A Work-Book for Girls

Maryvale High School
Morwell High School
Traralgon Technical School
Newborough High School

Prepared by
Marianne Robinson and David Dawkins

Case Study No. 17

Transition Education
Case Study Project

Transition Education Advisory Committee
Victoria

TD/VIC
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A CAUTION TO THE READER

The data for this case study was collected by M. Robinson between October and November 1981 and by D. Dawkins in November 1982 and the situation described is the one prevailing at that time.

Since that time, the project, project workers and the context in which the project operated may well have changed, as will the perspective of those involved. Readers should exercise their judgement in drawing generalisations from this study to their own or other situations, or in drawing conclusions about the project as it is described in this study.
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MARIANNE ROBINSON and DAVID DAWKINS

Transition Education Advisory Committee
Victoria
THE TRANSITION EDUCATION CASE STUDIES PROJECT

In April 1981 the Transition Education Advisory Committee (TEAC) commissioned the Deakin Institute for Studies in Education to prepare a number of case studies of selected projects within the Victorian Transition Education Program, to be completed by December 1982. The evaluation was to be conducted according to a brief established by the Evaluation Steering Group approved by TEAC, and employed the Transition Education Case Studies (TECS) research team to prepare a folio of case studies of projects which will serve as a source of information, guidance and inspiration for other projects being proposed or put into operation within the Transition Program. Most of the case studies are being prepared by the appointed team, and an additional small number are being contracted to independent workers who can inject some special insight into the case study (i.e. someone with specialist or localised knowledge).

During the term of the Project a series of 'discussion papers' will be issued, and at the end of 1982 a final report on the work of the project will be published including a synthesis of issues related to Program administration and the operation of projects. The TECS research team has been contacting many Transition Program projects and personnel in both the secondary and TAFE areas to gather views about the work of school and further education projects in Victoria. The TECS project is not an evaluation in the sense of assessing the worth of any project or personnel, but is designed to represent and communicate the work of the Transition Education Program by case studies which recognise the perspectives of project and Program participants.

THE PROJECTS STUDIED

The projects studied have been selected as potentially significant for the development and growth of transition education in general. Understandings generated by these studies are suggesting directions and practices for Transition Education personnel and projects in the future.

Apart from a search for projects whose understandings can be effectively transferred to other settings, the selection has attempted to represent fairly a range of situations, client groups, and educational strategies currently employed in TEAC projects in both schools and TAFE colleges.

The selection has been undertaken by the TECS research team initially on the basis of information provided in project submissions, and on recommendations from Regional Transition Education Officers, the Transition Advisory Committee, the Secretariat, and Special Education personnel. Projects studied have been selected only after initial negotiation with project personnel, Regional Transition Education Officers and others.

METHODOLOGY

A combination of research techniques have been used. Interviews, observations, and the examination of documentation have been employed as tools to enable each project's story to be told accurately and fairly. Negotiation between those involved in a transition project and the TECS team has been a basic principle of the case study design. Access to projects, the boundaries of the study, the preparation of reports and the eventual release of case studies for publication are all subject to negotiation.
The case studies are descriptive and non-recommendatory and should not be seen as pre-empting decisions regarding the future of projects.

On publication, the case studies are providing the 'host' school or college etc. with an account of its own work, and will assist TEAC personnel to gain insights which should help promote the design and implementation of effective transition projects.

Finally, the case studies will become public information, as a relevant source of information and experience for a wide range of groups wanting understanding or guidance in the area of school to work transition.

THE TEAM

**Stephen Kemmis**: BA(Hons), EdM, PhD: Graduated from the University of Sydney (1970) and was appointed as a tutor in Educational Psychology. From 1971-74 studied at the University of Illinois in curriculum evaluation and the methodology of educational research and evaluation. In January 1975 was appointed as Senior Research Associate at the Centre for Applied Research in Education, University of East Anglia, working on a major independent evaluation of the British National Development Program in Computer Assisted Learning. Returned to Australia in March 1978 to work briefly as an evaluation consultant to the Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra, and was appointed to Deakin University's School of Education in October 1978, where he is now Associate Professor in Curriculum Studies.

Interested in methodology of educational research and evaluation, especially case study and action research; also school-based curriculum development and evaluation.

**David Dawkins**: BA(Hons), Dip Ed: Has worked in a variety of manual and clerical positions before being appointed to the Papua New Guinea Education Service as a secondary school teacher in 1973. Appointed as a lecturer in Sociology at the State College Geelong in 1974 and to Deakin University in 1977 where he is currently a lecturer and chairman of Sociology of Education course teams.

Interested in schooling as a social and educational system, and the relationship between education and industry.
Terry Reilly: BA(Hons), DipEd, BEd, MS, PhD: Between 1974-77 was a primary school teacher in Coburg and Brunswick. In 1978 was Curriculum Co-ordinator for 'Upward Bound Program' (a program for economically disadvantaged youth) at the University of Oregon. From 1979-81 was an instructor in Education, University of Oregon.

Interests include positive youth development, issues of schooling and gender and field methods.

Barbara Cramer: BA: Since late 1977 worked in the research section at the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education in projects looking at transition, the effects of school-based assessment, and employers and school-based assessment. With 18 months special leave from VISE she has taken up a position as research assistant with TECS with interests in the relevance of education throughout the schooling process, structures and venues for education and student-teacher relationships.

Lynton Brown: BA, DipEd, DipApp Film & TV: Began teaching humanities at Noble Park Technical School in 1974. In 1975 became a foundation member of the Sunshine Technical School Annexe where he remained until it closed. In 1979 taught humanities and media at Sunshine Technical School and in 1980 was seconded to the Access Skills Project Team (Curriculum Services Unit). Since 1977 he has engaged in film and television production and consultancy in a variety of contexts.

Alison Austin: BA: Took a clerical position with a religious educational publisher at age 15 and eventually became editor of children's publications and publication production supervisor. Became a full-time mature age student in 1976 and has since worked in various secretarial and information positions.
The Changing Role of Women in the Workforce

In this program, staff and resource persons visit neighbouring groups and hold discussion evenings concerning the issue of non-traditional female work roles and various job opportunities. The content of the program is paralleled in school curriculum. Ten meetings are scheduled for the year.

Budget:
$1,500

Contact Person:
Bill Traill Ph: (051) 34 1200

Target Group:
Entire school population

Community Support:
Parents, employers, community.
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INTRODUCTION

This case study describes the "Work Book for Girls" project, which was itself a development for a much larger project which had been operating for some time previously, viz. the Gippsland Career Options for Girls project which was started in 1981. To understand the purpose and nature of the project described by this case study, it is first necessary to briefly describe the "parent" project.

The Career Options for Girls project operated within a number of schools throughout Gippsland. It originated on the combined initiative of Debra Towns from the Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee of the Education Department and Katherine Henderson from the ACTU Working Women's Centre. They had discussions outlining the nature of their proposal with Len Falk, who was then the Gippsland Regional Director of Education. With his encouragement their proposal developed until eventually a submission was made to the Schools Commission for funding.

The main objective of the project as proposed to the Commission, was to encourage girls to consider career options within male dominated trades as possible vocations which should properly be regarded as realistic options for themselves. The context for this was the urban industrial complex set within a rural environment which characterises the Latrobe Valley, which provide a contrasting context to the normal range of opportunities for students in rural areas of Victoria.

To understand the context of the Career Options for Girls project, it is necessary to bear in mind the unique features of the area. Gippsland is an agricultural region with a pocket of industrial development in the Latrobe Valley. As in all agricultural regions, employment opportunities are limited, especially for women. Many people believe that the Latrobe Valley is on the verge of a resources boom, centred on brown coal, and regard the growth area for employment to be in the technological field. Consequently, if equal opportunity is to be taken seriously, girls as well as boys, should be encouraged to study mathematics and sciences, take up apprenticeships in skilled trades, and aim to study science and engineering at tertiary level.
Part of this expectation of an expansion of technologically oriented occupations is based on State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV) projects for new power plants. The Loy Yang Power Station is under construction; planning has begun for Driffield Power Station; and the SECV is always on the lookout for new power station sites. A pilot coal-to-oil conversion plant is already under construction and there is hope of other industrial developments using brown coal, of which there are abundant reserves in the Latrobe Valley. Much of the projected development appears to be somewhat hopeful rather than realistic goals based on real indicators, but there is at least the promise of regular work commencing on the intended construction of new power stations in the foreseeable future.

Ian Gibson, lecturer in Economics at Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education, cast some doubt on whether the "resources boom" will have quite the advantageous effects on employment that are hoped for. He said that industries will be more capital intensive in the operation stage than has been characteristic until now. There may be some growth in supervisory jobs, and continued employment in the skilled trades, but there will be fewer blue collar and unskilled jobs. He did not expect there to be jobs in the traditional female occupations, so the encouragement of girls to aspire to enter what have been traditionally masculine occupations seems to be a sound policy.

As a result of the application to the Schools Commission, funding was obtained to employ a coordinator for the project. The position was advertised at the end of 1980 and specifically sought someone interested in expanding the career options for girls, particularly in areas in which women are not traditionally employed. It called for diplomatic liaison between schools and employers, especially to persuade the latter to employ more girls, and required the project coordinator to initiate programs within schools to encourage girls to broaden their interests and aspirations beyond traditionally feminine areas.

Jenny Hall was appointed to the position at the beginning of 1981. One of her first tasks was to determine the thrust of the project and to begin planning a framework within which to develop suitable activities.
A coordinating committee was also established which included teachers, a representative from the SECV and staff based at the Regional Education Office. Its function was to provide an avenue for liaison rather than giving direction. At a meeting of the committee attended by Ms Robinson in 1981 the agenda for discussion ranged over such issues as,

- the possibility of setting up alternative programs in rural and urban schools and which schools might be suitable;
- the problem of keeping girls in mathematics courses, and the organisation of in-service days to acquaint teachers with a new maths program;
- the degree to which the work experience program was satisfactory to the SECV;
- the question of opportunities for girls in rural employment, and a discussion as to why they were reluctant to take up farm apprenticeships;
- the likely effect of cost of living adjustments to the project budget.

The impression gained from that meeting was that the Committee's function was keeping everybody in touch to facilitate the dissemination of information and the cross-fertilisation of ideas, and secondly that of overseeing the budget. Apart from a general commitment by committee members to improving prospects for girls, the development and implementation of specific projects remained the job of the Coordinator. Fundamentally, her task was to think of what could be done to encourage girls to go into a wider range of jobs, thus improving their prospects of getting jobs.

Several activities were started in 1981, both within and between schools, as part of the Career Options for Girls project. A significant part of the project became work experience for girls in non-traditional jobs; in particular, trade and technical areas. Most of the non-traditional jobs were with the SECV, as might be expected, since that organisation is the major employer in the Latrobe Valley. However, some girls gained work experience with other employers, such as the local television station and a joinery firm.
A number of initiatives were tried out, for instance at Maryvale High School, the Year 10 students had been receiving 4 or 5 periods each week of careers education which was described by Jenny Hall as 'rather traditional in its emphasis'. Since more than two thirds of these students were female she proposed that an alternative approach might be adopted which structured the classes towards the interests of girls and suggesting to them the possibility of widening their occupational choice.

The traditional areas of occupational choice for girls reported by Jenny Hall and Kim Laird (the regional Transition Education Officer), have been such things as retailing (especially in pharmacies), clerical, hairdressing, and childcare. As the result of Jenny Hall's initiatives, careers education at Maryvale High incorporated the view that traditionally male dominated occupations be considered as options for girls. This coincided with information sessions and discussions with students about life expectations (especially vocational expectations) of males and females, the historical context of female occupations and the contemporary possibilities that were opening up vocations which have been traditionally male dominated, and the option to participate in non-traditional occupations as part of the schools' work experience program. As a consequence, 10 of the 28 female students had work experience in non-traditional occupations working in carpentry, plumbing, engineering shops, and agricultural situations.

A suggestion from the regional Education Office that Year 9 girls might obtain experience in male dominated occupations with the SECV was put to Newborough High School. In that school the careers teacher had less access to students in formal classes and was unable to provide non-traditional work experience options for the students. Special meetings were organised through the careers teacher to enable Jenny Hall to speak to parents seeking their support for a two week work experience program with the SECV as proposed. Those students who were to participate in the program were then taken out of classes for a two day briefing session in preparation for the work experience, and during the two weeks it operated, were brought together at the school for one night each week to monitor their progress. At the conclusion of the work experience, follow up work took place within regular classes conducted by Year 9 teachers in cooperation with the projects.
At Traralgon Technical School the project acted to promote the self-esteem of female students within what Jenny Hall has described as, "A school structure, both physical and socially, which works against females." The girls were formed into a separate group and provided with information and discussion sessions which sought to widen their career options. At Morwell High School a similar group had already been established on the initiative of the careers teacher.

Although the Career Options for Girls project was funded by the Schools Commission in 1980, it became a TEAC project in 1981, with continued funding in 1982. The Work-Book for Girls Project, which is the subject of this case study is an off-shoot from this larger project. It developed largely from the fact that towards the end of 1981 it became clear to the regional committee of TEAC for Gippsland that a modest sum would remain as a surplus for the year, which under the calendar year funding procedures would not be available for the following year. It was suggested that the funds be made available to develop a project which would serve two functions: firstly to give female students a chance to express the attitudes and opinions which they had been developing in response to the Career Options for Girls project; and secondly, to create a structure which might allow them to exercise their own initiative by acting independently in the development of a new project. What grew from these suggestions was a submission to TEAC for funding to produce A Work-Book for Girls.

To develop this project three meetings initially took place between Jenny Hall, the careers teachers, and girls from each of the participating schools to consider possible schemes. Several ideas were mooted and discarded. (one for example, was that a series of posters be produced depicting females within traditionally male dominated occupations. This idea was rejected on the grounds that they had really missed this opportunity since there were high quality posters available commercially which fulfilled this function, even if they were of a general nature and not specific to the Latrobe Valley) Eventually the idea for the Work-Book developed and took shape. Although Jenny Hall and the careers teachers were involved in this discussion and undoubtedly provided input, the project was essentially conceived by the students and achieved by them.
A submission was made to TEAC which was approved, and $1500 was made available for the production of the work-book.

It was a time of the year when we were coming to grips with the idea of student involvement and so we were ready for a project which was designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of a student designed and managed project, not only to us but also to other students.

(Kim Laird)

The aims of the project, as stated in the submission, were as follows.

1. To provide an opportunity for the students to further explore the issue of females in non-traditional occupations as it relates to them personally.

2. To have the students devise a means by which their perceptions of the issue can be best expressed.

3. To provide the opportunity for the students to be involved in the decision-making process thus instilling confidence through practical responsibility.

4. To utilize the resulting resource to support and encourage others exposed to the issue through the curriculum of their schools.

The coordinator for the off-shoot project was again Jenny Hall, Career Options for Girls Coordinator, and a new advisory committee was formed which comprised of one careers adviser from each school, namely Andrew Blair from Maryvale, Merrick Hilton from Morwell, Gerry Calnin from Newborough, and Lyndsay Griffin from Traralgon, plus students from each school.

THE SCHOOLS

Maryvale High School is located on the east side of Morwell. It has a population of 450 students, of whom two-thirds are girls. The school is relatively new, being established in 1966. It has a reputation in the local community of being innovative, and is sometimes seen as rather suspect because of this. Andrew Blair described it as "traditionally academic",
with one significant difference: the middle school is structured vertically, having a unit based system of work. In this scheme, there are no years 9 and 10. Instead students take core units from each faculty and then choose from 42 units offered over two years. Each unit lasts for a term. Mr Blair pointed out a number of advantages of this system. From the students' viewpoint, there is an immediate increase in motivation, since they choose the units they want to do, and also because each unit value is limited to one term's work, any failure does not cover a whole year's work. There is also an 'immediate gain in confidence levels', according to Mr Blair. He said kids have enjoyed the system; teachers cared about their courses, and disciplines problems were reduced.

At Maryvale High School, only 20% of the Year 7 intake continue to HSC, so the school is attempting to provide as many options as possible as an alternative to the academic track. As well as the restructured middle school, there is a "general education" course for Year 11 students to prepare them for life in the workforce. Students also take part in a work experience program in Years 10 and 11.

Morwell High School is located closer to the centre of Morwell. It has a population of 660 students and again, two-thirds of these are girls, although significantly, the male:female ratio evens out at Year 12, which is one indication of what type of career options and expectations exist for girls. Morwell High School is regarded by the community as being more 'traditional' and as having 'better discipline' than Maryvale High. Perhaps this is another way of saying 'more formal' and 'strict'. (The difference is summed up architecturally: Morwell is of the long strip style high school, characteristic of 1960s Education Department construction; Maryvale's buildings form a square around a central courtyard.) At Morwell High School, all students in Year 11 take part in a work experience program, and there is also a more limited program for students in Years 9 and 10 who may be intending to leave school or who have an interest in a particular kind of job. At Year 10, students mostly do work experience at the SECV. Merrick Hilton, careers adviser at Morwell High School, said there was some concern about students dropping out and going into apprenticeships and traineeships rather than continuing on to Year 12. Also, despite encouragement, not enough girls are taking up maths after Year 10. On this question Jenny Hall and Kim Laird both spoke of efforts by the SECV and the
Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education (GIAE) to encourage girls to continue with mathematics, describing these as an 'assault' on schools to get both male and female students to take maths and science to HSC level. They claimed that the implication given to the students was that if they did this they would be virtually guaranteed jobs in the dawn of the new technological age. They furthermore suggested that the manner in which this was done was not an uncontentious issue.

On a more positive note, however, there are a few adults making enquiries about returning to school, and this year there are two adult women in Year 12.

Newborough High School, the third school participating in this project, has a population of 500 students, and once again, about two-thirds of these are girls. The staff of 40 has been stable over the past six years, but in 1982 the Principal will retire and many of the staff are due for transfer. Gerry Calnin, the careers adviser, said that although the population of the school was increasing marginally, there is a trend amongst parents to opt for private education, so the Year 7 intake is lower. Mr Calnin described the school as a traditional high school with an academic curriculum. The curriculum, he said, is non-sexist, and there is no discrimination between boys and girls in the choice of electives, a policy which is supported by the parents.

The fourth school taking part in the project is Traralgon Technical School. In contrast with the other three schools, the population of Traralgon Tech is predominantly boys. In a total of about 570 boys, only one third are girls. (In the Latrobe Valley, by and large, people tend to regard High Schools as intended for girls and Technical Schools as intended for boys.) The first real intake of girls into Year 7 was only about eight years ago, although there had been a few girls scattered through the school prior to that.

Traralgon Technical School started its own program for girls in the school in 1981, quite separate from the Career Options for Girls project. Rosemany Langmore, who was employed as the coordinator, described the school's
program as having similar aims to the Career Options for Girls project in particular to enable girls to develop social skills and increased self-confidence to compete for jobs. The work experience program takes place at Year 10.

During 1981, as indicated above, part of the work experience programs at all four schools placed some of the girls in jobs previously seen as strictly male occupations. Over the past few years there has been increasing concern in the Latrobe Valley about employment among female school leavers, since the traditionally female areas of employment are not expanding. Economic growth in the area, as stated above, was expected to be in the technical areas, including skilled trades and new industrial technology, so the Career Options for Girls project was broadly intended to turn more girls in this direction. It was expected that placing girls in technical jobs, as part of a work experience program, would suggest to the girls themselves the possibility of working in these areas and would also encourage employers to consider accepting girls in areas where once only boys would have been employed. To some extent this has been successful, with the State Electricity Commission taking on about ten female apprentices in 1982, including one girl from Morwell High School who participated in the Work-Book project in 1981.

THE SOCIAL SETTING

The Latrobe Valley is an industrial area 150 kilometres east of Melbourne. It is the centre of the State's power generation industry, and for fifty years has been virtually dominated by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria, economically and socially. The SECV is the major employer, and much of the other employment in the area is connected with the power generation industry in some way. Coal mining and power generation are still the predominant industries and since the SECV controls both, it also, in many ways, controls the area. There are various other privately owned enterprises in the valley whose major business is contracting work with the SECV. Even when this is not their sole business, the requirements of the SECV have priority. The significance of this for the valley is that the
major area of employment is in an industry which has traditionally almost exclusively employed only men. Further, the SECV's employment policies and practices have largely controlled employment opportunities in the Latrobe Valley. The needs of the power generation industry have also significantly influenced the population structure, initially by the recruitment of migrants in the immediate post-war period, and more recently, with the construction of the Hazelwood, Yallourn W and Loy Yang power stations, by providing employment for a partly transient construction workforce.

Ian Gibson of GIAE pointed out that in the last 20 years development of the SECV has been of the boom-bust pattern. A large workforce has been employed in the construction of each new power station, but there have been gaps between the completion of one power station and the commencement of the next. An exception to this occurred between the completion of Yallourn W and the commencement of Loy Yang, and the short gap then encouraged construction workers to stay, with consequent pressure on housing in the area as they became a less transient and more permanent part of the workforce.

A feature of the Latrobe Valley workforce at present is that many members are teaching retiring age-groups, according to Mr Gibson. Because of rapid technological change in the power generation industry, each new power station consequently requires the development of new skills, but at the same time also requires a smaller workforce to produce a given amount of power. Mr Gibson suggested that the SECV is unlikely to replace all of the retiring workers, but rather would take the opportunity to tighten workforce requirements in power stations.

In terms of the employment structure, both male and female rates of unemployment would be likely to be very similar. However, Gibson did not believe women would displace men in existing jobs. Rather, as women trained in the appropriate areas, they would be competing with men for new jobs, for example, in new construction projects or in new parts of existing projects.

In discussing the prospects for female employment in the Latrobe Valley, Mr Gibson said that Loy Yang has created a substantial long-term increase in employment levels in the Latrobe Valley, but that growth in employment as a result of the construction of Loy Yang has now peaked.
There is the possibility of there being a permanent Latrobe Valley construction force, but this depends on forces outside the Valley and beyond the control of the SECV. For instance, the timing of the construction of the next power station depends on Alcoa and fluctuations in the demand and prices commanded by its product; the coal-to-oil conversion depends on OPEC and the international oil situation. What happens in the Latrobe Valley now depends on the outside economy and more distant economies, according to Mr Gibson, since the power generation industry no longer just supplies electricity to the state of Victoria, but supplies international industries.

This is in marked contrast to the earlier history of the SECV and the Latrobe Valley. Prior to World War Two, growth was steady, in the post-war period, the SECV entered a phase of rapid expansion. Labour was recruited, mostly among migrant men from Middle and Eastern Europe. At first only the men moved to the Latrobe Valley, but as development progressed and prosperity and stability increased, their families settled there as well. Zubryzcki's study, *Settlers in the Latrobe Valley* (1961), documents this period. By the beginning of the 1960's the SECV was concerned with the families of its workers. The workforce was predominantly masculine, but workers had wives and particularly children who were ready to start looking for jobs. Employment opportunities were very much limited, since the SECV was still the major employer. The availability of apprenticeships provided for the sons, but employment opportunities for women were minimal. It seemed that families had either to send their daughters away to metropolitan centres to work, or else the whole family would have to move. For some time, the SECV had a policy of employing young single women in clerical areas only, and this provided opportunities for at least some of the daughters, but there were few opportunities for married women. Although the Latrobe Valley is not far from Melbourne, it is not within commuting distance.

As well as its economic dominance of the Latrobe Valley, the SECV has had an important social influence. It has played a paternalistic role in the past (such as providing quite lavish recreation facilities in Yallourn and maintaining a larger workforce than was strictly required) as a preferable alternative to increasing unemployment in the area. One important consequence of this is that the population of the Latrobe Valley tends to have expectations consistent with this paternalism, and in particular,
that things should be provided for them (Puffin, 1975: 42). It is
difficult, for instance, to maintain community managed organisations in the
area, since the active members are more likely to be transients or
professionals who have moved into the area. Also, organisations tend to
model themselves on the SECV pattern, whether it is appropriate or not
(Puffin, 1975: 39), the 'needs of the community' and 'interests of the
community' tending to be used as synonyms for what the SECV wants, without
recognising that there are other industries and a greater variety of
interests in the community.

The other significant employer in the Latrobe Valley has been the Australian
Paper Manufacturers. Their enterprises in timber-getting and the
manufacture of paper products have also been typically masculine areas of
employment.

The Latrobe Valley, then, exhibits the typical pattern of the segregated
labour market. Jobs in construction, coal-mining, power-generation, and
timber-getting are men's jobs. Apprenticehips in any trades to do with
these industries have been for boys. The technical schools, until very
recently, have been single sex schools, effectively closing the possibility
of a technically-oriented education for girls. Indeed, the description of
the schools' student populations, mentioned earlier, suggests that the
pattern is still predominantly one of High School for girls and Technical
School for boys.

Because there are few industries and few employers, the workforce is
remarkably stable. The Central Gippsland Social Survey (carried out in
1974-75) found that the majority of male workers remained with the same
employer throughout most of their working lives. Limited opportunities for
employment in the area discourage people from changing jobs too readily, or
being adventurous in their career development. The result is a stable
workforce which in turn further limits opportunities to change jobs or
occupations, since vacancies do not occur.
WOMEN'S WORK IN THE LATROBE VALLEY

An interesting consequence of the existence of a stable pool of female labour in the Latrobe Valley was that in the late 60's and early 70's various industries were attracted to the area. These were in the traditional feminine industries of textiles, shoe manufacture and assembly of electrical components. However women's employment in the area has been less stable than men's, not only for the usual family-related reasons but because these industries are inherently unstable. Mostly, they were set up in small plants in the Latrobe Valley, attracted by decentralisation incentives, but because these industries are very vulnerable to economic fluctuation, changes in tariff protection, transportation costs, and so on, they have tended to experience a very short life. Such factories employed mainly married women.

Apart from unskilled and semi-skilled work in factories, a few women were employed in teaching, nursing and clerical occupations. To become teachers, girls had to leave the area for training, however medical (nursing) training was available in local hospitals (Moe and Traralgon). The other avenue for employment was sales work, with its limited prospects.

These days the Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education provides teacher training and a more general education at tertiary level, but the employment future is considered to be in the technological area, whether this is based on tertiary or trade training, and little future is seen for the traditional areas of female employment, except perhaps teaching.

The distribution of students at the GIAE is not likely to lead to much redistribution of the sexes in the workforce. Engineering and Applied Science students still remain predominantly male dominated choices with the occasional female student braving the masculine environment. Business Studies has some female students, but is also predominantly masculine. Arts and Education students are predominantly female, although there is a sprinkling of men in both courses. Adhering to this traditional pattern the staff structure at GIAE provides few roles for ambitious women; very few of the academic staff are women, and most of them are employed at the lower levels. All senior positions in the administration are held by men.
THE PROJECT

It is in this context of limited social and educational opportunity which as a corollary fosters limited expectations and ambitions, that the Career Options for Girls project was set. As we have seen, the initiative to develop a further project emerging from the girls' work experience in non-traditional jobs came from Jenny Hall, resource person for the Career Options for Girls project, but the actual decision to produce a Work-Book was made by girls from the participating schools themselves, according to Andrew Blair, from Maryvale High School.

Andrew said that the stage at which the project was conceived by the girls was a difficult one, since they were looking for something that had not been done before. At first there were a number of girls interested in the idea who were prepared to work on it, and there were meetings among students to get something started. Things 'got a little bogged down for a while' but later the project got going better.

The participating girls came from different schools and had varying degrees of involvement in the earlier Career Options for Girls project. Those from Maryvale High and Newborough High had had much more exposure to the issues through work experience programs, although as we have indicated above, even in this there were considerable differences. Those from Traralgon Technical School had been exposed to career education as a school exercise, whereas those from Morwell High had only received individual counselling from the careers teacher.

The project of producing a Work-Book was carried on away from the schools, thus permitting only a few girls from each school to become involved. Jenny Hall approached the schools, looking for students willing to participate in the conception and design of a new project, but within each school it was up to the girls themselves to decide whether or not to become involved and what they proposed to do. Andrew Blair said that in the beginning there were a number of girls who were interested and prepared to work on the project but that there were conceptual difficulties in deciding what to do, especially in thinking of something original which the students could get together and produce. It was the students themselves who came up with the idea of a
Work-Book. Participants became involved with the project on the basis of interest and their non-traditional work experience. However it turned out that once the project got going, very few students from Maryvale High School were involved - two participated at the first planning stage and only one took part in the layout stage.

Students from other schools in the area also became involved in the project, but again it was only a few girls from each school. At Newborough High School, Gerry Calnin, said that a small group of girls became involved and enjoyed the experience, but that it was an activity outside the school thereby constraining greater participation. At Traralgon Technical School, which already had a special program for girls, Rosemany Langmore, the school's TEAC adviser, described the Work-Book as 'extraneous, although its aims were the same' as the existing program. Nevertheless a small number of students participated in the project. The other school involved was Morwell High School, where again a small group of students was involved.

The Work-Book which was the end product of the project was intended to be produced specifically for girls. The intention was to develop something which could be used in class discussions which would challenge preconceptions and prejudices about what is suitable for girls (and boys). It was also intended to form the basis for discussions of some of the problems girls are likely to experience when working in non-traditional areas, and to prepare them for the isolation likely to be experienced in 'men-only' areas.

The Work-Book was intended to contain original material produced by students in year 9 and year 10 for use by girls in those years. Suggestions put forward for material to be contained within it included badges, stickers, diaries, pamphlets, parents' comments on their daughters' non-traditional work experience and photo-essays on the girls' experience. The finished Work-Book did not include all of these possibilities, but does include several accounts of work experience (as may be seen in the Appendix).
Although it was intended, by Jenny Hall at least, that much of the preparation should be done by the girls at their own schools, comments by teachers from each school indicate that this did not happen. Following their work experience, the girls were asked to write an account of their activities, with the aim of providing information for the use of next year's group. Material from these accounts was selected by a small group of girls from each school for inclusion in the Work-Book. Although girls from each school were involved, most of the work of selecting material and producing the booklet was done away from the schools, at the Gippsland Regional Office, under the guidance of Jenny Hall. There were a series of meetings at the Regional Office in Moe, where 16-20 girls, a few from each school, got together and it was on these occasions that most of the work was done.

Ms Robinson attended one of the earlier meetings held in late October 1981. It went from 9.30a.m. to 300p.m., and involved girls from all four schools. There were two broad aims for the meeting. Firstly, to facilitate discussion of the girls' work experience in non-traditional jobs, with the intention of stimulating their thoughts about the nature of the project that was to be designed and achieved by themselves. Secondly to sort out and start to assemble some of their written accounts for the Work-Book, once the decision to produce it had been taken.

At first, as in most situations where relative strangers meet for some common purpose, small groups of girls sat around waiting for something to happen. To initiate discussion of a broader nature, the discrete groups from each school were rearranged so that each group included members of all four schools. The girls then started to compare notes on their work experience at SECV and in other traditionally masculine jobs. When asked direct questions by Jenny Hall, they tended to be very positive about their experiences, but in describing these tended to stick to platitudes.

At first they needed some direction before they did anything much, but as they got to know each other, they spoke more fully about their experiences, started to suggest things they might do for the Work-Book, and started to work together. As they spoke about their work experience, some common
themes emerged. There were several mentions of 'stirring' by male workers. Some girls mentioned the men's attempts to accommodate to having women present:

They tried not to swear.
They took down their [centrefold] pictures.

Other comments suggested the absence of women on the job led to particular problems, for example.

No-one else used the toilets, so there were no lights.

Toilets seem to be a perennial problem associated with recruiting women into non-traditional jobs.

In general, girls were enthusiastic about their work experience when it actually involved work. However, some employers (or supervisors) appear to have restricted students on work experience to observation, and it was those girls who had been given the least to do who were the most to have felt isolated and less positive about their experiences. Most of the girls were fairly positive about the prospects of working in non-traditional jobs, although it was difficult to know whether this was genuine enthusiasm or what they thought they were supposed to say.

As the day continued, they became more cohesive in working as a group and more initiatives came from the girls themselves. A couple of the girls devised a questionnaire on people's attitudes to girls doing non-traditional jobs, and they went off down the street at lunch-time to interview people. In the afternoon the girls worked on 'profiles' of non-traditional jobs they wished to include in the Work-Book. They also developed some material for use in class discussions, in particular, a questionnaire directed to boys about the significance of sex roles in jobs.
In the discussion which ended the day's activities, there were some restatements of the traditional values about women's place, but these were challenged by other girls. While some of the girls thought that men's work was more important than women's and thought that women should not really be doing masculine-type jobs, others argued that women could and should do any kind of job.

One of the problems still to be overcome in arranging the material was the problem of how to present women who were working in traditionally masculine jobs. A female plumbing apprentice, used as an example of what girls can do in some of the Equal Opportunity advertising, was criticised by students who believed that she was 'only interested in the publicity' rather than in the plumbing. The students' criticism came from a meeting at which they actually met this girl, and their judgement was that she was more interested in gaining exposure in publicising female trade participation rather than in the trade itself. Jenny Hall contrasted this reaction to that given to a number of women during a visit to Moe High School later in 1982 and who had recently begun working in skilled and semi-skilled occupations traditionally regarded as male occupations. These women were given a much more positive reception. Why there should be a difference in reaction is difficult to say; perhaps the girls were too severely critical of one who was competitively similar to themselves, or perhaps the influence of the Career Options for Girls project was having more influence by this later date.

The reaction to the plumbing apprentice would be more expected at the beginning of 1981, but it would not be now. Careers teachers and, for example, humanities teachers, now speak more naturally of women in traditionally male dominated occupations and describe them as part of the context. More contact with real persons who work in these occupations has also encouraged a change in attitude.

(Jenny Hall)

There was also a suggestion at this meeting that although material on women doing non-traditional jobs attempted to show them as ordinary workers it missed the mark and instead tended rather to show them as 'freaks'. This is part of the general problem of the visibility of women in masculine environments. No matter how competent (or incompetent) the woman is, the most notable thing about her is that she is a woman doing a man's job.
Reactions to her tend to be exaggerated, whether they stress her skill, on
the one hand, or her 'femininity' despite the job, on the other. Students
felt that until such time as there are a greater number of women doing
non-traditional jobs together, this problem of trying to be, and be seen as,
an ordinary worker but feeling, and being seen as a freak, will remain.

Although this viewpoint was expressed, there was also the view from some
girls that being a female within an occupation where there were a
proponderance of males was 'fun'; that rather than being a 'freak' this made
them rather 'special'. Nevertheless, the underlying problem of being in
some sense different still remains.

The girls were not very fluent about this issue, talking in more conventional
terms about 'stirring' and attempts not to swear or removing 'pin-up'
pictures. This implies that although the issue is about treating women as
sex objects, it is really broader than that. At base, it is that women in
traditionally masculine occupations are out of place until there are enough
of them to make their presence less remarkable.

During the day, both Jenny Hall and Rosemany Langmore attempted to guide
discussion and activities without directing the girls, in spite of it
becoming apparent from the beginning that the girls would have felt more
comfortable if they had been told what to do. Consequently, although they
started off rather aimlessly, the students were becoming more confident and
taking more control by the end of the day.

Jenny Hall, commenting on some of the problems encountered in these early
meetings, pointed out that the girls were from a number of schools each
separated by at least 35 kilometres from its nearest neighbour. They had
not previously met each other, much less worked together.

Group cohesion had not yet been established and there
was a rapport to be established. Our aim was to be as
non-directive as possible, although of necessity we
had to guide the direction of the project to some
degree. Essentially though, it was the girls' project
and little by little they began to work together.

(Jenny Hall)
After the meetings at the Regional Office, there were plans for a series of meetings at the schools to finalise the material. It was expected that the material would be selected, edited and collated ready to be published in December. However, the end of the school year intervened, and as a result it was not possible for much to happen until March 1982.

Following the combined meetings in October this began to happen. The material which had been produced and assembled was typed and sent to the schools. This material included stories based on work experience, supervisors' reports, photo-essays, quizzes, and so on. The plan was that each school-based group would select the material its members wanted to include in the Work-Book, and then all participants would come together again for a combined editorial meeting. However, it was at this point that the major delays occurred. There appear to be a number of factors involved.

Timing was an obvious problem. The project was started in third term and had to compete with other end-of-year activities, such as lamington drives, and swimming sports. Furthermore, a number of girls left school before the end of the year to go to work, leaving the groups with fewer members. Exhaustion also took its toll.

Put rather bluntly, it was the end of the year and everyone, both staff and students, were simply too exhausted and run down. If we had begun the project at the beginning of the year the results would have been different. But in any case, it still provided us with a sound model on which to base our link programs this year, and they are working very well.

(Jenny Hall)

Another factor which caused delays, according to Jenny Hall, was the problem of coordinating activities in different schools. Once the material had been sent to the schools, it was handled quite differently in each one. At Newborough High School, some additional research was done by the girls engaged in the project, mostly on the position of women in the workforce. Gerry Calnin, the careers adviser, said that not much was done in the school. Most of the work was done by the girls on their own initiative, not as part of class work. They occasionally asked for help, but their teachers
were not organisers in the project and did not participate. The work the girls did involved some letter-writing and work on layout, however, only a small group of students were involved, and no staff.

At Morwell High School, the careers adviser Merrick Hilton, who had been involved at the beginning of the project, went on Long Service Leave. He said that some of the work was done at school, with a couple of women English teachers. However, the work done at school was minimal, and he thought the work from Morwell High was less than from Maryvale and Newborough. Jenny Hall said that some of the material was edited as part of a Year 11 English class.

At Maryvale High School, Andrew Blair said the project became a bit of a hassle. At this stage, Maryvale’s input was 'somewhat token', as there was difficulty in keeping up interest. There was virtually no activity on the project until April, 1982, and Mr Blair said Traralgon Technical School and Newborough High School made more positive contributions than Maryvale.

At Traralgon Technical School, the material was followed up by Rosemany Langmore, the school’s TEAC adviser. There the work became class work, and the girls produced a series of black and white sketches to accompany the articles as part of their Art class. However, Ms Langmore said that even though the girls enjoyed being involved, little of the work for the project was done at school. The work was mainly done when groups were taken to the Regional Office, on two occasions. Ms Langmore described the girls as interested when they went to the meetings, but not otherwise.

One part of the project which was continued during the end of 1981 and early 1982 was the making of badges. This did not involve inter-school cooperation, the badge-making machine was taken to each school in turn. The girls themselves made the badges, with slogans they had come up with in their school groups. Some examples are:

- Women Work Wonders
- I Can Be a Carpenter (or a plumber etc)
- I Might Not Want to be a Teacher
- Girls Can Do Anything
The final combined meeting for the project was held at the end of April 1982. Prior to the meeting, each school group had the draft material and was supposed to plan how it was to be presented. At the meeting itself, the participants decided on presentation, layout and the final selection of material to be included. They also organised production of the Work-Book, including typing, reproducing photographs, and costing the finished product. Before the meeting, Jenny Hall approached two places where production might have been done; the Regional Office Administration Staff and the Warragul Community Education Centre. It was decided to produce material at the Warragul Centre, after comparing relative costs and time.

The whole project was conducted in the face of a number of difficulties, not the least being that it began near the end of the year. There were three joint meetings with the girls to plan the project, then two or three planning meetings within each school between the girls and the careers or contact teachers to plan each group's contribution. The whole group then met again for two or three half day meetings to try to coordinate the contributions and then a meeting at each of the schools to assess the work before it was put together, and finally printed. The finished product was then sent out to the four schools for the girls to write covering letters and to distribute the Work-Books.

(Jenny Hall)

The finished Work-Book has been distributed to all post-primary schools in Gippsland. Copies have been sent to the four participating schools, which are responsible for wider distribution.
Despite the positive notion of the last badge slogan there has been a somewhat negative reaction to the project by teaching staff at the participating schools. This appears to be due partly to a misconception by them of what the project was really about and partly because the project was regarded as external to the school. These problems however, can provide some valuable lessons.

Ms Langmore indicated that the approach to participate in the project had come from Jenny Hall, and this was partly why participation by girls at Traralgon Technical School had been less than was hoped. She thought that the idea of a project (besides what the project should be) needed to come from the kids themselves if they were to be interested. It was difficult to get them to do anything, especially as the school was running its own program. The Work-Book project was in this sense imposed on the school rather than coming from the school, and consequently there was only token commitment. The staff found the idea hard to grapple with and were not terribly sure what was expected. Because participants were spread over four schools, it was difficult to fit the work into any curriculum context, and it remained an extra-curricular activity external to the schools.

It seems that in each school, the careers advisers, and perhaps the girls themselves, perceived the major effort as coming from somewhere else. At Maryvale, Morwell and Traralgon, the teachers thought the major work was coming from one of the other schools - probably Newborough High. In fact, it seems that most of the work was done under the guidance of Jenny Hall, and that there was difficulty in getting the girls to develop their own directions, except perhaps for the students from Newborough.

Speaking about this Jenny Hall again mentioned that the girls at each school had had different experiences, both in terms of the original Career Options project and in terms of career education and work experience. In addition, the differences between the internal structure of each school program had to be coped with. She agreed that the Newborough High girls did the bulk of the editing, but said that the Traralgon Tech girls also did some editing,
and ran their part of the project mainly in a series of lunchtime meetings. The Morwell students, whose careers teachers was by this time on leave, didn't operate as a group, but took part in the preparation of the Work-Book in cooperation with the English staff who had taken over Andrew Blair's role.

Geographic separation proved to be a continual problem and one of the difficulties encountered in the project was that of coordinating schools, and the associated problems of getting small groups together from different schools. For a large group, a bus can be hired, but a small group (6-10) must usually rely on private cars. Public transport in the Latrobe Valley is not particularly good, and certainly could not be relied on to transport groups from Traralgon, Morwell and Newborough to Moe for a meeting, or from one school to another.

In each case, because the project was seen as something which was going on outside the school, and involving only a small number of girls, misconceptions seem to have been gained about the aims of the project. As previously indicated, involvement by school staff was very limited. At Newborough High School, the staff were not involved unless their help was requested. Gerry Calnin suggested that this was not only because of the timing (towards the end of the year) but also because it was an external activity which was designed to have an impact once it was completed. However, he also indicated that there could have been some resistance to the idea of the Work-Book. When asked if he thought it would have an impact, he said, "No", on the grounds that the material in the Work-Book will not receive sufficient attention and that it is unlikely that staff will use it. His view was that the project went on for far too long, so that few of the girls were still motivated at the end. He concluded that the skills the project was supposed to developed should be developed as part of the students' school-work anyway, but, as Jenny Hall pointed out, if this were the case there would have been no need for the Careers Options for Girls Project or the Work-Book Project.

Andrew Blair, from Maryvale High School, also spoke of the difficulty of keeping up interest in the project. He expressed the view that the Work-Book itself was nothing earth-shattering or revolutionary, and the girls would not be interested in doing the same sort of thing again.
He added that there are "heaps and heaps" of information produced more professionally and more attractively, whereas the Work-Book is not immediately attractive to kids.

Merrick Hilton said that there was much less work put into the projects by students from Morwell High School than from Maryvale and Newborough indicating a lower level of interest. There too, the duration of the project was a problem, for a number of girls who had been working on it left school to get jobs before the project was completed. The finished Work-Book had not been used much at that school.

At Traralgon Technical School, the Work-Book had to compete with lots of other school-based projects and so it was difficult to get the girls to work on it, according to Rosemany Langmore. She felt that because the project was imposed on the school rather than coming from the school, this generated only a token commitment. Girls in the school were happy to look at the Work-Book and read it, but were not too keen on doing anything else. This has created further problems with distributing the book, since girls involved in producing the book were supposed to distribute it.

These comments suggest that there is some misconception about the nature of the project and what it aimed to achieve. It was never the intention of the project that it should produce a publication of commercial standard which would compete with existing publications. The aims, as stated above, were essentially to provide an experience for girls that would consolidate gains made through the Careers Options for Girls Project, by giving them a medium through which they might articulate some of their experiences and the lessons learnt through them during the course of the project, and also, at the same time providing a practical context within which to exercise autonomy and judgement.

Considering the difficulties encountered in this project, Kim Laird takes a more positive view of what was achieved.

Given the problems of distance, the schools being so far apart and the constraints of time (both from the point that it was getting towards the end of the year and the necessity for so much after hours activity), a tremendous amount was achieved.

(Kim Laird)
What are some of the lessons that project officers might learn from the difficulties described above? Firstly, the fact that there was some difficulty in winning a significant measure of cooperation from schools staff has led Jenny Hall to the conviction that before such a project can be successfully put into practice, the support of senior school personnel should be gained. Working through careers teachers was viable in terms of the Careers Options for Girls project when proposed activities could be coordinated with their normal routine, but in the situation where cooperation was required from a wider range of staff, a higher level of liaison was required in order to generate interest and accommodation from a wide range of curriculum interests.

The project required cooperation between careers teachers, and Ms Hall saw this as a strength as well as a problem. The careers teachers tend to cooperate anyway, but there was still considerable coordinating to do.

Because of this any project such as this would require a coordinator from outside the schools if more than one school was involved, because it would involve too much work for a teacher or career adviser to cope with. In addition, when the project was integrated into class activity it was observed that its momentum was sustained. However, when it was not made part of some class work, it was likely to be submerged, as happened at Maryvale High School. It was noted that where contact was with individual teachers dealing with students from several classes, it was sometimes difficult to maintain contact with groups, which strengthens the belief that a coordinating role is essential, if the necessary curriculum integration is to be achieved.

An implicit criticism of this project has been the apparent lack of interest and momentum, when students appear to have been groping their way forward. This of course, was an inevitable hazard of encouraging the students to do things themselves, and a necessary degree of patience must be exercised.

Jenny Hall was asked if she had any reservations, as a result of this project, about encouraging girls to aspire to non-traditional jobs, as there has been some concern expressed locally about pushing girls into technical areas that they are not suited to. She replied that she had no reservations at all about girls going into non-traditional areas. She considered that
more problems occurred when girls were encouraged to 'jump' into the maths-science area without adequate preparation. However, she also believed that the future for girls' employment in the Latrobe Valley is in the non-traditional areas.

THE VALUE OF THE PROJECT TO THE PARTICIPANTS

When asked about the value of the Work-Book project, Jenny Hall spoke of its value both to the participants and for girls who would be receiving the Work-Book. She considered that the process of doing the work was a very important part of the project, more important than what was to be produced, because of the skills developed in the process. Collecting material involved approaching and interviewing strangers as well as people already known to the girls. Collating and producing the Work-Book required them to develop negotiation and organisational skills, as well as going through the experience of editing their own work, a valuable educational exercise of itself. Ms Hall also considered the bond that developed between girls from different schools a 'terrific thing'. By working together on the project the girls came to know people from outside their own schools and learned to work in a larger group, in which they were required to provide their own direction. As Ms Hall visited the various school groups, she was asked about members of other groups. This network created by a common interest could provide the basis of a support group if any of the girls go into non-traditional jobs, and thus help to overcome some of the problems of isolation felt by women working in a masculine environment.

Ms Hall hoped the Work-Book would appeal to ordinary girls who are not necessarily the 'bright cookies who read career guidance brochures'. Most of the girls wrote only short statements and she speculated that this is probably what they prefer to read.

The careers advisers from each of the schools were less enthusiastic in their evaluation of the project. Gerry Calnin of Newborough High School, said that initially the girls enjoyed the project, and that the small group from this school which was involved displayed considerable interest.
For them it was useful, in that they were involved in the compilation of material, and had developed a degree of responsibility and self-satisfaction; and had useful interaction with students from other schools.

Rosemary Langmore of Traralgon Technical School said that the girls enjoyed very much being involved when they were at the meetings, but after this initial period they were not conscientious.

Andrew Blair of Maryvale High School said that the issues that should be discussed within the school were women and society and women and work. The Work-Book might encourage discussion of these, but he concluded that the project's only strength was that a group of kids got together and produced a finished product. In theory this was very worthwhile, but he did not know how useful it would be.

Merrick Hilton of Morwell High School said the Work-Book should be seen in the context of the work experience program, and as an additional element of this had been successful.

The consensus seemed to be that it was interesting for those who participated, but would have little impact otherwise. However, all agreed that girls from different schools working together was a worthwhile activity.

These reactions are interesting when considered in the light of what has happened since the production of the Work-Book. It has been distributed to post-secondary schools throughout the region and has had quite a good reception.

It is a useful document which is used throughout the region, not just in the valley. It is well received and isn't just regarded as a good effort but is useful for classes. Perhaps its greatest impact has been that it doesn't simply draw attention to the non-traditional context of occupational choices for girls. What it has done is to demonstrate to careers teachers who are aware of the problem and who are worried about 'leading the way' as it were, that something has already been done elsewhere and that they can be part of a movement to introduce girls to a new range of occupational choices.

(Kim Laird)
In addition, an interesting consequence of the project was that the girls from Traralgon Technical School received an invitation to visit St Anne's and the Gippsland Grammar School in Sale to speak about the project. They met with the girls at Sale and acted as group leaders for small group discussions based on the Work-Book. Again, a valuable social and educational experience.

But to speak in terms of what impact the Work-Book is having in the region is to forget what the aims of the project were. They did not include the production of a sophisticated brochure to be used as a professional teaching aid by staff and to be formally integrated into the curriculum in the region. It is of significance, and taken as a high complement by the students and staff involved in the project, that the Work-Book has received much positive acceptance, despite the reaction we have had from certain staff members from the participating schools. The objectives of the project were to provide students with a chance to express their own reactions to a much larger project, the Career Options for Girls project, and to exercise initiative and independence within a specific project. This they have done.

The community newspapers which are proving to be so popular are a similar vehicle to this Work-Book. In both cases, the purpose to achieve is not in the product but in the process. The Work-Book on the Careers Options project may be rather specific and may not always be possible to imitate. However, the process of generating discussion, initiative and activity may be. We have evolved a model from this project which is being applied in a series of link programs designed to give girls some experience of trade courses. What we do is, as in the Work-Book project, get them together in groups to compare and discuss their common experiences. The formal agenda surrounds the trade orientation program; the informal agenda is the discovery of what is possible. It is also useful as an evaluation technique to discover just how effective the larger educational program has been in influencing and generating change.

(Kim Laird)
Despite the difficulties of coordination and delays in production, this project has been a valuable transition education project for a number of reasons. Firstly, it involved the girls in developing skills, such as negotiating and cooperating beyond the school environment, which are not normally a part of the regular school curriculum. Secondly, the bonds established between girls of different schools has created the possibility that there be a development of some sort of support network for those who go into non-traditional jobs when they leave school. One participant, for instance, during the course of the project, has taken up an apprenticeship at the SECV this year, but still maintains an interest in the project and with the other girls who are involved in it.

The process of reflection and communication about work experience has of itself been valuable in encouraging girls to consider a wider range of jobs. The initial aim was to have the girls choose to do something and do it themselves, in a project in which close supervision and direction would not have been appropriate. As was intended, the process rather than the product, has been a more valuable experience for the participants, although the product itself has proven to be a useful stimulus for debate.
REFERENCES


Zubrzycki, Jerzy, *Settlers of the Latrobe Valley*, Canberra, Australian National University, 1964
APPENDIX

This contains examples of material to be included in the workbook. The sections are:

1. A photo-essay on a girl in a non-traditional job.

2. Accounts of work experience in non-traditional jobs.

3. Reports from Work Experience supervisors

4. A public opinion survey

5. Parents' views of the Career Options for Girls programme.
Kim was the successful applicant for a job as cleaner - gardener at Traralgon Technical School.

She had previously worked as a manager in a clothes shop.

After a trip overseas she had been unable to find work in this area, so she started to look for jobs in the non-traditional female area.

She was attracted to jobs that were out of doors. The job at Traralgon Tech. really suits her. It is a mixture of cleaning and gardening.

Her day starts by her distributing the rubbish bins.
Lunch:    Time for a break.

Kim goes to the canteen to get some lunch and to sit in the sun.

After lunch she goes back to the garden, refills the tractor and commences work once again.
WORK EXPERIENCE AT THE S.E.C.V.

When I got picked for work experience I though, "Oh great, two
weeks bludge from school and getting paid for it too!". Well,
as you find out in my story I was wrong.

The first day at the S.E.C. was the hardest. We had to meet
at the Centre to get briefed on what section of the S.E.C. we would
work in, how much we get paid, etc. We had to get there at half
past seven (I was early). A lot of guys were there for work
experience too (forms 4 and 5) and some girls from the same year
level. (Hard to talk to them lot.) So I stood around like a
stuffed duck waiting for one of my friends to come.

After we were briefed (if that's what you would call it) we were
taken away to our section and job. (I was in the Testing Lab.)
That means I fixed and renewed components and electrical equipment
which came in. Anyway, I was working in Yallourn S.E.C. Testing
Lab. Being on the ground floor I was away from three of my
friends who were on the upstairs floor. As we arrived at the
building we were split up and taken to our doom ... um ... bosses
who were to take care of us (ha ha). Anyway they took us to see
their bosses. My boss's boss was nice. He really made you feel
you belonged there, then you got the third degree. (Like playing
20 questions.) Asking why you were there, if you picked the job,
why, what job are you going to take, etc. Boy, what a nice guy.

Well after that I was taken back to the Lab. (ha I shortened it) to
Mr. Griffids (my boss). He was kinda nice. I got my own locker,
safety glasses (boy they are weird) and a white dust coat. They're
"cool". Then the worst had come, he started showing me how to do
electronics, like telling what fuse it is or resistor by a colour
code. All about ohms oh!! and a ton of Physics, boy my head was about to explode. Then he showed me around the Lab, telling me what this was, and that, boy was I confused, then he introduced me to the blokes, guys there. (Not a bad lot, especially the lot in the instrument lab.) Anyway after a confusing morning we had a coffee break at half past ten. Coffee break was supposed to run for 7½ minutes. We took 15 minutes. (Ooh aren't we naughty.) Lunch is at half past twelve and runs for 35 minutes.

After I returned I was given a board of resistors, fuses and capacitors to take apart which I did with ease (my dad showed me how when I was little). After lunch I had another talk, and then was allowed to wander around the Lab, I helped here and there. Then I was told that I was allowed to make a project. (I did two, ha ha) - you know, anything from an alarm to a selectalott (bet you don't even know what it is!) (I'm right you know). So I was shown books with cute little projects in them. I picked one called a "P.C. Birdie". (It makes bird noises.) You probably think I'm dumb for picking that but it was fun making it. Also I made a selectalott. It selects tattslotto numbers. Anyway, in the nine days I was there they helped me make them. The guys on the first day were staring but they soon got used to me. I was taken outside my building and shown around the S.E.C. and the Morwell Power Station, Open Cuts, etc. Boy, you feel stupid with all the blokes looking at you. (Really daft if you know what I mean.) The jobs which the Lab did are very complex but with several years study it would be simple as pie.

An incident happened on my second week, when a guy came in and I was picking something up. I looked at him and he exclaimed, "Good God, it's a girl!" Boy was I cheesed off and said, "Oh! thanks", then he apologized. (Of course kind hearted me accepted.) Many blokes swear but I was used to it. (My dad swears a lot so I was used to it - ha ha.)
You learn a lot about the working of the S.E.C. Sometimes the guys are real busy, but sometimes it is slack so they laze (sleep) about.

What I learnt about power circuits, I think I could fix a toaster, plugs, etc.

You get paid $3.33. You might think it's scabby but you have it like you are at school. You are learning (but this time it's fun). After the two weeks there (9 days) I didn't want to go back to school (well who does).

But when you have work experience, think about it. Are you going to take it as a career or not. It's not just bludging, it's learning about working. The Work Force is a hard circle to break into but if you are determined you will make it.
WORK EXPERIENCE

My work experience was at the S.E.C. The job I was doing was an Assisting Mechanical Tradesman. I worked from the 22nd of June till the 3rd of July. During those days I had the second Monday off (29th June) because of the nine day week the S.E.C. have. I was situated out at Hazelwood Power Station.

The first day we had to meet at the Administration Office at Morwell. We had to fill out this form and then wait for a person to take you where you were situated. On the same day we were equipped with our boots, overalls, helmet, ear muffs and safety glasses. We also went to the Safety Officer where the Safety Officer told us the Safety Rules.

For the next two weeks I was there, I worked with five groups. They were: Boilermakers, Riggers, Turbines, Boilers and General.

When I was with the Boilermakers, the blokes were really good to me. When I walked in the door to the Boilermakers they thought I was the T.A. (trades assistant). They had a Foreman and a Leading Hand. The Leading Hand showed me around. He showed me the boilers, inside the boilers and what the apprentices were doing.

With the Riggers, I really didn't do much except for sitting in this room where they all hang out and read the newspaper. While I was in the Foreman's Office they wanted me down in the drawing office. There was a stack of files that I had to put in the file cabinet and it was really boring.

When I was down with the Turbines, I was shown the turbines and I
saw a machine being fixed. It was really noisy while I was in the turbine so I had to wear my ear muffs. The turbines were on the ground floor and I had to go to the first floor where the top of the turbines were because one had broken down.

While with the Boiler group, I was taken up to the top of the roof and looked around. I was taken around where the briquettes were made and I saw some getting made and I saw some getting crushed. I watched some men fixing little bits and pieces.

When I was with the General group, most of the time I spent the day down in the drawing office and watched the men working on machines.
REPORTS FROM WORK EXPERIENCE SUPERVISORS

Duties of Job Position Involved

Civil Engineering involving surveying, estimating, looking at various projects and inspection of work with the various field and workshop gangs.

Behaviour and Acceptance of Instructions

She behaved well and understood most instructions given to her.

Willingness to Learn and Work

She asked questions about various jobs. She was particularly interested in the relationship between Engineering and the work being carried out.

Acceptability by Section

She mixed in very well for a young girl in a male dominated environment.

Attendance, Punctuality, etc.

She attended all days and was punctual for all work.

Other Comments

She wants to become a Civil Engineer. She has a good personality and attitude towards her work. She has the right qualities to become a good Engineer.
PUBLIC OPINION

We went around the streets of Moe asking different people what they thought about females in non-traditional jobs. We did this to find out different opinions of the public, and what the majority of people thought.

The questions we asked were:

1. What is your opinion of girls working in male environment jobs (S.E.C.)?
2. Do you think women should work at all or stay at home?
3. Do you think women are capable of doing men's jobs?
4. If you needed, for example, a plumber, would you prefer a male or female?
5. If you had a daughter would you approve of her working in a man's job?

The answers are as follows:

1. Young Lady with Small Child
   1. Good on them, if they want to do it.
   2. They should get out and work.
   3. Yes.
   4. Either - doesn't matter.
   5. Yes.
2. **Two Middle-Aged Ladies**
   1. It's alright. It's the same as men.
   2. Should stay at home, look after kids.
   3. Women are capable.
   4. It doesn't matter, as long as they're qualified.
   5. Would approve.

3. **Middle-Aged Men**
   1. They should work in places like S.E.C.
   2. Children come first, after they grow up it's O.K.
   3. Yes, they are capable - why not, they did it in the war!
   4. If he was alone, prefer a male. If with wife, it wouldn't matter.
   5. Yes. I approve.

4. **Old Lady**
   1. It's O.K., why not?
   2. Once they are of school age it's O.K. to go back to work.
   3. Yes, e.g. doctors, dentists, etc.
   4. It wouldn't matter.
   5. Would approve.

5. **A Couple**
   1. Don't mind them working
   2. Women should work.
   3. Not sure.
   4. It doesn't matter.
   5. If she wanted to.

6. **Retired S.E.C. Employee**
   1. Yes, they should, they're good workers.
   2. If they want, it's up to them.
   4. Doesn't matter.
   5. Approve.
7. **Old Lady**
   1. Don't approve.
   2. Should look after the home but depends on money situation.
   3. No - very few are capable.
   4. Prefer a male.
   5. No. Would not approve.

8. **Young Family**
   1. If they want to do it.
   2. Her duties are at home but it's up to her.
   3. Capable of anything!! (Woman) If it's not really heavy work. (Man)
   4. Doesn't matter as long as they are capable of the job.
   5. Depends on the situation. (15 years from now may be no jobs at all.)

**MIDDLE-AGED COUPLE**

9. **Woman**
   1. It's fair enough.
   2. They should go out and work.
   3. Yes - as long as it's not too heavy.
   4. No difference.
   5. Yes, I'd approve.

10. **Man**
    1. As long as there is no special privileges given to the women.
    2. Depends on what the individual wants.
    3. Yes.
    4. No difference.
    5. Yes.
PARENTS VIEWS

1. What did you think when you first heard of the program?
   A. A good idea.

2. Were you surprised?
   A. No. Thought it was progressive, and that with the unemployment situation, I thought it was very educational.

3. Would you have approved of it 20 years ago?
   A. Yes.

4. What was the attitude of friends?
   A. Many tended to think it was a "fad" and would pass after a few months doing the course.

Community attitudes may be influenced by press publicity - e.g. when my daughter did work experience as a painter at C.G.H. and her friend did carpentry also at C.G.H. the local paper published an article about girls doing those jobs. (1978)

This year a local paper (Ballarat) wrote about Longerenong Agricultural College taking girls and headed the article "Where the Girls are Just One of the Boys".