

A Study of the Life Work Portfolio:
Student Reactions

by

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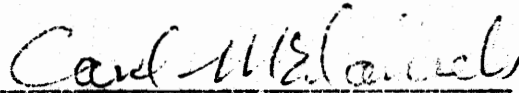
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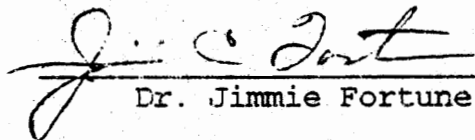
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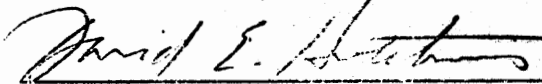
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A STUDY OF THE LIFE WORK PORTFOLIO:

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(ABSTRACT)

Portfolio, from the Latin words meaning "to carry and leaf," originally referred to a case in which to carry paper or drawings. This concept has now expanded to include a collection of like items (stocks or artist's portfolio) into the realm of education, self directed assessment, and career development consideration.

The original idea of the career portfolio was to integrate the National Career Development Guidelines (1989) into a comprehensive career guidance program. Get A Life (1992), a career portfolio developed by the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee and the Maine Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, was field-tested in 1992. The ultimate success of Get A Life led to the development of the Life Work Portfolio. This product which targeted adults was pilot tested in 1995. Even though the Life Work Portfolio underwent a pilot study prior to

publication, this study was the first to look at the Life Work Portfolio in depth, under controlled conditions.

The Spring Semester 1996 orientation classes of New River Community College in Dublin, Virginia, were used for this study. Two groups of nontraditional students (ages 23 and up) and two groups of traditional students (ages 18-22) were selected on a volunteer basis (n=26). One nontraditional and one traditional group participated in a structured group setting and completed the Life Work Portfolio in a series of four 1-1½ hour sessions, one per week for four consecutive weeks. One nontraditional and one traditional group completed the Life Work Portfolio in an unstructured setting with help available upon request for a period of four weeks.

All participants took part in a focus group at the end of four weeks to elicit responses related to the usefulness of the Life Work Portfolio. Participants completed the Life Work Portfolio Project User Reaction Form and McDaniels Career Transitions Considerations (MCTC) at the end of the fourth session. A descriptive analysis of the portfolios was completed by each participant.

Results of the study indicate that the Life Work Portfolio provides a viable tool for traditional and nontraditional students at New River Community College in

gathering information, skill identification, goal setting, enhancing self-confidence, and other issues related to successful career transitions. The Life Work Portfolio provided the appropriate structure for the process of lifespan career development to be understood and acted upon.

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Guinevere stated that the most valuable advice she received from her mother was that once you know what you have to do, you just do it. That has pretty much been my philosophy in life. However, I have had a tremendous amount of support along the way. Such has been the case in my pursuit of this degree. I very much appreciate the guidance and support given by my committee. They helped to make what at times appeared insurmountable, surmountable.

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Vicki Meadows should sign her name on this document beside mine, perhaps even in front of mine. She is a valued friend whose help and expertise I could not have survived without.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The labor force as defined by the U. S. Department of Labor (1993) is comprised of individuals 16 years of age or older who are either working or are looking for a job. It is estimated that by the year 2005, the total U.S. population will be 288 million, of which 219 million will be working age (U.S. Department of Labor, 1993). Over the 1994-2005 period, employment is projected to increase by 17.7 million or 14 percent. Wage and salary worker employment will account for 95% of this increase (U.S. Department of Labor, 1996). By August of 1995, the civilian labor force population was 132,211 thousand or 66.5% of the total civilian noninstitutional population which was 198,801 thousand (Klein, 1995). The baby-boomers, people born between 1946 and 1964, will range from age 41 to 59 by the year 2005. The baby-boomer's children will also be entering the labor force by 2005, increasing the size of the 16-24 year old labor force group.

Dennis (1994) says in her article "The Changing Work Environment" that we have gained 28 years of life since 1900. The average life-span in 1900 was 47 years; in 1991 the average life span was 75 years. What this means is that many people are now experiencing what some are referring to as a

second middle age between the years of 50 and 75. Many of the 76 million baby boomers--still a youthful 30 to 49--may have to work up to age 70 due to the extended life expectancy (Kaye, Lord & Sherrid, 1995).

The work environment is also changing. These changes are being influenced by global competitiveness, business deregulation, corporate mergers, changes in pension plan offerings, health benefit changes, and salaries tied to pay for performance versus fixed wages, to name but a few. This increase in life expectancy plus the increased numbers in the labor force combined with the changing work environment will result in an increase in the number of career transitions over the life span.

Schlossberg (1984) defines the term transition as:

an event (such as returning to school after working for many years) or a nonevent (such as staying in school over an unusually long period of time without completing a degree) that alters one's roles, relationships, routines, and assumptions (p. 14).

Studies of change (Schlossberg, 1987)--whether moving, losing a job, returning to school, caring for aging parents, or retiring--have shown that people in transition have both strengths and weaknesses.

A career transition can be one of two types: (1) planned, voluntary, or proactive; or (2) unplanned, nonvoluntary, reactive (Brown & Irby, 1995). Domestically, the frequency of job change is increasing. Involuntary job displacement has increased from one-in-four to one-in-three over the last five years (Cornish, 1993). Serial occupations are expected to be the norm by the turn of the century, and include four to six or more jobs per person (Wirth, 1992).

The adult in transition, regardless of the reason for the transition, may seek retraining, additional training, or an advanced academic degree in the search for a new or different job. Adults over age 25 who return to the classroom setting are referred to in the literature as nontraditional students (Panek, Partlo, & Romine, 1989; Christensen, 1994; Galbraith, 1990; Healy & Reilly, 1989; MacKinnon-Slaney, 1994). These nontraditional students now constitute approximately half of all college student populations (MacKinnon-Slaney, 1994).

The number of older students has been growing more rapidly than the number of younger students. Between 1980 and 1990, the enrollment of students under age 25 increased by 3 percent. During the same period, enrollment of persons 25 and over rose by 34 percent. From 1990 to 2000, NCES (National Center for Educational Statistics) projects a rise of 12 percent in enrollment of persons over 25 and an

increase of 13 percent in the number under 25 (U.S. Department of Education, 1995) (Table 1).

The nontraditional student may attend classes full-time or part-time, but generally commutes to campus due to other life role obligations (Christensen, 1994; Luzzo, 1993). According to MacKinnon-Slaney (1994) the nontraditional college student differs from the under age 25 college student whose main task is preparing for adulthood. Typically, the nontraditional student is self-supporting, mature, and responsible and leads life as an independent citizen with family and/or career responsibilities (MacKinnon-Slaney, 1994).

Against this rapidly changing workplace-workforce scene, the need for career counseling with the nontraditional student increases. The need for selective, targeted assessment within the framework of career counseling with the nontraditional student also increases.

Background

Critical issues continuing to surface during the 1990s focus on the employment and employability skills of adults preparing to exit U.S. public high schools and those pursuing advanced training in a community college or a four-year university (Bernhardt, Cole & Ryan, 1993). Services are

Table 1

Total Fall Enrollment in Institutions of Higher Education, By Attendance Status, Sex, and Age

	1970			1993			2000 (Projected)		
Sex and Age	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Full-time	Part-time
Men & Women, total	8,581	5,815	2,766	14,306	8,128	6,178	15,522	8,624	6,898
14-17 years old	259	242	17	175	159	16	246	227	19
18 & 19 years old	2,600	2,406	194	2,640	2,330	310	3,123	2,726	396
20 & 21 years old	1,880	1,647	233	2,708	2,219	488	2,849	2,304	545
22-24 years old	1,457	881	576	2,524	1,639	885	2,526	1,597	929
25-29 years old	1,074	407	668	2,008	755	1,253	1,979	688	1,291
30-34 years old	487	100	388	1,472	413	1,059	1,445	363	1,072
35 years old & over	823	134	689	2,779	613	2,167	3,356	708	2,648

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Fall Enrollment in Institutions of Higher Education" surveys; Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS), "Fall Enrollment" surveys; Projections of Education Statistics to 2005; and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Social and Economic Characteristics of Students, various years (1995).

needed for the nontraditional student/client facing career decisions and seeking advice about which career path to follow. Career decision-making and planning require insightful analysis of personal strengths that relate to the multitude of career options existing in the U.S. (Bernhardt, Cole & Ryan, 1993).

Nontraditional students cite unmet needs in career development as the main reason for returning to college (Luzzo, 1993). In research literature, age is traditionally associated with measures of career maturity. The literature also indicates that past career planning and work experiences are benefits to older students as they attempt to clarify their interests and begin the career decision-making process (Luzzo, 1993).

In a study by Healy and Reilly (1989), the hypothesis that nontraditional college students have different career development needs than under age 25 college students was tested. What Healy and Reilly found was that nontraditional students had more mature decision making attitudes than did under age 25 students using The Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale to assess career maturity. Also, nontraditional students tended to enter counseling with somewhat more clearly defined needs and a greater awareness of the career decision-making process. However, despite this more mature attitude toward the career decision-making

process, nontraditional students displayed hesitancy and anxiety regarding the successful completion of the career decision-making task.

Bolles (1995) refers to career indecision as a conflict between our "Safekeeping Self" and our "Experimental Self." The Safekeeping Self maintains our status quo while the Experimental Self assists us in striking out in new directions. The Experimental Self is the part of us which desires adventure and a better life. The implication for career counseling is a means to assist nontraditional students in overcoming a lack of confidence in the career decision-making process.

As early as 1948, Clifford Froehlich was suggesting that school counselors look at anecdotal records describing unusual projects completed out of school or autobiographical themes describing hobbies to assess aptitude. "We can probably help these young people make more intelligent decisions and better adjustments, even if we counsel them only on the basis of non-test data (Froehlich, 1948, p. 3)." Authentic assessment, performance-based assessment, and alternative assessment are currently hot topics in education at the university, secondary, and elementary school level (Boyle, 1994; Brown & Irby, 1995; Adams & Hamm, 1992). The portfolio has emerged as a comprehensive means to assess students and to showcase their accomplishments.

The portfolio concept is not new to the educational process. Career counselors have advocated individualized career plans for the past three decades (Cunanan & Maddy-Bernstein, 1995). Like the individual education program (IEP) mandated in 1990 for students with disabilities, an individual career plan can serve as a guide for every student, regardless of age. Gysbers and Moore (1987) suggested a career portfolio model that could be used by individuals entering or reentering the labor market. This portfolio would act as a repository for information that could be used for resume writing, for filling out job applications, and other job-hunting purposes.

In 1993 the National Education Association (NEA) published Student Portfolios as part of their Teacher-to-Teacher book series. In this book, teachers tell of their own school's restructuring efforts and the role of the portfolio. Martin Kimeldorf wrote Creative Portfolios for Success in School, Work, and Life which was published in 1994 with the accompanying A Teacher's Guide to Creative Portfolios for Success in School, Work, and Life.

Kimeldorf's purpose was to illustrate how a portfolio is similar to a scrapbook, journal, or photo album which highlights or illustrates the proud moments of one's life. Kimeldorf believes that before one can make a choice about the future, one must look over the past and evaluate the most

important events, experiences, and decisions in life. This is the same concept as that presented in the Life Work Portfolio (Van Dyke & MOICC, 1995) with the emphasis placed on adults and the career decision-making process.

Background NOICC Career Portfolio Effort

Career planning is the cornerstone for making appropriate career, educational, and occupational choices. Career planning is critical to making effective transitions (Perry, 1993). The National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) through a project with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the Maine Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (MOICC) developed a career portfolio for use by students. This portfolio project integrated the National Career Development Guidelines into comprehensive career guidance programs (NTSC, 1995). This product, Get A Life, provides a process that can be followed throughout one's life as career decisions are made. The process also provides transferable skills that will serve to empower individuals in the career decision-making process (ASCA, 1992).

In response to the success of Get A Life (more than 100,000 copies were sold in the first year), Catherine H. Van Dyke and the Maine Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (MOICC) under a grant from NOICC developed an adult

portfolio entitled Life Work Portfolio. This product was pilot tested in the Spring of 1995. (This author participated in the pilot study by using the portfolio with two individual participants and three participants who worked in a small group setting. (Appendix A) Results from the various pilot sites were compiled and revisions were made accordingly. The final product, Life Work Portfolio, was marketed to the public in late February, 1996. There were minimal changes or additions from the pilot product. The only significant change was the addition of informational worksheets added to the last section (example of job application; first week on the job; growth on the job).

Rationale of the Study

Bolles (1995) talks about the fingerprints of the Safekeeping Self and the need to focus on certainties--what one knows versus what one does not know; what one can do versus what one cannot do. Bolles (1995) also cites the need for lots of information gathering during the career change process. He suggests talking with others who have experienced successful change and especially those who have successfully moved into an area of interest. According to Bolles (1995) information gathering for job-hunters is not optional, it is crucial (p. 2). By using the Life Work Portfolio with small groups of nontraditional students, the

author hopes to enable these students to gather useful information about themselves in order to make desired career changes.

Problem Statement

A modern trend in professional education has been the use of portfolios. Portfolios have been used in teacher evaluation, student evaluation, and in specific types of instruction such as psychomotor skills, personal reference decisions, and skill identification. Some uses of portfolios have been studied and documented as to their utility. The Life Work Portfolio has enjoyed claims of usefulness, but has not been studied to validate these claims. What we do not know is its role in career-decision making, career planning, and self-examination. We do not know for whom or under what conditions the portfolio process works.

Purpose of Study

This study is aimed at describing structured and unstructured group processes to determine what benefits, if any, group members gained from the Life Work Portfolio process. Benefits were measured through focus groups, descriptive analysis of the portfolios, and the questionnaire used by the developers of the Life Work Portfolio. Group members were encouraged to maintain a journal of the process

which can be reviewed at the end of group sessions. The following questions are addressed in this study:

1. Does the Life Work Portfolio provide the necessary framework to make short- and long-term career/life plans?
2. Does the Life Work Portfolio provide the necessary framework to assist in moving successfully through the career transition process?
3. Will the self-confidence level of the group participant be enhanced by this process?
4. Will this procedure enable the group participant to recognize strengths and assets to be marketed in the job search process?
5. Does the nontraditional student benefit more than the traditional student from the Life Work Portfolio?

Procedure for Study

The orientation classes of New River Community College in Dublin, Virginia, were used for this study. The study was conducted during Spring Semester 1996 (February-May). Two groups of eight to ten traditional students and two groups of eight to ten nontraditional students were selected on a volunteer basis (n = 32-40).

One nontraditional and one traditional group participated in a structured setting and complete the Life Work Portfolio in a series of four 1-1½ hour sessions, one per week, for four consecutive weeks. One nontraditional and one traditional group completed the Life Work Portfolio in an unstructured setting with help available upon request for a period of four weeks.

All participants were asked to participate in a focus group at the end of four weeks to elicit responses related to the usefulness of the actual product, Life Work Portfolio. Participants also completed the Life Work Portfolio Project User Reaction Form (Appendix B) after four sessions. It was suggested that participants maintain a journal of their thoughts and reactions as they proceeded through the process.

Limitations

The dynamics of the group process will vary from group to group. This variance could have an affect on the degree of change in the attitude of the individual toward the career decision-making process. Also of concern will be the group reaction to and interaction with this author as group leader. A third limitation relates to the issues of self-reporting and volunteerism.

Definitions

ASCA: American School Counselor Association.

Career: The totality of work and leisure one does in a lifetime (McDaniels, 1995).

Career development: The total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to shape the career of any given individual over the life span (McDaniels, 1995).

Career transitions: Transitions related to one's career (Bridges, 1980).

Labor force: Supply of workers age 16 or older who are looking for work or are currently employed.

Leisure: Relatively self-determined activities and experiences that are available due to having discretionary income, time, and social behavior; the activity may be physical, social, intellectual, volunteer, creative, or some combination of all five (McDaniels, 1995).

MOICC: Maine Occupational Information Coordinating
Committee.

NOICC: National Occupational Information Coordinating
Committee.

Planned career transition: The extent to which the worker
moves from fantasy goals to exploration of
possibilities, narrows choices, and evaluates possible
actions (Schlossberg & Entine, 1977).

Planned transition: Voluntary or proactive.

Portfolio: A purposeful collection of student work that
exhibits to the student and/or others the student's
activities, efforts, progress, or achievement in given
areas (ASCA, 1992).

Unplanned transitions: Involuntary or reactive.

Work: A conscious effort, other than having as its primary
purposes either coping or relaxation, aimed at producing
benefits for oneself and/or for oneself and others
(McDaniels, 1995).

Organization of the Study

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature pertinent to this study. Chapter Three contains the methodology, including a description of the subjects, procedures for the study, and data analysis. The results of the study based on the data analysis are reported in Chapter Four. Discussion of research findings, conclusions, and implications are discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

Career portfolios are just beginning to be recognized as a viable tool for career planning. Little research has been conducted on the recent developments in this area. This chapter reviews literature in three areas related to this study. Section one looks at the career decision-making process as proposed by Super (1957, 1963, 1976, 1980, 1983, 1990, 1992) and a study by Healy and Reilly (1989). The second section looks at career transitions from the works of Schlossberg (1984, 1987); Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989); Schlossberg, Troll, and Leibowitz (1978); and Super (1957, 1963, 1976, 1980, 1983, 1984, 1990, 1992). The final section looks at literature related to the rapidly growing concept of career portfolios.

Career Decision Making

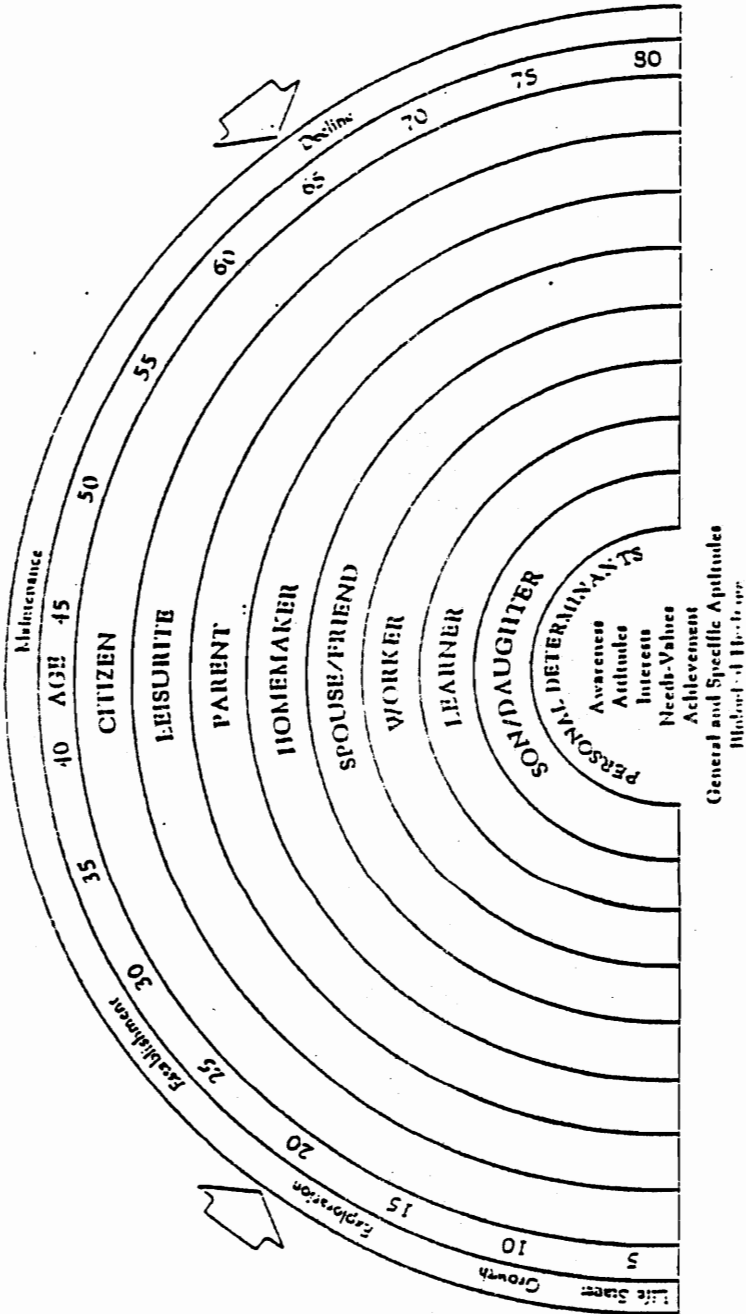
Super (1957, 1963, 1976, 1980, 1983, 1984, 1990, 1992) proposed that the stages of career development patterned those of human development over the lifespan. The idea that a career stretched over the lifespan became known as a developmental or life span/life space approach to careers. One way to view Super's life-span, life-space approach is through his life-career rainbow. In a classification of

stage transitions, Super (1984) illustrated a life-stage model by using a "life rainbow" (Table 2). This two-dimensional graphic schema presents a longitudinal dimension of the life span, referred to as a "maxicycle," and corresponding major life stages, labeled "minicycles." A second dimension is "life space," or the roles played by individuals as they progress through developmental stages, such as child, student, leisurite, citizen, worker, spouse, homemaker, parent, and pensioner. The roles are experienced in the following theaters: home, community, school (college and university), and workplace (Super, 1984).

This conceptual model leads to interesting observations: (1) because people are involved in several roles simultaneously within several theaters, success in one role facilitates success in another; and (2) all roles affect one another in various theaters (Zunker, 1990). The life roles fluctuate, depending on age and other circumstances across the life span.

Role salience is another dimension depicted by the Rainbow. As pointed out by Super (1980), the various roles interact. The addition of a new role reduces the participation of one or more others and sometimes affects the affective commitment. These various roles can be extensive (supportive or supplementary), compensatory, or neutral

CAREER-LIFE RAINBOW
 SITUATIONAL DETERMINANTS, REMOTE-IMMEDIATE
 Social Structure
 Historical Change
 Socio-Economic Organization and Conditions
 Employment Practices
 School
 Community



(Champoux, 1981; Super, 1940). They can also be conflicting if they make inroads into time and energy needed elsewhere. They can enrich life or overburden it (Super, 1940).

Super (1957) identified the career stages as growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. Successfully meeting the demands of any given stage was dependent upon the individual's readiness level or career maturity. "Career maturity is a constellation of physical, psychological, and social characteristics; psychologically, it is both cognitive and affective" (Super, 1990, p. 206). Development through the life stages can be guided, partly by facilitating the maturing of abilities and interests and partly by aiding in reality testing and in the development of self-concepts (Super, 1990).

Super states in earlier works that decision-making is central to career development (1980). By 1992, Super states that we accept the fact that career choice is not an event, but a process. Career choices are not made, they emerge (Super, 1992, p. 416). Developing self-concepts are gradually translated into role preferences and occupational plans. Some people do this career-, self-, and occupational-exploration early; some do it later, in the labor market, the work force, or in college (Super, 1992).

According to Super (1992) in contemporary career counseling there is no testing and telling, no non-directive limiting of counseling to the reflection and clarification of feeling. Super believes that career counselors need to provide help in encountering realities in ways that stimulate thoughts, provide material for thought, and help test the soundness of data, inferences, and conclusions. "In the process...there are often expressions of feelings by the client, and a need for appropriate responses by the counselor" (Super, 1992, p. 420). Super cited that the explorations of the meanings of developmental data, whether life-history or inventory data, are best done in a joint expedition of counselor and client.

Schlossberg (1972) proposed that individuals make career decisions based primarily on a decision-making-model developed by Tiedeman and O'Hara (1963). Based on this model, decisions are viewed in two major stages: anticipation and implementation. When individuals are in transition they first fantasize alternatives before weighing and implementing choices.

Charles Healy (1975) makes the following observations related to career decision-making: (1) it appears that high esteem people can differentiate among occupational choices more easily than low esteem persons; (2) planning and problem solving will improve by following a systematic method for

constructing a plan or devising a solution; and (3) counselors should furnish mechanisms whereby clients construct a plan or develop a solution. Clients must choose alternatives and must realize why choices were made (Healy, 1975).

Healy and Reilly (1989) conducted a study with 2,926 students under 51 years of age from 10 community colleges. Two primary questions were examined: (1) Do older community college students differ from younger ones in career needs? (2) Do women differ from men in these needs?

Consistent with Super's (1984) theory, the career needs typically addressed in college decline in importance as a function of age (older students report fewer needs). The sustained need in each of the career areas up to age 50 years is as noteworthy as the decline in needs with age. Tasks thought to pose minimal concern if repeated during the adult years are instead reported as major needs by 25% to 35% of the adults over 30 years of age in the sample. More noticeable is the need to explore jobs related to interests and abilities for nearly 40% of the 40 to 50 year olds (Table 3). Evidently, many of these nontraditional students are adapting an exploratory posture toward our changing opportunity structure, seeking and anticipating work experiences through which they can develop and discover new potentials in themselves (Healy & Reilly, 1989).

Table 3

Age Differences in Career/Vocational Needs for Women and Men

Need Level		Age Categories and Percentages															
		17-19				20-23				24-29				30-40			
		(213-315)	W	M	(281-282)	(426-431)	W	M	(426-433)	(272-274)	W	M	(288-290)	(377-379)	W	M	(298-302)
		(140-141)			(78-79)												
1. Knowing more about interests and abilities.	Major	39	37	28	29	24	27	21	23	24	27	21	24	23	24	23	23
	Minor	41	42	40	46	45	35	34	36	35	35	33	39	36	39	36	36
	None	20	21	32	25	32	38	38	46	38	38	46	27	41	27	41	41
2. Understanding/How to decide Career goals	Major	46	36	32	36	29	27	25	26	29	27	23	26	16	26	16	16
	Minor	33	44	35	36	32	30	34	33	30	30	33	29	33	29	33	33
	None	21	20	33	28	39	42	42	35	43	43	45	45	51	45	51	51
3. Becoming more certain of career/Vocational plans	Major	51	36	41	35	32	27	27	33	31	31	29	33	23	33	23	23
	Minor	32	44	30	41	33	28	35	31	28	28	31	24	32	24	32	32
	None	18	20	29	25	35	38	38	40	40	40	40	43	44	43	44	44
4. Exploring careers related to interests and abilities	Major	52	46	49	44	43	45	45	44	44	44	35	39	38	39	38	38
	Minor	34	40	36	38	36	30	30	31	31	31	35	28	30	28	30	30
	None	14	15	15	18	21	25	25	25	25	25	30	34	32	34	32	32
5. Selecting courses relevant to career goals	Major	44	43	38	39	31	43	43	41	41	41	33	30	37	30	37	37
	Minor	39	38	32	37	36	39	39	35	35	35	36	34	29	34	29	29
	None	17	19	30	24	32	28	28	34	34	34	32	36	33	36	33	33
6. Development job finding skills	Major	42	36	37	40	33	37	37	32	32	32	29	34	31	34	31	31
	Minor	40	45	39	38	38	33	33	36	36	36	34	24	25	24	25	25
	None	19	19	24	23	28	30	30	33	33	33	36	42	44	42	44	44
7. Obtaining a job	Major	34	40	34	41	33	38	38	38	38	38	35	28	43	28	43	43
	Minor	36	31	35	28	32	27	27	27	27	27	24	26	15	26	15	15
	None	31	30	32	31	35	36	36	39	39	39	42	46	43	46	43	43

Source: Healy, C. C., & Reilly, K. C. (1989). Career needs of community college students: Implications for services and theory. *Journal of College Student Development*, 30.

By using the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale, analyses revealed that despite their more mature attitudes toward the career-decision making process as a whole, nontraditional students continue to display some degree of trepidation and anxiety regarding the successful completion of career decision-making tasks (Luzzo, 1993, p. 118). Because our work system inhibits workers in one field from developing networks in other fields, many adults contemplating new fields may need college professionals to guide them into learning and employment opportunities in new fields (Healy & Reilly, 1989).

Career Transitions

Super formed his concept of career maturity over a period of years. Career maturity referred to the individual's readiness to cope with the demands of adapting to the changes that occurred while in a particular developmental stage. This concept was then applied to those individuals adapting to change brought on by transitions. Transitions occurred as the individual moved from one stage to another or as the individual confronted external forces, such as restructured work environments, or internal forces, such as illness or injury (Super, 1957).

Super stated that as individuals transitioned through life stages some career aspects such as vocational preference, competencies, and self-concepts changed with time and experience. Super believed that self-concept develops as a consequence of the interaction between heredity and environment. One's self-concept reflects one's innate talents and temperament, developed through experiences in different roles and identifications with different models. Thus development of self-concept is ongoing and subject to change with various life role transitions (Super, 1957).

Schlossberg (1972, 1984) expanded the notion of transitions through stages to formulate a new approach to understanding adult career development. According to Schlossberg, individuals were continuously faced with changes. Schlossberg (1984) found current adult development theories lacked an understanding of adults in transition. Schlossberg's theory was conceptualized as three major elements: (a) transition, (b) transition process, and (c) the coping resources of the individual in transition.

Schlossberg (1984) defined transitions as "any event or movement that resulted in change in relationships, routines, assumptions, and/or roles within self, work, family, health, and/or economics (p. 42). Studies of change, whether moving, losing a job, returning to school, caring for aging parents,

or retiring, have shown that people in transition have both strengths and weaknesses (1984).

Transitions can be planned, voluntary, or proactive, or unplanned, nonvoluntary, or reactive (Brown & Irby, 1995). Transitions that are expected or anticipated, as in a promotion, are controlled by the individual and have predictable consequences. Unexpected or unplanned transitions such as a demotion or death, are not under the individual's control, and do not have predictable consequences. Other transitions are planned, but may not occur, such as a marriage which never took place.

Schlossberg (1984) proposed three sets of actors that influenced the individual in the transition process: (a) variables that characterized the particular transition, (b) variables that characterized the particular individual, and (c) variables that characterized the particular environment. Each factor overlapped to predict the adaptation to or nonadaptation to the transition. Depending on the individual's perception of the transition, self, and environment, each variable was an asset or liability which assisted the individual's adaptation to the transition.

Schlossberg (1984) identified these seven variables which characterize the transition:

1. Trigger event: A specific event, that when it occurs makes an individual look at him or herself differently.
2. Timing: Using age as a defining variable such as going to college after high school.
3. Source: Change that comes about because the individual makes a deliberate decision, or change forced upon the individual by circumstances or other individuals.
4. Role change: Transitions involving role changes are defined as role gain or role loss.
5. Duration: Whether the change is regarded as permanent or temporary.
6. Previous experience with a similar transition: An individual who successfully adapted to a transition in the past will probably be successful at adapting to another transition similar in nature.
7. Degree of stress: How a person perceives the change and his or her relationship with others may affect how much stress accompanies the transition.

Schlossberg (1984) identified these variables as characterizing the individual:

1. Socioeconomic status: Socioeconomic differences impact the amount of stress associated with transitions. Thus, the lower the socioeconomic standing, the greater the financial difficulties and the greater the stress.
2. Sex roles: The transitions and stresses that a man experiences are more likely to be connected with work, whereas, those a woman undergoes are more likely to be connected with family life.
3. Age and life stage: Schlossberg believed that instead of chronological age, life stage was a more useful concept when studying transitions. Chronological age was not as important when compared to biological age, psychological age, social age, and functional age.
4. State of health: Health affects the individual's ability to adapt to a transition.
5. Ego development: The frame of reference through which the individual views the transition.
6. Personality: Explains the different ways individuals react to the world (transitions).
7. Outlook: How an individual views life impacts adjustment to transition.

8. Commitments and values: Basic values and beliefs influence the individual's ability to adapt to transition.

Schlossberg (1984) identified the variables which characterize the environment as four types of interpersonal support:

1. Intimate relationship: Relationship that involves the sharing of confidences.
2. Family unit: Individuals who perceive having a supportive family adapt to transitions more successfully than those who perceive the family as unsupportive.
3. Network of friends: Friends are a support system similar to that of a family.
4. Institutional support: Institutional support includes formal agencies such as social welfare, community support groups, and religious institutions.

Schlossberg (1987) states that individuals possess potential resources or deficits for coping with various transitions. She divides these resources into four categories called the 4 S's. By looking at the balance of resources and deficits in each of these categories she believes it is possible to predict how a person will cope.

1. Situation: Does the person see the transition as positive, negative, expected, unexpected, or dreaded? Did the transition come at the worst or best possible time? Is it "on time" or "off time"? Is it surrounded by other stresses? Is it voluntary or imposed? At what point is the transition--beginning, middle, or near the end? Is this a personal transition or a reaction to someone else's?
2. Self: What is the person's previous experience in making a similar transition? Does the person believe there are options? Is the person basically optimistic and able to deal with ambiguity?
3. Supports: External supports and options include both financial assets and potential emotional support from family, close friends, and co-workers.
4. Strategies: Understanding the nature of transitions can help us find ways to cope with them. The creative copers uses a number of strategies, including those that change the situation, change the meaning of the situation, and help the person manage stress (Schlossberg, 1987; Schlossberg, Lynch & Chickering, 1989).

The larger the transition, either good or bad, the more it will pervade the individual's life. As adults move through various transitions and role changes, they experience certain subjective events. One of the most consuming of these is stock-taking, reassessing themselves, their options, their potentialities (Schlossberg, Troll, & Leibowitz, 1978).

According to Schlossberg, Troll, and Leibowitz (1978) one's locus of control often governs transitions. The individual may be carried by the momentum of events, by the force of decisions made in the past which they may now regret. Often with the nontraditional student the transition is affected by the lack of internal control and the sense that time is running out. Successfully coping with immediate difficulties leads to an increase in one's sense of control and thus more control over the effects of the transitions on one's life (Schlossberg, Troll & Leibowitz, 1978).

Schlossberg (1984) contended that a transition was "a process of continuing and changing reactions over time--for better or for worse--which are linked to the individual's continuous and changing appraisal of self-in-situation" (p. 56).

Career Portfolios

As early as 1948, Clifford Froehlich was suggesting that school counselors look at anecdotal records describing unusual projects completed out of school or autobiographical themes describing hobbies to assess aptitude. "We can probably help these young people make more intelligent decisions and better adjustments, even if we counsel them only on the basis of non-test data (Froehlich, 1948, p. 3)." The portfolio concept is evolving and emerging as a comprehensive means to assess students and to showcase their skills and accomplishments.

In a brief released by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (1995), NOICC recommended an integrated approach to comprehensive career guidance and counseling (1994). This brief also cited the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 which was enacted to establish school-to-work systems which enable all students to identify and navigate paths to productive and rewarding roles in the workplace. This act emphasizes career planning for all students that can facilitate the smooth transition from school to work or further learning.

Cunanan and Maddy-Bernstein (1995) suggest the use of Individualized Career Plans (ICP) in order to open doors for all students. They believe that like the Individualized Education Program (IEP) mandated for students with

disabilities (1990), an individualized career plan (ICP) can serve as a guide for every student, regardless of age. McDaniels and Gysbers (1992) concur by stating that individualized career plans can be thought of as both instruments and processes that can be used alone, or with the help of others to monitor and carry forward with career development. The ICP can be used as a vehicle for planning. The ICP differs from a career portfolio in that the career portfolio contains more detailed documentation of the student's progress which includes work samples, certificates of completion including competencies mastered, and other indicators of actual work (Cunanan & Maddy-Bernstein, 1995).

The original idea of the career portfolio was to integrate the National Career Development Guidelines (1989) into a comprehensive career guidance program. Get A Life (1992) was developed by NOICC through a project with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) in Maine. A "mockup" of the portfolio and the accompanying manual were sent to 12 national reviewers who held leadership positions in various Career Development programs and organizations. The reviewers were asked to critique both the technical aspects of the portfolio and the substantive content and format ideas, keeping in mind that a primary intent of the project was to make both the portfolio and the

manual "user-friendly." A page-by-page analysis of each reviewer's suggestions was used to revise the two products (Get A Life and Facilitator's Manual) before making them available to the pilot sites (ASCA & NOICC, 1994).

Prior to being released for distribution, Get A Life was field tested in five states for a period of one year. The pilot sites were chosen as a result of a competitive request for proposals (RFP) issued to all State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees (SOICCs). Selection was based on the quality of the proposal, attention to project objectives, past efforts to introduce the National Career Development Guidelines or other career development initiatives, a realistic timeline and budget, the involvement of school counselors, and the extent to which the cumulative sites could reflect an adequate cross-section of socio-economic, cultural, and regional representation (ASCA & NOICC, 1994). The five pilot sites selected were Maine, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Utah. All pilot sites were asked to develop a Plan of Action to direct their activities during the year. Coordinators were asked to conduct Quarterly Reports, and follow-up conference calls were used to share information and ideas and to field questions about the projects. At least one visit was made to each of the sites by the project manager and the project consultant.

Several significant observations were useful in making changes to the portfolio and manual:

1. Administrative support and involvement is critical to the success of the portfolio project. Whenever administrators were well informed and participating in training, the rest of the staff took the project seriously and remained focused in its goals.
2. Schools that were more invested in school transformative efforts were more open to using the portfolio.
3. Schools that had already attempted to create resources to aid in the implementation of the National Career Development Guidelines had the most difficulty using the portfolio because they had already invested great time and energy in their own devices. Schools without such a history were more open to creative ways of using the portfolio.
4. A brief "Facilitator's Guide" was needed by teachers and others working with the portfolio. While coordinators were provided with a Facilitator's Manual, the information was rarely shared with others who were actually working with students. (A six-page fold-out guide is now provided.)
5. While most sites really liked the name of the portfolio, a couple of schools found it to be offensive. Both the Facilitator's Manual and the Facilitator's Guide now

address the importance of exploring the meaning of the title with students. (Your career is your life.)

6. The importance of planning and training was repeated over and over again. A good management plan and good managers of that plan are key ingredients of a successful program.
7. The pilot sites validated a previous concern that many educators did not seem to be informed about such important resources as the SCANS Report, portfolios, and the National Career Development Guidelines.
8. Perhaps because they had one year to be a pilot site, most schools tried to do too much too fast. Those using the portfolio need to see it as a "process" not as a workbook.
9. While the career development portfolio is a "concept" more than a folder, many educators feel limited by the space provided. (ASCA & NOICC, 1994)

This project was based on the premise that career development is more than just getting a job. The implication of Get A Life is that your life is your career. What you do with your life is therefore, the responsibility of each individual (ASCA, 1992). This product provides a process that can be followed throughout one's life as career decisions are made. These identified transferable skills

serve to empower the individual in making career decisions. The focus is on self-knowledge, life roles, educational development, and career exploration and planning. The purpose is to enable individuals to make successful transitions from school to the workplace and to continue the learning process throughout life. ASCA (1992) believes the community will benefit in the following ways:

- help prepare students (adults) for the workplace;
- address need for a positive work attitude;
- involve parents and community in the implementation process;
- help students develop responsibility for career success; and
- provide the opportunity for students to bring tangible evidence of their skills, accomplishments, and perspectives to the job search.

Get A Life reflects the concept that individuals are influenced by family, cultural heritage, societal forces, and one's own views of what is important. Life roles change as one ages and matures.

More than 100,000 copies of Get A Life were sold in the first year (NTSC, 1995). As a result of the proven effectiveness of Get A Life, Catherine H. Van Dyke and the Maine Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (MOICC) under a grant from MOICC developed an adult version of the

career portfolio entitled Life Work Portfolio. The Life Work Portfolio is divided into four areas of concentration:

- I. Who I Am
(Example: life roles, challenges, realities)
- II. Exploring
(Example: career exploration, networking, leisure and significant others)
- III. Deciding
(Example: generating options and consequences)
- IV. Planning and Acting
(Example: a plan, job seeking, resumes, interview)

N. S. Peery (personal communication, September 22, 1995), Career Specialist with NOICC, expressed the following: "...the results of this process is work that is actually owned by the person. The seeking and finding of knowledge and then applying it to self is an empowering process."

The Life Work Portfolio was pilot tested by MOICC and Catherine Van Dyke during May-July, 1995. One hundred and seventy-one responses were collected as part of the pilot phase of the Life Work Portfolio project. Fourteen of the responses were from site coordinators or group facilitators; 157 responses were from portfolio users. Of the 157, 11 participants were identified as using the portfolio on an individual basis; the remainder worked with the portfolio as part of facilitated groups. Of the 30 sites contacted to

participate in the study, 12 had responded by the time these results were compiled. Thirty participants were identified as juniors and seniors at a large university, 12 were veterans returning to the civilian workforce, 21 were identified as technical college students, 40 were identified as community college students, 41 were from a self-employment program, 8 from a rural adult education program, and 5 from a mixed age group of career changers. Gender identification was not required.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, was one of the 12 sites reporting results for the pilot study to MOICC and Catherine Van Dyke. Five participants worked with this author as a part of the pilot study. Two of the five opted to work individually and three participants selected to work with a facilitator.

Results of the pilot study, reported by Catherine Van Dyke, Maine Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, are shown below:

Life Work Portfolio Pilot Project

(Total Responses 171)

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not at All Useful	Did not Use
Who I Am	113	48	6	2
Exploring	93	65	5	4
Deciding	96	50	10	9
Planning & Acting	102	45	6	12

Generally speaking, respondents found the materials Very Useful. More respondents found the Who I Am and Planning and Acting sections Very Useful in comparison to the Exploring and Deciding sections, or the Guide.

The pages of the portfolio in the Who I Am section most frequently mentioned by both facilitators and participants as Very Useful were: What I Stand For, Life Roles, Interests, Personal Management Styles, Wellness Strategies, What I Can Do, Personality Style, Personal Qualities, Challenges and Realities, and How I Can Grow From Here.

In the Exploring section, the pages most frequently mentioned as Very Useful were: Career Exploration Activities, Networking, My Ideal Job, Training Options, and Working for Myself.

In the Deciding section, the pages most frequently mentioned as Very Useful were: Career Options Grid, Career

Decision Making Model, Deciding Checklist, and Make A Decision.

In the Planning and Acting section, Resume Worksheet, Interview Questions, Cover Letter Outline, Put Together a Plan, Job Seeking Checklist, and Training and Education Checklist were most frequently mentioned as Very Useful.

The changes most frequently mentioned referred to the Planning and Acting pages on resumes, cover letters, and interview questions. Respondents generally wanted more information, different formats, and more examples.

In 1993 the National Education Association (NEA) published Student Portfolios as part of their Teacher-to-Teacher book series. In this book, teachers tell of their own school's restructuring efforts and the role of the portfolio. Martin Kimeldorf wrote Creative Portfolios for Success in School, Work, and Life which was published in 1994 with the accompanying A Teacher's Guide to Creative Portfolios for Success in School, Work, and Life.

Kimeldorf's purpose was to illustrate how a portfolio is similar to a scrapbook, journal, or photo album which highlights or illustrates the proud moments of one's life. Kimeldorf believes that before one can make a choice about the future, one must look over the past and evaluate the most important events, experiences, and decisions in one's life. This is the same concept as that presented in the Life Work

Portfolio (Van Dyke & MOICC, 1995) with the emphasis placed on adults and the career decision-making process.

It is important to note that the portfolio concept is gaining in popularity. The Center on Education and Work at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin, has developed the Career Options Planner with a format similar to the Life Work Portfolio. This product was marketed in 1994 to target high school students. Also in 1994, the U.S. Army with the support of the National Consortium of State Career Guidance Supervisors developed the Planning for Life with a portfolio format which covers career planning, self-improvement ideas, and a self-review process. The Planning for Life targets the adult population.

The Virginia State Department of Education in Richmond, Virginia, distributed its version of the portfolio concept, Educational and Career Planning Portfolio to public secondary counselors during the Spring and Summer of 1995. This portfolio was designed for high school students with funds from the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990. As a follow-up to the Virginia State Department of Education initiative, the New River Valley Tech Prep Consortium in Dublin, Virginia, expanded the original model to include grades 4-8 and grades 13 and 14. Schools in the New River Valley Tech Prep Consortium region implemented the revised portfolio in the fall of 1995. Bridgewater

College's Class of 1999 in Bridgewater, Virginia, is pioneering a new program with a holistic approach of preparing graduates for more productive lives. The Personal Development Portfolio program has the key component of mentoring. Each freshman is part of a small group of students meeting regularly, with an advisor, to develop goals for college and beyond in each of eight dimensions: academics, citizenship, cultural awareness, esthetics, ethical development, leadership, social proficiency, and wellness. Each activity must be documented and then becomes a part of the student's portfolio of development.

Handy (1991) in his article "The Coming Work Culture: Portfolio People Are About to Flood the Marketplace. Who are They? They are Us" relates that he does not propose the portfolio way of life in a light manner. He states that many workers will have little choice in the matter, while others will willingly choose to use the portfolio concept. "Either way, entering this zone of the world of work obliges us to rethink many fundamental assumptions of our lives" (p. 56).

Handy (1991) presents the idea that portfolio people can no longer think of their *line* of work, one job leading to another and better job, ending in something called success (or failure) (p. 56). Instead, portfolio living forces workers to think in terms of the circle, something like a pie chart with different segments marked off for different

occupations, each colored for kind and degree of hoped-for remuneration (p. 56). This chart will be constantly changing, the dimensions of the occupation segments expanding or contracting according to the time invested, and the returns on the investment. These changes will occur over the years of the worker's life, but also from week to week and perhaps day to day (p. 56).

Handy (1991) also states that for good or ill, the portfolio life is the life of the future. He believes new models and new role players are needed to make the portfolio process and the changes in the workplace less frightening. These portfolio people will need to put their various bits of work into folders, similar to architects and journalists, and sell their services through examples of their work (Handy, 1991).

Summary

Portfolio, from the Latin words meaning 'to carry and leaf' originally referred to a case in which to carry paper or drawings (Peery, 1993). This concept has now expanded to include a collection of like items (stocks or artist's portfolio) into the realm of education, authentic assessment (Boyle, 1994), and career development. What we know is that this concept is a viable tool for working with students of all ages, including the nontraditional student. Even though

the Life Work Portfolio underwent a pilot study prior to final release for publication, there has been no study of the final product with a targeted population--the nontraditional student. Does it work for them?

Chapter III

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology and procedures of this study. The following topics are discussed in this chapter: (a) the research approach and design, (b) subject population and selection, (c) research procedures, and (d) data processing.

Research Approach and Design

The purpose of this study was to determine the utility of small group work using the Life Work Portfolio with the traditional and nontraditional student involved in the career decision-making process at New River Community College in Dublin, Virginia.

Subject Population and Selection

Students enrolled in the orientation classes during Spring Semester 1996 at New River Community College in Dublin, Virginia, were used for the sample population. The orientation classes at New River Community College use the portfolio process as a part of the course requirement. At initial class meetings on January 22, 23, and 30, 1996, the purpose and procedure of this study was explained and the

following card was distributed in order to elicit volunteers for this study:

Day/Date of Orientation Class:	_____
Name:	_____
Age:	_____
Gender:	_____
Telephone: Day -	_____
Evening -	_____
Mailing Address:	_____

Class Status:	_____
Class Schedule:	_____
Work Schedule:	_____
Best Time for Group Meetings: (List at least 3)	_____

From the list of volunteers generated by responses at initial orientation class meetings, two groups of 8-10 traditional and two groups of 8-10 nontraditional students were contacted for a sample of $n = 32-40$.

One group of traditional students and one group of nontraditional students worked in a structured setting. One group of traditional students and one group of nontraditional

students received help on an individual basis as requested (unstructured group).

Research Procedures

At the initial orientation session ground rules and expectations for the study were reviewed:

- structured groups will meet a total of four times,
- sessions will last 1 - 1 1/2 hours,
- attendance is expected at all four sessions,
- participants will be asked to participate in a focus group following the completion of all group sessions,
- students will be encouraged to maintain a journal throughout the process, and
- light dinner or snacks will be provided at each session.

Students working in an unstructured setting received the Life Work Portfolio at the initial group meeting with an explanation of the procedure. Students then worked through the process independently with assistance available upon request.

Participants in unstructured groups were asked to participate in a focus group session. Unstructured groups were also encouraged to maintain a journal throughout the process. All four groups completed the McDaniels Career Transition Considerations form and the Life Work Portfolio Project User Reaction Form after the portfolios were completed.

The Life Work Portfolio (MOICC & ASCA) was used as a guide for topics to be covered in each session regarding the career decision-making process. The guide is divided into four sections; one section was covered each session.

Once structured group sessions began, the procedure was as follows:

Session I:

- Group introductions
- Review of study
- Responsibilities of group members
- Section I Life Work Portfolio: Who I Am

Session II:

- Review of Section I Life Work Portfolio
- Section II Life Work Portfolio: Exploring

Session III:

- Review of Section II Life Work Portfolio
- Section III Life Work Portfolio: Deciding

Session IV:

- Review of Section III Life Work Portfolio
- Section IV Life Work Portfolio: Planning and Acting
- Focus group
- Descriptive analysis of portfolio
- Administration of McDaniels' Career Transition Considerations and Career Planning Confidence Scale
- Complete Life Work Portfolio Project User Reaction Form
- Turn in journals (optional)

Data Processing

Responses expressed during the focus group session were evaluated and reviewed to identify indicators of future career plans/goals; procedures for reaching identified plans/goals; and indicators of the role of the Life Work

Portfolio process in actualizing change. A descriptive analysis of the portfolios was used in an effort to support the uniformity of the treatment. Participants in all four groups were asked to complete McDaniels' Career Transition Considerations and the Life Work Portfolio Project User Reaction Form. Responses to the McDaniels Career Transition Considerations were reviewed to identify participant views of the various life roles and the key elements in personal planning as they relate to life roles. Reactions from the User Reaction Form were compiled to determine the utility of the Life Work Portfolio in this study versus the claimed utility based on the pilot study of 1995.

The following research questions were addressed by the data analysis in this study:

1. Did the Life Work Portfolio provide the necessary framework to make short- and long-term career/life plans?
2. Did the Life Work Portfolio provide the necessary framework to assist in moving successfully through the career transition process?
3. Was the self-confidence level of the group participant enhanced by this process?

4. Did this procedure enable the group participant to recognize strengths and assets to be marketed in the job search process?
5. Did the nontraditional student benefit more than the traditional student from the Life Work Portfolio?

Chapter IV

Results of the Study

The purpose of this chapter is to report the results of the research procedures. The chapter is divided into seven sections: (a) description of population for study, (b) results of the McDaniels Career Transition Considerations form, (c) results of the Life Work Portfolio Project User Reaction Form, (d) anecdotal information from group sessions, (e) results of focus group sessions, (f) portfolio analysis, and (g) summary.

Description of the Population

Students enrolled in the orientation classes during Spring Semester 1996 at New River Community College in Dublin, Virginia, were used as the sample population for this study. The orientation classes at New River Community College use the portfolio process as a part of the course requirement. At initial class meetings on January 22, 23, and 30, 1996, the purpose and procedure of this study was explained and the following card was distributed in order to elicit volunteers:

Day/Date of Orientation Class:	_____
Name:	_____
Age:	_____ Gender: _____
Telephone:	Day - _____
	Evening - _____
Mailing Address:	_____

Class Status:	_____
Class Schedule:	_____
Work Schedule:	_____
Best Time for Group Meetings:	(List at least 3)

Seventy-nine students out of 209 total students in the Spring Semester 1996 orientation class filled out the information card to express an interest in volunteering for the study. Of those 79 students, 43 agreed to participate in the study when they were contacted by phone. Once group work actually began, 28 students participated in the group sessions. The fifteen orientation class students who agreed to participate in the study, but never showed up, were contacted by phone. Reasons for not participating included the following:

2 students did not return messages left on answering machines. Two attempts were made to contact the students;

4 students stated that they had changed their mind and did not wish to participate in the study;

3 students stated that they had conflicts with work schedules;

2 students stated that they completed the portfolio assignment on their own while waiting to be contacted regarding the starting dates of group work;

3 students stated that they were not available at the time the group was meeting; and

1 student's telephone had been disconnected and could not be reached.

The breakdown of participants was as follows:

	Age 18-22	Age 23 & up	Total
Unstructured	5	7	12
Structured	9	7	16
Total	14	14	28

After the first group session, the only male participant in the 23 and up structured group dropped out. When contacted by phone, his response was that he intended to

return; however, he did not complete the group work. After the second session, the only male participant in the 18-22 structured group dropped out. The author was unable to contact him for follow-up information.

The following chart represents the breakdown for completion of the group sessions and evaluation processes:

	Age 18-22	Age 23 & up	Total
Unstructured	5	7	12
Structured	8	6	14
Total	13	13	26

There were no male participants in the 18-22 unstructured group; however, there were two male participants in the 23 and up unstructured group.

**Results of the McDaniels Career Transition
Considerations Form**

Tables 4, 5, and 6 show the distribution percentages of responses to the career transition considerations factors on the MCTC (1993): health, finances, family, place of residence, work options, leisure options, personal issues, networking issues, and other issues. Respondents were asked to consider what impact each consideration has on their

Table 4

Structured Groups MCTC Responses

	18-22 n = 8				23 and up n = 6			
	Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Very Positive	Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Very Positive
Health	12.5%	0%	0%	37.5%	0%	0%	0%	67%
Finances	0%	0%	37.5%	25%	0%	0%	0%	50%
Family	0%	0%	0%	62.5%	0%	0%	0%	83%
Place of Residence	0%	0%	25%	12.5%	0%	0%	0%	33%
Work Options	0%	0%	25%	12.5%	0%	0%	0%	67%
Leisure Options	0%	0%	12.5%	25%	0%	0%	17%	50%
Personal Issues	0%	12.5%	12.5%	37.5%	0%	0%	0%	50%
Networking	0%	0%	12.5%	25%	0%	0%	17%	67%
Other		12.5%						

Table 5

Unstructured Groups MCTC Responses

	18-22 n = 5				23 and up n = 7			
	Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Very Positive	Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Very Positive
Health	0%	0%	20%	20%	0%	0%	0%	57%
Finances	0%	0%	0%	100%	14%	0%	0%	57%
Family	20%	20%	20%	20%	14%	0%	14%	58%
Place of Residence	0%	40%	0%	60%	0%	29%	13%	29%
Work Options	0%	40%	0%	60%	0%	0%	0%	36%
Leisure Options	0%	0%	20%	40%	0%	0%	29%	29%
Personal Issues	0%	0%	40%	40%	0%	0%	14%	72%
Networking	0%	20%	20%	60%	0%	0%	29%	42%
Other								29%*

*Continuing Education and Job Security were listed.

Table 6

Total Responses n = 26 MCTC

	Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Positive	Very Positive
Health	4%	0%	4%	39%	53%
Finances	4%	0%	11.5%	50%	34.5%
Family	8%	4%	8%	23%	57%
Place of Residence	0%	15%	11.5%	54%	19.5%
Work Options	0%	8%	8%	42%	42%
Leisure Options	0%	0%	19%	46%	35%
Personal Issues	4%	0%	15%	35%	46%
Networking	0%	4%	20%	40%	36%
Other	4%				8%*

*Continuing Education and Job Security were listed as issues.

decision regarding career transitions. Respondents were instructed to select the responses which best expressed the degree of impact for each factor. The choices were: very negative, negative, not a major factor, positive, and very positive.

The overall factor with the highest impact was health (92%). Other factors overall also had high positive rankings: finances, 84.5%; family, 80%; place of residence, 73.5; work options, 84%; leisure options, 81%; personal issues, 81%; and networking, 76%.

Respondents were then asked to contemplate how much importance was given to each factor while in a transition. Respondents were instructed to rank order the factors as one (1) denoting most important consideration to nine (9) meaning the least important consideration. Tables 7, 8, and 9 show the top three rankings of the respondents. Health, finances, and family factors received the highest overall rankings.

Summary of McDaniels Career Transition Considerations Form

Results of the responses on the MCTC suggested that for this population, primarily family factors influence career considerations. Health factors, followed by financial considerations and then leisure options were also frequently ranked.

Table 7

Three Highest Ranking MCTC Factors Structured Groups

MCTC Factor	18-22 n = 8			23 and up n = 6		
	Ranked 1st	Ranked 2nd	Ranked 3rd	Ranked 1st	Ranked 2nd	Ranked 3rd
Health	1 12.5%		5 6.25		4 67%	3 50%
Finances	2 25%	2 25%		1 17%		
Family	5 62.5%	3 37.5%		5 83%	1 17%	
Place of Residence		2 25%	1 12.5%			
Work Options			1 12.5%			1 17%
Leisure Options		1 12.5%			1 17%	1 17%
Personal Issues			1 12.5%			1 17%
Networking						
Other						

Table 8

Three Highest Ranking MCTC Factors Unstructured Groups

MCTC Factor	18-22 n = 5			23 and up n = 7		
	Ranked 1st	Ranked 2nd	Ranked 3rd	Ranked 1st	Ranked 2nd	Ranked 3rd
Health	2 40%		1 20%	2 29%	2 29%	2 29%
Finances	2 40%	1 20%	1 20%	1 14%	3 42%	
Family	1 20%		1 20%	4 57%	2 29%	
Place of Residence				1 14%	1 14%	
Work Options				2 29%	1 14%	
Leisure Options		2 40%	2 40%			
Personal Issues		2 40%				2 29%
Networking						
Other						

Table 9

Three Highest Ranking MCTC Factors Total n = 26

MCTC Factor	Ranked 1st	Ranked 2nd	Ranked 3rd
Health	3 11.5%	6 23%	11 42%
Finances	5 19%	4 15%	4 15%
Family	15 57.5%	6 23%	1 4%
Place of Residence	1 4%	3 11.5%	1 4%
Work Options	2 8%	1 4%	2 8%
Leisure Options		4 15%	3 11.5%
Personal Issues		2 8%	4 15%
Networking			
Other			

Family factors which came out during the course of this study included single parents who felt the need to remain close to extended family for a support network. Being the primary caretaker of an aging parent was also mentioned frequently. Several participants also freely admitted the desire to remain close geographically to significant others, and were therefore seeking employment in only selective fields. The important aspect of these responses is that participants, for whatever reason, are considering the big picture of the life span/life space issues and not a narrow focus on only one element.

Reactions given in the MCTC reflect Super's ideas of the life space, or roles played by individuals as they progress through the developmental stages of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline (Super, 1957). Super's role salience (1980) is also represented by reactions to MCTC. The various life roles interact. The evidence that participants are aware of the various life roles and the interactions of those roles exhibits their career maturity or readiness to deal with career transitions.

Results of the Life Work Portfolio Project

User Reaction Form

At the close of the fourth session of this study, participants were given the same User Reaction Form as that completed by the pilot group participants in May-June, 1995, plus an additional form shown in Appendix B.

Results of the same User Reaction Form as that used in the pilot study when completed by participants of this study are shown in Table 10.

All respondents of this study rated each section of the Life Work Portfolio to be very useful or somewhat useful. It is important to remember that all study participants either worked directly with a facilitator or had access to a facilitator. Conditions for the pilot study participants were more diverse.

Written comments for each Life Work Portfolio User Reaction Form section are included in Appendix C. A sample is shown below:

Who I Am

Structured Group (18-22)

- The most useful part for me was the wellness strategies. The How I Can Grow From Here section was also useful.
- I think that by asking these questions of oneself it is easier to discover what is truly important.

Table 10

Life Work Portfolio User Reaction Form

	Who I Am			Exploring			Deciding			Planning & Acting		
	Very Useful	Some-what Useful	Not At All Useful	Did Not Use	Very Useful	Some-what Useful	Not At All Useful	Did Not Use	Very Useful	Some-what Useful	Not At All Useful	Did Not Use
Unstructured												
18-22 (n=5)	60%	40%			100%				60%	40%		
23 & up (n=7)	86%	14%			86%	14%			71%	29%		
Structured												
18-22 (n=8)	88%	12%			75%	25%			75%	25%		
23 & up (n=6)	83%	17%			67%	33%			100%			
Total (n=26)	81%	19%			81%	19%			77%	23%		
									88%	12%		
									100%			
									81%	19%		

- The most useful part to me was the section on What I Stand For.
- Being a freshman in college I was confused about everything. This part made me think about what I'm about and what I want to do in life.

Structured Group (23 and up)

- Wow! What a great section. I didn't realize I had so many skills and qualities.

Unstructured Group (18-22)

- This section would be very useful to high school students.

Unstructured Group (23 and up)

- Self-assessment was very helpful.
- Ways to deal with stress was very helpful.

Summary of Results of the Life Work Portfolio Project User Reaction Form

The additional page added to the User Reaction Form for the purpose of this study included an open-ended question related to the Life Work Portfolio as a product and the process of self-assessment. All respondents reacted favorably to both the product and the process. See Appendix C for specific respondent comments.

Participants in this study rated the portfolio product and process much higher than the pilot study groups. The

pilot group rated the Who I Am section with a 66% rate of very useful. In this study 81% rated Who I Am very useful. Section II, Exploring, was rated very useful by 55.5% of the pilot group and 81% of the participants in this study. Section III, Deciding, was rated very useful by 56% of the pilot study versus 77% for the participants of this study. The final section on Planning and Acting was rated very useful by 60% of the pilot group and 81% of this study's participants. The factors which surfaced most often to reflect the stronger response for the participants of this study were working in a structured group with a facilitator and the benefits of group interaction.

Overall, participants found both the product and the process beneficial. Areas which seemed to benefit the most were self-concept and the planning aspect for career decision-making through the self-assessment process. Participants appeared to recognize both personal growth and growth in relationships as the process emerged.

Anecdotal Information From Group Sessions

Krueger (1994) stresses the importance of noting participant behaviors before, during, and after sessions. These notations include actions, mood, sense, and body language.

Notations recorded during this study are included below by session.

Session 1

Structured (23 and up)

- Reserved group, reluctant to participate.
- One member stayed after the session to talk about her shyness.

Unstructured (18-22 and 23 and up)

- Students arrived at various times to pick up material and receive instructions.
- One female (age 18) stayed late to talk more about her particular interests and ask more questions.

Structured (18-22)

- More participation than the first structured group ages 23 and up.
- At the end of the session, all participants stood around for 10-15 minutes and talked with one another as well as asking the group leader individual questions.

Session 2

Structured (23 and up)

- One female stated before the session started that as a result of the first session, she was looking into a four year accounting program versus a two

year. She picked up transfer material before coming to the session.

- More group participation and interaction was observed in this session.
- The "shy" student from the first session asked a question and volunteered without prompting.
- At the end of the session, participants stayed for approximately 10-15 additional minutes to talk with each other as well as the group leader.

Unstructured (18-22 and 23 and up)

- Nine of the original twelve students in the combined unstructured group came for help during this session. The minimum length of time was 45 minutes, the maximum was 1 hour.
- Two students stayed beyond the 1 hour and made these comments during the course of the conversation:

Male participant:

"I tried to get out of orientation."

"I don't need to be told how to find things on campus."

"I don't need to be told how to use the library, but this portfolio stuff is good stuff."

"My Dad is 53 and out of work. We've been talking about this stuff and he thinks its valuable too. He's been doing some reading on it."

Female participant:

"I've learned more in two days doing this than anything else I've done."

Structured (18-22)

- Very talkative this session.
- Lots of interaction with the group leader and each other.
- Seems focused on the How To of the portfolio.
- After a 1½ hour session, no one left for at least another 10 minutes.

Session 3

Structured (23 and up)

- Group interacted and answered one another's questions regarding the portfolio assignment.
- The shy student from the first session volunteered a personal situation during this session. The group was discussing a decision-making model when the shy student recognized and shared how the process could be applied in a personal situation. The group was responsive and supportive.

Unstructured (18-22 and 23 and up)

- One student in the 23 and up always arrives early. She has been as much as 45 minutes early. She seems to seek one on one assistance in addition to someone to converse with.
- Two participants in the 23 and up group require additional explanations. These two seem to experience more difficulty comprehending and following through.
- Eight of the twelve participants were present for this "unstructured" session.
- One male participant stayed an additional 30 minutes to discuss personal/career/educational concerns.

Structured (18-22)

- Several questions in this session related to portfolio activities and specific job search issues.
- Group appears very interested in the process and its utility in their own situations.
- The only male participant did not show for this session. All other participants have attended regularly.

Session 4

Structured (23 and up)

- The shy girl has taken on a new appearance. She had a new hair style and wore make-up for the first time.
- Group appears to have reached a certain comfort level and are beginning to interact.
- After the session ended, participants were slow to leave. One participant expressed a desire for the group to continue.

Unstructured (18-22 and 23 and up)

- All 12 group members were present today.
- Several expressed thanks for the help they had received and also expressed the desire for something similar to the group work being offered as a class.
- Two participants, one male and one female, stayed afterwards to talk. The female stayed about 30 minutes, the male 45 minutes. As the male was leaving, he shook hands with the group leader and thanked her. He shared that he was going home for the weekend and was anxious to share his portfolio information with his father, who is unemployed, and a younger brother he described as "being kind of lost."

Structured (18-22)

- Personal portfolio notebooks were provided for participants. Several notebook work pages had been completed. This work was done by individuals outside the group sessions on their own time.
- Three students stayed to talk for approximately 40 minutes. Two of the three walked out with the leader and continued to comment on the group sessions. One stated that she signed up originally to meet people. She said she met her goal and much more. The second girl shared that she had arranged a job shadowing experience as a result of her involvement in the group sessions.

Summary of Anecdotal Information from Group Sessions

Participants' behaviors and dialogue seem to indicate a desire for a structured environment which encourages career exploration. Their eagerness is represented by behaviors such as arriving early and staying late to group sessions. Their willingness to give of their time to participate in the study is indicative of the desire to know more about career options.

Luzzo (1993) cited unmet needs in career development as the main reason for the nontraditional student returning to college. Healy and Reilly (1989) discovered that despite the

more mature attitude of the nontraditional student toward the career decision-making process, nontraditional students displayed hesitancy and anxiety regarding the successful completion of the career decision-making task. Responses and behaviors of the participants in this study, regardless of age, reflect a need and desire for information and guidance in the career decision-making process. Both groups, traditional and nontraditional students, displayed a willingness to change through the portfolio process.

Results of Focus Group Sessions

At the close of the fourth session with each group, a focus group session was conducted. The sessions were tape recorded with the participants prior approval. Field notes were also made during each session. Excerpts from the transcribed tapes are listed below and grouped by individual questions. Quoted responses indicate the respondents exact wording. Statements without quotations are abridged and may represent the response of one or more participants.

Question #1: Explain to the group how the Life Work Portfolio provides the necessary framework to make short- and long-term career/life plans. What should be added to help in the planning process?

Structured (23 and up)

All six participants in this group gave a positive response.

- The section on skills and making you aware of what you can do helps to set goals.
- The decision making process is helpful to make plans.
- "It put things in perspective for me. What is important to me, beliefs, values. It's been very beneficial."
- "It helped me think of things I never would of thought of on my own--like skills."
- "The need to set short and long term goals. We need to keep trying and going through the decision making process."

Unstructured (18-22 and 23 and up)

Ten participants gave a positive response. Two participants did not respond to this question.

- Just getting organized helps to put things in perspective.
- Looking at lifestyles and roles is important.
- It's good to see your thoughts on paper.
- "Identifying why I feel the way I do has helped. Learning the words (vocabulary) for skills."

- "The exploring part got me geared up. Helped me keep away from bias in my own thoughts." (Further questioning resulted in the idea that technical and vocational areas should not be overlooked. Not everyone needs a four year college degree.)
- "This way everything is more organized, listed. You can reevaluate your situation."
- "It helps me see what I do need and what I don't need."
- "It helped me look at what I can do with my life."
- "For me, its good at age 19 to have this structure and things written out for me."
- "Being a person of some age, it helped me decide that maybe the jobs I've had in the past were not the jobs I'm best at. Maybe I can make a career change and be better situated for the rest of my working years."

Structured (18-22)

Six participants gave positive responses. The two remaining participants stated that they agreed with what had already been stated.

- Reassessment of family values and beliefs--just an over-all reassessment helped.
- "This helped me to prioritize my decisions and reaffirmed what I want."

- "Because of this I've decided to move back home. The priority of family--once we (sister) recognized who we were and how important family is, we decided it would be best to move back. Now we know what is important. We'll continue our education there."

Research question 1. Research question 1 of this study asks: Does the Life Work Portfolio provide the necessary framework to make short- and long-term career/life plans? The groups' response was yes. The Life Work Portfolio provides the framework necessary to make short- and long-term career life plans. Eight participants made contact with the Career Development Counselor or the Job Placement Counselor. Many participants shared examples of how they were implementing the decision-making model presented in one of the sessions.

Question #2: How has the Life Work Portfolio provided the framework to assist you in moving successfully through a career transition?

Structured (23 and up)

Three participants gave positive responses. One response did not relate to the question, and one participant did not respond.

- "By recognizing my skills, transferable, leisure skills. This made it seem easier."
- This helped put a complicated process in focus.
- Not talking about the negative helped.

Unstructured (18-22 and 23 and up)

Six participants gave positive responses. Two participants concurred with previous statements. One participant's response did not relate to the question. Three participants did not respond.

- Skill identification--what you have now and may need in the future.
- "Planning for the job change is good. The planning part has helped me."
- "You know what your skills are now and what you want to do in the future. This gives you incentive to work on what you need to change."
- "Maturity is an issue--this portfolio is more long-term than 4 weeks to make a decision/change. This gets me started thinking."

Structured (18-22)

Seven participants gave a positive response or concurred with a previously stated positive response. One participant did not respond.

- Skill identification and seeing skills that transfer have helped.

- "Before I just looked at money or the place, now I look at the whole process."
- "I didn't realize my waitressing had any skills. This has helped me a lot. . .you pick up one skill here and take it somewhere else. . .this has added value to what I've done."
- "I didn't think leisure activities had any role-- now I do."

Research question 2. Research question 2 of this study asks: Does the Life Work Portfolio provide the necessary framework to assist in moving successfully through the career transition process? The groups' response was yes. The Life Work Portfolio provides the necessary framework to assist them in moving successfully through career transitions. Participants cited the self-assessment process; skill identification and learning to verbalize those skills; life role identification; and discussion of values and beliefs as factors which impact a successful career transition.

Question #3: How has your self-confidence level been effected by working with the Life Work Portfolio?

Structured (23 and up)

All participants gave a positive response or concurred with a previously stated positive response.

- "I haven't been giving myself enough credit."

- "There are things I can do that I haven't realized."
- "This has been a real confidence booster" (participant then gave a thumbs up sign).
- "I've decided to go to a four year college after doing this. . .I have what it takes."

Unstructured (18-22 and 23 and up)

All participants either gave a positive response or concurred with a previously stated positive response.

- "The organization part of this has added to my confidence level."
- "This helped me identify things I've never thought of. . .simple things that adds value/worth to what I already do."
- "It helped me see that my leisure activities are not frivolous. Now I can verbalize those skills I was learning."

Structured (18-22)

Seven participants gave positive responses or concurred with previously stated positive responses. One participant's response did not relate to the question.

- Helped me to have a positive outlook.
- Getting myself organized has helped.

- "This has helped me see value/merit to others' work."
- "My mother is a waitress. When people ask me what my mother does, I've always been ashamed and answered that my family ran a restaurant. . .I've always tried to make her look better. . .now I'll just say, she's a waitress."
- "This has helped in how I relate to others and to appreciate their skills."

Research question 3. Research question 3 of this study asks: Will the self-confidence level of the group participant be enhanced by this process? The groups' response was yes, self-confidence is definitely enhanced by this process. Factors cited which enhanced self-confidence included: organization, skill identification, and a reinforcement of value and merit of existing skills. The focus on strengths versus weaknesses was also cited as a means of enhancing self-confidence.

Question #4: How has this process helped you to identify strengths and assets to be marketed in the job search?

Structured (23 and up)

Five participants gave a positive response. One participant gave a response which did not relate to the question.

- Just learning the vocabulary for the skills has been helpful.
- Having examples of resumes and cover letters is helpful.
- "Coordinating and communication skills, recognizing job search skills like analyzing--and all of those others."
- "Knowing what to promote and recognize in myself."

Unstructured (18-22 and 23 and up)

Eight participants gave a positive response. Two participants concurred with previous statements. Two participants did not respond.

- How to talk about yourself and what you want.
- Shows to the employer that you know yourself.
- "The biggest part for me has been skill recognition, and to associate this with the job market."

- "You know how to talk about what you're looking for. You can describe what you can do."
- "The biggest part of this portfolio is that it helped me put together what I was and then associate it with a job market."

Structured (18-22)

All participants gave a positive response or concurred with previously stated positive responses.

- "It helped to see that the job search is a job."
- It helps to sell yourself when you see things on paper.
- Tips on actual interviews and resumes were helpful to show skills.
- "Actually being able to name skills is helpful--vocabulary."

Research question 4. Research question 4 of this study asks: Will this procedure enable the group participant to recognize strengths and assets to be marketed in the job search process? Group participants again answered yes. They expressed the belief that now being able to recognize personal strengths and assets would benefit them in the job search process.

Question #5: What are the weaknesses of the Life Work Portfolio? Do you have any recommendations or suggestions for improvement?

Structured (23 and up)

All participants responded to this question.

- Group interaction has been very helpful; however, this needs a facilitator.
- "We needed more than four sessions."
- "Sometimes they are not realistic. They make it seem almost too easy."
- "They didn't tell you the negative that can happen. Here are some things that can help you out. They didn't say that."
- "I would suggest a section on how to keep a job, what does the employer look for."
- "I would suggest a section on dealing with co-workers, how to cope."
- "All of us relating as a group helped me understand this much more than what's just in this paper. This needs group work."
- "If you handed me this book. . .I wouldn't have gotten half as much as working in a group."
- "I feel like we're just getting started and now we have to stop."
- Needs more real life examples.

Unstructured (18-22 and 23 and up)

All participants agreed with the statements given by five students.

- A list of references would be helpful. Where can we go for more information on a particular section?
- "We could have used more time. This needs to be a required class."
- The actual pages need more space for you to write stuff on.
- "This would have been tough for me by myself. You definitely need a teacher."
- "Four weeks is way too short. There's so much here to think about--this is pretty deep stuff."

Structured (18-22)

All participants either responded or agreed with previous weaknesses/recommendations.

- Needs more tips for on the job: working with a supervisor, co-workers, complaints.
- "This definitely needs to be done with an instructor!"
- Should be required for orientation.
- "This last session was the most valuable, seeing if others viewed the process as I did. Did I get what I was supposed to out of it? This session needed to be longer."

- "If you take this as a freshman, you might not waste 5 or 6 years. Offer this earlier."

The two primary recommendations which surfaced were: (1) the need for group work with a facilitator and (2) more time needed to fully comprehend and complete the portfolio process.

Research question 5. Research question 5 of this study asks: Does the nontraditional student benefit more than the traditional student from the Life Work Portfolio? Responses from group participants during the focus group sessions did not indicate any difference between student populations. All participants from both age groups gave responses to indicate growth and change.

Summary of Focus Groups

In addition to exhibiting positive responses to the research questions of this study, two major points surfaced during the focus group sessions: (1) the need for a systematic approach to the career decision-making process and (2) the importance of a positive self-concept in the career decision-making process.

Charles Healy (1975) makes the following observations related to career decision-making: (1) it appears that high esteem people can differentiate among occupational choices more easily than low esteem persons; (2) planning and problem

solving will improve by following a systematic method for constructing a plan or devising a solution; and (3) counselors should furnish mechanisms whereby clients construct a plan or develop a solution. Clients must choose alternatives and must realize why choices were made (Healy, 1975).

Schlossberg, Troll, and Leibowitz (1978) spoke to the issue of stock-taking, reassessing oneself. They cite this event as one of the most consuming events for the adult as he/she moves through various transitions and role changes. The Life Work Portfolio focuses on skill identification and self-assessment in a manner such that self-confidence is improved. Focusing on the positive--what one knows versus what one does not know; what one can do versus what one cannot do appears to have greatly enhanced the self-confidence of the participant.

Portfolio Analysis

By the conclusion of group sessions, participants were to have prepared a portfolio to turn in as a portion of the orientation class grade. All four groups included examples from a variety of life roles. Portfolios included examples of skills learned from previous or current jobs; examples of skills acquired from leisure and volunteer activities; as well as examples of skills acquired from parenting, military

service, or other life roles. Skills were showcased through writing samples, craft work, art work, photography, videos, certificates, and/or awards received as well as through narratives.

Examples included in participants' portfolios exhibit an awareness of the whole person. Super (1992) states that career choice is not an event, but a process. Career choices are not made, they emerge. Participants appear to be cognizant of these facts as they assess themselves in various life roles and move forward in the career decision-making process.

A partial list of examples by category included:

Previous/Current Jobs

Landscaping
Portfolio
Library
Clothing Store
Baby-sitting
Waitress
Child Care
Workstudy
Childhood Chores
YMCA
On Job Training
Retirement Center
Bartending
Electrical Wiring
ER Clerk
Cleaning Houses
Campground Activities
Coordinator
Nursing
Lifeguard
Furniture Company
U.S. Navy

Life Roles

Cooking/Wife
Mother
Sibling
Student
Military
Childhood Chores
Dorm Life
Scout Leader
Employee
Budgeting/Parent/Spouse
Problem Solving/Parent
Single Parent
Returning to School
Wife in Abusive Marriage
Job
Applicant

Leisure

Landscaping
Choir
Drama
Physical Fitness
Computer
Crossword Puzzles
Basketball
Band
Scuba
Photography
Hiking
Travel
Mountain Climbing
Crafts
Come Decorating
Gardening
Awards/Certificates
Glass Etching

Volunteer Activities

Greenhouse
Peer Tutor
Church Coach
English Tutor
Community Band
Girl Scouts
CPR
Nursing Home
Club Work
Booster Club
School Volunteer

Summary

During the course of the first group session, participants were encouraged to maintain a journal of their thoughts, feelings, reactions, and experiences as they worked through the portfolio process. At the last sessions, participants were asked to share from their journals, or turn in journals for review by the group leader. No participant had maintained a journal. Perhaps the development of the portfolio for orientation and the notations made by the individual in the portfolio workbooks was viewed as similar to maintaining a journal.

Participants were punctual and consistent with their attendance to group sessions. Twenty-eight (28) participants began the group work and twenty-six (26) completed the group work. That represents a 93% holding rate for group sessions. Also of significance, of the 26 participants who completed the group sessions, 8 contacted either the Job Placement Counselor or the Career Development Counselor located on the New River Community College campus for more assistance in the self-assessment and job search process.

The data presented in this chapter demonstrates a very positive reaction to the Life Work Portfolio as well as the process of portfolio development and self-assessment.

Chapter V

The final chapter reviews (a) background, (b) the purpose of the study, (c) the procedures of the study, (d) discussion of the research findings, (e) conclusions, (f) implications for counselors, and (g) implications for future research.

Background

A modern trend in professional education has been the use of portfolios. Portfolios have been used in teacher evaluation, student evaluation, and in specific types of instruction such as psychomotor skills, personal reference decisions, and skill identification. Some uses of portfolios have been studied and documented as to their utility. The Life Work Portfolio, a joint project of the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, the Maine Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, and the Career Development Training Institute at Oakland University, has enjoyed claims of usefulness, but has not been studied to validate these claims.

The Life Work Portfolio project was a result of the tremendous success of Get A Life developed by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the Maine Occupational Information Coordinating Committee. While Get A

Life targeted the school age population, the Life Work Portfolio was designed to target the adult population involved in career transitions.

As early as 1948, Clifford Froehlich was suggesting that school counselors look at anecdotal records describing unusual projects completed out of school or autobiographical themes describing hobbies to assess aptitude. "We can probably help these young people make more intelligent decisions and better adjustments, even if we counsel them only on the basis of non-test data" (Froehlich, 1948, p. 31). The portfolio concept is evolving and emerging as a comprehensive means to assess students and to showcase their skills and accomplishments.

In 1993 the National Education Association (NEA) published Student Portfolios as part of their Teacher-to-Teacher book series. In this book, teachers tell of their own school's restructuring efforts and the role of the portfolio. Martin Kimeldorf wrote Creative Portfolios for Success in School, Work, and Life which was published in 1994 with the accompanying A Teacher's Guide to Creative Portfolios for Success in School, Work and Life. Kimeldorf's purpose was to illustrate how a portfolio is similar to a scrapbook, journal, or photo album which highlights or illustrates the proud moments of one's life. Kimeldorf believes that before one can make a choice about the future,

one must look over the past and evaluate the most important events, experiences, and decisions in life. This is the same concept as that presented in the Life Work Portfolio with the emphasis placed on adults and the career decision-making process.

The original idea of the career portfolio was to integrate the National Career Development Guidelines (1989) into a comprehensive career guidance program. Get A Life (1992) was developed by NOICC through a project with the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) in Maine. Prior to being released for distribution, Get A Life was field tested in five states for a period of one year. This project was based on the premise that career development is more than just getting a job. The implication of Get A Life is that your life is your career. What you do with your life is therefore, the responsibility of each individual.

It is important to note that the portfolio concept is gaining in popularity. The Center on Education and Work at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin, has developed the Career Options Planner with a format similar to the Life Work Portfolio. This product was marketed in 1994 to target high school students. Also in 1994, the U.S. Army with the support of the National Consortium of State Career Guidance Supervisors developed the Planning for Life with a

portfolio format which covers career planning, self-improvement ideas, and a self-review process. The Planning for Life targets the adult population. The Virginia State Department of Education in Richmond, Virginia, distributed its version of the portfolio concept, Educational and Career Planning Portfolio to public secondary counselors during the Spring and Summer of 1995. This portfolio was designed for high school students with funds from the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990. As a follow-up to the Virginia State Department of Education initiative, the New River Valley Tech Prep Consortium in Dublin, Virginia, expanded the original model to include grades 4-8 and grades 13 and 14. Schools in the New River Valley Tech Prep Consortium region implemented the revised portfolio in the fall of 1995. Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, Virginia, has implemented the Personal Development Portfolio with the Class of 1999. This product uses a mentor approach to assist students in goal setting in eight dimensions: academic, citizenship, cultural awareness, esthetics, ethical development, leadership, social proficiency, and wellness.

Handy (1991) in his article "The Coming Work Culture: Portfolio People are About to Flood the Marketplace. Who Are They? They Are Us" relates that he does not propose the portfolio way of life in a light manner. He states that many

workers will have little choice in the matter, while others will willingly choose to use the portfolio concept. "Either way, entering this zone of the world of work obliges us to rethink many fundamental assumptions of our lives" (p. 56).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine what benefits, if any, group members would gain from the Life Work Portfolio process.

The following questions were addressed in this study:

1. Does the Life Work Portfolio provide the necessary framework to make short- and long-term career/life plans?
2. Does the Life Work Portfolio provide the necessary framework to assist in moving successfully through the career transition process?
3. Will the self-confidence level of the group participant be enhanced by this process?
4. Will this procedure enable the group participant to recognize strengths and assets to be marketed in the job search process?
5. Does the nontraditional student benefit more than the traditional student from the Life Work Portfolio?

Procedure for Study

The Spring Semester 1996 orientation classes of New River Community College in Dublin, Virginia, were used for this study. On January 22, 23, and 30, 1996, orientation students filled out information cards expressing an interest in volunteering for the study. Two groups of traditional students and two groups of nontraditional students were selected on a volunteer basis.

One nontraditional and one traditional group participated in a structured setting and completed the Life Work Portfolio in a series of four 1-1½ hour sessions, one per week, for four consecutive weeks. One nontraditional and one traditional group completed the Life Work Portfolio in an unstructured setting with help available upon request for a period of four weeks.

All participants participated in a focus group at the end of four weeks to elicit responses related to the usefulness of the actual product, Life Work Portfolio. Participants also completed the Life Work Portfolio Project User Reaction Form after four sessions. McDaniels Career Transition Considerations (MCTC) was completed at the end of the fourth session. A descriptive analysis of the portfolios was completed.

Seventy-nine students completed the volunteer information card at the initial orientation class meeting. When contacted to begin participation in the study, 43 of the 79 agreed to participate. Once group sessions began, 28 of the 43 volunteers actually participated in the group sessions. Through the course of the group sessions, four weeks, only two participants dropped out of the study. Twenty-six of the original 28 completed the study, or a holding rate of 93%.

Discussion of Research Findings

Research Question 1: Goal Setting

Does the Life Work Portfolio provide the necessary framework to make short- and long-term career/life plans?

Charles Healy (1975) talks about the need to assist clients in following a systematic method for constructing a plan or devising a solution. Healy observed that planning and problem solving improved when following such a method.

Comments from participants in the focus sessions, as well as anecdotal records kept during the individual group sessions, indicate that participants were provided the framework to make short- and long-term career plans. Evidence to support this includes contacts made with the Job Placement Counselor and the Career Development Counselor on campus. Other evidence includes assertions by participants

that they are taking initial steps to develop short- and long-term career plans and that they have already instituted the decision-making model presented in the Life Work Portfolio.

Research Question 2: Career Transition

Does the Life Work Portfolio provide the necessary framework to assist in moving successfully through the career transition process?

Studies of change (Schlossberg, 1987)--whether moving, losing a job, returning to school, caring for aging parents, or retiring--have shown that people in transition have both strengths and weaknesses. A career transition can be one of two types: (1) planned, voluntary, or proactive; or (2) unplanned, nonvoluntary, reactive (Brown & Irby, 1995). This study has demonstrated that focusing on strengths is an asset in planning and executing a career transition whether it is planned or unplanned. The Life Work Portfolio and the self-assessment process appear to provide the necessary framework for career counseling with both the traditional and the nontraditional student.

Research Question 3: Self-Confidence

Will the self-confidence level of the group participant be enhanced by this process?

Super believed that self-concept develops as a consequence of the interaction between heredity and environment. One's self-concept reflects one's innate talents and temperament, developed through experiences in different roles and identifications with different models. Thus development of self-concept is ongoing and subject to change with various life role transitions (Super, 1957).

Each participant who completed the portfolio process had a positive comment in regard to their self-confidence. Factors which appeared to enhance self-confidence included: organization, skill identification, acquiring vocabulary to verbalize skills, reinforcement of value or merit of skills, and focus on what one can do versus what one cannot do. The factor mentioned most often was the identification of life roles and skill identification related to that life role. Awareness of these life roles and related transferable skills appeared to greatly enhance self-confidence.

Research Question 4: Job Search

Will this procedure enable the group participant to recognize strengths and assets to the marketed in the job search process?

Schlossberg (1984) proposed three sets of actors that influenced the individual in the transition process: (a) variables that characterized the particular transition, (b) variables that characterized the particular individual, and (c) variables that characterized the particular environment. Each factor overlapped to predict the adaptation to or nonadaptation to the transition. Depending on the individual's perception of the transition, self, and environment, each variable was an asset or liability which assisted the individual's adaptation to the transition.

Participants expressed the belief that through the self-assessment process; through skill identification, and learning to verbalize those skills; by recognizing various life roles; and by prioritizing beliefs and values they have been empowered to successfully move through career transitions.

Participants all believed that through the self-assessment process and through the skill identification process they would be better prepared for the job search. Being able to identify skills and verbalize them along with

the recognition of transferable skills was viewed as a plus by participants.

Research Question 5: Traditional vs. Nontraditional

Does the nontraditional student benefit more than the traditional student from the Life Work Portfolio?

Responses from group participants did not provide evidence that either traditional or nontraditional students benefited more from the portfolio process. It was a consensus of the groups that all individuals benefited from the process. However, it must be noted that students involved in the unstructured groups, regardless of age, sought help on a regular structured basis.

Results Compared to Pilot Study

Life Work Portfolio Pilot Project (n=171)

New River Community College Study (n=26)

	Very Useful		Somewhat Useful		Not at All Useful		Did not Use	
	Pilot	NRCC	Pilot	NRCC	Pilot	NRCC	Pilot	NRCC
Who I Am	66%	81%	29%	19%	3.5%	0%	1.5%	0%
Exploring	55.5%	81%	38%	19%	3%	0%	2.5%	0%
Deciding	56%	77%	29%	23%	6%	0%	5%	0%
Planning & Acting	60%	81%	26%	19%	3.5%	0%	7%	0%

This table demonstrates the more favorable reaction to the Life Work Portfolio when compared to results from the pilot study. The structured environment and the presence of a facilitator must be considered when comparing this study to the pilot study. Results would indicate that greater benefits are gained through group work with a facilitator.

Conclusions

Bolles (1995) talks about the fingerprints of the Safekeeping Self and the need to focus on certainties--what one knows versus what one does not know; what one can do versus what one cannot do. Bolles (1995) also cites the need for lots of information gathering during the career change process. He suggests talking with others who have experienced successful change and especially those who have successfully moved into an area of interest. According to Bolles (1995) information gathering for job-hunters is not optional, it is crucial (p. 2). The Life Work Portfolio and the self-assessment process provided this and much more to the participants of this study.

Five major points surfaced as a result of this study. It is important to remember that the method of self-reporting may have influenced results obtained in this study. Also, all participants were volunteers, with an expressed interest in the portfolio process.

1. The portfolio process was a positive experience.

The evidence is overwhelming from focus group sessions and written responses on the Life Work Portfolio Project Users Response Form that the portfolio process was a positive experience for all group participants. Responses on the McDaniels Career Transition Considerations form and items included in the portfolio analysis demonstrated an awareness of multiple life roles and factors involved in career transitions. The fact that 26 of the initial 28 participants completed the study speaks to the belief of participants that the experience was beneficial.

2. Career counseling and personal counseling cannot be separated. An issue which surfaced during the study which had not been anticipated was the interrelatedness of personal and career counseling. John Krumboltz, Keynote Speaker for the 1995 Virginia Counselors Association Convention in Norfolk, Virginia, on November 30, 1996, spoke to this concept. Super (1992) stated that career counselors need to provide help in encountering realities in ways that stimulate thoughts, provide material for thought, and help test the soundness of data, inferences, and conclusions. "In the process. . .there are often expressions of feelings by the client, and a need for appropriate responses by the counselor" (Super, 1992, p. 420). Super cited that the explorations of the meanings of developmental data, whether

life-history or inventory data, are best done in a joint expedition of counselor and client. Out of the 26 participants who completed this study, 6 related personal issues during the sessions which illustrated the relationship between personal and career counseling, and the need for client/counselor interaction versus the client working alone.

3. The portfolio process is a viable tool to add to the counselor's repertoire. The portfolio process is a developmental concept which emerges and changes as life roles emerge and change. This process gives the client a look at the lifelong process versus a snapshot of one particular time or place. Students' individual portfolios exhibited the concepts of development, change, and growth as various life roles were identified and then showcased. Written comments and verbal responses during the focus group sessions illustrate the utility of the portfolio process in self-assessment and career transitions.

Healy (1975) observed that planning and problem solving will improve by following a systematic method for constructing a plan or devising a solution. The portfolio process provides the framework for planning, goal-setting, and decision-making.

4. Self-confidence is greatly enhanced through the portfolio concept. Data from the focus groups, anecdotal information, McDaniels' Career Transitions Considerations

form, portfolio analysis and the Life Work Portfolio Project Users Reaction Form overwhelmingly indicate improved self-confidence in study participants. Improved self-confidence is evidence that the portfolio process is a worthy endeavor.

Healy (1975) observed that high esteem people can differentiate among occupational choices more easily than low esteem persons. Enhanced self-confidence aids in the career transition process.

5. The participants of the portfolio process prefer group work with a facilitator versus working individually. This study has been the first project to study the Life Work Portfolio in depth under controlled conditions. Results indicate an even stronger approval of the product than the pilot study indicated. In a strong voice, participants expressed the growth, and affirmation of growth, from the group process versus working individually. Unstructured group participants refused to work individually and consciously chose the group setting. This point did not surface in the pilot study. Handy (1991) states that for good or ill, the portfolio life is the life of the future. This study supports his statement.

Implications for Counselors

Three main implications for counselors surfaced in this study:

1. Using the portfolio process as an evolving and developmental process must take into account the maturity and ability level of those being served. Super's (1980, 1990) ideas of career maturity, role salience, and the need for a decision making model in the career development process are well supported by this study. Greater career awareness and improved career planning are fundamental to the educational reform taking place.
2. Counselors must treat the whole person. Career decisions and personal decisions are interrelated. This connection must be dealt with in the portfolio process. Life roles are a major focus of the portfolio process, but little time is built into the process for consideration of the broad implications those life roles present. Perhaps one reason participants in this study expressed the need for more time in the process was related to their need to deal with and process personal issues related to the career decision making process.
3. Counselors should recognize the benefits of group interaction and working in a structured setting. Participants unequivocally stated that the process is

most beneficial when using a facilitator in a group setting. Students in the unstructured groups attended sessions as regularly as did those in the structured group, indicating the need for assistance in the process. Participants believed that the group interaction played a major role in the benefits gained from the process. Perhaps more at issue is the career maturity level and the developmental level of the participant.

Implications for Further Research

The following areas are recommended for further research as a result of the findings in this study:

1. What is the utility of the portfolio process when participants are grouped by ability levels?

Within groups there was a noticeable difference in ability levels and career maturity of individuals. Some individuals required more time to comprehend and process the material and concepts presented during the sessions.

2. What is the utility of the portfolio process when groups are divided by currently employed versus currently unemployed?

It would be of interest to note recommendations for the portfolio process when participants are divided

by employed versus unemployed. Do these two groups have different needs?

3. What is the utility of the portfolio process when sessions are extended beyond 4 (one or two semesters) to allow time for reaction to personal issues related to career decision-making?

A majority of the participants in this study expressed the desire for more sessions. The portfolio is designed to be a life-long tool. At what point in time is the participant prepared to continue the process on an individual basis?

4. What is the utility of the portfolio process for participants working on an individual basis with a career counselor versus working in a structured group?

Participants overwhelmingly desired a facilitator. Would they have been willing to work individually with a facilitator versus group work with a facilitator?

5. Is there a difference in the utility of the portfolio process for students in the community college environment versus students in the four year college/university environment?

This study focused on the community college student. Would students in a four-year

college/university environment have the same experience with the portfolio process?

6. What is the utility of the portfolio process when offered as a computerized information delivery system?

Technology plays a major role in career development today through the availability of computerized information delivery systems. How is the portfolio process different, or is it, when delivered by computer?

7. Is there a gender difference in response to the portfolio structure and process?

The pilot study of the Life Work Portfolio did not report a gender breakdown for participants. Four of the original 28 participants were male in this study. Two males dropped out during the course of the study. Of the 26 participants who completed the study only two were male. Was this coincidental or related to the structure and/or process of the portfolio format?

Researcher Observations

According to Krueger (1994), the problem drives the analysis in qualitative research involving focus groups. This study looked at a group of community college students and their reactions to the Life Work Portfolio. Using a

focus group was one aspect in the evaluation of the study. This group of community college students had a very positive reaction to the portfolio product and process. However, several observations not included in the research analyses deserve mention.

Participants espoused the need for a facilitator in the portfolio process. What qualifications or training does the facilitator need? Was it the portfolio process or the group counseling process which received the positive response in this study? This researcher was a trained counselor. Group counseling skills as well as background knowledge in careers and career counseling were drawn upon throughout the study.

The original idea of studying structured groups versus unstructured groups disappeared through the course of the study. The concept presented by Catherine Van Dyke and MOICC that the Life Work Portfolio can be used as a stand alone instrument did not hold true for this group of community college students.

The Life Work Portfolio is not a standardized assessment instrument, but assessment does take place. The participants involved in this study also became involved in a self-directed self-assessment. Using this instrument to promote retrospection created change/growth for the individuals involved.

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Appendix A
Correspondence Regarding Pilot Study



National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee

2101 M Street NW, Suite 155, Washington, DC 20037
Telephone: 202/653-5665 FAX: 202/653-2123

April 4, 1995

Carl McDaniels
Virginia Tech University
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302

Dear Dr. McDaniels:

I am pleased that you will be participating in the pilot testing of the adult *Life Work Portfolio*. This has been a collaborative project with the Career Development Training Institute (CDTI) of Oakland University, the Maine State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (MOICC), and a NOICC Resource Group. Every effort has been made to include representatives from all facets of adult career development in the process. Expert reviewers have provided feedback for this draft of the final product. We are now ready to see how the portfolio is received by those for whom it is designed.

This letter is to confirm your commitment to use the *Life Work Portfolio* and *Guide* in your work setting between May 1 and June 30, 1995. We are more interested in quality and diversity of participation than quantity. We will plan to send, at no cost to you, 5 *Portfolios* and *Guides* for this purpose at the address above.

If any of this information is incorrect, please notify Nancy Perry, 202/653-7680 immediately. The materials should arrive no later than April 28. Included in the package will be forms to provide input from both individual users and group facilitators.

NOICC is proud to add the *Life Work Portfolio* to our adult career development package of training and curricula. Your participation in this project is a major step toward completion of a comprehensive program to assist adults in work-related life passages. Thank you in advance for your help in what we know will be a successful endeavor.

Sincerely,


JULIETTE N. LESTER
Executive Director

Commissioner
Bureau of Labor Statistics
U.S. Department of Labor

Assistant Secretary
Employment and Training
U.S. Department of Labor

Assistant Secretary
Vocational and Adult Education
U.S. Department of Education

Assistant Secretary
Postsecondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Assistant Secretary
Economic Development
U.S. Department of Commerce

Assistant Secretary
Force Management
and Personnel
U.S. Department of Defense

Commissioner
National Center for
Education Statistics
U.S. Department of Education

Commissioner
Rehabilitation Services
Administration
U.S. Department of Education

Director
Bilingual Education and
Minority Languages Affairs
U.S. Department of Education

Under Secretary
Small Community and
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture



National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee

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April 27, 1995

MEMORANDUM FOR: *LIFE WORK PORTFOLIO* Pilot Site Coordinators

FROM: Adult Portfolio Project Development Team

SUBJECT: Recommendations for Implementation

Thank you for agreeing to be a pilot site for the adult portfolio funded through a grant from the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) and developed by the Maine Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (MOICC) and the Career Development Training Institute (CDTI) at Oakland University, Michigan. This product has been in development for nearly two years with the input of career development facilitators who serve diverse adult populations. This draft has been printed for pilot testing using the feedback from expert reviewers representing the various adult groups. It is important to remember that the final product will depend on your feedback and the data gathered from users of the *Life Work Portfolio*. Our current plans are to make final revisions in the summer of 1995 with the intent of having a product ready for general use in September, 1995.

The *Life Work Portfolio* is designed as a stand-alone instrument for use by individuals, with the *Guide* acting as a reference for clarification or expansion of activities. We anticipate that the *Life Work Portfolio* will be used in facilitated groups as well as by individuals in career or employment centers. We have therefore provided an equal number of *Life Work Portfolios* and *Guides* for your use. You may make the choice as to distribution of the *Guides*. Some facilitators may use the portfolio as a repository of information and documentation of a process in use. Others may want to use the *Guide* as an enhancement of curriculum and give one to each portfolio user. Although the portfolio can stand alone as a guide through the career development process, we believe that its effectiveness will be greatly increased by using it with an appropriate curriculum. *Workforce in Transition: A Blueprint for Adult Career Development and Job Search Training* (WIT), a recent publication of the CDTI, may be of interest to you if you do not have a prescribed curriculum. The WIT Table of Contents is attached.

The *Life Work Portfolio* is based on the National Career Development Guidelines, nationally validated career development competencies for adults. At the end of each section, the appropriate Guidelines are listed, in revised form, as a tool for self-evaluation. Institutions and agencies may also use this evaluation to analyze the programs they are using to meet client needs. More information about the National Career Development Guidelines is included in this mailing.

Commissioner Division of Labor Statistics U.S. Department of Labor	Assistant Secretary Employment and Training U.S. Department of Labor	Assistant Secretary Vocational and Adult Education U.S. Department of Education	Assistant Secretary Postsecondary Education U.S. Department of Education	Assistant Secretary Economic Development U.S. Department of Commerce
Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Statistics U.S. Department of Defense	Commissioner National Center for Education Statistics U.S. Department of Education	Commissioner Rehabilitation Services Administration U.S. Department of Education	Director Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs U.S. Department of Education	Under Secretary Small Community and Rural Development U.S. Department of Agriculture

The final portfolio product will have envelopes inserted at the beginning of each section for use in storing suggested documents or materials. Due to the press of time, we were not able to put these in the pilot copies.

We are using the words *career*, *occupation* and *job* in specific context. *Career* is the totality of work, paid and unpaid, one does in his/her lifetime. Therefore, we use phrases such as career direction, career transitions, and career exploration to denote events within the lifelong process of developing a career. *Occupation* is one's primary work task, such as electrician, counselor, etc. We use occupation in the process of researching and exploring various work tasks that might suit the individual. *Job* is an identified set of duties/responsibilities assigned to be performed on a sustained basis by one person. For example, an electrician may have a job in the maintenance department of the local hospital. These definitions are from the National Career Development Policy Statement and are generally accepted in the field.

Review the enclosed materials and decide how you can use them in your work. Our only requirement is that you provide us with the feedback requested. We have included a *Site Coordinator Reaction* form for you to complete and a *User Reaction* form to be completed by each participant in the pilot. We've tried to keep these forms simple for ease of completion. It is very important to collect as many of these as possible. Please return all of the completed forms to:

Catherine H. Van Dyke
RFD Box 4170
Camden, ME 04843

BY JUNE 30, 1995.

We will use your feedback to make a final revision to the portfolio materials. Thank you again for your willingness to participate in this pilot project.

If you have any questions, please contact Cathy Van Dyke, (207) 236-8463 or Nancy Perry at (202) 653-7680.

Attachments

June 23, 1995

To Whom It May Concern:

This pilot group was comprised of five females ranging in age from 25-48. Educational background ranged from a high school diploma to a graduate student. Three participants opted to work independently while two participants requested a facilitator.

It was obvious from the onset that group dynamics would play an integral role in the level of involvement and thus in the degree of satisfaction with the product. Brainstorming enabled participants to organize and put into words jumbled thoughts and feelings which they lacked the vocabulary to express. Both of these participants believed that they benefited more from group work than they would have working on an individual basis. Participants who worked independently expressed the same belief that optimum benefit would be gained through small group work.

I very much enjoyed working with this project and hope this feedback is beneficial. I am considering working with portfolios and career development for my dissertation topic and would be eager to assist you in any way in the future. Please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Terri Street
Graduate Student, Counselor Education
(For Dr. Carl McDaniels, Professor, Counselor Education)



VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Division of Administrative and Educational Services

College of Education
E. Eggeston Hall, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061-0302
(703) 231-5642 Fax: (703) 231-7845

August 24, 1995

Dolores A. Esser
Executive Director
VOICC
Richmond, VA 23211-1358

Dear Ms. Esser:

The pilot project for the Life Work Portfolio at Virginia Tech was conducted by Terri Street, doctoral student in the Counselor Education Department. Terri handled this project in my absence due to surgery and because of her interest in working with portfolios.

Attached you will find copies of her correspondence. Copies of individual participant results can be obtained by contacting Cathy Van Dyke (207) 236-8463.

We found this product to be a viable alternative for working with adults as they prepare for multiple career changes. As indicated in the correspondence, group work was more effective versus working with the individual. We look forward to utilizing the final product which is scheduled for completion in October.

If I can provide further assistance please feel free to contact me.

Very truly yours,

Carl McDaniels
Professor & Program Area Leader
Counselor Education

Attachment

*A Land-Grant University—The Commonwealth Is Our Campus
An Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Institution*

LIFE WORK PORTFOLIO Project

Catherine H. Van Dyke

Project Consultant

RFD Box 4170

Cumden, ME 04843

207-236-8463

August 28, 1995

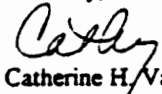
Terri Street
College of Education
Virginia Tech
East Eggleston Hall, Room 308
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0302

Dear Terri:

Here are the copies of the evaluation forms from the Life Work Portfolio Project pilot test. I have also enclosed a copy of the Summary of Pilot Project Results. Be advised that since this compilation was done, I have received additional feedback from about 250 participants. Some of the feedback was summarized in a way that I could not directly correlate it with the forms I had. However, the gist of the new feedback was along the same lines as what is represented in the report.

Thank you for your interest and commitment to this project. I truly appreciated your comments and would be happy to talk with you again about portfolios.

Sincerely,



Catherine H. Van Dyke

Appendix B

Samples of Forms Completed by Group Participants

**Life Work Portfolio Project
User Reaction Form**

The Portfolio is divided into four sections. Please rate how useful each section was to you as you worked with the Portfolio. Your written comments are most valuable. Please take a minute to write some notes about each section.

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not At All Useful	Did Not Use
WHO I AM	1	2	3	4
What was most useful?				
What changes would you recommend?				
EXPLORING	1	2	3	4
What was most useful?				
What changes would you recommend?				
DECIDING	1	2	3	4
What was most useful?				
What changes would you recommend?				
PLANNING & ACTING	1	2	3	4
What was most useful?				
What changes would you recommend?				

Some of you may be using the GUIDE to the LIFE WORK PORTFOLIO. Please tell us how we can make this a more useful reference for people using the Portfolio

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not At All Useful	Did Not Use
GUIDE to the Life Work Portfolio	1	2	3	4
What was most useful?				
What changes would you recommend?				

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not At All Useful	Did Not Use
How would you rate the <u>Life Work Portfolio</u> ?	1	2	3	4

What was the most useful part of the product?

What was the most useful part of the process?

What changes would you recommend?

Please note any other comments or reactions to using the Portfolio and/or Guide.

The Michigan Career Transition Considerations (MCTC)

There are many issues to ponder in weighing the pros and cons of career transition considerations. Most of these can be clustered under eight or nine headings. There are obvious interactions between and among considerations. These are listed below along with a blank category you can add depending on what else you also think is important. It is suggested that you put your self estimates on a scale of 0 (Very Negative) to 100 (Very Positive).

Rank the item or items as you feel they are important to you (one (1) would be most important to nine (9) least important or zero (0) for no importance) and make notes as needed.

YOUR RANK
ORDER



- A. **HEALTH** - How is your health? Any long-term problems? Is your family history one of long lived ancestors? How is your mobility? Hearing? Eyesight? Etc. Are you on a regular exercise program? A healthy diet? Other considerations for you?

0	25	50	75	100
Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Positive	Very Positive

Notes: _____



- B. **FINANCES** - What are your basic sources of income? How long could you fall back on savings? Do you have other sources of income? Savings? Is your spouse likely to work? How long?

0	25	50	75	100
Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Positive	Very Positive

Notes: _____



- C. **FAMILY** - Parents to care for? Children to care for? Grandchildren or others to care for? Health of spouse or significant other? Children/parents you can move in with? Is there pressure to stay in your geographic area? Or move?

0	25	50	75	100
Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Positive	Very Positive

Notes: _____



- D. **PLACE OF RESIDENCE** - How about staying where you are? Do you have positive housing prospects elsewhere? Do you want to move to be nearer (or farther away) from parents, children, others?

0	25	50	75	100
Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Positive	Very Positive

Notes: _____

- E. **WORK OPTIONS** - Satisfied/unsatisfied with your job? Do you have other part-time or full-time work opportunities on your own or with someone else? Do you have a dream of pursuing another occupation? Have you been waiting to put your "leisure to work?" Thinking about a small business or working at home?

0	25	50	75	100
Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Positive	Very Positive

Notes: _____

- F. **LEISURE OPTIONS** - Satisfied/unsatisfied with your current leisure activities? Interested in learning new opportunities in the areas of volunteer, creative, social, physical, or intellectual leisure activities? Do you have a dream of learning to play the piano? Learning to paint? Want to further your education? Is there a community college or four year/graduate program near by?

0	25	50	75	100
Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Positive	Very Positive

Notes: _____

- G. **PERSONAL ISSUES** - How do you feel about yourself? Your spouse or significant friends? What is your relationship with others? Any major goals still unfulfilled in life? Are you a workaholic? How is your mental health? How about your daily work routine? Associates at work? How about spiritual concerns?

0	25	50	75	100
Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Positive	Very Positive

Notes: _____

- H. **NETWORKING ISSUES** - What is the status of your relationship with family, friends, and neighbors? How about your participation in religious, civic, social, alumni, professional, leisure groups, and other organizations? What contact can these or other groups you belong to assist in any career transition?

0	25	50	75	100
Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Positive	Very Positive

Notes: _____

- I. **OTHER ISSUES** - State the consideration: _____

0	25	50	75	100
Very Negative	Negative	Not a Major Factor	Positive	Very Positive

Notes: _____

Appendix C

Written Comments to Life Work Portfolio Project
User Reaction Form

Respondents' written comments to Life Work Portfolio Project
User Reaction Form (If comment was made more than once within
the same group, it was noted only once for that group.)

Section I: Who I Am

Most Useful

Structured 18-22

- What I can do section
- Asking questions of oneself
- What I stand for
- This made me think about what I want in life
- Beliefs/values
- Wellness strategies and how I can grow from here
- Looking at life roles
- Personality styles

Unstructured 18-22

- Realizing my risk taking style
- Putting in writing how I work
- What I stand for
- Very useful for high school students

Structured 23 & up

- Entire section
- Life rainbow
- Interests and their descriptions
- What I can do
- Who I am checklist

Unstructured 23 & up

- Ways to deal with stress
- Self-assessment and identifying skills

What Changes Do You Recommend?

Structured 18-22

- Some questions too broad
- Section on interests needed
- More choices

Unstructured 18-22

- More wellness strategies
- More information on time management

Structured 23 & up

(No written comments)

Unstructured 23 & up

- Needs more space to write in

Section II: Exploring

Most Useful

Structured 18-22

- Outstanding activities
- Excellent checklist
- Networking & training options
- Finding out about campus resources
- My ideal job

Unstructured 18-22

- It let me look at what I really want from a perspective job.
- Interviewing people related to the job I want.

Structured 23 & up

- Career exploration activities
- Exploring training options
- Jobs I could get with skills I already have
- Helped me realize what's most important for me and my family instead of getting just any job I can get

Unstructured 23 & up

- Helped me explore and make up my mind
- The section on starting your own business
- Thinking about the job that is right for me
- Realizing that I don't want some of the jobs I thought I did

What Changes Do You Recommend?

Structured 18-22

- Needs more instructions
- Suggestions on taking orders
- Needs more examples

Unstructured 18-22

- Add more encouragement
- More information on working for myself

Structured 23 & up

(No written comments)

Unstructured 23 & up

- Make career or study search part of the requirement (example: Discover)
- List books that might be good references like Fortune 500

Section III: Deciding

Most Useful

Structured 18-22

- Career options grid
- Work/personal characteristics
- Model for decision making
- Helped me explore all my decisions and reach a good plan
- Good checklist
- Listing positive and negative consequences

Unstructured 18-22

- Getting everything organized
- Whole section was very useful
- Career options grid
- Getting me to look harder at my decision

Structured 23 & up

- The entire section was beneficial
- Decision making model
- Career options grid

Unstructured 23 & up

- Decision making model, finding out who I am and things that I like or dislike helps me make future decisions

What Changes Do You Recommend?

Structured 18-22

(No written comments)

Unstructured 18-22

- This section was not as helpful for me now as it will be later on.

Structured 23 & up

- Career options grid was too complex

Unstructured 23 & up

- Take into account variables that may change before you decided and plan is carried out. Identify and plan for them. Revert back to exploring options.

Section IV: Planning and Acting

Most Useful

Structured 18-22

- Goal setting
- Putting together a plan
- Job application fact sheet
- Need for cover letter
- Worksheets
- Interview questions were excellent. It will make you less nervous if you know what to expect. You can keep your cool.
- What goes on a resume
- Good for suggesting organization

Unstructured 18-22

- It's good to see stuff on paper, it helps get things going. Not just an idea in your head, but solid, on paper.
- Gets you moving into the project.

Structured 23 & up

- Seeing the format for turning your decision into a goal and then planning and acting on that decision
- Resume application worksheet
- Interview questions
- Helpful in updating resume and cover letter
- Entire section was beneficial

Unstructured 23 & up

- Collecting my ideas and organizing them
- Keeps employment records well.
- Help plan and change for future wants.
- Planning is helpful because it keeps me organized. It makes it easier to write cover letters.

What Changes Do You Recommend?

Structured 18-22

- Include more examples

Unstructured 18-22

- More information on acting

Structured 23 & up

(No written comments)

Unstructured 23 & up

(No written comments)

Responses to open ended questions included in the Life Work Portfolio Project User Reaction Form.

What was the most useful part of the product/process?

Structured 18-22

- I think that the Who I Am section was really helpful in deciding how I handle things and my beliefs.
- Just going through the sections with others helps you assess what's going on.
- Work characteristics and personal characteristics.
- Discussing in class.
- The most useful part was the written exercises in the portfolio.
- Going through the exercises with an instructor explaining things along the way.
- Who I Am. It made me realize who I was and I enjoyed it so much I had my younger sister join us so that she would also realize who she is.
- I really enjoyed working with the leader and other students that shared ideas.
- The step by step process.
- Working in a group.
- Working in a group. Also having a leader to guide you through it. This way if something confuses you then there is someone there to help you.

Unstructured 18-22

- It made me realize what skills I really have that I didn't know I had.
- Getting it all together.
- The fact sheets, having information already on record is good, being prepared for your interviews and applications.
- I think it is good to look at yourself this way.
- I think the product is something that relates to maturity of the user. Some parts I wish I had earlier in my life. Other parts I am going to be very happy to have later in my life.

What was the most useful part of the product/process?
(continued)

Structured 23 & up

- The exploring, Planning, and Acting parts were very beneficial. I've decided to seek a 4-year accounting degree instead of a 2-year degree. I feel great about my decision.
- Having a group leader to take you step by step.
- Being in a group and having a facilitator.
- Interacting with other people in my group.
- It got me to really think of things I never even realized that were helpful or skills that I had that I didn't realize.
- It explained clearly the way to handle making a good decision.

Unstructured 23 & up

- Learning about myself and putting it on paper.
- In the Exploring section--learning what kind of jobs that I didn't what to seek.
- Gets you started thinking in the right direction and then gives you what you need to continue.
- Self analyzation and assessment skills I've learned. I can see that everyday skills are transferrable. Where I didn't think I knew anything, I have skills that are not documented, but I have confidence that I can tackle nearly any job.
- Helping one with my own portfolio.
- The step by step instructions and the examples.
- Meeting in a group, looking at my skills, making a portfolio, thinking about roles, getting my confidence back.

What changes would you recommend for the product/process?

Structured 18-22

- Add a little bit more information to the Planning and Acting. Like how you handle your boss.
- The only change I would make is that this be a requirement for all freshmen in college.
- I think there needs to be a section listing careers.
- Maybe more examples and explaining some of the sections a little better.

Unstructured 18-22

(No additional comments)

Structured 23 & up

- I think making this into a portfolio class would be helpful to everyone.
- This is beneficial if done in a group effort with a leader--not alone.

Unstructured 23 & up

- More time with others in a class setting to encourage brainstorming and get ideas. Many skills may be overlooked without this interaction.
- Add references to use.

Please note any other comments or reactions to using the Life Work Portfolio.

Structured 18-22

- I think it is definitely better if you do this in a group.
- I think the portfolio should be taught with a leader. Other than that, it's a wonderful investment for everyone.
- The whole thing was great. I do believe everyone needs to have one of these in their homes. It even helped my sister in some ways.

Unstructured 18-22

- This is a person's life long project and people should recognize this when evaluating.

Structured 23 and up

- The portfolio helped me to take a reassessment of my goals, and to understand how to prioritize decisions. This is a great tool.

Unstructured 23 and up

- Great product.
- Needs more space to write answers.
- I enjoyed this, it was very helpful.
- I think this is the best thing to get a person started in a career.

Vita

Terri Evans Street was born in Marion, Virginia, on December 9, 1950. The daughter of Ed and Elizabeth Evans grew up in rural Southwest Virginia and quickly learned the merits of education and perseverance. After graduating from Marion Senior High School in June, 1969, she entered Emory and Henry College, Emory, Virginia, in the fall of 1969. It took Terri three years to complete the Bachelor of Arts degree in English at Emory and Henry College. These three years also saw the birth of her only child and pride and joy, Brian.

While employed by the Wythe County School System, Terri received a Master of Science degree in Education from Radford College in 1977 and a second Master of Science degree in Counseling and Human Services from Radford University in 1992. During this time Ms. Street taught at various levels including 4th grade, 6th grade, 7th grade, 8-12 English and Speech and Drama, and then moved into the role of secondary Counselor at George Wythe High School in Wytheville, Virginia.

After 20 years of service in public education in the Wythe County School System, Ms. Street took a leave of absence to pursue a Ph.D. in Counselor Education at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia. She received the Certificate of

Advanced Graduate Studies from Virginia Tech in December, 1995, and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Counselor Education/Student Personnel Services in May, 1996.

Terri Evans Street