

Nontraditional Careers
11th Grade Career Development Advisement Activity #4
Teacher as Advisor Program (TAP)
Estimated time: 30-45 minutes

National Career Development Standard/Competency

1. Understanding the influence of a positive self-concept
 - Identify and appreciate personal interests, abilities, and skills
 - Demonstrate an understanding of how individual characteristics relate to achieving personal, social, educational, and career goals
11. Understanding the continuous changes in male/female roles
 - Identify factors that have influenced the changing career patterns of women and men
 - Describe the advantages and problems of nontraditional occupations

Goal:

Students will investigate nontraditional careers.

Objectives:

- Understand changing career patterns for men and women
- Identify nontraditional careers for men and women
- Discuss benefits and challenges of nontraditional careers

Materials:

- 11th Grade Career Development Advisement Activity #2 handouts - **Nontraditional Careers, Myths and Reality** and **Investigating Nontraditional Careers**
- Pen or pencil

Activity:

1. *Greet students:* “Welcome to advisement. Today we’re going to discuss nontraditional careers. You learned about nontraditional occupations in middle school. Nontraditional careers are those in which there is a gender imbalance, where less than 25% of the workers in an occupation are either male or female. Do you think there are more jobs where men represent 75% of the workers or where women represent 75% of the workers?” *Allow time for students to answer.* “According to labor statistics, 80% of all female workers work in about 5% of all jobs. If there are 440 job categories, you can see there are far more nontraditional job categories for women than for men. Why do you think that’s the case?” *Allow time for students to address the question.*
2. “Let’s look at some myths and realities about nontraditional careers for women.” *Distribute handout # 4, Nontraditional Careers, and go over the information with students. Allow time to discuss the information.*
3. “What do you think are some of the benefits of a nontraditional career?” *Allow time for students to discuss the question. Write their answers on the board. Possible answers: high wages, good benefits, variety and mobility, casual dress, outdoor work, job satisfaction, opportunities to learn while you earn, career ladders, enhanced quality of life, gain new skills that can be used in many jobs.* “What do you think are some of the challenges of a nontraditional career?” *Allow time for students to discuss, write their answers on the board. Possible answers: hazardous workplaces, requiring safety protocols, special equipment and protective clothing, discrimination and/or harassment, sense of isolation at workplace, non-*

supportive family and friends, transportation and childcare, weather, heat, cold, dust, dirt, noise in some workplaces, physical requirements, shift work, seasonal layoffs, the work and skills you need might be unfamiliar.

4. Distribute handout # 5, **Investigating Nontraditional Careers**, go over the directions for the activity, answer questions from students, and ensure that they understand the assignment and when it is due.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on their participation in the class discussions and on their handouts.

Nontraditional Careers, Myths and Reality
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There are many myths about whether women can or should work in jobs that are considered nontraditional for them. Below are facts regarding common misconceptions about women working in male-dominated nontraditional jobs.

Myth: Women are in the labor force to earn some extra spending money.

Reality: The majority of women work because of economic need. In May 1986, two thirds of working mothers with children at home said that they worked to support their family. For all working women, over half worked to support their family and/or themselves. In 1992, 44 percent of women in the labor force were either single (24 percent), or divorced (12 percent), widowed (4 percent), or separated (4 percent). Women's need for good jobs is demonstrated by the fact that nearly 45 percent of all family households maintained by women lived in poverty in 1990.

Myth: Women and men are represented equally in most occupations.

Reality: Women workers are concentrated in traditionally female occupations. In 1994, women represented 78.9 percent of all administrative support (including clerical) workers and 66.1 percent of all retail and personal services workers, but only 9.3 percent of all precision production, craft, and repair workers and, as of 1990, 7.2 percent of all apprentices.

Myth: Certain jobs are "men's work" and other jobs are "women's work."

Reality: Attitudes about which jobs are appropriate for men and which ones are appropriate for women are the result of tradition and socialization. The vast majority of job requirements are unrelated to sex.

Myth: Jobs in which women are traditionally employed pay salaries comparable to jobs in which men are traditionally employed.

Reality: Jobs in which men are traditionally employed typically pay 30 percent more than traditionally female jobs. Two common traditional jobs for women, data entry clerk and secretary, pay \$344 and \$373 a week, respectively. Mechanics and repairers, jobs predominately held by men, earn on average \$523 a week. Overall, in 1991, women workers were paid \$6.77 an hour compared with \$8.73 for men, or just 77.5 percent of what men earned. For full-time year-round annual earnings, women's earnings were less than 70 percent of men's earnings, due in part to the concentration of women in low wage work.

Myth: Blue-collar work or heavy, physical labor is nontraditional for women.

Reality: Many jobs now thought to be nontraditional for women have been performed by women in the past. Throughout history, women have done heavy labor on the farm and in the fields alongside men, and during World War II, over 6 million women entered the labor force to build ships and airplanes, and produce factory goods.

Myth: Women are not strong enough to do heavy labor.

Reality: The strength requirements for nontraditional jobs are often exaggerated. Many nontraditional jobs are less physically demanding than housework, and many traditional women's jobs, such as nursing and waitressing, are just as physically demanding as some nontraditional jobs. Moreover, the Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that special equipment be provided for every heavy job regardless of whether it is being done by men or women. In addition, mechanization continues to decrease the level of physical demand of many jobs. Finally, while the average man is stronger than the average woman, some women are stronger than some men. Women have excellent lower-body strength and with training can develop strong upper-body muscles as well.

Myth: Nontraditional jobs are too dirty, noisy, and dangerous for women.

Reality: Nontraditional jobs are often dirty and sometimes dangerous. However, both men and women must weigh the hazards with the benefits of taking certain jobs. In addition, many traditionally female jobs, like mothering and nursing, are dirty and messy, and some also have health hazards, such as computer terminal radiation and carpal tunnel syndrome. Many women do not mind getting dirty when they are paid a good wage, and with proper safety instruction, all workers can minimize the danger they experience on the job.

Myth: Women do not have the mechanical or mathematical aptitude for skilled trade work.

Reality: There is no difference in women's and men's innate skills and potential to justify existing occupational segregation. A study conducted by the Johnson O'Conner Research Foundation Human Engineering Laboratory found no difference attributable to sex in 14 of 22 aptitude tests given to men and women. In the eight remaining tests, women excelled in six tests and men scored higher in two.

Myth: A woman's place is in the home, not on a construction site.

Reality: In 1994, women accounted for 46 percent of the total labor force. Nearly two thirds of all women age 16 and over were in the labor force in 1991. Women accounted for 62 percent of total labor force growth between 1980 and 1991 and two out of every three workers entering the labor force between 1990 and 2005 will be women. The majority of women work because of economic necessity, and nontraditional jobs may enable women to support themselves and their families.

Myth: Women won't like trade work.

Reality: Many women enjoy working with their hands and outdoors. They take great pride in knowing that they have helped to build or create something. As a result, researchers have found that most tradeswomen have a high degree of job satisfaction.

Myth: Women will leave a job to get married and have children; therefore, the job should go to a man who will stay.

Reality: In March 1992, on average, women were found to work 30 years over the course of their lifetimes, regardless of whether or not they married. Of those women who do leave to have children, more than half return to the labor force when the child is one year old. By the time the youngest child is three years old, at least six out of every 10 mothers have entered or returned to the labor force.

Myth: Married women who have husbands to support them should stay home and leave the good paying jobs for men.

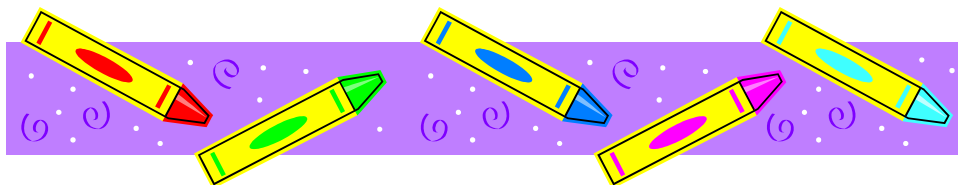
Reality: Many American families are unable to support themselves on a single income. As a result, the proportion of married-couple families with the wife in the paid labor force rose from approximately 40 percent in 1972 to 59 percent in 1990. In that same year, the median income for married-couple families with both husband and wife in the labor force was \$44,053 compared to \$32,478 for those without the wife in the paid labor force. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, even if all the employed married women gave their jobs to unemployed men, there would still be 1.2 million unfilled jobs.

Myth: Women on a job site make it difficult for men to concentrate; they are too distracting.

Reality: It will be different, at first, to have a woman on a work site if an employer has never hired one before. Employers can ensure workers' productivity by telling employees that a qualified woman has been hired and that harassment will not be tolerated. While sexual harassment can happen in any work environment, it can be particularly harsh for women working in nontraditional occupations. The problem that must be stopped is the harassing behavior, not women's entrance into the workplace.

Myth: Women will lose their femininity if they work in a trade.

Reality: Women can encounter offensive language anywhere, not just on the job site. While women need to be physically prepared for nontraditional jobs, there is nothing unfeminine about being physically fit.



Investigating Nontraditional Careers
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Student name: _____
 Advisor: _____
 Date: _____ Due Date _____

Nontraditional careers are those in which there is a gender imbalance, where less than 25% of the workers in an occupation are either male or female. The purpose of identifying these careers as nontraditional is to help educators, parents and students promote interest in and access to them for both genders. The goal of these efforts is to make sure that all individuals who have interest and/or skills in a particular career area have an opportunity to pursue that interest and develop their skills in an environment that is free of gender bias. Remember, most of you can do whatever you choose to do.

Directions

1. Log into **My Portfolio** using your User Name and Password.
2. On the *GCIS* home page, click on **Occupations**.
3. Choose three nontraditional careers to investigate in **Occupations** file of *GCIS*.
4. Click on **Add to My GCIS Favorites in My Portfolio** for each of the occupations you have explored and record your thoughts in the **My Thoughts** field.
5. Click **Save Information**.

Nontraditional careers for men

Bookkeeper/Accounting/
 Auditing Clerk
 Cosmetologist
 Data Entry Keyer
 Dental Hygienist
 Dressmaker
 Health Record Technologist
 Licensed Practical Nurse
 Nursing Aide/ Attendant
 Orderly
 Occupational Therapy
 Assistant
 Physical Therapy Assistant
 Registered Nurse
 Teacher Aide
 Teacher Assistant
 Textile Sewer/Machine
 Operator

Nontraditional careers for women

Adjuster & Calibrator
 Aircraft Engine Mechanic
 Air Traffic Controller
 Airplane Pilot & Navigator
 Automobile Mechanic
 Brick, Stonemason & Tile
 Setter
 Broadcast Equipment
 Operator
 Cabinet Maker & Bench
 Carpenter
 Captain & Other Officer,
 Fishing & Other Vessels
 Carpenter & Related Work
 Data Processing Equipment
 Repairer
 Drafter
 Electrical & Electronic Repairer,
 Miscellaneous
 Electrician
 Firefighter
 Funeral Director
 Furniture & Wood Finisher
 Groundskeeper & Gardener
 Guard
 Heavy Equipment Mechanic
 Machinist
 Mechanical Engineer
 Numerical Control Machine
 Operator
 Police & Detective
 Sheet Metal Worker
 Surveying & Mapping Technician
 Tool & Die Maker

