Act, the Civil Rights Act, and Medicare and Medicaid were

passed (Jannsen, 1993). These acts were significant in that they acknowledged that structural inequities were responsible for poverty rather than the individual deficiencies of the poor (Zarofsky, 1986). This "war," unfortunately, suffered defeat due to the evaporation of funds, which were being channeled into the Vietnam War. During this period, the war in Southeast Asia escalated, causing a change in national priorities. Some scholars of the Johnson administration predicted they could have eradicated poverty if not for the Vietnam War (Donovan, 1967). Reston (as cited in Donovan, 1967) stated that by 1967, the problem of poverty had been defined, the programs all had names, the machinery was now in place; but the funds were lamentably inadequate to the gigantic scope of the problem.

The early to mid 1970's saw few major change in policies toward the poor; however, the late 1970's and early 1980's began to show not only sizable cuts to poor relief but a noticeable flaw in the upward mobility of the middle class. Phillips (1990) related this concern through a statement by Levy:

> There was little mass unemployment in the 1980's and few people were forced to take money wage cuts. To the contrary, money wages were rising

briskly, but prices were rising, too, and few people gained ground.

We knew that something was wrong, but we lacked the language to describe it. Conflict among regions, industrial sectors, and generations was clearly on the rise, and we spoke of growing inequality as if census statistics would show the income distribution splitting apart. But official income inequality increased only modestly, and the inequality has been harder to measure. It involved a mixture of family arrangements, when people bought their homes, and how established they were in their careers. It involved their current income but also their outlook for the future and the likelihood of attaining their aspirations. It was an inequality of prospects in which many people who had attained the middle-class dream could ride out the period while people who aspired to the dream-people who were banking on rising living standards-saw the future shrink. (p.18)

In his first budget, Reagan called for across-the-board reductions in personal income tax rates, increase in defense budget, and a "drastic fiscal retrenchment" to reduce government spending, especially on social programs (Danziger & Gottschalk, 1995). This focus of the neoconservative

agenda of the Reagan years helped to bring back the understanding of poverty as an individual deficiency of the poor. Lawrence Mead (cited in Schwarz & Volgy, 1992) summarized this sentiment when he wrote that in today's economy, few Americans who work steadily will remain poor. Martin Anderson, the domestic policy advisor to President Reagan, was quoted as saying that "the real problem of welfare was the refusal of welfare mothers to take jobs" (Duprez, 1998,p.24). Deprez(1998) argued that the focusing on the dependency issue of welfare during this era was due in large part to Charles Murray and his book, Losing Ground, which she calls the domestic policy bible of the Reagan administration. Murray (1994) argues in his book that "some people are better than others. They deserve more of society's rewards, of which money is only one small part. A principal function of social policy is to make sure they have the opportunity to reap those rewards. Government cannot identify the worthy, but it can protect a society in which the worthy can identify themselves"(as cited in Sidel, 1996, p. 3).

By the early 1990's, many conservatives and liberals agreed that changes in the welfare system needed to be made. In President Clinton's 1992 bid for the presidential office, one of his campaign platforms was to "end welfare as we know it." When the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity

Act of 1996 was finally passed by a Republican Congress and signed into law by a Democratic president, it was believed by many to be the "silver bullet" needed to "end welfare as we know it." High hopes were established that this new legislation would lead the majority of welfare recipients to sustained self-sufficiency.

The most significant changes in the new welfare reform was the creation of a cash welfare block grant called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families(TANF). The TANF block program replaced four existing programs which included Aid to Families with Dependent Children(AFDC), AFDC Administration, the Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills Training(JOBS) program, and the Emergency Assistance Program (Astone & Watts, 1997). The following chart illustrates the significant differences between TANF and AFDC:

AFDC	TANF
Entitlement for families with children headed by a custodial parent, relative, caretaker, or legal guardian	Ends entitlement to cash incentives Cash assistance and child care programs are converted to block grants.
No federal time limit.	Five-year lifetime limit on cash assistance to families. Requires parent or caretaker to be involved

	in appropriate work activities leading to employment and self-sufficiency.
Required at least 20% of mandatory JOB Opportunity Basic Skills (JOBS) component, 20 hours per week with 75% attendance.	Require 50% of welfare registrants to participate in an approved recipients to work by the year 2003
Reduced benefits for non-cooperation with Reduced benefits for non-cooperation with Work	Cash benefits terminated for non-cooperation with TANF Work Program.
Exemption for medical reasons, having a child under 1 year old, etc.	One exemption from TANF for a recipient with a child under 3 months of age, with a lifetime limit of 12 months.

(Work First Guide: 1997,p.1)

In this section, I have examined the meaning of welfare by providing a brief historical account of welfare in the United States. In the next section, I examine the meaning of work in a post-industrial society.

The Meaning of Work in a Post-industrial Society

It is difficult to define the exact beginning date of post-industrialism (Nelson,1995). Some would suggest the 1940's while others point to the recession years of the 1970's. Block (1990) offers an explanation of post-industrial as given by Bell as the historical period that begins when the concept of industrial society ceases to provide an adequate account of actual social developments. Bell (as cited in Kincheloe, 1995, p.84) continued that while industrial societies are goods-producing, post-industrial societies are grounded on services, employ intellectual technology, and are dependent upon theoretical knowledge. Similarly, in describing the realities of work in a post-industrial society, Macdonald and Sirianni (1996) offer the following quote from George Will:"McDonald's has more employees than U.S. Steel. Golden Arches, not blast furnaces, symbolize the American economy" (p. 1).

In this section, the contradictions associated with a post-industrial society will be examined. Many equate the transformation from industrial to post-industrial to mean

the emergence of technology as the dominant ideology of the workforce. It is assumed by many that the majority of the jobs in this era will come from the high-tech sector. However, this description of post-industrial society is only partially true. The other side of the story is that in a post-industrial society, the greatest number of jobs created are those of low-skill, low-wage service sector jobs. Other identifiable markers of post-industrialism include disparity in wealth, downsizing, and contingency work. In this section, the socio-economic dimensions associated with post-industrialism as well as the meaning of "good work" in a post-industrial society will be examined.

Disparity of Wealth

In the 1980's, many Americans suffered a decline in their living standards. This was the first decline since the 1930's, and this decline has continued through the 1990's (Krugman, 1992). Danziger & Reed (1999) reported that the 1980's and the 1990's saw an increase in income for families in the upper middle while incomes for those at the lower middle class declined. The real income of the average family before taxes in the top 10% of the population rose 21% from 1979 to 1987 while the bottom 10% fell by 12%(Krugman, 1992). According to New York University economist Edward Wolf (Zuckerman, 1999), the top 20% of Americans account for

more than 100% of the total growth in wealth from 1983 to 1997, while the bottom 80% lost 7%. Collins (1996) concurs that according to the Federal Reserve Board and the IRS, in 1989 the top 1% of households was worth more than the bottom 90%. Based on these statistics, Collins speculated that more than one-half of all U.S. families are living from paycheck to paycheck with little or nothing in the bank for emergency.

Barlett and Steele (1996) stated that the U.S. has the widest gap between rich and poor of any industrialized nation as exemplified in these numerous disturbing assertions about inequality in America:

- In the U.S. the top 1% of households controls almost one-third of the nations net worth and the next 9% control another 26.8%. This means that 10% of households in the U.S. owns 67.2% of the wealth while the remaining 90% account for the final 32%.
- Salaries and bonuses of the highest paid executives ballooned an average of 951% between 1975 and 1995. The 73 million blue and White-collar workers experienced growth of just 142%, which did not keep up with the inflation rate of 183%.
- In 1995, John Welch Jr., the CEO of General Electric, salary rose 950% to 5.25 million while

at the same time the number of employees at GE dropped 41%. (GE stock options raised this to $35 million by the end of 1995)

- In 1995, Richard M. Rosenberg, CEO of Bank of America earned the equivalent of the salaries of 169 bank employees.
- American corporations paid their top officers $221 billion in compensation in 1992. This exceeded the combined incomes of every working individual and family earning less than $50,000 a year in Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, more than 12 million individuals and families. (p.29-31)

Sidel (1996) and Robels (1997) argue that this economic disparity in wealth is accompanied by racial polarization. Blacks and Hispanics disproportionately represent the bottom quintile of the economic distribution in the United States. In 1993, a study confirmed that the poverty rates of Blacks and Hispanics were three times greater than that of Whites. This study showed that 33.1% of Blacks, 30.6% Hispanics, and 9.9% Whites lived in poverty (Sidel, 1996).

Similarly, Handler (1995) and Deprez (1998) asserted that this disparity of wealth is accompanied by a "feminization of poverty." Since 1979, hourly wages declined steeply for all women, but African American women without a

high school diploma were hardest affected (Handler,1995). Even though much boasting has been done about the economy today, economic growth has deteriorated for women with dependent children, women of color, and women with little education (Robles, 1997). Today, over 50% of female headed families are living in poverty (Handler, 1995).

Newman (1993) suggested that the loss of the high paying manufacturing jobs has contributed to the disparity of wealth, creating the "newly poor" in the U.S. These "new poor" are the people who, until a short time ago, enjoyed the middle class status of the manufacturing sector. Many of these now displaced employees have worked in manufacturing and industry for years, and through the process of an upwardly mobile system had achieved substantial wage and benefit increases. This loss of a strong and stable middle class is foreboding for U.S. society as a whole as explained by Braun (1995):

> Any substantial decline of the middle class-even if it is partially psychological-would be ominous for the U.S. as a whole. It is the middle class whose values and ambitions set the tone for the country. Without it the U.S. could become a house divided in which Middle America would no longer serve as a powerful voice for political

compromise....Virtually everyone agrees that America needs to maintain its middle class.

With the continuing widening margin of wealth in the U.S., many are voicing concern over the potential for social unrest in this country (Braun, 1991). George Peterman, senior fellow at The Urban Institute, argued that the United States is becoming more and more a segregated society in which the rich live in the suburbs and the poor live in cities and in rural areas. This results in the poor no longer having access to adequate schools or gainful employment. He warned, "there's a lot of suppressed anger out there and an explosion of social unrest may be inevitable" (as cited in Braum, 1991, p.185).

Similarly, Edward Muller (1985) analyzed over 50 countries in which income inequality data existed. He reported that " a very strong inverse association is observed between income inequality and the likelihood of stability versus breakdown of democracy" (p.47). He noted that all democratic countries in his study which have huge disparities in income distribution inevitably experienced a demise in democracy. In countries with "intermediate income inequality," only 30% experienced a breakdown in democracy. Furthermore, he noted that in democratic countries with little disparity in income distribution, no breakdown of democracy was experienced. Interestingly, Muller noted:

> This negative effect of income inequality on democratic stability is independent of a country's level of development...Indeed, level of economic development, considered by many scholars to be the predominant cause of variation in the stability of democratic regimes, is found to be an irrelevant variable once income inequality is taken into account. (p. 52)

Sidel (1996) posited that the social unrest never manifests itself into violence or rebellion in this country because of the powerful ideology of meritocracy. She asserted that "common sense" should have the poor and powerless blaming the rich for their despair since this group has profited enormously while the vast majority have seen their income and quality of life spiral downward. The poor do not rebel, because they, like most Americans, buy into the concept of meritocracy in which success is dependent on individual action. Thus, the rich are perceived to have "earned" their wealth by working hard while the poor "deserve" poverty because of laziness and lack of ambition (Sidel, 1996). In this scheme, corporate CEO's are seen as highly motivated and productive, thus legitimizing their salaries while the poor are seen being headed by a female who prefers leisure to work and is only interested in having babies, thus perpetuating the cultural symbol of welfare.

Downsizing

It is interesting to note that the term "downsize" did not come into our language until the 1970's and referred to the shrinking of cars. In 1982 it began being used as a term for workers since it was easier to explain a job being lost due to downsizing rather than getting fired. Similarly, the term "layoff" also has experienced a re-definition since the 1970's. Its earlier denotation referred to a temporary inconvenience; now it means a permanent goodbye (Kleinfield & Uchitelle, 1996).

The reality of a post-industrial capitalist society such as ours is that jobs will be lost while new ones come into existence to replace the old ones. However, in this era the lower and blue collar workers as well as a large number of white collar workers are affected by downsizing and laying off. In the 1990's, many corporations that incurred huge profit margins have laid off thousands of workers. For example, Sears Roebuck laid off 50,000 workers in January 1993; Boeing laid off 28,000 workers in February 1993; IBM let go 63,000 workers in July 1993; AT&T laid off 15,000 in February 1994, and Delta Airlines let go 15,000 in April 1994 (Aronowitz & Esposito, 1998). By 1990 the auto industry in the U.S. had lost 25% or 150,000 jobs, the steel industry 60% or 225,000 jobs, and 50% or 700,000 workers had lost

their jobs in the textile and garment factories of the South (Aronowitz & Esposito, 1998). Labor Department statistics show a loss of 36 million jobs between 1979 and 1993, while the New York Times puts the estimate at 43 million by 1995 (Kleinfield & Uchitelle, 1996).

Fleisher and Goff (1999) admitted that some downsizing has taken place in the last decade; however, they are critical of statistics such as those cited above. They accuse these "doomsayers" of downsizing to be myopic in their interpretation of the meaning of downsizing. They harangue these "doomsayers" for using the journalistic tactics of case studies, designed to show the human and emotional side of the suffering rather than just the "dull" statistical data. Goff and Fleisher contended that between 1979 and 1995 about 43 million jobs were lost and that in 1996 the top 10 corporate downsizers let go over 103,000 workers. However, they also pointed out that the economy added over 19 million net jobs from 1979 to 1995 and any innovative and dynamic economy will experience downsizing and upsizing. They further contended that jobs will disappear in declining industries and in industries where technology and consolidation allow them to perform with fewer employees, but jobs will sprout up in other current or new industries. They also argued that innovations in agriculture have reduced its labor force to less than 3%.

Even though some farmers may suffer hard times, they assert that the big picture is being missed if we dwell on the plight of the farmer. These workers are now "freed" to go out and help produce other items that will now be affordable because of the productivity gains in agriculture.

Admittedly, as thousands of jobs are being lost, many more are being created. However, what needs to be examined more closely are the kinds of jobs that are being created. Kleinfield and Uchitelle (1996), authors of The Downsizing of America, stated that most people who lose a full-time job do get a new one; however, their new job pays less than the old or is only part-time.

The Service Sector

In a post-industrial society the place where most people are finding jobs is in the service sector. The service sector produces mainly two types of jobs: large numbers of low-skill, low-pay jobs and a few high-skill, high-income jobs. There are very few jobs in the service sector classified as middle income jobs. The National Research Council (1999) categorizes service work into three categories which includes personal service, clerical and administrative support, and sales and conclude that these jobs make up over 41% of the workforce today.

Morris and Western (1999) asserted that the service sector will contribute 80% of all jobs in the 21st century while Macdonald and Siranni (1996) predicted an even higher 90%. These jobs are distinguished by lower health and pension benefits and a higher rate of part-time work (Morris & Western, 1999). Braum (1995) pointed out that the higher paying manufacturing jobs have been replaced with lower paying service jobs which he calls the "McDonaldization of the work force." Nelson (as cited in Macdonald and Sirianni, 1996) pointed out that "service workers are more likely than manufacturing workers to have lower incomes, fewer opportunities for full-time employment, and greater inequality in earnings."

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, in 1994, 79% of nonagricultural jobs in the United States were in the service sector and 90% of the new jobs projected to be created by 2000 will be in service occupations (Macdonald & Sirianni, 1996). In today's economy, agriculture accounts for only about 3% percent of U.S. jobs, goods-producing sectors about 25%, and the service sector over 70%. Macdonald and Sirianni(1996) argued that the following factors contribute to this shift to the service sector:

1. Need for fewer workers due to automation
2. Exportation of manufacturing too low-wage job markets overseas

3.Feminization of the work force which has led to an increase in demand for such jobs as cleaning, cooking, childcare, etc..(p. 87)

Much has been said about the future of work and the new skills (usually implying "technological skills") U.S. citizens must acquire in order to participate fully in our economy. The learning of new technological skills for the "new workplace" does seem at odds with the fastest growing industries of service and retail trade. Much of the literature suggests that although new technology will undoubtedly create some new origins of work in some sectors, other areas of work will be diminished. Apple (1998) stated that only 15% of the new jobs being created in the 21st century will require high skill attainment. He concluded that the occupations that will contribute the most jobs in the future are building custodians, cashiers, secretaries, office clerks, nurses, waiters and waitresses, elementary school teachers, truck drivers, and other health case workers. None of the above are related to high technology and only nursing and teachers require any post-secondary education.

In a report published by the Southern Rural Development Center (Barfield & Beauliew, 1999), information is cited from America's Labor Market Information Service and the Bureau of Labor Statistics on the projections of the largest

number of jobs and educational requirements for 1996-2005 for the south (Oklahoma included). These are ranked according to the number of new jobs and the kind of education and training required:

1. Cashiers	short-term,on-the-job training
2. Retail Salesperson	short-term,on-the-job training
3.General Mangers/Executives	work experience/bachelor's degree or higher
4. Waiters/Waitresses	Short-term,on-the-job training
5. Janitors and cleaners	short term,on-the-job training
6. Registered nurses	Associate's degree
7. Truck drivers	short-term,on-the-job training
8. Marketing and Sales Supervisors	Work experience in related occupation
9. Nursing aids, orderlies	short-term,on-the-job training
10. General office clerks	short-term, on-the-job training
11. Systems Analysis	Bachelor's degree
12. Secretaries	Post-secondary vocational training
13. Guards	short-term,on-the-job training
14. Child care workers	short-term,on-the-job training

15. Home health Aids	short-term,on-the-job training
16. Clerical Supervisors	Work experience in related field
17. Receptionists	short-term,on-the-job training
18. Teachers	Bachelor's degree
19. Food Preparation workers	short-term,on-the-job training
20. Teacher Aids	short-term,on-the-job training

The jobs that are expected to grow at the fastest pace are professional jobs which do require advanced training; however, the majority of the jobs that are going to be available will be in the semi-skilled and un-skilled areas (Barfield & Beauliew, 1999). The question is, how can these types of jobs be transformed to provide a livable wage with some feeling of job security.

Today, the government and corporate America are still pleading for a more skilled workforce. Due to the rapid escalation of technology, the workforce, they claim, is insufficient to meet their needs. Citing the same findings of the SCANS report a decade earlier, corporate has America blamed U.S. schools for the poor educational preparation of U.S. workers. The worker is not prepared for the kinds of jobs needed in a post-industrial society, thus causing productivity and wage growth to decline. Mishel and Teixeira (1995) come to a different conclusion:

> The main obstacles to attaining high-performance workplaces are factors such as: management myopia and fear of empowering workers, the lack of significant wage pressure, the ease of pursuing alternative low-wage options (producing offshore, depressing wages, benefits, and working conditions) and a variety of institutional barriers to change. In the context of these factors, a poor supply of workers with the necessary skills is at best a minor additional obstacle. The available evidence does not indicate a skills shortage or skills mismatch, but rather a "management shortage," where U.S. employees have adapted to international competition by emphasizing low price rather than high skill production (p.193-206).

Contingent Work

Another feature of work in post-industrial U.S. society is the rapid growth of temporary or contingent work. For example, the largest employer in Mexico is General Motors while the largest employer in the U.S. is Manpower, a temporary help agency (Kleinfield & Uchitelle, 1996).

Contingent work is defined as jobs that do not fit the traditional description of a full-time, permanent job with

benefits. It includes part-time work, temporary work, and contract work. Yates (1994) pointed out the following in describing contingent work:

> 1.Involuntary part-time work has grown 121% between 1970 and 1990.
>
> 2.Temporary employment grew 300% between 1982 and 1990
>
> 3.There are between 29.9 and 36.6 million contingent workers, or between 25 and 30% of the labor force.(p. 19)

An example of this deception is observed in, The End of Work, in which Rifkin(1998) offered the following:

> Government figures on employment are often misleading, masking the true dimensions of the unfolding job crisis. For example, in August 1993 the federal government announced that nearly 1,230,000 jobs had been created in the United States in the first half of 1992. What they failed to say was that 728,000 of them, nearly 60 percent, were part-time, for the most part in the low-wage service industries.(p.167)

Many other studies seem to indicate the high number of jobs available in the U.S., but many of these studies do not look at the different dynamics concerning these jobs. For example, in another study done by Davis, Haltiwanger, and

Schuh (1996), they premise their report on the basis that a job is an employment position filled by a worker. It does not distinguish among part-time, full-time, and overtime employment positions. When studies such as these are viewed through a non-critical lens, indicators of the status of what is taking place in the "real" world become blurred and undefined.

Technological Aspects

If asked to define post-industrialism, many people would respond with some reference to technology. Jobs of the future will require technology; technology will re-define access to knowledge; technology will be the great equalizer.

One of the commonplace assumptions about a post-industrial society is that most jobs of the 21st century will require new technological skills. In other words, high skilled jobs are synonymous with technological advances. Workforce 2000, which was prepared by the Hudson Institute for the Department of Labor (Yates, 1994), reflects this belief:

> The jobs created between 1987 and 2000 will be substantially different than those in existence today. A number of jobs in the least-skilled job classes will disappear while high-skilled

> professions will grow rapidly. Overall, the skill mix of the economy will be moving rapidly upscale, with most new jobs demanding more education and higher levels of language, math, and reasoning skills. (p.40)

Dippo, Schenke, and Simon (1991) agreed that technology will change the way many people do their work and to attain high skill/high wage jobs, technological skills will be imperative. However, contrary to beliefs that technology will provide "good" work for the 21st century, they argued as new technology is introduced, work more often than not will become deskilled. Kincheloe (1999) concurred that although technology can produce counter trends that upgrade the skills demanded by individuals, deskilling, due to technology, will degrade many high-tech workers of today. One example is the introduction of industrial robots and the introduction of "numerical control" into the production process which allows for the transfer of knowledge and skills away from the experience/skilled worker to the computer program. Rifkin (1998) compares this new technology to Henry Ford's mass production of the 1920's.

> With numerical control, instructions on how a piece of metal should be rolled, lathed, welded, bolted, or painted are stored in a computer program. The computer instructs the machine tool

> on how to produce a part, and inserts robots on the line to shape or assemble parts into a product. Numerical control has been called "probably the most significant new development in manufacturing technology since Henry Ford introduced the concept of the moving assembly line. (p.86)

Furthermore, as cited earlier, the largest increase in jobs in the 21st century will be found in the service sector rather than in the fields of technology.

Another illusion of a post-industrial society is that technology will re-define access to knowledge and technology will bring about equality in the United States. In 1999 President Clinton asserted the following:

> Technology gives us the tools to ensure that no one gets left behind. Millions of Americans now on the economic margins can join the mainstream in the enterprise of building our nation. A child in South L.A. or in the remote part of Indian country can have access to the same world of knowledge in an instant as a child in the wealthiest suburban school in this country. (cited in Business Week,1999)

Unfortunately, statistics do not support the president's claims.

A 1997 report argued that the gap in computer ownership between low and high-income groups threatens not only to perpetuate the existing familial patterns of socioeconomic disadvantage, but also to widen the gap between the most and least affluent Americans (Agron & Kennedy, 1999). Statistics also show that households with incomes of over $75,000 are more than 20 times likely to use the internet as households with less than a $15,000 income (Argon & Kennedy, 1999). The disparity is even greater among African American families, while the National Urban League reports that only 16% of schools in the poorest neighborhoods have Internet access (Argon & Kennedy, 1999).

Lewis (1989) asserted that unless something is done to encourage greater participation by women and minorities in the use of technology even further divisions of labor will occur. Aronowitz and DiFazio (1994) problematized the naive assumptions embedded in the idea that technological access equals power. They echo the concern of McDermott (cited in Aronowitz and DiFazio, 1994) that technology is not characterized by the development of various machines, but more importantly, by the emergence of experts to control them. This further takes away voice of many groups and individuals, particularly the lower socioeconomic class. McDermott stated:

> It seems fundamental to the social organizations of modern technology that the quality of the social experience of the lower orders of society declines as the level of technology grows no less than does their literacy. And, of course, this process feeds on itself, for with the consequent decline in the real effectiveness and usefulness of local and other forms of organization open to easy and direct popular influence their vitality declines still further, and the cycle is repeated. (as cited in Aronowitz and DiFazio, p.87)

Another understanding of technology and post-industrialism is that technology will increase the amount of leisure time Americans enjoy. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, leisure is defined as "time free of work or duties." However, the very possibility of leisure is dependent not only on how many hours of the day one spends in employment but the number of hours one has to enjoy this leisure away from employment (Dippo & Simon, 1991). Technology has supposedly done away with much of the repetitive, meaningless, mind-numbing labor. Machines more efficient are replacing jobs such as office worker and bank tellers. This type of convenience purportedly gives people more time to enjoy the pleasures of life. The problem with this argument is that those workers who have been displaced

because of technology are not able to enjoy the luxury of leisure.

Good Work

Mainstream media and governmental analysis reports are exalting the wondrous economy of the U.S. in the late 1990's and beginning of the 21st century. They claim that with virtually a non-existent unemployment rate of 4.2%, any able-bodied person can find work. What they fail to report is the type of work available. The reality is that in the 21st century many U.S. workers face part-time, temporary, and contingent jobs which are counted by statisticians as if they were full-time (Yates, 1994). The Urban Institute (Handler, 1995) estimates that for women exiting welfare in the Work First legislation, only 61% will have steady work by their late 20's, with 36.9% working bad jobs and one-quarter in good jobs. Of the remaining 39%, most will be jobless. The study further predicts that only one half of recipients without high school diplomas will work steadily by their late 20's, and only 15.2% will have good jobs. These statistics are important in painting an accurate picture of what constitutes work as opposed to "good work" in a post-industrial society.

To understand the meaning of "good work" in a post-industrial society, one needs to have an understanding of

how the definition of work is defined and by whom the definition standard is set. Advocates for the working class have suggested a definition of "good work" that may differ substantially from the view of corporate America, while a welfare mother's view of "good work" may not agree with the theoretical summations of academia.

In the Industrial Era with the rise of a middle class, "good work" often equated with manufacturing jobs which usually paid enough to sustain a comfortable level of living on the salary of one. This version of existence was realistically satirized in the Charlie Chaplin film, "Modern Times," which portrays the degradation of assembly line production. Although this type of work was tedious and self-depreciating, it did allow a segment of the population to enjoy a financially secure lifestyle.

During the 1950's and 1960's most men were employed in "good jobs" that paid "good wages" and many of these jobs also include health insurance and pensions (Danziger & Gollschalk, 1995). Important to remember is that many of these jobs required minimum education. On the job training provided the necessary skills for success, and typically such jobs lasted until retirement, while the incomes of the rich, the middle class, and the poor all increased at similar rates (Danzinger & Gottschalk, 1995). This reinforced the wisdom that "a rising tide lifts all boats,"

that in a healthy economy the rate of poverty would fall"(p.2).

If "good work" means the ability to support a family, the 1970's found a large majority of people in the U.S. out of "good work." By the 1970's, labeled by Frank Levy (Handler, 1995) as the "quiet depression," medium family income fell and poverty increased. This trend has continued. A Census Bureau report in 1994 stated that the percentage of all Americans who work full time but earn less than the poverty level for a family of four rose by 50% from 1967 to 1993 and more then 25% of the U.S. population are officially living below the level required for a decent standard, a 50% increase since 1973 (Danziger & Gottschalk, 1995).

If "good work" is the ability to support one's family, fewer and fewer workers have opportunities for good work. Because of the low wages, most jobs in the service sector are not adequate for supporting a family. Furthermore, contrary to popular opinion, these jobs, particularly in low income areas, are scarce. For example, Newman's (Lennon & Newman, 1995) study at a McDonald's in a Harlem neighborhood found an average of 14 applicants for every opening, and Handler (1995) suggested that there are six times more people looking for jobs than there are vacancies. He cites a study conducted by the California Employment Development Department which projected the job vacancies in Los Angeles

through 1999 for low-skill position as 72,948 while the number of unemployed and discouraged workers seeking employment was estimated to be 595,300.

Kincheloe (1999) argued that "good work" in a post-industrial era is much different from the notion of work in the industrial age. Drawing from a a post-modern critical perspective, Kincheloe (1999) asserted that "good work" today must include the following ten dimensions:

1. The principle of self-direction
2. The principle of the job as a place of learning
3. The principle of work variety: freedom from repetitive boredom
4. The principle of workmate cooperation
5. The principle of individual work as a contribution to social welfare
6. The principle of work as an expression of self
7. The principal of work as a democratic expression
8. The principle of workers as participants in the operation of an enterprise
9. The principle that play is a virtue and must be incorporated into work

10. The principle of better pay for workers in the growing disparity between managers and workers (pp.65-69)

Kincheloe (1999) goes on to define the characteristics of bad work:

1. Social Darwinism: Workers must operate under the law of the jungle. Those who succeed at work are the fittest.
2. Nature as enemy: One of the most basic of human struggles involves man vs. Nature.
3. Science as a fact provider: Positivism covertly shapes the nature of the workplace.
4. Efficiency as maximum productivity: worshipping the bottom line.
5. The supremacy of systems-efficiency and cost-benefit analysis models, or the effectiveness of standardized inputs in the quest for agreed-upon outputs.
6. People-proof jobs: designing work so that no matter how dumb a worker might be, the job can still be done.
7. Short term goals: the absence of ethical vision.

8. The contingency of human happiness and human motivation on the acquisition of better consumer items (pp.70-73).

Wirth (1992) echoed a similar sentiment in his notion of "good work" in which he presents evidence of the declining efficiency of Fredrick Taylor's notion of scientific management in a post-industrial era which ignores the human or "socio" side of work. Wirth presented democratic sociotechnical theory as an alternative which emphasizes communication, reflection, collaboration, and inventiveness. He concludes that to ignore the human aspect of work is to be out of touch with reality.

This idea of good work/bad work is particularly relevant to any discussion about the recent Welfare-to-Work legislation that has adopted an uncritical use of the word "work." Typically, when used in the context of this legislation, "work" simply means a job, even if it is a job that perpetuates a person's impoverished status. The idea behind the legislation is a naive belief that being engaged in any kind of work is the means to social mobility.

Kincheloe's (1999) differentiation between work and job is important in understanding the meaning of "work" in the Welfare-to-Work initiatives. He asserts "a job is simply a way of making a living; work involves a sense of completion and fulfillment. In a job, items are produced for

consumption, whereas work produced items that are put to use in people's lives. An individual's purposes and meanings are engaged in work, but they are repressed in a job" (p. 64). Clearly, the notion of "good work" must include more than simply the attainment of a job. In a study done based on the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, the meaning of a "good job" was determined by the voice of low-wage working women. They stated that they need at least $8.00 an hour and 35 hours a week in order to cover all child care, transportation, and other expenses (Handler, 1995).

Furthermore, the assumption underlying the Welfare-to-Work legislation that placing people in jobs automatically makes them feel better about themselves, leading to personal responsibility (hence the name of the legislation "Personal Responsibility Act), economic independence, and social mobility conflicts with the economic realities of today which acknowledges that we are a society defined more and more by economic disparities. For example, by the end of the 1980's, the average CEO earnings were seventy-two times more than a teacher and ninety-three times more than a factory worker (Kincheloe, 1999). A recent study in South Carolina indicated that three out of every five former welfare recipients were working an average of 34 hours at a rate of $6.34 an hour (Albelda, 1999).

Kincheloe's (1999) version of "good work" will probably not be readily embraced by the business community which typically operates on a "maximize profit by minimizing cost" mentality. However, his ideals are worth striving for if we believe that in a democratic society all members should have the opportunity to engage in work that has the potential for both personal and social transformation. This means that workers are actively involved in decisions which affect the workplace. Workers have opportunities for creative and autonomous expression. Workers should share in economic benefits. In the context of Welfare-to-Work, if we cannot depend upon employers to adopt a philosophy of "good work," then we must turn to the TANF programs themselves to help welfare recipients acquire the technical skills and social skills needed to compete in the 21st century.

The Personal Responsibility Act of 1996, commonly referred to as the Welfare-to-Work legislation, bases its premise on the rationale that any work is better than no work. The idea of the meaning of "good work" is absent from the philosophy which guided the passage of this legislation. Statistics are showing the enormous decline in the number of people on welfare, but it fails to address the issue of what type of work is being obtained. Many critics of this legislation claim that it is creating an even greater number of working poor in this country. Short term job specific

training, which trains workers for a particular job that may be only short term is encouraged while advanced training/education which could lead to a life of self sufficiency is not. The next section of this study will focus on different strategies concerning education in a post-industrial world.

Work Education

In order to be more effective educators in this post-industrial era, many obstacles, such as gaining a better understanding of the different skill levels needed must be overcome. Grey and Herr(1998) offer the following hierarchy:

1.Level I - Work habits and people skills. These include work ethic and basic skills that are necessary for all employment. These jobs typically include low wage/low skill work.

2.Level II- The level I skills with some academic training. A certificate from a vocational program is typical of this level. Workers can expect to obtain entry level positions which may/should lead to upward mobility, benefits, etc...

3. Level III - The skills of levels I and II plus Specific Occupational and Literacy skills. These are the high skill/high wage jobs that are available to the minority who possess these high skills. Although these

are the fastest growing jobs, they are low compared to the number of low wage/skill jobs in this country.

This hierarchy, although seemingly simple, demonstrates a concrete manner which educators can use to judge the type of work they are preparing their students for and how workers can gain a labor market advantage. It also exposes the myth of "good jobs" in the U.S. When asked, business leaders suggest that if someone has the "soft Skills" when they are hired, they can be taught the rest. What this suggests is that low skilled workers in this country have an option to be successful if they will work hard and adopt the proper attitude. What it fails to say is that these are entry level positions(Level I) that often offer no upward mobility and still leave the people working in them poor. Cohen (1998) pointed out that a major reason for the success of the welfare-to-work reforms is the change in how welfare recipients are prepared for work. He asserted that computer and typing skills are the old fashioned way and have been replaced with the teaching of soft skills such as showing up on time, not fighting with workers, and dressing appropriately. Cohen (1998) quoted the words of Eli Segal, president of thee nonprofit Welfare-to-Work Partnership. "Employers are saying, Give us people with the right attitude and job readiness, and we'll take care of the

rest." What is not mentioned by Mr. Segal is the type of jobs these employers are offering.

Implications for Work Education

The implications of the new welfare reform legislation on adult education are significant. First and foremost, all educational programs (e.g., ABE classes, GED classes) which do not include work readiness are not funded under the new legislation. Thus, community colleges, technical institutes, and other educational institutions which in the past offered literacy programs, remedial work, short-term certificates, and other such programs have lost many of their clients and their funding. Secondly, many welfare recipients under the new TANF legislation may be denied opportunities to pursue post-secondary education because the Pell Grant mandates part-time school enrollment. This presents a conflict under the new legislation since the majority of welfare recipients are required to work full-time. Lastly, since the major emphasis of the new reforms is on "work-first," critical educators in adult education will have to adapt their emphasis from critical pedagogy and transformational learning to the new workplace environment

Since the Welfare-to-Work legislation restricts the amount of time one can spend in preparing for work, workforce training programs, which aid workers looking for a

job and on the job, will become more and more prevalent. Typically, these programs translate into a series of short-term classes focusing on teaching literacy skills which are occupational context specific. However, scholars such as Grubb (1996) have argued that this approach to this type of instruction is faulty and does not provide for the kinds of critical thinking and reflection needed to be an active citizen in today's society. The basic premise is that workforce training programs must take seriously the definition of "workplace literacy" cited in the SCANS (the Secretary of Labor's Commission of Achieving Necessary Skills) report which includes a wide range of basic skills (e.g., reading, speaking), thinking skills (e.g., problem solving), and personal skills (e.g., responsibility, honesty). This is particularly important in light of the focus of the Welfare-to-Work initiatives which pay little attention to developing critical and reflective thinkers; rather the aim is to produce compliant and obedient workers who should be content with making minimum wage and happy that they are no longer economically dependent upon the government. The job of critical adult educators will be to reform the curriculum and pedagogy of workforce education programs so that individuals, many of whom will be welfare recipients, can learn not only the skills needed to be

successful on the job but also the skills needed to be critical, active agents of social change.

Critical Pedagogy

A growing number of educators have begun to question workforce training programs based on what Freire (1973) has called the "banking model" of education in which the job of the teacher is simply to dispense knowledge. Educators such as Gregson (1994), Lakes (1994), and Schultz (1997) have articulated the need for adult education to be based on notions of critical literacy. According to Lakes (1994), in a critical perspective, learners not only gain an understanding of the sources of injustice in their own work lives, but more importantly acquire the analytical tools in which to collectively challenge and act on the origins of their marginalization or oppression in the labor market.

Programs based on notions of critical literacy incorporate curriculum opportunities that encourage adult workers to analyze the social, political, and economic conflict of their work with the intent of transforming their position in it. For generations, the Tayloristic tradition of "efficiency" has been the dominant ideology of both education and industry. Advocates of scientific management believe that problems can best be resolved by expert designed technical solutions which ignores the "socio"

dimension of work. Wirth (1992) proclaimed this type of rationale to be out of touch with reality since it ignores the human aspect of work. Wirth (1983) concluded that socio-technical work design provides the conceptual framework for analyzing work in ways to combine broader worker participation with technical design to support it and to challenge Tayloristic principles.

Although speaking more specifically about vocational education, Gregson's (1994) explanation of how critical pedagogy might transform the curriculum of workplace programs offers a different view of curriculum. The curriculum of workplace literacy programs based on a critical perspective:

1. should be participatory
2. should take students from the known to the larger context
3. should be placed in a historical context
4. should engage students in liberatory dialogue
5. should make learning experiences relevant
6. should promote active citizenship
7. should make curriculum content problematic
8. should encourage reflective thinking

(p.167)

However, curriculum reform based on a critical approach is not without its problems. For example, Kalman and Losey

(1997) described a case study in which a teacher attempted to implement a critical curriculum approach in a hospital literacy program. Despite the good intentions of the teacher, she continuously reverted back to a traditional style of teaching. The authors offer several explanations for this phenomenon. "Good" teaching has traditionally been associated with maintaining authority in the classroom. Teachers who attempt to implement a critical curriculum rarely have administrative support and are usually not allowed enough time for adequate preparation. Further, many adult learners may initially resent unfamiliar non-traditional teaching methods.

In contrast, Greenwood and Bartlett (1996) related an account of a teacher who incorporated a critical approach to curriculum which ultimately alienated her African-American women students. As the author pointed out, the teacher over-relied on stereotypical assumptions about how African-American women learn best while failing to take into account the context of the women's lives. Most of the students were the victims of abuse; thus, questioning authority and discussing controversial issues had real and often serious consequences for the women.

Schultz (1997) argued that curriculum planners involved in planning workforce-training programs based on a critical approach need to acknowledge that curriculum decisions are

always decisions about power and politics. Such questions as "whose knowledge is being excluded in the curriculum" and "whose voices and life histories are not represented in the daily lesson plans" must be asked, and the focus of such an education should be on equity and empowerment, not some future technological need.

Summary

The question of "what to do with and for the poor" has garnered multiple responses. In early colonial times, taking care of the poor was the responsibility of the local, meaning families, churches, and communities. By the mid 1800's, states began to take over some of the responsibility of taking care of the poor through indoor and outdoor relief. With the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935, the federal government assumed the major responsibility for providing aid to poor families with dependent children. The 1996 Personal Responsibility Act shifted the focus away from the federal government to the state with the giving up block grants to states, which could then decide the best measures for aiding people to move from Welfare-to-Work.

In the study, I acknowledge that the worker of the 21st century, especially the lower skilled and lower educated, face challenges in his/her quest for "good work." As evidenced, the meaning of "good work" does not start or stop

with a simple definition. In this post-industrial society in which we now reside, there seems to be no single truth, only varying realities. While scholars call for "good work" to be democratically enabling, one of my interview subjects explained it in a totally different light. When asked about the meaning of "good work," she matter-of-factly stated, "It is not the work, it's the wage."

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

> Since 1996, welfare caseloads nationally dropped more than 30%--a remarkable decline. State agency heads, local caseworkers and recipients now realize that the business of welfare is work--not checks. (Thompson, 1998, p.37)

> Oh yeah, McDonald's is hard work for low pay. I've got friends that work there, and she said you're looked at like a little cockroach. (Lilly, age 24, White female]

The two quotes juxtaposed above exemplify a primary problem with current research about Welfare-to-Work. The first quote, like much of the research being published, touts the legislation as a huge success. Nationwide statistics indicate that people are moving off Welfare-to-Work. The welfare caseload has dropped nationally 47% since January 1994 (Newman, 1999). Oklahoma has been considered one of the most successful states with a decrease in welfare caseloads since 1996 of over 34% (Welfare Reform Succeeds in Oklahoma,http://www.onenet.net/okdhs/division/fssd/untold

htm). However, Lilly's quote problematizes the success and points to the problems with relying solely on statistical data to draw conclusions about the success of any reform, including Welfare-to-Work. To gain an understanding of the social implications of Welfare-to- Work, one must delve into the lived realities of these "numbers." This study involving one particular Welfare-to-Work program and 18 people whose lives are impacted on a daily basis by the welfare reforms is intended to provide a glimpse into the realities not mentioned in statistics.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design employed in this study and to detail the specific methods and procedures used in conducting this qualitative case study of a Welfare-to-Work program.

Case Study Research Design

Case studies can be either quantitative or qualitative. A quantitative case study seeks to explain a given phenomenon whereas a qualitative case study seeks to understand and describe the phenomenon. A qualitative descriptive case study was used in this study to explore the research questions and satisfy the purpose of the study. In explaining the purpose of qualitative research, Merriam (1998) asserted that qualitative research is concerned with understanding the meanings individuals give to a phenomena.

Qualitative research always considers the contexts in which meaning is made and aims at a holistic understanding, using thick description. Qualitative researchers seek to understand and present the perspectives of their participants (called the emic perspective). Additionally, in qualitative research the researcher is the primary means or instrument for collecting and analyzing data.

Merriam (1998) defined qualitative case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a singe instance, phenonomon or social unit" (p. 21). Stake (1995) asserted "a case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case" (p. XI). Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995) concurred that defining and delimiting one's case is the most important step in conducting case study research.

What is a case? A child may be a case, a particular instructional program may be a case, a School-to-Work program may be a case, or a college classroom may be a case. What all of these have in common is that each is a specific, unique bounded system (Smith, 1978; Stake, 1995). As Stake (1998) asserts, "a doctor may be a case, but his doctoring lacks the specificity, boundedness, to be called a case" (p. 87).

Typically in education and the social sciences people and programs are the cases of interest. Usually the case shares common characteristics with other persons and

programs although sometimes one might study a case because of its atypical characteristics. Although one may pick a case because of its similarities to other cases, the primary purpose of case study research is not to generalize. "Case study research is not sampling research. We do not study a case primarily to understand other cases. Our first obligation is to understand this one case" (Stake, 1994, p. 4).

Gall, Gall, and Borg (1999) defined four characteristics of case study. First, one conducts a case study for the purpose of gaining insights into a particular phenenomon. Second, case study involves the collection of a large amount of data about the specific case. Data collection typically takes place over several months and involves a variety of data collection methods. Third, case study is context driven - that is one studies a phenomenon in its natural context. Fourth, a case study seeks to catch the complexity of a phenomenon by representing both the emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspective. In a case study, the voices of the insiders are heard loud and clear. However, the researcher uses his/her etic perspective to theorize and conceptualize the phenomenon in a broader context.

Similarly, Merriam (1998) defined three characteristics of a case study: particularistic, descriptive, and

heuristic. Particularistic implies a focus on a particular person, situation, event, program or phenomenon. Descriptive means that the written end product of a case study is comprised of "thick description." This means that the research must employ the strategies of a good writer to provide rich and descriptive details of the phenomenon under study. Heuristic implies that the "case study helps us to understand processes of events, projects, and programs and to discover context characteristics that will shed light on an issue or object" (Sanders, 1981). There are many different types of case studies and many different reasons for why researchers study a case. Stake (1998) identified three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. In an intrinsic case study, one undertakes the study because of one's intrinsic interest in the topic. One wants to better understand the particular case (e.g., a particular child or curriculum). In an instrumental case study, the case itself is of secondary interest. The primary interest is in providing "insight into an issue or refinement of theory . . . [the case] facilitates our understanding of something else" (p. 88). In a collective case study, a researcher studies several cases at the same time in order to gain insights into a particular phenomenon or population. Jonothan Kozol's (1991) Savage Inequalities represents a collective case study in that he investigated

several poor schools in the United States to better understand and better theorize the structural inequalities in contemporary American public education.

Merriam (1998) categorized different types of case studies according to their overall content. In a descriptive case study, the purpose is to present a "detailed account of the phenomenon under study" (p. 38). Descriptive case studies are typically atheoretical but they are helpful in giving basic and descriptive information about areas in which little research has been conducted. New programs and experimental practices are typically the focus of descriptive case studies.

The purpose of an interpretive case study is to provide descriptive data as well as to analyze, interpret, and theorize the phenomenon under study. Sometimes a typology or model is constructed based on the data analysis. The purpose of an evaluative case study is to describe (as in a descriptive case study), explain (as in an interpretive case study), and to evaluate or produce a judgement. Kenny and Grotelueschen (cited in Merriam, 1998) suggested that "case study can be an important approach when the future of a program is contingent upon an evaluation being performed and there are not reasonable indicators or programmatic success which can be formulated in terms of behavioral objectives or individual differences" (p. 39).

Typically case study researchers use multiple methods for collecting data. The three most commonly used are interviews, observations, and document analysis. Merriam (1998) noted several reasons why field observations are important in creating a thorough case study. As an outsider the researcher may observe things in the setting which have become routine or commonplace to the participants themselves. For example, in this study, I noted in my observations of classroom discussions that anytime an authority figure in a work setting was referenced, the person was referred to as a "he." Field observations also provide data to be used as a reference point in interviews. For example, using the above notation in my field observations, I followed up in the interview with a more in-depth discussion of gender in the workplace. Furthermore, observations are important because people often say things and do things in a classroom or other informal setting which they would not do or say in a formal interview. Merriam provides the following checklist of elements to observe:

- the physical setting
- the participants
- activities and interactions
- conversation
- subtle factors
- researcher's behavior (pp. 97-98)

Another method for collecting data for a case study is through interviewing. The most prevalent type of interview is the one-on-one interview. According to Bogdan and Biklin (1992) an interview is a "purposeful conversation, usually between two people . . . that is directed by one in order to get information from the other" (p. 96). The purpose of an interview is to gain information in the participant's own words. Typically this information is that which cannot be obtained through observations (e.g., someone's beliefs, thoughts, perceptions, or feelings). The kinds of questions the researcher asks in an interviews depends upon what kind of information he/she seeks to gain from the interview. Typically, interviews are categorized as highly structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Merriam, 1998).

Structured questions are similar to those that would appear on a written survey. Interviews using structured questions would be precise and consistent for all people being interviewed and would not deviate from the interview protocol. For example, "How long have you been receiving welfare benefits" is an example of a structured question.

Semi-structured and unstructured interviews are much more commonly used in case study research because these allow the participants to convey their perceptions and knowledge in a more authentic way. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher may go into the interview with a

set of flexibly worded questions but these questions shape the parameters of the conversation. The researcher allows the interviewee to meander into topics he/she wants to discuss. In an unstructured interview, the researcher has no preset questions typically because the researcher does not know enough about the topic to know what questions to ask. An example of an unstructured question might be "tell me what is going on here." Often an unstructured interview follows the format of a conversation between two good friends. In most qualitative research studies, researchers uses a combination of all three kinds of questions.

The third type of data collection method case study researchers often use is document analysis. Documents might include official records, personal documents, curriculum guides, printed materials, newspaper articles, public records, or researcher-generated documents (e.g., photographs taken by researcher).

Rationale for Using Case Study In Exploring Welfare-to-Work

The purpose of this case study was to describe and analyze the meaning of "good work" as perceived and enacted by the various stakeholders involved in a TANF program in Oklahoma. The research questions framing this exploration included:

1. What are TANF participants understanding of the Welfare-to-Work legislation?

2. How do TANF participants and the teachers and administrators in the TANF program define "work"?

3. What are the perceptions of the various stakeholders involved in a TANF program regarding the meaning of good work and how do these meanings differ?

4. What is the meaning of "good work" in the practices (e.g., career guidance) and programs (e.g., job training) associated with the Welfare-to-Work legislation?

These four research questions were designed to address the purpose of the study. The first two were aimed at helping me discover the meaning of work through my interviews with participants and my observations at the research site. It was important that I focused both on what people say is their understanding of the meaning of work and how people enact through various practices (e.g., job training, counseling sessions, etc) their understanding of what "work" means in the context of Welfare-to-Work. The third question was important because it focused my attention on understanding the nuances of difference that are manifested in my interviews and observations about the meaning of work. The fourth question represents what I see as the most important aspect of this study, that is, what is the impact of the different ways in which work is

understood, articulated, and enacted on the people who have the most to lose and to gain (i.e., welfare recipients) from the Welfare-to-Work reforms. The fourth question was important because it moves us from thinking about success in terms of numbers only (i.e., how many people have left the welfare rolls) to an understanding of how a discourse (i.e., the discourse of work) shapes policies and practices. For example, does the meaning of "work" as being articulated in the programs designed to move people from Welfare-to-Work offer people opportunities for "good" work (Kincheloe, 1999) or does it reproduce a stratified, unequal work force in which some people have the opportunity to engage in "good" work while others are relegated to unstable, emotionally unsatisfying, low-skilled, low paying jobs?

To gain insights into the research questions, an interpretive case study was determined to be the most appropriate research design for this study. One purpose of an interpretive case study is to describe in rich detail the particular case of study. This study provides thick description of one particular TANF program in Oklahoma. This description is important since all studies to date in Oklahoma have utilized statistical analysis and presented findings in the form of numbers exiting the welfare rolls. Using this descriptive data, another purpose of an interpretive case study is to "develop conceptual categories

or to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data gathering. . . . A case study researcher gathers as much information about the problem as possible with the intent of analyzing, interpreting, or theorizing about the phenomenon" (Merriam, 1998 p. 38). Drawing upon critical theory, this study provides an analysis of the meaning of "good work" as understood by the various constituents involved in a Welfare-to-Work program.

Context of the Study

In 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (P.L. 104-193), known as the Welfare Reform Bill, was enacted. In effect, this new legislation replaced four existing programs: Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); AFDC Administration; the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program, and the Emergency Assistance Program (Watts & Astone, 1997). Under Title I-Block Grants for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), this bill gave the states the responsibility of administering welfare. The federal funding for TANF programs was capped at $16.4 billion annually through the year 2002, and this $16.4 billion was divided among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The new legislation states that after receiving benefits for two

years, welfare recipients must work a minimum of 20 hours per week. TANF recipients have up to 12 months of vocational training to prepare for a job, and only 20% of TANF recipients in a state can be in vocational training at the same time.

The block grant in Oklahoma is administered by the Department of Human Services. Oklahoma officially began welfare reform on October 1, 1996, with three major changes incurring. These included:

1. Federal welfare reform requires most adult welfare recipients to immediately look for work upon applying for benefits and within two years be working or participating in a work-related activity.

2. There is a five-year lifetime limit on cash assistance for most adult recipients. In Oklahoma, the maximum cash assistance for a family of three is $292 per month.

3. Oklahoma initiates job search activities at application.

Oklahoma has taken the Work First approach to welfare reform. The Work First agenda has as its underlying principle that "work is better than welfare." Participating families receiving TANF in this state must sign a personal responsibility agreement underscoring the idea that success in the work area is largely their responsibility and the

failure to cooperate results in closure of their case. One of the primary assumptions of Work First in Oklahoma is that "Oklahoma DHS, believing that work is better than welfare, regards work as a sign of family stability" (Welfare Reform Succeeds in Oklahoma: The Untold Story).

Oklahoma has been very successful according to national reports. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration acknowledged that Oklahoma earned a 3.4 million high performance bonus for placing recipients in full time jobs(December 6,1999.http://www.okdhs.org/Ipublicinfo/press/gj120699.htm). In 1999, statistics have shown that the state reduced its cash assistance by 25% and has had an overall reduction of 67.6% since this state initiated the Welfare Reform activities. In a news release on January 4, 2000, the same statistics were reported, although more information was included. It stated that despite the decline in cash assistance (TANF), the volume of case activities has remained relatively constant during the past seven years (http://www.okdhss.org/ipubliccinfo/press/gj010400.htm).

Setting of the Study

This study was conducted in one of the 22 vocational sites in Oklahoma that has chosen to include a TANF program. Red River Vocational Center (the site of the study) was chosen because it was close in proximity allowing me to

spend initially two to three days in the field. In a pilot study, contact had been made with an administrator at RRVC who was amenable to a study on her site. Red River Vocation Center is located in a highly affluent residential community. The existing facility is 15 years old with extensive renovation taking place continuously. RRVT resembles a high-tech college. It is a huge facility in an upscale suburb of a major city. Houses in the area range in price from approximately $150,000 in the old surrounding neighborhoods to millions in the new subdivisions being constructed. It is an atypical surrounding of what one would equate with a TANF program.

Secondary students from seven area high-schools take classes at RRVT. As typical of the other vocational centers in the state, RRVT population includes approximately 60% adults. RRVT offers programs in Business and Computer Technology, Health Sciences, Industrial Engineering and Technology, Social Sciences, and Human Resources. Certain courses offered in business, advanced technology, health, transportation and industrial technology are eligible for college credit through a local community college and nearby university. In addition to the courses and programs cited above, RRVC also offers a variety of short term courses, professional workshops, and continuing education programs.

The original welfare projects started in Oklahoma vocational sites in 1993, and there were initially five programs. The funding that was designed for the five programs in 1993 has not been changed; however, now this money must be divided among 22 sites rather than the original five. Each of the vocational TANF sites has designed its own program following state guidelines for transitioning welfare recipients to work. According to information disseminated by the state's Vo-Tech agency, TANF students, in addition to receiving vocational training, also receive aptitude, interest, and ability evaluations, basic skills training (e.g., math, reading, grammar), employability skills (e.g., resume writing), individualized work site training, life-skills training (e.g., developing a work ethic), and niche market training (e.g., job skills that are needed in high demand occupations).

Before 1997 no organized effort for welfare recipients existed at RRVC. By the end of August 1997, three students were enrolled; by December there were eleven, and in March of 1998, 50 were added making the total 83. In the summer of 1997, Red River's Life Off Welfare (LOW) program hired two people to begin the program: Tracy, the job coordinator, and Marilyn, the director. Later, Julie, the remediation teacher, was hired.

During the first year, 83 students participated in the LOW program. By 1999 that number had increased to 139 students. The retention rate of the TANF population is around 84%, while the general population at RRVT stays around 74%. In the last three years there have only been three men go through portions of the program. About 60% of the TANF students are African-American; another 35% are Caucasian; the other 5% are American Indians, Hispanic, and Asian.

Students are referred to the program by DHS caseworkers and private agencies; thus, the administration in this program has to maintain a positive working relationship with area DHS offices. Funding for the programs comes from four different sources. These sources include:

1. Flat amount from the state Vo-Tech
2. Flat amount from DHS to assist with infrastructure
3. Money from an incentive system which began in July 1999. They receive money based on the placement of students in a job. They received a second incentive six months later if the students were still working at that job.
4. Financial aid the students receive helps to defer the cost of having to pay students tuition

It should be noted that this particular program is self-supporting, thus, not interfering with the finances of the overall institution.

Unlike many of the other TANF programs, Red River's LOW program does not offer custom training or niche marketing training. This program primarily filter students through the regular Red River school offerings. No special training classes exist solely for TANF students. They are part of the regular student body and matriculate into the various vocational programs offered at RRVC. Different from other programs in the state, the LOW program does not offer short term job specific training for welfare clients, and they do not place students in jobs.

Unique to the LOW program at RRVT is an orientation session for new clients/students. This orientation lasts two weeks and is divided into several parts which include welcome/introduction, testing and evaluation, career counseling, computer literacy, Hard Choices (intangible soft skills/job readiness), and remedial studies if needed. It is intended to build a sense of community, therefore, increasing the likelihood of retention and success.

Participants

Purposeful sampling was used in identifying participants in the study. According to Merriam (1998),

"purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 61). In order to understand the meaning of good work from multiple perspectives, I elicited participants from three categories: TANF recipients involved in LOW program, teachers in the program, and administrators. At this site, there was one full-time remediation teacher, one job development coordinator who also had some responsibility for teaching, and one administrator who also had some responsibility for teaching. All three were participants in the study. The 13 TANF recipients who were interviewed for the study were in many ways representative of the larger population of TANF recipients at this site. Thus, their participation was elicited through a typical sample, defined by Merriam (1998) as reflecting "the average person" (p. 62). All of the individuals involved in the LOW program at Red River were women with children. During the time of this study, the majority were White; they ranged in age from 18 to 42. The ages of their children ranged from three months old to 17 years old. Of the 13 TANF participants in this study, 10 were White, one was Hispanic, and two were African-American, thus reflecting the general demographics of the larger population. One was 18 years old; five were between the ages of 20 to 30; six were between the

ages of 31 and 40; and one was 41. The teacher, administrator, and job coordinator were all White females between the ages of 30 and 45.

Data Collection Methods

Data for this study was collected through four methods: (a) one-on-one interviews, (b) group interview, (c)participant observation, and (d) document analysis.

Interviews

Interview data were collected through semi-structured, open-ended interviews with both individuals and small groups. Over the course of the study, one formal interview was conducted with 13 TANF recipients attending school at RRTC, the teacher of remediation, and the job coordinator. The interviews lasted from 30 minutes to two hours. Interviews were conducted on site in the break room, in available classrooms, and in the administrator's office. Each interview was audiotaped with the participant's permission. Merriam (1998) suggested four different kinds of interview questions: hypothetical, devil's advocate, ideal position, and interpretive. The following interview protocol reflects these four different types of questions:

1. Define "work."
2. What does "good work" mean to you?

3. How does your class (program) prepare people for work?

4. What kind of work do most of your students find after completing the job training program?

5. Suppose I am a welfare recipient on my first day at this job-training program. What would you tell me about the kind of work I can expect to find after completing this program?

6. What would be considered "good work" for someone completing your program?

7. What would be considered a "bad job' for someone completing your program?

8. How did you get to RRTC? Why did you choose here?

9. What kind of work have you done in the past?

10. What do you consider to be the ideal job?

11. Some people would say that people on welfare are lazy and just do not want to work. What would you say to people who say these kinds of things?

12. What kind of work do your students hope to find? How does the job training offered here help them in finding and being successful at this kind of work?

I was able to ask each of the interviewees these questions; however, each interview differed depending on the person's lived experiences as well as their comfort in speaking to a male researcher. As typical of qualitative research, these interviews often took on a life of their own, meandering into topics I originally had no intent

discussing. The unsolicited topic most frequently discussed was the physical and emotional abuse these women had suffered. This topic is discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.

Over a nine-month period, I conducted four formal interviews with the director of the LOW program. All of the interviews were conducted in her office and were audiotaped with her permission. These interviews were quite lengthy; the shortest one being one hour. The first interview was very much an unstructured interview since I did not know enough about how welfare-to-work operates in this state to ask knowledgeable questions. In this first interview, Marilyn was helpful and forthright in providing historical information about the politics of welfare-to-work. The next two interviews were semi-structured and designed to elicit her beliefs about "good work" as well as to gain an understanding of the context of Welfare-to-work at this particular site. The final interview was a structured interview in which I shared my tentative findings and asked her specific questions (e.g., how many students are currently enrolled) to help me clarify my research.

I also conducted two formal interviews with Julie, the remediation teacher, and Tracy, the job coordinator. Each interview lasted approximately one hour with the first

interview being semi-structured and the latter one being structured.

In addition to these one-on-one interviews, I also conducted three group interviews. The first interview was conducted with five of the TANF participants with the purpose of discovering the obstacles which led to failure in the workplace. The second group interview was conducted with seven students and the job coordinator during one of the class periods. The topic of the interview was barriers to employment and how to overcome these barriers. The third interview was with two of the participants that I had interviewed earlier. They asked to be interviewed together. All of these group interviews were audiotaped.

Because I spent considerable time at this site over a six-month period, I became somewhat of a fixture in their daily routine. Thus, much of my data was gained from informal interviews conducted as we talked before classes, ate in the break room, socialized at a Christmas party, and participated in class discussions.

Participant Observation

I began observing the LOW program in October 1999. The coordinator invited me to observe the third day of a new orientation session. She thought the first two days would be inappropriate for me to observe since according to her,

"there is a lot of crying and sharing that takes place those days." My first observation was of an orientation session being held in a large room that seemed to be designed for the teaching of auto mechanics. There was a large pull down door for vehicles to enter and exit. One half of the room was carpeted, and the rest was concrete. A dry erase board hung on the front wall. The room had exposed ceiling with blown insulation on the exposed beams. Huge air ducts and heating/cooling units were visible. There were nametags on the desks as well as personal snack items.

Over the next three months, I observed at RRTC on a regular basis. From October to December, I observed at least three hours a day two days a week. At first, I was more of a passive observer, sitting quietly in the orientation sessions and remediation classes.

As the weeks progressed and I established a rapport with the participants and the teacher, I began being more of an active participant. During the orientation sessions in which role-playing was employed, I participated in various role playing scenarios. I was given worksheets to complete and asked to share my responses. For example, I completed the "self-image Exercise" and then shared with the others my answers to questions, such as "What three positive words describe you" and "what are your strongest points?."

As I was able, I took copious on the spot notes, which were later written into extended fieldnotes. Often, however, because I was an active participant, I had to wait until I got into my car at the end of the day to write notes. I also kept a separate field journal for recording my personal thoughts, emerging themes, and ethical decisions I had to make in the field.

Document Collection

In addition to interviews and observations, I also collected data through document analysis. During the study, participants were extremely helpful in supplying me with numerous documents, which became valuable artifacts for analyzing how work was being conceptualized in the formal curriculum and through teacher practices. Documents included the "Hard Choices" curriculum, the student handbook, attendance contracts, orientation agendas, information guides, course catalogs, financial aid applications, special project applications, LOW program information, Spring Break activities booklet, statistics reports, academic calendar, GED information packet, informational data about Welfare-to-Work in this state, student writings, and numerous handouts given to students.

A total of 63 documents were examined, analyzed, and categorized based on the themes presented in Chapter Four.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a systematic process for organizing and arranging one's interviews, field notes, and documents so that one can present his/her findings in a convincing manner (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). In qualitative research, analysis begins immediately and is an on-going process.

The data analysis technique used in this study was based on Marshall and Rossman's (1995) five step procedures of analysis: (1) organize the data, (2) generate categories, themes, and patterns, (3) test the emergent hypotheses against the data, (4) search for alternative explanations of the data, and (5) write the report.

I began the process of data analysis by organizing the data into manageable chunks. This entailed me reading the transcripts, field notes, and documents repeatedly so that I gained an in-depth understanding of the content. I then organized my interviews into two stacks: TANF participants and teachers and administrators. Field notes were kept separate, and I gathered all my documents into a central box.

In developing coding categories, I identified salient themes in two ways. After reading the transcripts, field notes, and documents several times, I began highlighting key terms and repeated phrases and formulating categories in the

right hand margin. In particular, I developed coding categories based on six of Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) list of coding families: perspectives held by subjects, subjects' ways of thinking about people and objects, activity codes, strategy codes, and preassigned codes. Based on this first round of coding, I derived 76 themes, which ranged from GED testing to drugs to welfare stereotypes.

In the second step of the coding process, I collapsed these 76 themes into 23 taxonomies: bad work, good work, good workers, bonding, self-esteem, testing, TANF legislation, orientation, *Hard Choices*, RRVT, drugs and abuse, expectations, past work experiences, family life, vocational classes, remediation, children, fears, DHS, prejudice, obstacles, and attitude.

In the third step of the analysis process, I began evaluating the data in terms of asking how the emergent data related to the purpose of the study and research questions. When "holes" were discovered, I returned to the original interviews, field notes, and documents for clarification, and in some cases, returned to the site for further clarification from my participants.

In the fourth step, I had to "engage in the critical act of challenging the very pattern that seems so apparent" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 116). This step of the process was very important for it forced me to tame my own biases

against the recent welfare reform and analyze in a new light the perspectives of my participants.

In writing up my data, I chose to present the data by highlighting my participants' perspectives and allowing their viewpoints to provide the framework for the report. Thus, in Chapter IV, I chose to include many direct quotes rather than summaries of their quotes. I felt this was important so that the reader could gain an understanding of their tone and use of language rather than reading my interpretation of their words. Where appropriate, I interwove my own life story and experiences so that the reader could understand the lens I brought to the study.

Issues of Rigor

Theoretical debates are being waged relative to what criteria should be used to evaluate qualitative research. Some scholars (e.g., Connelly & Clandenin, 1990; Hammersley, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) argue that terms such as reliability, validity, and generalizability, have no place on qualitative research. Other scholars such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest using different criteria for judging the merit of qualitative research. Terms such as transferability, trustworthiness, and consistency are suggested. Regardless of what criteria or terms one uses, qualitative researchers must be able to defend the validity

or trustworthiness of what they have found as well as be able to defend the ethics of their research practices.

The following section will explain the strategies used in this case study to address the evaluative criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Krefting, 1991).

Credibility

A study is said to be credible if it is "conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Two strategies used in this study to provide for credibility were triangulation and member checks.

Triangulation. Marshall and Rossman (1995) define triangulation as the "act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point" (p. 144). Triangulating one's data allows one to use multiple data sources to confirm the findings of the study. In this study data was triangulated through the use of interviews, observations, and document analysis. The themes discussed in Chapter 4 emerged as findings of the study based on their presence in all three data sources.

Member Checks. The most valuable means for ensuring my findings were credible was through the use of member checks.

Member checks is a strategy whereby the researcher shares his/her tentative findings with the participants in the study (Merriam, 1998). The purpose of using member checks is to make sure the researcher has credibly portrayed the participants' perspectives as well as to verify information presented. Throughout this study, I shared my tentative interpretations about the meaning of good work with the various participants. Throughout my interviews, I continuously asked participants questions such as "this is what I'm hearing you say ..... Have I gotten it right?" or "OK, let me tell you what I think you are saying . . . Is that right?" Sometimes the participants would say, "No, this is what I meant ....." As I began to write Chapters 3-5, I frequently sat down with Marilyn and shared with her what I had written. She was particularly helpful in clarifying the intricacies of the welfare-to-work program.

Dependability

The term "reliability" is often used in quantitative research to refer to whether or not a study can be replicated. However, according to many researchers (e.g., Merriam, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) reliability is a problematic term for the social sciences because human behavior is not governed by universal, predictable laws. Thus, Lincoln and Guba have suggested that qualitative

researchers replace reliability with "dependability" and "consistency" meaning are the results consistent with the data collected and implications given. Merriam (1998) suggests three strategies, which I have incorporated, for enhancing dependability: clarifying the investigator's position (discussed in the section "subjectivity"), triangulation (discussed in previous section), and audit trail.

Audit Trail. Dey (1993) argued "if we cannot expect others to replicate our account, the best we can do is to explain how we arrived at our results" (p. 251). An audit trail is one way of documenting precisely what a researcher did in conducting his/her study. In this study, I have established an audit trail by describing in rich detail how the data was collected, interpreted, and analyzed. Additionally, I have provided information about how decisions were made throughout the process (e.g., why this site was chosen, how themes were determined).

Transferability

In quantitative research, terms such as generalizability or external validity are often used as a criteria for evaluating the merit of a study. External validity refers to the extent to which the findings of a study A can be applied to other situations. Most qualitative

researchers tend to talk about transferability rather than generalizability. Transferability has to do with how well the findings in Context A can be transferred to Context B (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The responsibility of the researcher then is to describe in detail "Context A" so that the reader can then evaluate how similar Context A is to his/her own setting. In other words, it is the reader's responsibility to assess how applicable the findings of one study are to another context. According to Firestone (1993), "it is the reader who has to ask, what is there in this study that I can apply to my own situation and what clearly does not apply" (p. 34).

To enhance the transferability of this study, three strategies were used: triangulation (discussed earlier), rich, thick description, and typicality or modal categories (Merriam, 1998).

Rich, thick description. By providing a report rich in "thick description," I have tried to recreate the studied setting, context, and situation with as much detail as possible. This allows the reader to make connections between his/her setting and the context of this study.

Typicality or Modal Categories. Typicality or modal categories refers to how typical the context under study is to others of the same category. In other words, how typical

is this Welfare-to-Work program to other such programs in the Midwest and in the country. By providing detailed information about how Welfare-to-Work operates in the state under study as well as about the particular program studied, I hope that the reader will be able to ascertain how typical the program is to her/his own and be able to transfer the findings to his/her own site.

Subjectivity

One of the characteristics of qualitative case study research is that the researcher is the primary research instrument. Thus, one must be careful to tame one's subjectivity (Peshkin, 1988). One must acknowledge as far as it is possible, one's biases and personal relationship with the topic under study. In this section, I detail my own experiences with the topic of study so that the reader may better understand the lens through which I have conducted this study.

Growing up in Mississippi, my relationship with poverty began years ago; however, as the son of middle class teachers, I was simply an observer of the poverty that surrounded me. My relationship with poverty and work as it intersects with my academic interests began six years ago while living in a small town in South Georgia. At the time, I was working as an industrial painter with a Kentucky

company. During this tenure, I met many workers from around the area and country. Donnie, an alcoholic, illiterate painter, from the mountains of Tennessee, and I became fast friends. He had a tremendous effect on my personal as well as my educational philosophy. His stories of non-educative opportunities and hardships put a face on *The Other America* as depicted by Harrington (1962). His statement to me, "Teach, if I had an education, I'd be dangerous," brought a dimension of both compassion and rage for the system that had failed him. Through my friendship with Donnie, I was able to view the world a little more differently than before I knew him, and see past any ill-conceived prejudices that I might have held.

Soon after, I went to work teaching night classes at the local technical institute. The subjects I taught were Business English and Technical writing to adults. Many of my students were employees of the plant where I was still painting during the day. The students were mostly entry level employees who were taking these classes to enhance promotion. This plant offered these educational opportunities at no cost to employees to enhance their upward mobility. For many, this was their first "good job."

This teaching experience brought about more opportunities at the technical institute when I was appointed the GED examiner and counselor for three rural

counties. The illiteracy rate for the counties varied between 40% to 50%, and there were many displaced workers due to the closings of most of the textile factories. I encouraged and provided support for many women and men who had recently become unemployed after working at the same factory for years. They now faced a future with little education, and the GED was the one link that could possibly get them back into a "good job" because most of the newer industries in the area only hired high school graduates or individuals with a GED. Very vivid in my memory is the image of twenty-five adults ranging in age from eighteen to sixty sitting in a classroom on a beautiful fall Saturday morning taking the GED exam. I remember thinking that each of these people represents some type of failure to many in our society. Failure of our educational system not meeting their own special needs, or failure in themselves by not meeting the "expected norms" of the society in which we live. This seems somewhat ironic, because until a short time ago, most of the people sitting in the classroom that Saturday morning had worked every day for the past twenty years.

As the Welfare-to-Work legislation began being implemented in Georgia, I was selected to teach a class for welfare mothers in how to be a customer service representative. During this tenure, I was approaching the end of my masters studies and had begun to embrace the

ideals of Knowles, Apps, Friere, Horton, and other adult educators and critical theorists. From what started as a "distrustful" beginning by the women became a wonderful experience. We did talk about how to be a customer service representative, but spent hours discussing their dreams and goals, and how they hoped to get there. To say that I was a part of them would be wrong, because at the end of the day I went home to my world of small problems while they went to what many would consider hell. One student had the bathtub from the upstairs apartment fall through the roof into her bathroom. The thing that most captured me, was the lack of any voice the women had. They told stories of caseworkers, landlords, law enforcement, etc...who completely took advantage of the status in which they lived. Many classes were spent talking about these issues and ways they might change them.

On the first day of my study at RRVC, I walked into an orientation session with Marilyn. Everyone looked at us but quickly dismissed us, focusing their attention on Tracy, the teacher at the board. Marilyn left me to go back to her office without introducing me. I finally sat down, unsure of whether or not to take notes, and finally thirty minutes later, Tracy stopped and said, "I know you are aware that we have a visitor in the room and about all I know about him is that his name is Jim." I stood up and said hello. Several

students then informed me that I needed to move up to where they were in order to talk with them. I complied. I began by giving them information about myself (e.g., jobs I have had, family), and then told them the purpose of my research. To that, one woman replied, "Have you ever been on TANF?" I told her, "No. The closest I have ever come to receiving government assistance was unemployment." She then responded that the research that really needed to be done was for me to go undercover, apply for TANF, and discover first hand the humiliation they have had to endure. At that point I shared with her a story about myself. One day while I was a painter I was in the grocery store in my overalls and covered in paint. I was there to purchase a beer, and I walked by a woman with a small child. The woman grabbed the child and directed the child away from me as if I had some form of disease. I could envision her telling the child to stay away from people like that.

Another student quickly interjected that she did not like being a guinea pig so that I could write a book and get rich with them getting nothing. I assured her that my intent was not to get rich but rather to write a report that would include the voices of those directly impacted by the recent reform rather than just statistics. I also told them that if they did not want me there they had the power to tell me to leave. I said I would leave the room if they needed to

discuss it further. They agreed to allow me to stay. As one of the woman pointed out, "It's OK. You seem to look like a really nice guy."

I am not suggesting that I know what it feels like to be poor, unemployed, and on welfare. However, I am looking at this topic through more than the lens of academia. The voices of this population are not being heard, and I am just one small cog on the wheel that would like to try and change that.

Ethics

With any study ethical decisions emerge on a daily basis. This study was no different. I adhered to the traditional ways of conducting ethical research - that is through the approval of the Institutional Review Board(IRB). This research was approved by the IRB at Oklahoma State University (IRB # ED-00-165). (See Appendix for IRB approval form). The participants in this study signed a consent form which stated the purpose of the research. To protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms were used.

However, daily ethical dilemmas arose that were not covered by the IRB. For example, what responsibility, as a human, do I have to the women in this study when they tell me of the abuse they suffer? How ethical is research when I

get a doctorate out of the endeavor and the participants get very little in return. As a student said early in the study, "we don't want to be your guinea pigs so you can write a book and get rich."

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

Unraveling the complexities of Welfare-to-Work legislation by talking to people who are most affected by the reform has been an interesting journey, often taking me places where I did not want to go. Having read and believed in Kincheloe's (1999) theories about good and bad work and my natural leanings toward critical theory presupposed me to the belief that everything about the new legislation was wrong and mis-guided. Although I still feel that the legislation is problematic for several reasons (see discussion in Chapter 5), I have also learned that, like almost everything in life, there is no black and white when it comes to the legislation.

When I approached this group of women with my intent for doing this study, I assured them that it would not be a statistical look at how great the Welfare-to-Work legislation is, but this study would look at the legislation through their eyes, the people with the greatest amount to win and lose. I felt that in order to obtain the greatest understanding of what these women were saying, the reader of this study must gain familiarity with them. Thus, I begin this chapter with short snapshots of each of the women so

that the reader may have some contextual information to go with the names that appear throughout the chapter.

"We're not TANF People": Biographical Sketches of TANF Participants

Katherine is a 41-year-old White female who, at the time of our interview, had four girls ranging in age from five to 12. She had a boy in December 1999. She lives in Guthrie with her mother, but according to Katherine, "she is getting tired of us living here." She gets no support from the father of her children although he does put gas in the car sometimes. Although it seemed probable that she would not pass the TABE test soon, she wants to go to work and make money. Her comments, "Here it is Christmas and my kids ain't going to get nothing," and, "I don't have nothing, I don't even have a car of my own," evidence the despair she feels, although she attempts to cover it with jokes and laughter.

Kippy is a 22-year-old White female who has a six-month-old daughter. She quit high school a month before graduation because her mother kicked her out of the house. She took the GED the next day and easily passed. She is married to a 30-year-old man who works irregularly and has a problem with anger thus leading to an abusive marriage. While I was there, she had to be taken to the hospital

because he had hit her in the ear, and she feared a ruptured eardrum. She was at RRVT to become a dental assistant, but one day would like to be an English teacher.

Tanya is a 39-year-old Black female who has three kids. Their ages are five, two, and four months; all are boys. She finished high school and went to college for approximately two years. Most of her work experience has been in fast foods. She explains, "I just did not want to work for a fast food the rest of my life so I decided to do something else, and go ahead and get my education." When asked why she came to RRVT, she told me, "I kind of got myself in a bad situation. I decided to, I needed some help financially, so I decided to do that and come to RRVT where I can get a better education and take care of my kids."

Evelyn is a 24-year-old White female with two children. Their ages are six and ten. She dropped out of high school because she was pregnant with her second child and received detention for excessive tardiness. Her tardiness was due to the effects of her pregnancy and not being able to walk very quickly. Evelyn had recently taken and passed the GED. She has been on welfare for a short time. Prior to this, she lived with her father after her mother died. However, her mother's death had caused financial difficulties. She suffers from Chromes disease and could not afford medication if not for Medicaid. Her brother was not supportive of her

attending classes. According to her, "he thinks they teach that feminist stuff there."

Lilly is a 26-year-old White female who has two boys, seven and three. She finished high school despite the fact that "her mother cared less if she did or not." She works seasonally at a ballpark in the concession stand, but it is not enough to support her kids. She got married after high school and was married for 8 years. Her ex-husband, the father of her children, is now involved with drugs. She explained, "He's supposed to pay child support and they are looking for him, but they can't find him. He'll be running around on the street, just bouncing around."

Lizze is a 24-year-old White female with two boys, aged five and three. She was pregnant with twins but they both died. After she lost the twins, she was told by her Department of Human Services(DHS) caseworker, "I'm going to give you a few months to grieve and then in August you'll have to go to school." She has always worked but was forced to resort to welfare after her divorce in which the relationship was physically abusive. She worked in a day-care center but could not make enough money to support herself and children. She recently passed her GED and hopes to become a Medical Assistant.

Janice is a 37-year-old White female with one child, a 17-month-old daughter. She has struggled with a drug problem

for years and recently got custody of her young daughter. She hopes someday to be a drug counselor. During the research study, the older man with whom Janice had had a long-term relationship died unexpectantly. Janice was concerned that some of the things she had done in the past may keep her from being able to learn. She told me, " All the activities I had done in the past, I was scared that I was not teachable."

Camille is a 22 year old White female with one son who is 18 months old. The father of her child is a drug addict who she thinks now lives somewhere in California. She has only been on TANF for several months and got on because she had no insurance for her child. She came to RRVT because she does not want to have to work like her mother has done all her life. She said," I want to learn a profession or a trade, instead of working odd jobs like my mother has done all her life and barely support you know, making it from one check to the next, I don't want to be like that."

Candy is a 24-year-old female with one son who is nine months old. She has been on welfare for only a few months. She is married but her husband does not work at any regular jobs. She has had many jobs although working as a stripper paid more than any other job she has held. She told me that she came to RRVT with very low self-confidence but the LOW Orientation has helped her self-esteem. She is going into

Dental Assisting because they looked in the paper, "There is a huge demand, and in Oklahoma they pay $11 to $15 and hour."

Sherry is a White female who has three boys. Their ages are eight, ten, and 13. She graduated from high school and attended college for one year. She has always worked but is recently divorced and has battled health problems. She explained to me," I used to work, but my health got bad so I had to quit. My caseworker asked if I felt like going to school, so now I am here studying to bring up my scores so hopefully I can get into accounting, and get into a job making good money."

Sally is a 30 year old White female with three children. She has been divorced twice and has moved back home with her mother and father, although it seems to be an unhappy arrangement. She was working until recently when she was fired because she had to miss due to the illness of her youngest son. She wants to be an administrative assistant and estimates that it will take her nine months to complete the program and get a good job. Until them, "I bite my tongue, and find the strength to do what I've got to do."

Sheena is a 39-year-old Black female with a 17 year old son who is in the 10th grade. She finished high school and is going to RRVT to be in Polymer injection technology and "hopefully when I complete it, I will find a good job that

will provide me something." She admitted that she hates being on welfare and stated," Yeah, it bothers me, because I know I can do better."

Sue is a 34-year-old Hispanic female who has two children. One is 16 and the other is 14. She has been on welfare since her first child was born and she was 18. She has never had a job before, and admitted at our first interview that "I had juiced the system." She had just passed part of the TABE and was going to go home and call her mother, although she would not tell her boyfriend, "because he would just ruin it for me." She has home-made tattoos on both arms and wears long sleeve shirts all the time in order to keep them covered. She was extremely nervous about attending RRVT, but covers her anxiety with a sense of humor as evidenced on her first day of class when she noted she was the only Hispanic. "Where are all the Hispanic people at? Are they at home making tortillas? Are they swimming across the Rio Grande and not here yet?"

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the themes that emerged in the study concerning the meaning of work in the Welfare-to-Work legislation. I have categorized these themes based on the four research questions:

1. What are TANF participants understanding of the Welfare-to-Work legislation?

2. How do TANF participants and the teachers and administrators in the TANF program define "work"?

3. What are the perceptions of the various stakeholders involved in a TANF program regarding the meaning of good work and how do these meanings differ?

4. What is the meaning of "good work" in the practices (e.g., career guidance) and programs (e.g., job training) associated with the Welfare-to-Work legislation?

Question #1: What are TANF participants understanding of the Welfare-to-Work legislation?

With the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (P.L. 104-193) of 1996, also known as the Welfare-to-Work Act, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) was abolished and replaced with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). The new legislation is complicated, and is not very well understood by the public. One purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent of the knowledge of the new legislation held by TANF participants themselves. What emerged from this inquiry was an understanding that despite changes in laws, perceptions about "welfare mothers" are still quite persistent. Furthermore, most TANF participants have very little knowledge about the legislation itself and have to depend upon others (e.g., case workers, teachers in the Life

Off Welfare(LOW) program) for what little information they do possess. Despite this, all of them embrace the idea of moving off Welfare-to-Work. In this section,I discuss the TANF clients' perceptions about "welfare mothers," the knowledge and lack of knowledge they possess about the recent legislation, and the positive manner in which they embrace the basic rhetoric of moving off Welfare-to-Work.

The Persistent Stereotypes of Welfare Recipients

Many people in the United States continue to have certain negative perceptions of the "typical" welfare mother. These images usually include some reference to women who are lazy and produce children like rabbits. The women in this study, however, were very adamant that they were not this "typical" welfare mother. As Sherry explained:

> I have been on TANF for about a year. No, actually, I was on TANF about nine years ago. Actually, the first time I've ever been on welfare, and then with my health going bad, they put me back on TANF. But no, **I am not a TANF person.**

Likewise, Kippy explained:

> It all goes back to habit. You get so used to not having a job and just getting a check and you know I am not really into that yet. I am never going to be because I was only on it for three months before I started school.

Interestingly, many of the women in this study expressed views about welfare mothers that seemed to perpetuate this stereotype; however, they were quick to point out that these images did not include themselves. In other words, they spoke of the welfare mother who sits around doing nothing but having babies as someone other than themselves. Candy, speaking about her sister-in-law who is on welfare, stated, "You just sit, like my sister-in-law did. She just sat on her butt getting her food stamps and check and not doing anything, and she is still worthless." Kippy states a similar belief, giving this example of the "typical welfare mother: "the more babies you have, the more money you get and that is not a reason to bring a child into this world, to get more money on your check."

Sue did state that at one time she was the typical welfare mother but she has changed with the new legislation:

> I have never, ever, worked a day in my life. Well, I did, I juiced the system. Back then we did not have to go to work, we did not have to go to

> school, we did not have to do anything. We just got our check. They did not ask you where you went, what you spent your money on. They didn't care. They didn't care if you still had food stamps left over from last month. I really didn't want welfare but had to get it because I could not pay my hospital bills for my kids and then I just fell into the system and stayed there. I liked it and it did not bother me. I was 18 and had a car and had gas.

These women did not view themselves as typical "welfare mothers," but they all expressed concern about how they are perceived by others when it is discovered that they do, indeed, receive some kind of government assistance. This typically occurs in the grocery store when they use their access card (which replaced food stamps). Evelyn explained how the attitudes concerning welfare mothers follows her in everyday activities:

> It happens a lot in the grocery store. Since they got the cards, it has been ok, but even with the cards you still get looked down on. They don't want to help you, they get frustrated because they have to punch it in differently so it is a little better but it is still tough. I think we just get treated differently because of that. It does not

matter how you dress, you get treated differently than the person in front of you paying with cash or check. The only time I actually feel good about myself is when I actually hand them the cash. You don't know how it actually feels until you are giving them the food stamps. It is no difference than the way Blacks are treated.

In dealing with the public's perceptions of people on welfare, Candy expanded on the problems encountered by Evelyn:

> I have had a problem with the lady at Albertson's. When I go in, before school or something, she would be like, "Hi, how are you?" As soon as I pull out my access card she goes, "Oh, my God." She says did I hear how these welfare people get to work out and all this stuff. I told her I had to use WIC, and she says that you have to tell me if you are using that. I had 31 cans of formula, and the checker did not even help me to my car. I just want to tell her, "I am a single mom trying to go to school."

In many ways, even though they see welfare as a temporary way of life, some of the women have internalized the shame associated with being on welfare. Lizze explained that although she feels better about herself about going to

school, she is not very proud of having to rely on TANF to do it. She says, "I am ashamed of it because you should get out there and work." Sheena felt that receiving welfare bothers her because she knows that she can do better.

Similarly, Kippy expressed embarrassment about being on welfare because of the way others perceive her:

> I remember when I used to be a cashier, and I was not on welfare and people would come through and I would try and figure out their situation and if it did not look like they deserved it, it would make me mad. I feel everybody judges you and I feel I should be doing better than that for me and Clovie. I don't feel like we should be on welfare. My parents, you know what they said about it? What are you going to do, just sit around in some Section 8 (government subsidized) apartment and be on welfare the rest of your life? It is kind of like a big joke around our family, you get on, you better get off quick. They are not supportive of the people that pop out baby's left and right just so they can stay on it.

What is clear from these women's responses is that reformulating policies and practices related to welfare has not changed how welfare recipients are perceived by themselves and by the public. Living on welfare carries

tremendous guilt, shame, and embarrassment which impacts these women on a daily basis.

The Lack of Knowledge and Misinformation Concerning TANF

The women in this study unanimously misunderstood this legislation, which directly affects their lives. Although the level of understanding varied from virtually non-existent to operable, it was apparent that they were, for the most part, unaware of the policies and rules which govern their personal lives. When I asked Sue how long she had been on TANF, she told me that when she started RRVT she didn't know that TANF was welfare. She found out when she asked the teacher what TANF was, and the class laughed at her question. When asked about TANF benefits Camille stated:

> I actually found out through one of my friends. DHS does not give you a whole lot of information on it. Like Marylyn says, you really have to go to them to find anything else out. I found out from a friend and called them and they sent me an application.

Kippy thinks that she thinks that when she gets through with school, "TANF will check up on her and they may even give you a check for awhile to get you started." Sue, who has recently moved from New Mexico, has a boyfriend that

just got a job. She is unclear as to how this will impact her benefits:

> I got here and I started over and everything was cool. It was the same thing and nothing has changed, but now my boyfriend has a job and supposedly I am supposed to take his check in so they can deduct it. I don't know how they do it here. I don't know if they deduct from my money, or my stamps or they close my case because he's now working. I don't know how they do it and I am curious to find out.

When asked if her 17 son had to live with her to keep receiving benefits, Sheena replied that," I think they do. I'm not really sure, but I think that's how it works.

The one piece of the legislation about which most of the women were knowledgeable was Job Search. There are 13 allowable activities included in the Welfare-to-Work legislation. Some include unsubsidized employment, subsidized private sector employment, subsidized public sector employment, work experience, on-the-job-training, job search and job readiness for up to 6 weeks, community service programs, and vocational training. Although from the above described interviews most did not understand a large extent of the legislation, most did understand Job

Search. This is probably because this is the one activity DHS workers consistently explain to TANF recipients.

In many cases, the women felt that information about educational opportunities was denied to them. Camille explained it precisely and briefly in the following statement:

> The job thing was first. I had to mention school before she mentioned it to me.

It is interesting to note that no attention is given in the formal curriculum in the LOW program to discussing the TANF legislation; yet, it is a topic about which the TANF participants know virtually nothing.

The Positive Manner in Which the Majority Embrace the New Legislation

Although the women articulated an almost non-existent understanding of the complexities and intricacies of the new legislation, they all embraced the rhetoric of the reform, that is, the importance of moving people off welfare and into work. All of the women in this study showed readiness to get off of TANF and into a position to support themselves and their children. For example, Sue, who previously exclaimed that when she was younger had juiced the system, stated: "I want to support my family and I think I needed them to push me to do this because otherwise I would not

have done it. I probably would not have even gotten a chance to come here. I would just be out there on the road with nothing and probably in jail."

Janice sees the new legislation as a way to get an education which will lead to work: "I am taking advantage of the TANF program paying my school, and helping me with my bills until I can get this education to get me in the doors." Similarly, Sherry views work as a way of paying the bills, something she cannot do on the minimal TANF (welfare) check she currently receives each month:

> Getting the little amount of money I get, I've got to pay my bills. I may have $20 to buy the household stuff I need. I don't have enough money left over to even get my kids clothes or stuff they really need.

Evelyn, who was at first reticent about the new legislation, explained her change of heart in this way:

> Honestly, I had no other choice. They were either going to take my welfare or I went to school and at first I was just going to school to keep it but after the first three days I was here I realized that I am not here because of that, I am here because there are actually people out there that can help and I can do what I want to do

Katherine complained that she felt that," DHS was kind of like running her life and sticking their nose in where it did not belong," but she had a positive attitude about the way the new legislation worked. She stated:

> Yes, it is a lot better. I have a new caseworker and it was like, OK, some people are made to come here and do this. She gave me a choice; you can either do this or do job search. I decided hey, never too old to learn anything. Might as well go back to school and try. AFDC was easier, but then again, people are sitting home, not doing nothing and you know, that's not rightful for the home, but get a check and spend it for whatever you want.

Kippy explained that her mother loves the new legislation which allows her to go to school, while Sue admits that if she had not had the push brought about by this legislation, she would never have taken the needed steps to remove herself from welfare. Janice says she was given the option of getting a job or going to school. She concludes that:

> I needed it. Personally, I needed it because you know the way that my life had been. If I don't have a push in a direction, it is hard for me to

make the footstones to follow a direction unless I get a little push.

None of the women argued that the philosophy of "Work First" for welfare mothers was wrong; however, Sherry, because of her health problems, was the only one who sometimes expressed a somewhat more ambiguous sentiment about the reform: "Maybe Work First is a good idea, but from health problems, I don't think it is a good idea."

Question # 2. How do TANF Participants and the Teachers and Administrators in the TANF Program Define "Work"?

The perceived success of the Welfare-to-Work legislation has been solely measured by the statistical reduction of the welfare rolls. Little study has been presented concerning the meaning of "work" in this legislation. One of the purposes of this research study was to probe the meaning of work held by the various constituents impacted by the recent welfare reform legislation. What was interesting in the responses of the participants was the differing meanings people held about work and how they contrasted work to other terms such as "career" and "job." In the following sections, I present the participants responses to the questions about the meaning of work.

The Administrator's and Teachers' Perceptions of Work, Job and Career

Jody, Marilyn, and Tracy were all asked to define the meaning of work. Interestingly, Tracy was the only one who answered the question in the context of her own life. She stated:

> To me, work is different than a career and let me just go into that. I grew up on a farm and to me work was chores. That is, work around the house, feeding the animals, taking care of business. I remember going out when it is 10 below zero and chopping ice for animals or something so they can drink. That is work to me. I grew up seeing parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and neighbors going to work. They would say, Oh, I have to go to work. It seemed like a miserable experience. I didn't want to grow up and have to go to work. I didn't want to go somewhere that would make me miserable everyday.. . . Work is a necessary evil.

Tracy was quite adamant about her beliefs that "work" carries with it a negative connotation and repeatedly throughout my interviews with her would purposively change

my use of the word "work" (e.g., what is "good work") to job or career.

Jody and Marilyn were more positive about their understandings about the meaning of work, but both of them talked about work in a much more personally abstract way than did Tracy. Jody sees work as the skills one needs to attain a job or career:

> To me, work is the, well it is the physical or mental activities that we go through, that we get involved in to do the career we want to do. Whether it be studying math or maybe taking a class that will eventually get us into the job we want to get in. It's the steps that we need to get the job that we eventually want to have. Work, makes up the job. Now the Welfare-to-Work, that would insinuate that work is actually the job, so to me personally, I probably would have named it something different, Maybe Welfare-to-Career.

Marilyn, the director of LOW, frames her responses clearly in the context of Welfare-to-Work and the lives of her TANF clients rather than what work means to her personally. She states, "It doesn't matter what you are doing, but hopefully you feel good enough about it that you are going to continue to do that so you can support your family."

Marilyn views job and work as the same but differentiates the two from career:

> I do think that job and work are the same thing and that is just for some people just a routine something that they go to every day because they need a paycheck, and there is nothing wrong with that, but I like the term career because it implies that there is some laddering or opportunities for growth. The groups we serve pretty much are looking, they will tell you themselves that we don't just want a job. We want a career. We want opportunity and whether they put that with the word career or not, a lot of them will say that we don't want just any job.

Marilyn believed that the legislation was wrongly named if the purpose is to get people off welfare and into "meaningful" work. She believed that meaningful work is a career, which implies opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Jody also stressed the difference between work and career noting that a career is something one has to do to reach your career or goal. She further expanded on this difference: "Work sometime means doing things you do not like but we have to look at it as a step to getting the end result we want."

Tracy likewise concurred that job and a career are different. She stated:

> I don't think of my job as work. My job is my career. It is something that is planned; a purposeful course for my life, although it took dips and turns. My career has involved me choosing things I was interested in.

Jody, Marilyn, and Tracy differentiated between work and career and note that the intent of Welfare-to-Work should not simply be work. Rather the purpose of the legislation should be to embark people on a lifelong journey of meaningful work, conceptualized by them as a career.

The Perceptions of the TANF Participants about the Meaning of Work, Job, and Career

Where the administrator's view of work tended to be somewhat in sync with each other, the participants displayed varied realities concerning the meaning of work, job, and career. While some may argue that it is simply a case of personal definitions, it is important in the fact that these women are all involved in a Welfare-to-Work program which is manifested in a "Work First" agenda and how they define "work" is central to the way in which they view the opportunities for their individual lives.

Camille is quite articulate in recognizing that in the recent legislation "work" simply means making money - even if the work one does is meaningless, low-paid, and low-skilled:

> Society defines work as anything that makes money: flipping burgers, Taco Bell. Honest money is work. To make it in the world you need some education, you know; just to send somebody out there to flip burgers and still live on nothing is just not right.

Similarly, Evelyn proposed a view of work as something that is defined and imposed by others who have some power or authority:

> Work is something that you do to get money but you are really not happy at it. You may do it to make somebody else happy. Work, it seems to me, is pushing you to do something you really don't want to do.

Kippy says that work is anything such as sweeping your floor to raking your yard. She thinks that everything you do in life is work and work tends to be underpaid.

Echoing the sentiments of many of the policy makers that "honest work" will enhance one's self-esteem in knowing he/she is a responsible, productive citizen, most of the women in the study defined work as something that would make

them feel better about themselves. Sue, who has never worked, defined work as:

> Supporting your family that you have not supported for so long on your own. Do it yourself and keep the job. It is something you want to do. I've never had a job. Everyone tells me that when you get that first check you will be so happy.

Sally saw work as something that would lead to some luxuries she can not afford now: She stated:

> 8 to 5 job Monday through Friday. Good job, get a paycheck, bills get paid and OH, we got a little bit of money we can do something this weekend. . . I want a house, a car, and a horse. If I get all that I will be happy although you do have to have clothes for a job.

Similarly, Sheena defined work as:

> Getting up in the morning, going out at night but not being in the streets. Working eight hours a day, making money, taking care of your household, taking care of you and your kids, you know, that's work.

Sherry defined work as being able to support her family but is quick to address, "I don't want just any job, like McDonald's," while Tanya looks at work as simply having a good job so she can make enough money to support her family.

Lizze defines work as something you may get a paycheck for, such as cleaning house or taking care of the kids. However, the Welfare-to-Work legislation does not view such domestic chores as caring for one's house or children as legitimate work despite the fact that countless middle-class women are allowed the luxury to "work" at home caring for their children.

Katherine is the only TANF participant who equated work with an enjoyable endeavor. This is not surprising since the majority of the women have not experienced their prior work as being something they liked. Katherine, however, had had a positive work experience in her former job as a factory worker. She explains that work is "a place to go. Work to me is a place to have fun and work at the same time. Like doing factory work, you can have fun doing that plus it's work. I love to work with my hands, if I can't work with my hands then there ain't no point in working."

This notion of enjoying one's self came up most readily in discussions about the differences between job, work, and career. Most of the women felt that a job or a career was something one could enjoy. Lizze, Sally, and Evelyn, and, all agree that a job is something that you want to do. Lizze states that hopefully a job is something you like while Sally defines job as "something that you enjoy doing." You say, "I have a good job [as opposed to] I got to go to work

today. I had a good job as a travel agent but got fired because I got pregnant." Similarly, Evelyn stated:

> A job is something you like doing; good at it, and makes you happy. You are supposed to love your job and like what you are doing and feel good about it and the people around you.

Camille distinguished between work, job, and career in the following way:

> Work and profession are different. Profession is something you enjoy doing, something you pick for yourself. A job is where you work, and a profession is a step over a job and work. I am here looking for a profession.

A career was seen by many of these women like Camille and Sheena, as something one can choose as a means of attaining a future of life-long work. For example, Kippy defines career as having a skill that makes you marketable, and Sheena explained career in this way:

> Well, having work is, you know, it'll take care of you, your household, but if you don't have the kind of job that you are looking for to maintain, then you're still gonna be struggling. A job could be any job, and a career would make the difference between that job. Like you pick a career that's gonna better yourself.

Two of the women, Tanya and Lizze, saw no differences between work, job, and career, and two of the women felt that work carried with it a more positive connotation than did job. Jancie views job as "like a McDonald's, 8 to 5, minimum wage type things, but this is just my opinion" and work as "that's tricky. I think that there is a different level. I think that you can go to your job and make minimum wage, or you can get an education in a specific field, get trained, and make higher wages. That to me would be work."

It is interesting to contrast the women in this study's differentiation of job and work to that of Joe Kincheloe (1999) who asserts "a job is simply a way of making a living; work involves a sense of completion and fulfillment. In a job, items are produced for consumption whereas work produces items that are put to use in people's lives. An individual's purposes and meanings are engaged in work, but they are repressed in a job" (p. 64). Fourteen of the 16 women interviewed expressed ideas the exact opposite of Kincheloe; that is, they felt that work was repressive and a job was more of a way to feel a sense of fulfillment.

As evidenced by the above account, the TANF clients were much more diverse in their interpretations of work, job, and career than were Jody, Marilyn, and Tracy. Their responses, in part, illustrate the debate about the merits of the Welfare-to-Work legislation. Camille's and Evelyn's

responses illustrate the belief that the meaning of "work" in the legislation is simply "any work is better than no work." They find this definition demeaning and impositional. It also alludes to the incongruency between what White, middle class policy makers would consider work they themselves would do, and the work they seek to impose upon others. The poor should be glad to have the opportunity to "flip burgers," and if they fail to take such a job, it is because they are lazy. One of the ways that the TANF legislation perpetuates this belief that any work is better than no work is through Job Search, one of the 13 allowable work activities in which a TANF client can participate. Job search entails a client documenting that he/she has spent 30 hours a week looking for a job. If he/she is offered a job as a result of the search, the TANF client is required to take the job regardless of what kind of job it is. If the person declines, he/she can be denied benefits, such as Medicaid, TANF check, and food stamps. There are, as Tracy explains, loopholes. For example, a mother of school age children could put restrictions on her availability by saying that she has to be at home from 3:00 p.m. until midnight. If she were offered a job during this time period, she would not have to take it based on restrictions on her availability.

However, more than half of the TANF clients in this study articulated a view closely aligned to the rhetoric of policy makers. That is, they were grateful for the opportunity to engage in honest work so they can become self-sufficient, productive citizens. They believed that taking on personal responsibility for supporting their families would enhance their self-esteem. From a critical perspective, it could be argued that these women are operating under "false consciousness" which Marx (cited in Ritzer, 1977) argued is part of the hegemony of capitalism which dupes workers into believing that they are autonomous, free-thinking individuals who deserve the work the capitalist gives them. Many would argue that based on these women's perceptions of work, the Welfare-to-Work legislation is a successful mechanism for disciplining workers for the workplace by developing "personal demeanor, modes of self-presentation, self-image, and social-class identifications which are the crucial ingredients of job adequacy" (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 131).

Regardless of how one might interpret the meaning of the women's statements, the reality is that there are certainly differing opinions about the meaning of work, and in most cases, the connotation of work is a negative one. This leads one to ask if Welfare-to-Work might eventually be changed to Welfare-to-Career in much the same way as School-

to-Work has been changed to School-to-Career. Since the major focus of the Welfare-to-Work legislation has been on work, these differing understandings and the negative connotation present an obstacle in light of the fact that work is never defined in the policy statements. Without a clear and agreed upon meaning of work and what the purpose of the legislation is in terms of people "going to work," how can success really be determined?

Question #3. What are the perceptions of the various stakeholders involved in a TANF program regarding the meaning of good work and how do these meanings differ?

Kincheloe (1999) asked "in a democratic society . . . what constitutes good work? Socially beneficial work? Just work? Fulfilling work? Democratic work?" (p. 64). He goes on to define his perceptions of good and bad work. These questions posed by Kincheloe precipitated my interest in the study of the meaning of work; however, unlike Kincheloe who does not base his work on field based research, I wanted to hear what workers and soon to be workers themselves had to say about terms such as good work and bad work - terms typically not used in everyday conversation. Hence, one purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of the various stakeholders involved in a TANF program regarding the meaning of good and bad work. In particular, I

was interested in comparing the perceptions of the people who live good and bad work on a daily basis with that of Joe Kincheloe, an academic who theorizes good and bad work from an intellectual, abstract orientation. In this section, I present the participants' understandings of good and bad work. In the next chapter, I analyze these findings in comparison to Kincheloe's theories of good and bad work.

Administrator's and Teachers' Perceptions of Good and Bad Work

After interviewing Marilynn, Tracy, and Jody, it became apparent in the analysis of the data that their responses about "good work" were not focusing on their own personal lives as workers but rather on the recipients they were serving. They were asked to simply explain "good work," and unlike the participants who all answered from their personal perspectives, the administrators answered from what they thought "good work" should be for the clients they were serving. All three of them believed that good work and career are synonymous. Good work meant one was engaged in a career that provides opportunities for personal and professional growth. Marylyn explained: "Good work" equals career. Absolutely. Our students will be able to experience "good work". If not, I feel what we are doing would be pointless.

Jody explained that the participants here are looking for "good jobs" and that "good work" needs to include benefits. She goes on to say that "good work" is "a way of working up the career ladder in something they love to do, something they can put their heart in."

However, as Tracy explained, different people will have different views of good work. Their job as teacher or administrator is not to impose their own views on the TANF clients but to help them find their own "good work." This means, according to all three of them, having a sufficient income as well as a job that matches an individual's aptitudes, interests, and financial desires. Tracy explained:

> I would not consider my definition of work to be a good job. A good job would be seen through the eyes of the student. It would not be through my eyes, but hopefully by the time they have gotten through our program to where they are looking for a job, they've got a real good definition of what that is and the success in that comes when they find a match for what they have in their mind...and that has to do with income, and it has to do with how much they enjoy it, and it has to do with the time they are allowed to spend with their families. I would say that success in that area

has to do with that student finding what they want. It has nothing to do with what I think, has nothing to do with what statistics say.

As a program, we are trying to target $8 an hour or more, which there are a world of possibilities of careers out there available to you and we want to help you find whatever it is that is going to match up with where you want to be, whatever you interests are, what you are good at, what you enjoy doing. We are going to look at how much money you expect to make, how much money you want to make, what kind of lifestyle you want to live, and what we are going to hope to do is to match your interests and your abilities and your skills with a type of wage that you will feel comfortable, able to support you family on...and find that career that you are going to be able to go to work everyday and enjoy it and look around in amazement that they pay you to do it.

Similarly, Marilyn pointed out:

We want to make sure they have made good choices. They have selected the appropriate position and intent that they are going to finish this program because they like it, it has the potential for success for them and that they can see that there

is a career ladder available or the opportunity to increase wages and increase self-sufficiency.

Jody said that the TANF clients represent a diverse group who have different expectations about what is good work. For example, most of them are accustomed to making minimum wage; they are in the LOW program because they do not consider this good work and they are hoping that through education they can get a better job. Others, however, have never worked; thus, for them, getting any job, even though it is a minimum wage job, would be considered good work.

However, all three of these women were quick to point out that the LOW program does not prepare people to enter immediately into a career level job. Rather, they are preparing people for entry level jobs that they consider to have the potential to lead into a career. Tracy explains: "Our students often find a variety of careers, often times in entry level positions. I think entry level differs from career field to career field. Entry level to me is that first step in the door of any type of field that you want to go in to."

Marilyn expressed concern that the participants come into the LOW program with an expectation of good work (i.e., career) that is in opposition to the kind of work for which they are being prepared:

> I get concerned sometimes that they (participants) have unrealistic expectations. That, they perceive this as, like getting a four year college degree, and they are going to be in the 30 thousand range and higher to start. We try to be a reality piece there, and let them know that we are talking about entry level positions. When you come out of Vo-Tech and you have got to make the climb and get your foot in and all that, but I think a lot of them have some pretty high expectations, or they will come in and say that I can't work for less than $10 an hour. Well, that will be hard to do with many of the Vo-Tech programs.

Marilyn, Tracy, and Jody believed that sometimes a person may have to begin with bad work (i.e., entry level job) but if they are a good worker they can move into a career. (These statements are obviously in the context of the TANF clients rather than in the context of their own lives.) In other words, bad work can lead to good work, but the focus of responsibility lies on the individual as illustrated by Marilyn's comment that "we are all captains of our own ship," meaning we determine our own future. Tracy asserts:

> Where you are the low man on the totem pole, and you have to pay your dues and sometimes that means

> that you have got to be the first one there and the last one to leave. Sometimes that means you take the hours that nobody else wants. Sometimes that means that you are making less than everyone else, that you are starting on your way of building seniority for yourself, of getting experience on your resume..that coupled with education is going to give you advancement in the future, and it depends on the career. Sometimes that experience can give you more advancement that education.

Jody echoes Tracy when she states, "Sometimes "bad work" may lead to "good work". It can be a step in getting to the end result that we want."

Although Tracy, Marilyn, and Jody all found the focus of Welfare-to-Work misguided with its emphasis on work rather than career, in many ways their comments represent similar sentiments of the TANF legislation policy makers. That is, the welfare reform bill offers people a chance to work that leads to them feeling good about themselves as productive wage-earning citizens. This feeling of self-confidence, according to Marilyn, Tracy, and Jody, can lead to a life of meaningful work if the individual proves himself/herself to be a good worker. In other words, the Horatio Algier story is very much embedded in their beliefs

about welfare and the potential to rise from "rags to riches" if one simply cultivates and enacts a good work ethic. Tracy elaborated on this:

> If I had to flip burgers, and I knew that I was going to be flipping burgers until I was 55 years old, I would be very depressed; however, if I was doing it for $6,25 an hour and I knew that after a few months I was going to move up to the register, and after a few months there, if successful, I was going to move to the window, and then I could be manager of that back cooker, and I could see the progression and the building, I would not mind flipping burgers at all. It wouldn't be so much work because I would see it is kind of a means to an end. I know that it is possible for everyone to find something out there that they really enjoy. I don't think that I am one in a million thing.

Tracy followed this quote with the rags-to-riches story of a former student who is now making $30 thousand a year:

> One of our students that surprised everyone because so many of our students come in and say that they don't want to do fast food or I will do anything but that, is making 30 thousand dollars a year managing a waffle house. So, that is a

> success to us, even though she is in fast food which a lot of people frown upon. There are those advancements, and there is upward mobility.

In the course of the interviews and analysis, the difference between "good work" and "good worker" sometimes became blurred. Marylyn addressed this as:

> This is a personal philosophy for me. It doesn't matter what you go in to, that if you are a good worker and have good work ethics and if you are there everyday and dependable and reliable, You do your job well…It doesn't matter whatever it is you are doing you are going to climb.

Marilyn talked about how Tracy, Jody, the secretary and she are all good role models for the TANF clients because they are all good workers, which is the reason why they all now have good jobs:

> You can see that it was partly luck, partly was education, partly was skill, but we have all become successful because of the things we have done and mostly that is that we have been a good employee from start to finish. People look for that, and you climb because of those things too. Many of them [participants] have had short term employment opportunities if at all or maybe in

families where maybe nobody worked. They don't know what it is like to be a good employee.

Interestingly, as Marilyn, Tracy, and Jody talked about bad work, their perceptions often contradicted their earlier statements about how an individual can make his/her own opportunities out of a bad work situation. Going back to her earlier definition of work as a "necessary evil," Tracy explained:

> I would consider bad work or bad job as work. Something that a student dreaded going to. They didn't want to be there but they felt they had to do as part of living, as part of supporting their families, as part of whatever. It's work, they feel like they are at this point where they have got of do it, and there is no opportunity for them to look up to another level or position or moving out of the entry level.

While Marylyn believed that their students who finish the program (12 months) can obtain good work, she is critical of the Welfare-to-Work reform because it does not distinguish between good work and bad work:

> Any type work is ok in a "work-first" project. Bad work can be Taco Bell where they are still not going to be self-sufficient and still living in poverty, but the DHS workers don't care because

the goal is to get people off the system. Any kind of job is better than none.

Participants' Perceptions of "Good Work"

Since few of these women expressed any prior experience with having good work, their perceptions about good work were typically based on more concrete issues that impacted their daily lives. Not surprisingly, 11 of the 13 interviewed cited money as being an important factor of good work:

> I would say good work is, you know, a lot of people like the fast food. It's not a bad thing, and it's not a good thing. But the money, you know what I'm saying? You need the money to survive. (Tanya)

Typically, their responses about good work actually named a particular wage that they thought would be indicative of good work:

> Something that I like, and something that, I'll say good work, that pays at least more than 8 or 9 dollars an hour. (Sherry)
>
> To be financially stable without any help. I don't want help from the state or anything like that. Right now I could make it at $6.50 an hour you know and that would be tough so making $8 as the

base pay will be pretty comfortable for me right now. (Camille)

$9 to $10 an hour, which is good. You know, it is a lot more than I ever made working at McDonalds. (Evelyn)

I expect to make $8 an hour, will take more. (Sally)

For Sue and Sheena, good work meant providing a stress-free life in which money and paying the bills is not one's primary consideration:

Pay, money, since I have never had any. Now it is just money, trying to have my own money to spend it on what I want to spend it on. (Sue)

I wouldn't be worrying about if the rent's going to be paid this month. If rent's gonna be paid that month. You know, bills, stuff like that. If I had a good job where I could maintain. No worry, no stress, no financially, no way. (Sheena)

Sue astutely recognizes that perhaps her definition of good work is based on her impoverished life and her lack of having any experience with good work. She said, "maybe my knowledge will go up and I'll think something different, but now it is just money."

Seems like, and this is just strictly observation, nothing written down, but it just seems like a lot

> of our students have a very limited reality in those life areas [budgeting] and that sometimes their goals are so short term, day to day, feed their family, that they are not thinking about a year from now , 5 years from now, 10 years from now,...buying a house or a car, getting a job an being able to move to another part of town. It is so immediate, food and clothing, and shelter. It is the kind of hierarchy of needs that we are so concerned about today and tomorrow the we can't look past it, and most of our students don't have bank accounts. (Tracy)

More important than pay, however, was that good work involved doing something enjoyable. All 13 TANF were unanimous is saying that "good work" would be something that they enjoyed doing:

> Getting the job done is important, but it is more important to be happy where you are at. That is just how I am. I don't want to be unhappy, I already did that before. (Lilly)
>
> I worked at Covergirls. Most people can't make $1400 in one day, but I hated it. So, I am not there. If I liked it I would still be there, but I hated it. I've got to like what I'm doing to be happy. (Candy)

> For me to get a job doing something I want to do because if I got a job at something I didn't want to do, I probably would not like it. (Sue)
>
> The job I do have now does not really pay that good, but I enjoy it. I cook there, I flip burgers, but I enjoy my job. It's not a career job, but I enjoy it. (Lizze)

Part of enjoying what one does is having a healthy work environment, and several of the women pointed out that good work meant having such an environment in which co-workers and bosses were likeable and the atmosphere at work was non-stressful:

> Friendly people where everyone gets along good. It is comfortable and relaxed. Dress comfortable and everybody just gets along with each other. (Katherine)
>
> Good work would be a small dental office, very nice boss, and the other employees nice and easy to get along with and short hours. (Candy)
>
> I would not want to work around anyone that was rude, or had apprehension about trying to train me because they feel like they are top dog and they don't have time for you. I would like to work in a fun atmosphere, kind of laid back. (Kippy)

Time spent with children was another important component of good work, but this issue was blurred by the more immediate need of "providing and supporting" their family which came under the topic of money. It must be remembered that all of these women are the primary care givers for their children; most of them are single mothers, so the immediate need of taking care of their children financially seemed to take precedent over time spent with children. This is, of course, in opposition to many middle class women who would assert that a key component of what they would consider "good work" would be time off with their children:

> I want to be able to work and make the money, you know, to be able to get my kids what they need or want, some things they want , but not everything. (Katherine)
>
> I need something that can support me and my 3 kids and if that is 9 months of school here to get me a good job when I get out, fine. I bite my tongue, and find the strength to do what I've got to do. (Sue)

Candy, who is married, was the only one who stated that a key feature of good work to her was having some time off (e.g., Wednesday and Friday afternoon) so that she could spend time with her son.

For about half of the women good work meant having benefits. Here "benefits" related solely to medical insurance. Not one of the women mentioned retirement benefits, paid vacations, life insurance or any other commonly thought about component of job benefits. Since several of these women suffer from various health problems, it is no wonder that medical insurance is a number one priority. Camille explained that while she considered good work to entail getting benefits, "you can always, pretty much get Medicaid." She does not recognize that once she got a decent paying job that she, in fact, would no longer be eligible for Medicaid. This is further indication of the lack of knowledge these women have about the TANF legislation.

Kippy stated, on the other hand, recognizes that benefits are important "because we are giving up our medical benefits once we go to work." Evelyn, who has Chromes disease was very vocal in her having to have benefits for a "good job."

> I will not take a job if there are no benefits. I don't care if it pays the highest salary in the world, if it does not have medical….I don't care about paid vacations r any of that. It could pay $1000 a day but if it does not have medical, I am not taking it. If something happened to my

children, where would I be. If they did not have workers comp, I would not take it. My health and my children's health are more important than the highest paid salary because without that, the job is just not worth it.

Shilea, who repeatedly talked about good work in terms of having a "stree-free" life recognizes that having benefits contributed to one's peace of mind:

> I want to be in a good working place with benefits, insurance, you know, things like that. I'd like to have a better car than what I have now. I ain't gonna say worry free, but less worry, less stress.

Although Marilyn, Tracy, and Jody all felt that good work was synonymous with career, only five of these women included the word "career" or "profession" when talking about good work. Camille asserts, " Instead of working odd jobs like my mother has done all her life and barely support you know, making it from one check to the next, I don't want to be like that… I am looking for a profession."

Jancie, who desired to be a drug counselor, was the only woman who felt that having a college degree was imperative for good work: .

> I would hope to be sitting in my own office with my degree up on the wall for counseling and have

made it through this school and to get my counseling degree will definitely be more school. At least 4 more years.

Rather than having a college degree, many of these women felt that good work meant having some kind of skill that would make one marketable which would lead to stable work. Having a skill meant that if fired, she could get another job because she had a skill that was needed in the workplace:

> I want a skill, something to make me feel proud of myself like I know a little more than most. (Kippy)
>
> I want to do something, something good, something meaningful. I don't want to work at McDonalds or Wal-Mart. I want to have a job that I have skills in that I can go and find another job if lose that job. Where I can make money to support myself and my children. (Lizze)
>
> Working in an office is really what I want to do. What a secretary does, working on a computer, maybe some filing. They just don't sit there and type all day. I don't want to keep going in out from the hot and cold. I want to stay in one place the whole time. You won't get as sick. (Katherine)

Sally felt that having some marketable skills meant the difference between having a "pity job" (which someone just give you to help you out) and a job which the employee is in a more reciprocal relationship with her employer:

> Just give me something to do. You got those files, then I will do it. You want these phone calls made, I can do that. Just make sure that I have something to do. Make sure that you are not just giving me this just to give me something, that I am doing something that will help you.

A few of these women felt that the particular skill that was needed in order to get good work was technological skills. For example, Sheena felt that having the word "technology" in her job title would enhance people's perceptions of her. She stated, "I like it because of the title, technology. It'll make me feel important, technology. What do you do? I work in technology."

Jancie reflected a pervasive understanding in this culture that in a post-industrial society, every worker will need to be computer literate. She asserts:

> I don't know of any job from flipping hamburgers to attorney's office that they do not use computers and with any field I choose to go into, which I want to get my counseling degree, you need to know about computers.

She goes on to talk about how being computer illiterate put her at a disadvantage in her previous job situation. She believes that having computer skills will enhance her self-confidence:

> When my life started going downhill was when computers were first coming out into the work field and that is kind of when I walked away from work, from a job. Any kind of job, work, it is hard, you know , without computers. So, I am just trying to get the basics, just understand the computer and get as much education in computering as I can.

A few equated good work as having some kind of power or authority. Lizze explained that she wanted to be a juvenile probation officer because of the power: "I want to tell them, you got to do this. Some people, it would make me feel good. Kind of like DHS. They have the power." Similarly, Evelyn asserted:

> I want my own office by myself in a nice setting and nice salary. Not like a secretary, like a business manager. Not at like McDonalds, any kind of company like a travel agency..having that authority, I don't know...more like an assistant manager.

Sally reflected an understanding of good work that seems typified in such movies as "Baby Boom" and "Working Girl" in which the woman executive wears the power suit and has some authority while still retaining her good looks:

> A good job would be to put my hair up...with my business suit. Be one person at work then get off and be another.

Several of the women talked about prior work experience that they would consider a good job, rather than good work. However, only Sherry talked about a personal work experience that she felt was an example of good work. This was her experience working in a factory in which she experienced several components of what others have talked about being good work: decent pay, personal satisfaction, and the respect of co-worker. She explained:

> If the machine didn't tear up as much as it did, I would have probably could have done it for years and years with the money going up. So, if the money kept going up and up and up, and my health wasn't bad, I would have been still there. I put my headphones on, nobody bothered me, I was to myself all day, and do my job, and that was it. They liked me, they respected me very well, because nobody else wanted to do the job, and I

was the fastest one at doing the job. I felt good at doing the job.

Participant's Perceptions of "Bad Work"

Throughout the study - in interviews, field observations, and focus groups - work at McDonald's or "flipping burgers" was used as a metaphor for bad work. As discussed earlier in Chapter II, Service sector jobs, such as those at McDonald's, are the fastest growing segment of employment in this country. Yet, the women in this study did not view McDonald's type of work as desirable work. They felt it epitomized bad work because it was low-pay, low-skilled, and menial.

> I want to do something, something good, something meaningful. I don't want to work at McDonalds or Wal-Mart. (Lizze)
>
> I would be bitter too, if I worked at McDonalds. Candy)
>
> I am grateful for this opportunity. This has given me the time to get my life back on track. If I went to work, I just, I mean anybody can go to McDonald's and flip hamburgers. That is not what I want for myself and my daughter. (Jancie)
>
> I don't like McDonalds and all them peopl. You don't get paid that much to put up with all that

crap. It's hard work for low pay. I've got friends that work there, and she said you're looked at like a little cockroach. (Lizze)

Bad work would be some type of hard labor or McDonalds or a Burger King. I would feel like I wasted my time if I got a job like that. I wouldn't belong there. I like to have some people contact, but I don't like to feel like I am waiting on them. (Evelyn)

Oh sure. I think it does take skill, especially customer service skill, but I don't feel proud of myself. I know that sounds snobby, I feel like that is a high school job. I just don't want to be 50 and standing behind that register checking people out. (Kippy)

Working at a fast-food type, which I've never done, but I think I can do it. Janitorial work, cleaning, stuff like that, that's not me. That's bad work because I'm not the type of person to go out and clean for somebody else. That's just something I wouldn't want to do. (Sherry)

Not surprisingly, responses about good work were often centered around issues of low pay. For example, Katherine states, "I need to make $5 or $6 an hour. They still give minimum wage for low paying jobs. I can't live on, say, $3

an hour. I can't live on that. I can't raise any kids on that, there just ain't no way." Similarly, Lizze asserts: "I thought I would be able to make it on my own, but $5.50 is not anything with kids." Sheena, who repeatedly talked about "maintaining" (just making ends meet) is not enough said that bad work meant that "Your working, you're maintaining, but you're struggling at the same time."

However, a hostile work environment was cited more often than low pay as being indicative of bad work. Unfair bosses, petty co-workers, unhealthy work, and long hours were all factors that lead to a job being categorized as bad work.

> Something that I do not enjoy is not a good situation for me. (Camille)
>
> Bad pay, bad boss that is mean to you, long hours [weekends or nights], other people at work are hard to get along with. Just something where you dread getting up and going. (Candy)
>
> Working with people that don't like you. I don't know what kind of job. I don't think there is a bad job. If you need a job you are going to take it. (Sue)
>
> Get $5.50 an hour, everybody fights and talks behind everybody's back and no one gets along and

someone is stealing in the office. I would consider that bad work. (Lizze)

Shilea talked about the job she currently has as being "bad work," but much like Tracy, who said "work is a necessary evil," Sheena viewed her bad work as being essential to her livelihood and something about which she has little choice:

> I've done too much of that [bad work]. Like right now, I'm making too much of bad work, but it's helping pay my bills. Rent and stuff, and it's taking care of the babies. I work at a janitorial service. I go at night and I clean this building. I clean the outer side. Somebody cleans the inside, and if they're not there, I do their part.

Candy spent a good deal of time talking about her former job as a stripper at a local bar. She talked about this job as being bad work because she hated what her job entailed (i.e., taking off her clothes):

> I hated it there. I had to be a different person when I walked through those doors. Every night I would drive around the block thinking what can I tell them why I can't come in. I made enough money so I really don't have to go. I was making a bunch of money, but I hated it.

However, she sometimes expressed much more ambivalence about this job because she recognized that it offered her one component of good work - money and self-confidence. For Candy, looks were very important, and her job as a stripper meant that her ego was often stroked:

> It was excellent money. The most money I ever made in my life. The least amount I made for a seven hour shift was probably $300 and the most was $1400. The $1400 I just sat and talked to a man at a table and he just gave it to me. Most of the time that is how I worked. I would wait for people to come up to me. I couldn't hustle. I wasn't very good at hustling. But sometimes that is very good for your self-esteem because there all of these people telling you how pretty you are and everything.

As discussed in the review of the literature, temporary work is typically considered bad work because it usually offers no benefits, no job security, and it is low wage. However, during one of the class discussions involving eight of the women and Tracy, they contradicted this assertion. The following is an excerpt from fieldnotes taken during a conversation in which Tracy has told them that going with a temporary agency has become more and more popular. She says "you're actually on the job, getting trained, and then after

a couple of months, they can offer you full-time job with benefits. In an hour interview, what can they really find out about what you really do on the job. They are taking a risk."

> (Person #1): I would hire the temp, because I would get to see how they would perform the job.
>
> (Person #2): Unless I find a job that I just really think I have to have, in the paper, or do my research, I don't think that I'm gonna go that way. I think I'm gonna go through the temp, because it's the better way.
>
> (Person #3): I have seen where they hired somebody who quit on them, and I could see where they'd rather have somebody they could try out, rather than me.
>
> (Person #4): They don't do anything but pay you that little bit of money they have to pay you, and that's it. They get away with everything else. Which is very cool, because you get to experience them, as well as them getting to experience you.

Tracy, closed out this discussion by responding to the inquiry concerning temps leading to full time employment. She states:

> A lot of time they do, but I wouldn't say most because I don't know that. But gosh, if you get in

there, and treat every day like an interview. You're doing your best, and when your job's done, you're looking for other ways to help other people, or to solve other problems that you see, My gosh, how could they not hire you?

Unlike Tracy, Marilyn, and Jody who viewed bad work as something one can turn into good work, these women did not express the belief that bad work can lead to good work. This is probably due to the fact that in their life experiences, this has never happened to them personally. Sue, for example, was working in a travel agency which she liked; however, when she became pregnant she was fired. Later, she was hired at a tanning salon but soon lost her job when her child became ill. Although Marilyn contends that "we are all captains of our own ships," most of these women do not feel so optimistic. As Sue poignantly commented, "I don't think there's a bad job. If you need a job, you are going to take it." Obviously, the luxury to choose a job based on whether it is good or bad work is not one that many TANF clients have.

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Question #4-What is the Meaning of "Good Work" in the Practices and Programs associated with the Welfare-to-Work Legislation?

The first three research questions of the study answered questions concerning perceptions of the participants and administrators. Question # 4 addresses "good work" in a much more pragmatic manner by analyzing how the LOW program prepares TANF clients for "good work." In order to successfully understand how this transformation may take place, a description of the program must first be analyzed.

Rationale of the Life Off Welfare (LOW) Program

There are 22 Welfare-to-Work programs in the 29 vocational schools in the state of Oklahoma. Although each program has general guidelines under the direction of the Department of Human Services, the programs have much autonomy in the way they operate on a day-to-day basis. The curriculum, scheduling, and instructional activities are left up to the discretion of the individual institutions.

Most of the Welfare-to-Work programs in Oklahoma subscribe to the political agenda of the "Work First" philosophy, although the LOW program proved to incorporate many unique dimensions. When Marlyin was asked if other

state programs do the same type orientation as LOW, she replied,

> "No. Absolutely not." Every school only has to do assessments. Many programs you just walk in the door, you do a one on one visit and that is orientation, and then they are scheduled for testing.

All the programs administered testing for the students, with the TABE being the most common type. Financial aid, such as the Pell grant, look at TABE scores of the student because most financial aid cannot be awarded to anyone not passing the criteria of the test. Most vocational institutions use this criterion for admission to their full-time programs. The rationale is if someone does not score high enough on the test, his/her chances of being successful in school is minimal; therefore; investing money in that person would constitute considerable risk. If a person does not reach the required score, there are some short-term programs, such as computer applications, that a student may enroll in while he/she does remedial work to improve TABE scores.

Philosophy of LOW Program

> No, we do not place people in jobs. Some programs will literally place their clients somewhere. We

> really just don't operate with that same philosophy. We really feel like that if you do a good job with training and showing people where and how to find jobs and what to do to keep the job, then there is a better buy in of doing it themselves. They need to pick their own employer, have their own buy in. (Marilyn)
>
> Up front, it seems like sometime the easiest and best way to do it is to find them a job and place them in it but that is a short term solution in mind. These are long term, for the most part, welfare recipients who need long term solutions just not a quick fix. Anybody can get a job tomorrow but the quality of job and their ability to go where they want has a lot to do with it. I think that relates to happiness on the job, but to know that they are not just trapped in that position because we got it for them. (Tracy)

The above quotes illustrated the premise that initiated the LOW program they have today at RRVT. Unlike the majority of its contemporary institutions, the LOW program offers no "short term" niche market training. Many TANF training centers offered short term training that prepared clients for immediate job specific work. Typically, the training in such job readiness programs employed teaching an individual

only what is necessary to be productive on the needed task. However, the LOW program did not subscribe to this belief as their philosophy is that students should have the opportunity to choose the vocational field they wish to study, although low scores could possibility prohibit someone from entering their chosen field. Unlike many programs, students are encouraged, but not told, what they should enter. Tracy explained their role at LOW:

> I think that part of our job has to be stepping out of the all-knowing, all-powerful OZ and into the supportive position where we say, this is you, this is your life, these are your goals, this is your opportunity to shape them and we are going to help you.

The overall goal, as stated several times by the administrators, is employment, but education and vocational training is stressed instead of short-term solutions. The TANF recipient who comes to RRVT will participate in a nine day orientation conducted by administrators of the LOW program. After the orientation is complete, those who passed the TABE will wait for their vocational class to begin, and others that did not make the needed score will work with the remediation teacher.

Orientation Sessions of LOW Program

As mentioned earlier by Marilyn, the orientation at RRVT is very atypical of the other institutions. Whereas many others simply define orientation as one day set aside for testing, the LOW program offers a two week program for their TANF clients. A new session starts at the beginning of every month, although this has not always been the case. At one time they had a one-day orientation but found that it was not adequate for their clients. Nine months ago the administration felt that a change was needed, and the updated program was begun. The updated program is a two week long orientation which includes introduction, assessments, *Hard Choices*, and Remediation. The following is a discussion of the goals and purposes of each part of the LOW program.

Introduction. The introduction to the LOW program I visited started at precisely 8:30 a.m. on Monday morning, and tardiness was strongly discouraged. Punctuality is stressed throughout the introduction and subsequent components of the LOW program. In fact, Marilyn stated that she would lock the doors at 8:45. Most of the students have been to RRVT for an initial meeting with the administrators of the LOW program, having been sent by their DHS caseworker, but this is the first time they have been

together as a group. The orientations contains approximately 21 people, which Marylyn explained is a typical number. Marylyn explains that any larger would be difficult in meeting the individual needs of each student. Marylyn spends the first morning of orientation going over the programs offered, financial aid, expectations, and what the LOW program can offer them. The afternoon session continues with Marylyn answering questions and dispenses applications for financial aid. The afternoon ends with a tour of the RRVT campus.

Assessments.

> Our whole goal is to prepare them for work, so our initial orientation helps them take a better look at themselves for one, because we do go through some assessments, academically and vocationally so that they can find where their best fit is. A lot of our students may come in with some unrealistic expectations or goals. There may be one their raises their hand and says that I want to be a brain surgeon, but that doesn't mean they can, either academically or whatever may come into play, so, we go through that, hopefully giving them a better picture of who they are and where they are at this point in their lives. We can help them down the road figure out, OK, what

type of work am I best suited for, so that they can get some direction in their life. (Marilyn)

To determine the context of his/her academic deficiencies, the TABE test is administered to all students. This test not only informs the teachers and administrators of the cognitive levels of clients, it is also used to determine who can get into vocational classes and who is eligible for financial aid. After completion of the test, students are given the results in a very timely fashion, usually in one to two days. Marylyn explains to the student how the test is to be interpreted and makes sure that everyone has a clear understanding of her score and if she is at the level to be enrolled into the vocational program of her choice.

To help determine the class in which they would like to enroll, the students took the Compass test. This is a inventory assessment of their interests and gives them an idea in what they would excel. Marylyn and Tracy also offer encouragement and advice during this short-term process of determining the "career field" they wish to pursue.

Hard Choices. *Hard Choices* is the multi-dimensional part that addresses the humanistic areas of the orientation. In this section, which continues throughout the course of orientation with either afternoon or morning meetings, Tracy, the job developer is the leader, although she leads

it in such a manner that some would acknowledge her as a facilitator rather than leader. The purpose of these group sessions is to address ethics, values, and other concerns which happen in the work place, and barriers the students encounter in obtaining and retaining employment. Sessions are usually two to three hours in length.

Remediation. This section referred not only to the basic literacy skills someone may need in order to retake and pass the TABE, but it also involves students going to the computer labs and working there. Many of the TANF recipients at RRVT never performed any applications electronically, so this service is a valuable asset to the program. The LOW program has a part-time computer teacher, and this allows for several students to be able to go into the RRVT computer labs at any time to receive help from qualified personnel in technology.

The main focus of remediation, however, is in the class room with a full-time remediation teacher. Here, students work on their own with guidance and help provided as needed. Students who pass the TABE and are not in need of remediation also come to this class until they can go into their vocational class. This is usually for one to two weeks. While waiting, these students sometimes tutor others and in many cases are able to start working on the curriculum of the vocational class they have chosen.

The above is a brief summary of the LOW program in terms of the orientation they offer their TANF students. One should note, however, that after the students leave orientation and enter the remediation or vocational education classes, they still maintain contact with Jody, Marilyn, and Tracy.

How Does the LOW Program Prepare Students for "Good Work?"

Because teaches and administrators have so much autonomy in shaping the Welfare-to-Work programs, their individual belief systems concerning "good work" shape everything that is done at each site. As stated earlier, Marilyn, Tracy, and Jody's understanding of "good work" is synomonous with "career," but at the same time they believe that a person can turn "bad work" into "good work" by inculcating the habits of good workers. These habits, according to the LOW Student Handbook, include "good work habits, ethics, good communication skills, positive self-awareness, good relationships with others, effective goal setting skills, and proper problem-solving skills." From my analysis of field observations, interviews, and documents, five dimensions emerged as the primary ways in which the LOW program seeks to prepare TANF clients for good work. Each of these will be discussed below.

Personal Responsibility

As the name implies, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, emphasized that TANF recipients should assume personal responsibility for themselves and their families. Although the teachers and administrators at LOW expressed contradictory beliefs about the "Work First" agenda, they do subscribe to the idea that being engaged in work teaches responsibility and lead to being a productive citizen. Jody explains:

> The way I look at it, they must all contribute to society. They have a choice, so, if they do not want to go through the steps to better themselves for a better job, they need to go to work, whatever they can find to do. Hopefully, it will be something they enjoy, but even if it is minimum wage, they need to be working.

The LOW program conducted by RRVT emphasizes this need for responsibility with its focus on attendance, dedication, and attitude.

Attendance.

> I think each orientation is improving in the fact that we are more up-front. They know that it is going to be strict and if they don't abide by the

> rules, attendance policy and those kind of things; they will not be here. (Jody)

As evidenced from earlier discussion in this chapter, the administrators and teachers believed that "good work" and career are synonymous, and that "good work" can be obtained by toiling patiently and subserviently in "bad work;" however, this transition, according to Marilyn, Tracy, and Jody, can never materialize if attendance is sporadic. Marylyn, Tracy, and Jody all suggested that attendance is a major problem at RRVT for their clients, and acknowledge that in order to obtain and keep a "career," good attendance is imperative. Each TANF client is given an attendance policy sheet that states among other edicts, "Your attendance is not a personal issue, it's the law. Please remember: an empty desk is an empty future." All recipients sign a attendance contract with the LOW program, and students who do not comply with it are likely to receive a "nasty gram" from Marylyn. Although this is typically a warning, it can lead to expulsion from the LOW program and ultimately closure of the TANF case if compliance is not met. When asked if attendance in school is the same as going to work, Marylyn admitted that it was not; however;

> What clients will tell us, students will tell us is, Oh no, I would not be this way at work because I get paid, so they themselves perceive attendance

> in school as very different than attendance on a job and money being the primary motivator. My response is that you receive a TANF check, and you receive $6 a day. You receive benefits and foodstamps. All of those things are because you are participating.

The major emphasis on attendance by the staff at RRVT stresses that if one can not or will not go to work on a regular basis, one cannot expect a career. Many of the recipients buy-in to this philosophy and in some classes, students made up their own ground rules in which rule number one was to be punctual. Kippy stated:

> Their attendance policy is so strict. That is the most important part of work to me, like having a career. You can get a career and then if you don't show up then you are fired and so their attendance policy is so strict it kind of gets you prepared for like when you go out and have that real boss.

Kippy continued:

> I think everything is habitual, and I think that getting up and having to be somewhere every morning prepares somebody for a job who hasn't worked in a long time.

Lizze concurred that attendance at school is important if you want to keep your attendance at your job, and Sally

states that orientation has helped prepare her for work by making her do something everyday.

> It's like a job. You get up in the morning and get ready, take the kids to daycare, come to school, go home and eat dinner.

In one of the classes, Tracy asked how this course will help them be more effective in work, and the two most common answers given were to follow rules and to be punctual. Tracy then asked the group if it was important to be on time to work, and they again responded in a positive manner. One of the students told the story about Hertz, the rental Car Company:

> The way many companies determine if they have made the right choice is by the attendance records. Big companies like Hertz, the only way they judge is if you come to work.

Attitude.

> It all goes back to attitude and everyone is in control of their own attitude. We all have to be responsible for it. (Jody)

Repeatedly, the phrase "having the right attitude" emerged in the various components of the LOW program. Having the right work attitude was reflected in the participant

requirements which are printed in the LOW student handbook. These six requirements include:

1. You must want to be here.
2. You must consider this your job
3. You must commit to 100% attendance
4. You must follow all rules
5. You must understand the goal is to go to work in your vocational training area.
6. You must try to do your best, be your best, each day.

Evelyn demonstrated her belief that having the right attitude is one of the primary lessons being taught in the LOW program, and people who lack the right attitude will not be successful as workers:

> Orientation has been good, it's been real good. There is a lot of things out there I did not know that you need to be prepared for work. They give you a lot of information and stuff that you didn't know where to find it they found for you. I think they prepared me for work, with the exception of the skills for doing it. Everything else, outside of that, appearance, attitude, and just everything. It would not be bad to bring in more about motivation, but if you really don't have it, you don't have it. I guess it just depends on the

person. If they want to do it or not. There is just so much you can do for somebody. If they really don't want to do it, you can't force them. A lot of people are set in their ways and you can not change them.

Jody also talked about people who have the wrong kind of attitude and how having a bad attitude hurts everyone. She told me a story of how one student told another student, "you have got an attitude here and your attitude is affecting everyone else. What can we do to help you with this?"

Jody also believed that one of the main reasons why people do not complete the program is due to a "bad attitude":

> The ones that drop out, they come in with the attitude that they have to be there. They use all their energies still trying to beat the system. Not thinking it's fair that attendance is important, I can't really think of anyone that has that attitude that has made it for very long here.

The LOW program is required by DHS to complete a "Time and Progress Report" monthly for each TANF client enrolled in their program. One of the traits they must assess is the student's work attitude. During Christmas and spring break, when class is not in session at RRVT, TANF students are

still required to complete 30 hours of education or work related activities. The way the LOW program handles this is by giving the students a series of work activities such as volunteering, working part time, and job searching. If a student volunteers or works part-time, she is required to have her employer or person in charge to complete a work verification sheet. Two of eight components to be evaluated are "attitude concerning work" and "attitude concerning others."

Dedication. Being dedicated to work and to acquiring the habits of a good worker was another lesson taught in the LOW program. This typically was reflected in conversations during interviews and in class discussions about those who persevered, stayed with the program, and proved they were dedicated to taking personal responsibility for finding meaningful work. Marilyn, Tracy, and Jody referred to this notion of dedication in terms of "de-selection" as reflected in Marilyn's comment during one of the interviews:

> We still say it is better if students de-select themselves because ultimately if we have to get through the program and them be a reference and help them find employment, we need to know that they have been serious and worked hard and that their heart is in this. If they kind of fall out of the system due to poor attendance, or whatever

excuses come up, then they really did not want to be here anyway. So it is OK with us if they de-select. It is frustrating that we have spent a lot of time and energy to put together that together and to try to nurture that and get them in the system and then they wash pretty quickly. That is frustrating.

Tracy views this de-selection as a natural process that separated the dedicated from the non-dedicated:

> When students drop out during orientation, I feel that is part of what we set into our program as somewhat of a natural de-selection process. In that I mean that the students hopefully exposed enough in those days of orientation to what we are about. Is this something I want or maybe I need to look elsewhere. And if this isn't something that they really fit into, we don't want them to be here. It's not going to be successful if they don't have some buy-in, if they don't want to be a part of this. It's a great opportunity, we want them to see that, but again, if the individual doesn't feel like it is a great opportunity, it is not for them, and not only are they going to make themselves miserable by being here, chances are it's going to rub off on other students.

Camille felt that the she has learned more from work than the orientation, but believes that orientation is good for people who have not done much for themselves and it weeds the ones out who are not going to do it. She stated:

> You know, you bring them in for two weeks and you talk about things and the ones that aren't going to make it, they will be gone. I think it kind of weeds people out so that Jody doesn't have to. It would really be a waste of time to mess with because they are really not dedicated to it. Some people have not really been out there and understand it, so give them two weeks or orientation, to kind of understand it a little bit better and they can make a clear decision if they really want to be here or just want to go back home.

It is evident from the interviews, observations, and documents that personal responsibility is being taught at LOW through its emphasis on attendance, the right attitude, and dedication. These traits are considered to be of utmost importance in obtaining and retaining work, which may ultimately lead to "good work." If a participant of the LOW program lacks these traits, they are weeded out through the process of de-selection. What typically happens for those

who drop out of the program is they engage in job search or take a low-skilled, low-wage job.

Ethical Decision Making

TANF recipients at RRVT are also taught to be ethical decision makers in preparation for good work. This entails reflection upon one's personal values and incorporating those values into making ethical decisions that are not always easy to make. Marilyn explains:

> We do a workshop that gets them looking deep at themselves and their needs and their priorities and what is important to them and what is not is all part of that, as well as looking at the ethics piece. So we feel like that is kind of an employment ethics piece. What would you do in certain situations and it is not a criticism of what you would do is wrong or bad, it's that there are multiple solutions and what are the consequences of your solution. So, it definitely has a workplace, work context.

Hard Choices is a component of orientation that focuses on values and ethics in the workplace. It is a structured curriculum, although Tracy seemed to be flexible with it according to the perceived needs of the participants. One

part of *Hard Choices* is devoted to scenarios which involve ethical situational circumstances. Some examples from the curriculum guide include:

1. According to your company's policies, quality is the highest priority. You are working on a rush order and have to cut some corners in order to meet the deadline. It would take at least another day to do a quality job, but then you would miss the deadline and both the customer and the boss would be unhappy. What should you do?
2. A fellow employee is being harassed at work and is afraid to say or do anything about it for fear of losing his job. You have witnesses several instances of the harassment, and you fear retaliation from the company if you "blow the whistle." You can't afford to lose your job. What should you do?
3. One of your coworkers, who is also a personal friend, has been going through a number of health problems and has used all her sick time. You have tried to be a good listener and to help out when you can. Now your coworker has asked you to punch in for her and cover for her during a medical appointment. What should you do?

Although I was not in the sessions during the time of all the above discussions, I was present in other workplace

situations which Tracy guided the group in thinking about how their personal values impact the kinds of decisions they make. For example in one session, Tracy wrote words such as tolerance and obey on the board and let students discuss the feelings they had for such word. Some of the comments included:

> It is just like your boss. You do not have to like him but you must tolerate him. Or like DHS, You also have to tolerate them. (Ladonna)
>
> The old Negro saying about tolerance is it does not matter what people call you, it is what you answer to. (Mary)
>
> Obedience means to obey and I don't obey anyone but Jesus Christ, but no one here on earth. (Brenda)
>
> I don't like the work obey, it makes you feel like you are in slavery. (Sarah)
>
> I was in a marriage and every time I did not obey I got beaten. (Rita)
>
> If I do not obey the rules of DHS, I will not get my little check (Sophie)

In another session, Tracy posed questions which required the students to discuss in groups different situations and what decisions they would make. Some of these situations included:

1. What do you do if you catch a co-worker doing drugs in the bathroom?
2. What to do when a co-worker wants you to finish her job?
3. What do you do when an employer rubs his hand all over them?
4. What do you do when a cashier gives your friend a discount?
5. What do you do if you have missed to many days and your employer wants you to meet him for one hour each week in his office or you will be fired?
6. What do you do if the boss keeps giving you sexual advances to be alone with him?

These classes stress that values and ethics are a large part of the workplace, and to try and separate them from work would not be feasible. In order to be successful in the workplace, the LOW program contends, one must be able to reflect on one's own personal values in order to make ethical decisions. Sometimes these discussions became quite heated and not all of the students were comfortable with talking about values and controversial issues as explained by Camille:

> It's just bringing up subjects that sometime you really should not talk about in public anyway with people. You've got race, religion, things like

that you just don't talk about, some people just get heated.

Obviously, Marilyn, Tracy, and Jody believed that the women in their program needed help in clarifying their values and belief systems. However, Lizze believed that she personally did not need such guidance because her own Christian beliefs were enough to ensure that she made ethical decisions:

> I kind of knew everything we were talking about in Hard Choices because there's a lot of things I believe, Christian ways, you know, being good to people and stuff. That's just my belief. There's some people, I felt sure, that went through it that don't have that.

Bonding and Being a Team Player

One of the unique characteristics of the LOW program, according to Marilyn, is that it promotes a sense of bonding so that women, who prior to this have felt quite alone, can feel as if they are part of a community. This is reflected in the first page of the LOW students handbook which reads: "We are here to work with you to realize your dreams of successful employment and an improved lifestyle for you and your children. Always remember, you are part of the team and

in order that we are successful, each member must play his or her role effectively."

Many of the women expressed great appreciation for the opportunity to bond with one another:

> These are the first friends I have made here. The first few classes we bonded with it. It is great, I think, I really do. It gives you a chance to bond with everyone. Our group is so close. Oh, man, it's like we love each other. (Kippy)
>
> When you don't have anybody else to talk to then you don't want to carry all of that with you to work and unload on somebody and get in trouble. I have these friends now and if I need to talk about it I can always come back and talk to them. (Lizze)

Marilyn, Jody, and Tracy believed that if the women bonded with each other and with them, they would want to come to class, thus they would be more apt to complete the program. Marilyn explained:

> Creating that bond with the students where they have a feeling that someone is going to care about me if I don't go today seems to help with motivation. It seems to help to keep the students coming better so we wanted to set up a system that

created that. A group coming in all together created that bond.

The bonding experience through Orientation was readily apparent in the women's responses. Although some may have enjoyed the overall experience more than others, they were in agreement that the cohesiveness of a group was a positive thing. Sally commented how it was helpful to talk with others about problems she thought only she had, and both Candy and Sue expressed how it had raised their self-esteem and confidence.

Embedded in this notion of community building is the belief that good workers are also team players who are able to work with a variety of people to contribute to a common goal. Janice expressed this belief in the following way:

> It helps you work with other people. Everybody has different ways and different ideas and it helps if you have a positive attitude. The esteem part of it, knowing that wherever you came from you are capable and you can get, can further your education and teamwork
>
> Actually, this second group seem more courageous and ambitious. We have all gotten along, like we come from different directions and for different reasons but we are all pushing for the same goals. There is a lot of teamwork.

Throughout the LOW program, group work and being part of a team was emphasized. For example, during one of my observations the group participated in an activity called the "Beta/Alpha Game." In this activity, the class was divided into two groups. Each group was to build a tower. The catch was, however, that each person represented a different culture; thus, they shared no common language or cultural understandings. The goal of the activity was to see if the group could reach the objective of building a tower together despite their differences.

On another occasion, an activity was given to them which combined team work with values clarification. The group was divided into three teams, and each team was to reach a consensus about the three people with whom they would want to be stranded on an island. The responses varied from "Superman, Samantha the Witch, and George Clooney" to "Jesus, Leonardo da Vinci, and Martha Stewart."

During another observation, Tracy asked them to get in groups. The students began to move to their familiar groups; however, Tracy stopped them. Several of the students said, "We were already in groups." To that, Tracy told them she wanted to configure new groups by asking them to count off 1-2-3. The students complied and got into new groups but were obviously not very happy with Tracy's new way of forming groups.

The new focus of the workplace is to discourage autonomy and encourage teamwork. In this manner, it is evident that RRVT appears to be succeeding as one of the participants exclaimed "Team work!" in response to what did they learn in orientation that they did not think they would. Unfortunately, as the groups began to disperse into different vocational programs and the remediation classes, the cohesiveness of the groups began to fall apart.

Marketable Skills

It has been noted throughout this study that the purpose of the LOW program is to help TANF recipients gain employment. The program is different from other programs in that it offers no special niche market TANF class, and before students can go into a vocational class, they have the opportunity to experience the two week orientation. However, the bottom line is that the LOW program is preparing people for work by helping them gain marketable skills they believe will lead to good work. As one participants succinctly pointed out, "We are all here for one reason. We want to take care of our families and provide a better life."

Likewise Tracy explained:

> We are not going to find you a job. We are going to give you every tool possible. We are going to

> give you all the resources, we are going to let you use our computers, We are going to walk you through step by step, but you are going to be to doing it yourself. It is hard and more difficult, and sometimes they don't like going through it but when they are done that is something we can't take back away from them. Up front, it seems like sometime the easiest and best way to do it is find them a job and place them in it but that is a short term solution. Anybody could get a job tomorrow, but the quality of the job and their ability to go where they want has a lot to do with it, and I think that relates to happiness on the job, but to know that they are not just trapped in that one position because we got it for them, but they have all the skills it takes to get another job if they so desire.

Part of this process is helping students select what type of work they wish to pursue. This is done by staff counseling, assessments, and a computer program called Discover which helps participants discover their interests. Because of the rigid time constraints, there is little time provided in choosing what may become a career. Tracy expressed her views as," I don't think it is possible for anyone to have a well thought out, well educated decision in

one day of career planning. I don't think that's possible." Nevertheless after the basic placement testing is complete, students attempt to make a hasty decision.

Students with a high enough placement score are able to shortly start the vocational program of their choice. These choices include: Business and Computer, Health Occupations, Automotive Services, Construction Trades, Welding, Child Care, Graphic Communications, and Polymer Injection. Getting into one of these programs usually takes several weeks, so during this time they are assigned to the classroom with others who are still trying to receive a passing score. Many of the participants who have passed the TABE found Jody's remediation class somewhat boring because they were simply waiting until they could start their vocational class. By DHS requirements, however, they must be in school six hours a day. Some of the students were allowed to start to work on the curriculum of their vocational class while in the remediation class. Others helped tutor those who had not passed the TABE test.

In Jody's class, remediation is done on an individual basis, and students take turns going to the computer lab. LOW is one of the only vocational programs in the state that has a full-time TANF teacher and a half-time computer teacher. This class is designed for the student who needs literacy assistance, with math usually being the most common

failure. Marilyn explained the function of this class as follows:

> The rest of the time in orientation is used to help if there is an academic deficiency, and to me that gets to a literacy issue in the workplace, so just helping them brush up on their reading, math, or language, or getting their GED, I continue to monitor that and that is a big piece toward employment. A lot of our students do not understand or see that connection but we hopefully have talked to them about that and how employers want people who are well-educated, or at least educated to the point that they are going to be able to read the warning labels for their job, or the memos that come across their desk, or those types of things.

While studying for the scores to allow admission, students without a high school diploma are encouraged to pursue a GED since DHS will pay for it. During my time at RRVT, three of the TANF clients received their GED.

Although one student who dropped out complained that the remediation class was like "detention," the majority of students who need remediation seemed to appreciate it.

> I have learned a lot and Jody has been real helpful in encouraging us to come everyday and to tell us that attendance is important here. (Lizze)
>
> I liked Jody's class. It gives you time to, how can I say that, to do your studies that you probably would normally do outside the home, but you've got that time in class to do it. I could go for that. (Sheena)
>
> Jody's class has helped me. It taught me about math and spelling. (Sally)

During my observations at RRVT, I observed numerous women retake and pass previously failed tests and gain admission into the vocational program.

The students in the LOW program are in large part funneled into the regular vocational population at RRVT in order to gain the skills needed to get a job. As stated earlier, there is no special short term niche marketing class for TANF students; however, on rare occasions it is determined that even though a student is incapable of passing the required admission for full-time training, sometimes short term training is recommend for that individual. These classes may consist of different levels of computer training.

Acquiring the Proper Cultural Capital Needed to Get and Keep a Job

Cultural capital includes such social practices as dressing, acting, thinking, and speaking (Kincheloe, 1999). Typically, the workplace is a site in which the cultural capital of the dominant society is prized. For example, workers are typically expected to dress and speak in a way that reflects the values and beliefs of the dominant society. As Kincheloe (1999) argues, "workers who do not possess the cultural capital of the dominant culture are in big trouble. They are viewed as rude and uncouth, not the type of people a 'cultured' person would want to have around" (p. 222).

One of the ways in Marilyn, Jody, and Tracy are preparing the TANF clients for good work is by helping them acquire the cultural capital of the dominant society. Through such lessons as the proper way to dress, correct table manners, and effective interviewing skills, the TANF recipients are being inculcated into the culture of the dominant society in hopes that this will help them gain a job which will lead to good work.

Resume Writing and Cover Letters. Tracy spent considerable time discussing with the TANF students the importance of having a good resume and cover letter. In

emphasizing the importance of resume writing, Tracy told the women during one class period:

> You learn all these other things, and how much did we learn about the Five Civilized Tribes? So much time went into that alone. Can I tell you any piece of history that I learned in high school, and just quote it to you? No, I don't think I can, but if they taught me something like resume writing, I would have remembered it. Most of us don't get what we need to have as far as job searching or company searching. No one told me about what it's like to move up within a company. Climbing the career ladder.

Students were given detailed information about the importance of a resume looking professional with correct spelling, grammar, and mechanics. Handouts were distributed with sample resumes. Tracy told the students, "I don't care if you apply at Best Buy or McDonald's or wherever. If it looks like it would be acceptable to an attorney's office, then you're good to go everywhere."

She did tell them they could be creative in their resumes in certain circumstances. For example, if one were applying for a job that required artistic ability, it would be appropriate to add some clip art to the resume. However, she told them, "If you ever have any doubt in your mind,

stay more conservative." For example, she told them Dalmatians clip art was inappropriate as was writing one's name with a 3-D look. "That's really neat and all, but it's not conservative, and it's not as professional a look, or as finished a look, as something a little more generic."

In a several paged handout on resume writing guidelines, the TANF students were given the edict "remember you are selling yourself, attract attention to your skills and abilities." Further instructions such as use high quality off-white paper and use action verbs are also given.

As important as the resume is, Tracy told them that the cover letter was even more important because it offered the first glimpse of a person's ability to write and make a good impression. Thus, Tracy spent a good deal of time instructing the students about the proper way to write a cover letter:

> Cover letters are often perceived as last minute additions that have to be completed before your resume can be sent. But that shouldn't be the case. It should be something that's real methodical, planned out, and that you, kind of like the icing on the cake, but it's the very first thing an employer reads, that's his first perception, his first impression of you. To understand the importance of cover letters, just

> put yourself in the place of a senior executive in a major corporation. You're busy. You have a few cover letters with attached resumes. You pick up the first cover letter and quickly read, Dear Sir, I am interested in employment with the XYZ Corporation. The second letter, to whom it may concern; this is no longer acceptable. Then you pick up the third cover letter. "Dear Mr. Hanson, you were recently quoted in Business Week as saying that your company objective is to first or second in market share in all your market segments by the fourth quarter of 1999. I congratulate you and your company on its aggressiveness and confidence." I want to keep reading.

Later in the year, the TANF students were taught how to use the computer to find out information about companies, such as Taco Bell, so that this information could be incorporated into the cover letter. They were also given instructions on how to write a cover letter that presented a personal mission statement that was parallel to that of the company's. Finding this information was quite easy, according to Tracy, since almost all companies, even "mom and pop organization" had web pages that could be easily assessed.

Interviewing Skills. Tracy continuously impressed on the students that finding a job was a competition. They would be competing against perhaps hundreds of other employees. Thus, how one presented herself in the interview might be the deciding factor for an employer to hire her. Tracy told the women "interviewing is an art, and it takes practice."

One of the activities designed to help the women acquire interviewing finesse was mock interviews. Tracy explained to the class one day:

> We'll do mock interviews. We'll start with each other. That'll be fun. And then I'll have few folks from DHS and from temp agencies to come in. They'll set up their booth, and we'll alternate. And you'll have three interviews in a day. And then we'll have a little evaluation from, and then we'll evaluate you.

Another activity used in the class to help students in their interviewing skills was videotaping mock interviews. Tracy explained how this works:

> We will, and have in the past, brought video cameras in and videotaped interviews. No one enjoys it when it's happening. However, it has been one of the best tools our students have had. We will not show it to the class. But it's for you

to look at yourself. You don't know all the times you say "whatever" or "uh."

Students were given various handouts related to interviewing. One of these was entitled "the 22 most frequently asked interview questions" which gave responses to each of the questions. For example, under the question "Do you get angry," the advice was to respond "There is just no use for it in the workplace. My skills allow me to effectively deal with frustrating situations." and to the question "what is your idea job," the advice is to respond with "you offer much of what I would consider ideal. I want to be part of team where I can utilize my skills for the best interest of the company." After the interview, the handout instructs students to write a thank-you note which should be written within 24 hours and on nice paper or stationary and put in a matching envelope.

Tracy also provided pragmatic advice about things to say and not to say during an interview. For example, she told them you should never say during an interview, "my past supervisor was the biggest bitch." She explained to them that the interviewer would think she has a problem with authority figures. She also instructed them to look around the interviewer's office to find topics for discussion. She told them,

> Yeah, they've interviewed everybody else, and their answers were great, but you noticed this fish that they caught in whatever river. Little things like that that are just social skills, and they really can make a big difference as far as impressions go.

Personal appearance and the proper way to dress. One of the employability skills taught during the LOW program was the importance of personal appearance and knowing how to dress properly. In the student handbook under "Guidelines for LOW participants," one of the guidelines specifically addresses dress code/personal appearance. This guideline is worth quoting at length, particularly when one compares the rigidity of this dress code to the non-existence of dress codes at other educational settings for adults, such as the college classroom:

> Students have the right to choose their own grooming and clothing styles. However, students must be aware of health, safety, and morality issues in that the manner of dress does not interfere with work or create disorder in the learning environment. Clothing articles which include profanity, references to drugs and alcohol, or have sexual connotation are not permitted. No hats or caps of any kind are allowed

in class. Shoes must be worn at all times, as per State Health Department. Dresses, skirts, and shorts must not be shorter than finger-tips length (when hands are down at side). PAGING devices must be kept on silent alert.

Note: This is a Training and Employment Readiness program. It is difficult to find employment for people who go to extremes in dress or appearance. Prospective employers visit our school frequently and are very conscious of the appearance of our students. Therefore, we require students to be neat and clean in appearance at all times.

To aid the women in gaining knowledge about the proper way to dress, RRVT had an agreement with a local thrift shop to buy each woman an outfit. Although not explicitly stated, the intent was to help the women in putting together an outfit that was appropriate for an interview.

On the day of the trip, we all drove to the thrift store. I was the only male and felt uncomfortable due to the lack of privacy in the dressing rooms. The store was very small; there was one dressing room with swing doors that did not completely hide the person inside. The women tried on clothes with most of the assistance coming from each other rather than Tracy. When asked for advice, Tracy would answer with comments such as "that looks nice." One student,

however, resisted this attempt at attiring her in the proper clothes. Sue said, "They're trying to make me dress like a girl. I like to dress like this." She pointed to her clothes which were jeans and a long sleeve shirt. Later, Sue revealed that she was very self-conscious about her tattoos and wore long sleeve shirts to cover them.

During one class period, the students were given a handout entitled "Succeeding in the world of work: Living without welfare" prepared by the U.S. Department of Labor. One of the categories included in tips to succeed is "look your best." The handout read, "You represent the company to customers and clients, dress accordingly. When in doubt about how to dress, ASK!"

Etiquette. Because these women live in poverty and had not been exposed to much of the knowledge that upper middle class people have, Tracy, Marilyn, and Jody felt that the TANF students needed instructions about proper etiquette. Frequently these lessons took place in the informal discussions in the afternoon classes facilitated by Tracy. For example, Tracy relayed to the students that she often felt uncomfortable herself when she knew there was a rule governing what she should do, but she did not know the rule. Thus, she asked her mother to give her a book on etiquette. The same book she received from her mother, Everything Etiquette, was one of the books adorning the bookshelves in

Tracy's class. During one three hour class period, the entire focus was on topics included in this book. These include dating etiquette, etiquette at home, how to teach your children proper etiquette, public displays of etiquette, meal etiquette, and party etiquette. Tracy explained the importance of knowledge of etiquette to the class:

> Have you ever been in a situation where you didn't know what to get somebody, or how much to spend? That's hard. Things like simple courtesy. This is empowering information. I always felt awkward not knowing what to say. Writing to senators, dinner parties, and then faux pas, which are etiquette tips you can't live without. Personal hygiene, eating like a human beings, the rules for inanimate objects. So we'll go through some of those. But the book's over there, and you guys can look through it any time you want to. It goes through stationery. Things you don't use everyday. There are different types of stationery and different ways to address people, and there are certain types of inappropriate stationery. Did you know there was such a thing? One should never mix business and pleasure.

During one class period, the students watched a film on a formal dinner party. The film instructed the viewers on such items as what eating utensils to use, the way to dress, how to show that you are finished with your meal, and the proper order of courses at a meal. Tracy told then that even though they may not go to a formal dinner party such as the one portrayed in the movie, they needed to have the knowledge of such matters as what forks to use so they would feel comfortable in any eating situation.

Students were also instructed on the proper way to make introductions. Tracy explained to the students that this was very important knowledge for the workplace. For example, she told the women that whoever has the highest rank, for example one's boss, should be introduced first. "You should never introduce your friend to your boss; you introduce your boss to your friend," she instructed them.

The women were even given instructions on how to get into a car in they were wearing a dress: "You open the door, and then you sit down, and then you move your feet in. But you always keep your feet together, so you wouldn't be kind of stepping in." Tracy did go on to acknowledge that she does not always adhere to this herself: "Of course, to try and get in my truck that way! Make sure nobody's around, and then hop up there!"

Tracy informed me during one of the interviews, "they know how to do a resume, they know what an employer, what their expectations are going to be and how to look at it from the employer's perspective." Obviously, Tracy believed that the employer would be a representative of the dominant society. Thus, representing one's self in a manner that reflected dominant society's values was very much part of the LOW program. The students were encouraged through tips on writing a resume, to interviewing skills, to dressing properly to having the right manners to adopt a persona that would make them more acceptable to the employer. However, one cannot lose sight of the fact that the LOW program's goal, above all else, is employment for their students.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The Welfare-to-Work legislation has generated considerable debate and controversy since its enactment in 1996. On the one hand, state after state has publicly proclaimed the legislation a phenomenal success. People are leaving welfare at a rate as high as 40% in some states. On the other hand, opponents of the reform are telling us that the picture is bleaker today than ever for the poor. Albelda (1999), reporting the results of a study of 500 adult former welfare recipients in South Carolina asserted, "When asked about providing for their families while off welfare versus on it, 50% said they currently were behind in paying their rent or utilities versus 39% when they were on welfare" (p. 16). The purpose of this study was to understand and analyze the meaning of work in the context of the TANF legislation from the perspectives of TANF clients and teachers and administrators involved in a TANF program.

Conclusions

1. TANF participants are misinformed and uninformed about the Welfare-to-Work legislation.

The Welfare Reform legislation gave states the responsibility for implementing the particulars of how to move people off welfare and into work. Since this legislation's is in its infant stage, changes are commonplace. This places an enormous responsibility on DHS workers for relaying this changing information to TANF recipients.

As Marilyn, as well as researchers have pointed out, DHS workers are themselves underpaid and have enormous case loads. In the context of this study, the TANF clients met with their DHS caseworker only once a month. Furthermore, it was common for a TANF client to have several different caseworkers in a short period of time. Because of these mitigating factors, TANF recipients lack an in-depth understanding of the TANF legislation that so affects their lives.

2. In some cases, the teachers and administrators involved in educational programs for TANF clients are also uninformed about the TANF legislation.

Because of some of the same reasons cited above, teachers and administrators who work with TANF educational programs lack critical information about the particular's of the legislation regarding educational opportunities. For example, prior to July 1999, remediation at a vocational school was considered part of the 12 months of vocational

training allowed for TANF clients. This changed as of July 1, 1999. However, Marilyn, the administrator of the LOW program, was not informed of the change until December 1999.

3. Stereotypes of the welfare mother as being lazy and morally irresponsible persist despite wholesale changes in welfare laws.

The women in this study spoke poignantly about how they are confronted almost daily, whether it be at RRVC, at their children's schools, or in the grocery store, with the negative perceptions of the general public toward people receiving government assistance. Policy makers passed the Welfare-to-Work legislation with the intent of making dramatic changes in the everyday lives of welfare recipients. What they failed to take on was changing the public's perceptions of welfare recipients. It is the continual negative stereotyping of "welfare mothers," more so than the actual TANF legislation, that emotionally impacts TANF recipients in their everyday lives whether it be as shoppers, students, or parents.

4. The majority of TANF recipients espouse agreement with the "Work First" philosophy. The teachers and administrators have conflicting beliefs about the Work First approach. However, as mentioned above, the TANF recipients lack an in-depth understanding of the philosophical

underpinnings of "Work First" beyond that of "work is better than welfare."

"Work First" is designed to move welfare recipients into a job quickly. As Castellano (1998) argues, the "Work First" approach assumes that "the best preparation for work is work itself and that welfare recipients will gain experience in entry level jobs and move on to better work" (p.284). Marilyn, Tracy, and Jody expressed contradictory ideas about the Work First agenda. They recognize the limitations of the approach in its focus on short-term job training which prepares people for entry-level jobs. They recognize that long-term success in a job means having skills other than just job specific skills. Thus, in the LOW program, they spend time helping the women acquire skills such as reflective thinking and ethical decision making which they believe will help women to acquire and keep good work. At the same time, they espoused agreement with the idea that entry-level jobs will lead to good work.

The TANF recipients themselves lacked an informed understanding of the specifics of Welfare-to-Work. However, they were aware of the general thrust of the reform - that is, to move people to work. The participants in this study were quite critical of acquaintances, family, and friends who did not embrace the willingness to work. What the participants failed to acknowledge was that Work First

approach meant they would be denied long-term educational opportunities vital to obtaining and sustaining good work.

The TANF recipients in this study want to engage in meaningful work. They equate their self-worth with the ability to provide for their family. In traditional discussions about the association between work and self-esteem, men's self-esteem is usually tied more into work than a woman's. However, these women, who do not count on the men in their lives as making a meaningful monetary contribution to their and their children's lives, believe that their self-esteem will be enhanced through work.

5. TANF recipients, administrators, and teachers in TANF programs differ in their understandings about the meaning of good work, but they share an underlying understanding about the factors that contribute to good work. Their understandings of good work differ from Joe Kincheloe's (1999) explanation of good work.

Kincheloe (1999) stated that "if schools and workplaces are to contribute to the reinvention of democracy and challenge the antidemocratic tendencies of the contemporary era, good work must be carefully defined and pursued" (p. 65). The purpose of this study was to define the meaning of good work from the perspectives of TANF clients and educators involved in a TANF program. According to these

stakeholders, good work includes the following five characteristics. These include the principle of:

1. self-sufficiency and a decent wage
2. intrinsic value
3. a healthy work environment and workmate cooperation
4. the ability to care for one's children
5. benefits

As articulated by the TANF participants as well as their teachers and administrators, good work must include the principle of being able to live life without financially struggling. Although the administrators and teachers equated a lack of financial struggle to having a career and some participants saw "good work" as having marketable skills, all of the participants agreed that good work meant decent pay. Kincheloe, in his ten characteristics of good work, places "better pay for workers" as his tenth characteristic. He noted, "obviously good work cannot tolerate the obscene differences between management and worker pay" (p. 69). He then goes into a discussion of corporate profits and managerial slashing of labor costs. No other mention is made of the basic premise that good work means good pay. For the women in this study, living day-to-day without knowing if rent can be paid or clothes for their children can be bought is part of their lived reality. Thus, they are in search of jobs that will pay a decent wage. The teachers and

administrators at LOW are very cognizant that good work must mean good pay. They conceptualize this in terms of having a career versus getting a job. Thus, they see their first priority as teaching TANF clients the skills (both marketable, soft skills, and life-long learning skills) to obtain a job (though it may mean entry level) that will eventually lead to a career.

A second principle articulated by the participants in this study is that good work must be personally satisfying. The TANF clients spoke of such things as being happy with what they were doing and being good at what they do. Similarly, the teachers and administrators spoke of good work as something that is enjoyable. Kincheloe (1999) does not talk directly about good work as being work that is personally satisfying, but he does allude to an element of enjoyment and happiness in several of his characteristics of good work. For example, he notes that good work should incorporate elements of "play" into it. However, his notion of play centers on freedom and fairness rather than play as something that is enjoyed and makes one happy. He also notes that good work should allow for expression of self. He particularly talks about good work as involving creativity, but he goes on to say "a critical definition of output would not be complete until it included concerns with the intrinsic satisfaction of work, the economic security of

workers, and the role of work in the workers' pursuit of happiness" (p. 67). Clearly the participants in this study believe that at the heart of good work is that it fulfills their intrinsic needs as well as extrinsic needs.

A third principle of good work expressed by the participants is that good work means being involved in a healthy work environment in which people work with each other rather than against each other. Kincheloe (1999) agrees that one characteristic of good work is that of workmate cooperation. Whereas Kincehloe sees this as a group of workers putting aside their own needs and engaging in the intellectual process of "sit[ting] down together, exchange[ing] information, and discuss[ing] the nature and purpose of their work" (p. 66), the women in this study view a healthy work environment as one in which people are comfortable with one another.

A fourth consideration of good work is that good work is integrally connected to being able to care for both the physical and emotional needs of one's children. Unlike Dr. Laura and others who view good work as taking care of one's children at home, the participants in this study did not talk about good work in terms of actual time spent with their children. Rather, they spoke of good work as giving them the power to care for their children in terms of basic needs such as clothing, medical care, health benefits, and a

few luxuries (such as bikes). Deprez (1998) articulates this contradiction as follows:

> It seems particularly odd to me that at the same time welfare for poor women and their children is getting the old heave-ho, right-wing papers such as the Wall Street Journal are on a crusade to encourage middle class women to stay home and take care of their kids because it is good for the children to have a mother at home for the first few years. And also because it is a "natural instinct" for women to care deeply about their children. Well, I guess they think poor kids and poor women are exempt from these realities. Perhaps they think it is perfectly okay for poor children to come home to an empty house, but rich kids and nannies are in danger. (p.26)

Kincheloe (1999) makes no mention of the connection of good work and children. However, for these TANF women, who are the primary providers for their children, good work is very much tied to their children, albeit in different ways than the middle class.

The last characteristic of good work means is that it allows workers not only good pay but also benefits, particularly medical insurance. The TANF participants typically spoke of "benefits" solely in terms of medical

insurance. Retirement benefits, paid vacations, and medical leave were not mentioned. Many of the women in this study suffer from poor health; thus, they recognize the importance of being able to care for their own and their children's immediate health needs. Again, Kincheloe (1999) makes no mention of good work being tied to access to benefits. Since these women are the primary care givers for themselves and their children, taking care of the physical needs of their family is paramount to considerations of good work.

Most of the characteristics of good work espoused by Kincheloe (1999) were missing in the TANF recipients and their teachers and administrators' understandings about the meaning of good work. For example, Kincheloe asserts that good work means being one's own boss or being free from the "tyranny of authoritative power" (p. 67). None of the participants expressed a notion of good work as being free from the "humiliation of supervision that holds them under suspicion and surveillance" (p. 65) although three of the women did note that good work meant having some power and authority. Typically, however, this power was conceptualized not as being the boss per se but as being the secretary under the boss. One might propose that because the TANF clients are so indoctrinated into the idea of being a good worker (that is taking orders from someone else) that they cannot imagine themselves as people with power.

Also absent from their discussion of good work is the idea that the workplace is a place of learning and that good work should contribute to the public good (Kincheloe, 1999). One could certainly argue that Kincehloe's (1999) explanation of contributing to the social good is very much reflective of a White liberal position in which one has the luxury to think about work in terms of such questions as "do the goods being produced serve human needs?" and "do they [goods produced] meet the criteria of permanence, healthiness, and artistic and creative integrity" (pp. 66-67). The TANF women in this study who have struggled their entire lives to satisfy the most basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing do not view good work as serving the more abstract principle of service to the common good.

6. An underlying belief of the TANF educational program studied in this research is that any job can lead to upward mobility (i.e.,good work) if an individual inculcates the habits of a good worker. The primary goal of the program then was to teach TANF recipients the habits of a good worker, such as personal responsibility, ethical decision-making, team building, marketable skills, and acquiring the cultural capital of the dominant society.

If one takes the premise of Marilyn, Tracy, and Jody that any job can lead to good work, then one could argue that what was being taught in the LOW program was how to be

a good worker. This manifested itself in five primary ways. The students were taught personal responsibility with an emphasis on the qualities of punctuality, having the right attitude, and dedication. The students were also taught that a good worker is able to reflect on her own values and make ethical decisions for the good of herself and her employer. They were being prepared to be a good worker by being taught the importance of bonding and teamwork and through help in gaining marketable skills. Finally, they were being taught the habits of a good worker by adopting the cultural capital that the employer was believed to possess.

One of Kincheloe's (1999) assumptions about bad work was embedded in the administrator's and teacher's understanding of work - that is, those who succeed at work are the fittest. Kincheloe argues that traditional understandings of work operate under the assumption that "the strongest and the most resourceful will gain the rewards and privileges; the weakest will fall by the wayside into demeaning situations" (p. 70). Marilyn, Tracy, and Jody echo this, although using somewhat different language when they discuss the idea that if TANF participants work hard and embody the habits of a good worker, they can find good work. The unsaid is that those who do not work hard or do not inculcate the habits of a good worker will find themselves in the low waged, low skilled, "bad work."

Kincheloe goes on to state that the ownership of "cultural capital," the knowledge, skills, and practices deemed worthy by the dominant culture (e.g., using correct grammar, dressing professionally), inherently puts some people in a position of privilege which makes the acquisition of good work easy while others, because they lack the cultural capital, are inherently marginalized. Tracy, Marilyn, and Jody do not speak of such things as resume writing as cultural capital, however, they do recognize that one of the requisites for getting good work is having those skills deemed worthy by the dominant culture. Part of the intent of the LOW program is to help aid these women in gaining some of this cultural capital. For example, the women were taken to a second-hand store to buy an outfit for interviewing. They were instructed during this outing about the "proper" way to dress for an interview. Not surprisingly, the "proper" way to dress included conservative power suits. No attention was given to how one might dress professionally while retaining her own cultural heritage. What is lacking in the program is that the women are not taught to critique the notion of cultural capital. Hence, the status quo is perpetuated by buying into cultural capital as being the domain of the White elite. However, if one looks at the idea that good work is above all else good pay, knowing how to get that good pay through the enacting of cultural capital

is essential. In other words, academics such as Kincheloe (1999) who will get good work precisely because they possess the cultural capital of the dominant society because of their race, class, and gender can critique the notion of cultural capital much easier than a Black woman or a low SES woman who does not possess cultural capital by virtue of her birth.

7. "Working at McDonald's" is a metaphor for describing bad work - that is, work that is low paid, low skilled, and menial.

Kincheloe (1999) talks about bad work in terms of esoteric ideological assumptions which include such principles as bad work as "the supremacy of systems-efficiency and cost-benefits analysis models, or the effectiveness of standardized inputs in the quest for agreed-upon outputs" (p. 71). The women in this study responded much more in the concrete when explaining their perceptions of bad work. In summary, bad work was the opposite of all the characteristics of good work described above. To put it succinctly, working at McDonald's epitomizes bad work. Bad work is low skilled, low level, low paying, unsatisfying work in an unhealthy, stressful, contentious environment.

Unfortunately, as much of the research on welfare reform is telling us, McDonald-type jobs (i.e., low paid, low skilled)

are the most prevalent kinds of work welfare recipients are finding.

8. The TANF legislation gives local programs much control in determining the best kind of programs for its particular TANF constituents.

At this particular site, the teachers and administrators had incorporated many aspects of what Gregson (1994) has called a critical approach to adult education. For example, the curriculum and practices involved TANF clients as participants in their own learning. In many ways, the learning experiences in the LOW program were relevant to the women's out of school lives. The TANF clients, through such activities as values clarification and ethical decision making were encouraged to think reflectively. However, missing from the classes were the more challenging components of critical pedagogy such as engaging students in liberatory dialogue, promoting active citizenship, and making problems problematic. However, like many educators with good intentions, Marilyn, Tracy, and Jody find themselves in a contradictory space that does not always promote critical pedagogy. They were pressured to equip these TANF clients with job readiness skills which would make them immediately employable and they had to do this under a time constraint of 12 months. Thus, the everyday realities of providing the women with such skills as resume

writing, interviewing, and dressing for success, became primary to those of teaching the women to challenge an economic system that marginalizes them because of their social class, gender, and in some cases, race.

Dewey (1916) believed that preparing students with only entry levels job skills was insufficient. In order to enjoy a life of adaptability and self-reliance, Dewey advocated a transformative curriculum which allowed for integration of vocational and academic subjects and placed the needs of the students before the needs of the employer. Dewey's notions have much relevance for TANF programs in that too much of the focus has been on "work" regardless of the kind of work and not enough on notions of a life of adaptability and self-reliance. In many ways, the LOW program has tried to incorporate practices and curriculum which promote this, but the reality is that this TANF program, as all programs, operates under a time constraint and a political agenda which situates job readiness as being the number one priority. The question then becomes how can programs, such as LOW, "take part in correcting unfair privilege and unfair deprivation, not to perpetuate them" (Dewey, 1916, p. 13).

Recommendations

1. TANF recipients need to be better informed about the laws, practices, and policies that so integrally impact their lives. This could be done in a variety of ways:

A. Advocacy groups - Community groups and organizations committed to social justice and personal empowerment (e.g., literacy councils, family services, ACLU) need to form advocacy groups with TANF participants for the purpose of raising awareness about the TANF legislation. More importantly, these advocacy groups need to empower TANF recipients to address the issues that detrimentally affect their lives. This would include helping TANF recipients learn skills such as collective bargaining and lobbying.

B. The formal curriculum of any TANF program, such as LOW, needs to include an in-depth exploration, examination, and critique of the Welfare-to-Work legislation. TANF recipients need to understand the history of the legislation, the philosophical rationale, the programmatic of how it operates, and avenues for addressing concerns they have with the legislation.

2. Teachers and administrators involved in TANF programs need to have regularly scheduled meetings with each other as well as with legislators and DHS personnel to ensure that everyone is working from the same set of guidelines.

3. There should be public awareness announcements, similar to drug awareness ads, focusing on dispelling the myths and stereotypes about people who receive public aid.

4. Policy makers need to refocus the emphasis of "Work First" to "good Work First." If this approach were taken seriously, the 12-month limit on educational opportunities would be changed. Policy makers who themselves probably see a college education as an entitlement would have to re-think why such a privilege is not given to the poor. Certainly, not all TANF recipients desire a college education but as written now, the Welfare-to-Work legislation virtually guarantees that TANF recipients will be denied the opportunity for post-secondary extended studies. Good work means long-term stability, financial security, and personal satisfaction. Short-term job readiness programs, which are the focus of most TANF programs, are not sufficient for embarking individuals on a long-term journey of good work.

5. Related to the above, the focus of policies in a democratic country such as ours needs to shift from ending welfare to ending poverty. We live in a society with contradictory and conflicting ideas about poverty. We, on one hand, promote philanthropy and charity (even giving tax write-offs to promote the giving of money to those in need). Educational reforms such as service-learning and mandatory community service for graduation speaks to our belief that

part of our civic responsibility is to work to help the less fortunate. On the other hand, the United States has one of the highest disparities of wealth of any industrialized country. We de-value service sector jobs in terms of paying for them(e,g, child care workers and sanitation workers are among the lowest paid); yet, we think certain people (i.e., the poor) should jump at the opportunity to engage in work that is devalued.

Ending poverty in a capitalist society is much more complex than ending welfare because it requires the affluent to evaluate their own complicity in perpetuating poverty. As typified in the name of the Welfare-to-Work legislation, The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, ending welfare places the blame or responsibility for ending one's own poverty on individuals. If people are poor they are because they do not act on the work opportunities given to them; thus, they are responsible for their own poverty. Ending poverty requires those who prosper in our society to assume some responsibility in considering how wealth is distributed unevenly along race, class, and gendered lines. It forces those who have financial security to consider how underlying social and economic structural problems in a capitalist society might be the cause of poverty, joblessness, and the acquisition of good work.

6. TANF programs, such as LOW, need to creatively use the general parameters given to them by their state to implement curriculum and practices that incorporate critical pedagogy, thus helping students find and maintain good work.

In Oklahoma, the state mandates that six major areas be incorporated in every TANF educational program. Each individual program has great latitude in determining the specifics. These six areas are:

1. Aptitude, Interest, and Ability Evaluation
2. Basic Skills Training
3. Employability Skills
4. Individual Work Site Training
5. Life Skills Training
6. Niche Market Training

As discussed in Chapter 4, the LOW program does not attend to numbers four and six. They operate under the philosophy that their purpose is to give students the skills and training they need to find life long meaningful work. They do not find jobs for the students. They address aptitude, interest, and ability evaluations primarily through the administering of the TABE test and through a career interest inventory. They address basic skills training through Jody's remediation class. They address employability skills through teaching students such skills as resume writing, interviewing techniques, dressing for

success, and job search techniques. They address life skills training by helping their students manage childcare and transportation needs, manage their money, resolve conflicts, and communicate effectively. All of these are worthwhile endeavors; however, there are some additional ways that TANF programs can use the general parameters given to them in shaping a program that would enhance the possibilities of TANF clients finding good work.

Aptitude, Interest and Ability Evaluation

First of all, in terms of aptitude, interest, and ability evaluation, TANF programs need to acknowledge that a large majority of their clients may be learning disabled. Currently, no mechanism is in place for identifying adults with special needs. This inevitably leads to students not being given the up-front skills they need to find meaningful work.

The literature on the number of learning disabled in Welfare-to-Work programs is virtually non-existent; however, generalizations can be implied from studies which state:

- Unemployment rate of adults with learning disabilities range from 50% to 60% (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Panagos & DuBois, 1999)
- Three to five years after high school, only one in nine individuals with learning disabilities has earned some

type of post-secondary education degree, certification, or license (Wagner, 1993)

- Employment rates of individuals with learning disabilities immediately following high school were equal or above their non-disabled peer; however, most of the jobs were part time, unskilled, and low paying (Panagos & Du Bois, 1999)
- In a 1991 study of U.S. schools, 23% of students with learning disabilities dropped out, 16% status was unknown, 2% aged out, 13% graduated with a certificate, and 46% graduated with a diploma (Wagner, 1993)
- According to the National Longitudinal Transition Study, youth with learning disabilities are more likely to live in poverty than peers of the general population (Wagner, 1993)

Giovengo, Moore, and Young (1998) are one of the few researchers investigating how learning disabled individuals are faring in the Welfare-to-Work programs. Their research focused on adults receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and those participating in the Job Opportunities Basic Skills Programs. They found that approximately 30% of TANF recipients in Kansas and Washington were learning disabled.

It would be beneficial for the educators in the Welfare-to-Work programs to be made aware of the special

needs of their students; however, based on the findings in this study, teachers typically lack such information and lack adequate training to provide for the needs of the learning disabled students.

Another obstacle in identifying learning disabled students is the lack of any usable instrument for screening for disabilities. For example, the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale is very expensive and must be administered by a professional. A new screening instrument, the Mississippi Assessment Technique for Identifying Learning Disabilities in Adults (MATILDA) is much more practical and less expensive; thus, it may help in making the identification of adults with LD easier (Grubb, Walker, Pierce, 1997).

The philosophy of the Work First initiative also severely limits time in training situations since the emphasis is on work not one duration. Time constraints prohibit long-term training. In many cases, adults who are LD need extended time to master certain skills.

One way that TANF programs can benefit adults with LD is by becoming advocates for those possibly 30% of their adult students. They can also help their students to become advocates for themselves by letting them know their rights and entitlements.

In addition to assessing learning disabilities, TANF recipients need to engage in more extensive career discovery. The fact that almost all of these women mentioned some kind of secretarial work as being "good work" speaks to their limitations of the wide array of careers available. One possible way to accomplish this is to give TANF recipients the opportunity to engage in job shadowing activities in non-traditional careers.

Basic Skills Training

Typically, basic skills training is based on what Friere (1973) has called the banking model of education in which students are conceived as empty headed vessels waiting for knowledge to be poured into their heads. Students are taught to read, write, and compute rather than to reflect critically on one's own concrete position in the world. Basic skills training needs to incorporate Freire's notion of "problem posing" in which student and teacher are viewed as critical co-investigators. This notion of critical consciousness can be developed through a series of steps. As applied to TANF programs, this would include the first step in which the teachers and the TANF students develop "generative themes" (Freire, 1973) such as drug abuse and sexual harassment which represent their own lived realities. From this set of themes, the teachers, in collaboration with

other community agencies, would develop instructional materials based on these themes. The materials might include interviews, photographs, and role playing among others and would become the focus of the discussions with the TANF students. These materials should be designed to help the TANF students think reflectively on their own lives which hopefully lead to what Freire has called "praxis," action based on critical reflection.

Critical educators (e.g., Gregson, 1994; Lakes, 1994; Schultz 1997) have articulated the need for adult and vocational educators to incorporate curriculum opportunities that encourage adult learners (e.g., TANF clients) to analyze the social, political, and economic conditions of the workplace with the intent of transforming their lives and their position in it. Such an approach, according to Lakes (1994), is critical for democratic education to take place:

> Learners not only gain an understanding of the sources of injustice in their work lives, but more importantly acquire the analytical tools in which to collectively challenge and act on the origins of their marginalization or oppression in the labor market (p. 3)

The challenge for such educators is balancing the possibilities of critical pedagogy with the realities of the

structural, political, and economic forces impacting good work in this country.

TANF recipients need to view their low income status from a historical perspective and to understand that as citizens in a democratic state they are responsible for their own life while also recognizing that the factors involved in being poor in this country are also embedded in the economic system in which we live. In a democratic education, students are taught not to accept the ways things are, but to question them. They should be taught to question the dominant power structure which rules this country and makes decisions that may not be in their best interest. This means teaching TANF participants the historical roots of poverty and their connection to the economic system of capitalism.

Employability Skills

Employability skills are typically constructed in terms of how to make a good impression on the employer so that he/she will hire you. In the LOW program, this included such things as writing a good cover letter and dressing for success. Another way of looking at employability skills is from the viewpoint of the employee. How can an employee protect his/her own interests? What rights do employees share? How do I address wrongs in the workplace? How do I

form collective political strategizing for redressing ills in the workplace? These questions should be used in forming curriculum and instructional strategies designed to aid TANF clients in gaining a sense of empowerment as workers.

Life Skills Training

Repeatedly throughout this study, the TANF participants spoke about such issues as drug abuse, domestic abuse, gendered stereotyping, sexual harassment, and interpersonal conflicts with partners and friends. What these women sorely lacked was an understanding of how they were being exploited, used, and abused simply because they are women. Thus, I realized that life skills training must include equipping these women with the knowledge, strategies, and skills they need to protect and empower themselves. For example, women would benefit greatly from a course in self-defense. Research has demonstrated that women who feel that they can physically protect themselves from unwanted advances feel much more competent and confident in their everyday lives. A full range of counseling services (free of charge) should be available for the TANF students. Support groups mediated by a professional which allow women to talk about domestic problems would heighten their understanding of the commonalties of the problems they encounter with husbands and partners. TANF educational programs need to

work closely with community agencies, both public and private, (such as centers for victims of domestic abuse, Al-Anon, AA) to ensure that women know the vast array of service available to them.

Implications for Vocational and Adult Education

Under the new legislation, education and training for welfare recipients consists primarily of short-term training programs and some on the job training sessions once a recipient finds work (Hayes, 1999). This typically equates to education being a secondary consideration. The focus for preparing people for work in a short time has now fallen to vocational technical schools and adult education centers; thus, adult and vocational educators must take a lead in implementing educational programs that promote "good work." They must also take a lead in trying to change these time requirements so that TANF recipients have the opportunity to gain the education they need for good work.

Adult and vocational educators face many challenges in the coming years in trying to integrate critical literacy training with the skills needed to perform a particular job. Curriculum planners for TANF programs must be able to demonstrate how the teaching of such skills as discussed in #7 above will benefit employers in ways in which they can

understand, such as lower absenteeism, higher morale, and increased productivity.

Additionally, adult and vocational educators involved in TANF educational programs must challenge the banking model of education by formulating curriculum and practices which encourage students to be reflective thinkers, critical and ethical decision makers, and community builders. This will entail, in many instances, changing pedagogical approaches. Grubb (1996) indicates that there are two dominant pedagogical approaches in teaching workplace literacy. The most common approach is a teacher-centered, teacher-directed approach. This approach has a long-standing tradition in U.S. education. Certainly, when workers were organized around Frederick Taylor's theory of scientific management, this type of didactic instruction might be rationalized as an appropriate way of inducting students into a culture of work. However, as Grubb points out, worksites are slowing changing, and with the influx of "Work First" workers coming into the workplace, a different way of teaching needs to be employed. The second way of teaching workplace literacy seeks to accommodate the changing worksite by offering instruction based on a student-centered, constructivist model of pedagogy.

The LOW program studied in this research offers a glimpse at the possibilities for vocational and adult

educators who seek to embody pedagogical techniques more in line with a student-centered, constructivist model of teaching. Yet, constructivism void of the purpose of social change is limiting, as pointed out in this study. Adult and vocational educators involved in TANF programs must take seriously Dewey's (1916) assertion that "it is the aim of progressive education to take part in correcting unfair privilege and unfair deprivation, not to perpetuate them" (p. 13). The challenge then for adult and vocational educators is to assist TANF recipients in attaining not only the technical skills needed for good work but also the critical skills needed to participate in a true democratic citizenship.

Suggestions for Further Study

1. Since the majority of TANF recipients are women, research studies by women researchers who incorporate a feminist lens need to be conducted.
2. Research studies which compare and contrast how TANF clients are being prepared for good work in several different TANF educational programs need to be undertaken.
3. A longitudinal study focusing on a cohort of TANF clients who have graduated from a program such as LOW needs to be conducted.

4. A study focusing on TANF clients with learning disabilities needs to be undertaken to better understand this under-researched and under-served population.
5. Employees who are hiring TANF recipients, such as those involved in socially responsible companies, need to be the focus of a study.

Closing Remarks

This country has always had a love-hate relationship with work. We work more hours than any other industrialized nation; yet, we are a nation more and more obsessed with leisure time. Thus, "going to work" is a complex phenomenon that entails more than simply getting a job. Work is integrally connected to our sense of worth, how others judge our character, and our place in the cultural, social, and economic strata of our society.

As I begin my own journey as a college professor into work that I hope is "good work," I reflect on where I was when I began this study - that is, I hoped to portray the Welfare-to-Work legislation as the "devil in disguise." However, this study forced me to stop and listen to the lives of people who live Welfare-to-Work rather than those, such as myself and other academics, who merely study and read about Welfare-to-Work. Although the debate surrounding Welfare-to-Work often gets situated as a conservative vs.

liberal debate, the reality is that the Omnipotent Conservative who seeks to speak for what is best for the country's poor is as troublesome as the Omnipotent Liberal who situates himself/herself as the voice of the poor. Public dialogue is essential if we are going to be a country that believes all must and should engage in good work rather than simply work. Such dialogue, however, must include TANF recipients themselves. It is my hope that this study has added to this dialogue by not only including the voices of TANF recipients who have much to say about Welfare-to-Work but also problematizing the meaning of work so that discussions surrounding welfare reform might shift from Welfare-to-Work to Welfare-to-Good-Work.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Date: October 29, 1999 IRB #: ED-00-165

Proposal Title: "GOING TO WORK: AN EXAMINATION OF THE MEANING OF "WORK" IN WELFARE TO WORK"

Principal Investigator(s): James Adams
James Gregson

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature:

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

October 29, 1999
Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

Vita

James Harold Adams

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: GOING TO WORK: AN EXAMINATION OF THE MEANING OF WORK IN WELFARE TO WORK.

Major Field: Occupational and Adult Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Greenwood, Mississippi on September 8, 1955, one of Two children to Harold and Ruth Adams. Married with three children.

Education: Graduated from Riverside High School in Avon, Mississippi in May 1973. Received Bachelor of Science in Education in May, 1978 from Mississippi State University, Starkville, Mississippi. Received Masters of Science in Adult Education in 1996 from Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia. Completed requirements for Doctor of Education at Oklahoma State University in July 2000.

Experience: Began teaching and coaching in public schools in 1978. After four years, went into the different areas of sales and contract painting. Returned to Education in 1994 and in August 2000, will be an Assistant Professor at Mississippi State University.