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Occupational Stereotyping by High School Deaf Students: A Preliminary Survey

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OCCUPATIONAL STEREOTYPING BY HIGH SCHOOL DEAF STUDENTS: A PRELIMINARY SURVEY

Lianne Moccia

I. INTRODUCTION

The choosing of a vocation is a complex process. Many factors affect the exploring, the decision-making, the training, the eventual placement. Each person approaches the question of work laden with attitudes, information, and misconceptions about work itself and which kinds of jobs are or are not within the framework of possibilities for her or him. One area that has been given much attention is how certain jobs have been considered appropriate for one sex and inappropriate for the other. These sex role stereotypes have resulted in many occupations being done only by men and many occupations being done only by women. Being the wrong sex has been a handicap — employment has been inaccessible for persons of the 'wrong' sex.

In the area of deafness, research has been done to show the effect of sex role stereotypes on vocational choice. Deaf women have been found to have significantly more traditional attitudes regarding sex roles than hearing women (Cook and Rossett, 1975). Hearing impaired male college students held more traditional beliefs regarding both men and women than did their hearing peers (Kolvitz and Quелlette, 1980). Research has also been done to show the effect of deafness on attitudes regarding occupational training and choice. A study of 30 female vocational students showed that they viewed occupations in a different manner than hearing peers; they considered the more interesting

and higher prestige jobs as suitable only for hearing people and closed to them as deaf (Duprez, 1971). Close to 300 NTID summer vestibule students were surveyed concerning their attitudes toward sex stereotyping of occupation and stereotyping of occupation on the basis of hearing or deafness. The males showed more stereotyping of jobs by sex than the females (which the authors suspected, since most of the women surveyed were in non-traditional courses of study at NTID). Those who stereotyped jobs by sex tended to see hearing impairment as a restriction for job possibilities (Egelston-Dodd, 1978).

A result of this double-pronged stereotyping — by sex and by deafness — has been that deaf individuals are overrepresented in certain fields of work and underrepresented or missing altogether in many others. A model for remedying this situation has been developed by Egelston-Dodd (1978). She suggests a program for materials and presentation based on a learning model with four dimensions: (1) the staff; (2) the conceptual; (3) the information; and (4) the experiential. Solid information about varieties of jobs as well as actual skill training in trades should be presented to both deaf women and deaf men so that they are equipped to make a real choice (McHugh, 1975; Lerman & Guilfoyle, 1970). Vocational planning should be based on a well-informed choice. Too often, deaf young people learn skills without a sufficient amount of knowl-

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edge to choose which they want to know and work at. The career development process has frequently been a process of matching talents with available tasks — and these have been occupations that are familiar to the deaf (Munson, Hoag, Howard, 1973). The training and exploration have conformed to stereotypes of sex and disability. Deaf individuals should be provided with information about all kinds of work and encouraged to enter work areas that have previously been considered closed to them. One such area is in the field of the sciences (Smith, 1979).

One effective method of accomplishing this expansion of occupational vistas is through direct experience with the jobs and with people working at various occupations. Egelston-Dodd suggests field trips to job sites (Egelston-Dodd, 1978). Two VR counselors in New York City have instituted visits to work situations as part of their program in working with deaf high school students to have easy communication with the worker at the job site, to relate specifically to the job through a deaf worker, and to expand their own horizons regarding the possibilities for them as deaf workers.

This study is an investigation of the attitudes of deaf high school students with respect to sex and deafness stereotypes. It also attempts to examine the extent of deaf role models in the lives of the participants in an attempt to see the effect they play on what the students see as potential areas of work.

II. PROCEDURES

This study examined 73 high school students between the ages of 14 and 19 (14-4, 15-15, 16-17, 17-24, 18-10, 19-3) at the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB). Thirty-four of the students (46.6%) were male and 39 (53.4%) were female. By self-report, 51 (69.9%) were deaf and 21 (28.8%) were hard of hearing (one person did not respond to the question). While 50.7% (37) reported age at onset as "birth" and 45.2% (33) reported it as "later", 4.1% (3) gave no

answer. Of the 33 who reported age at onset as "later", 26 reported the onset occurring before the age of 4, one at age 5, one at age 6, and further data was missing for 5 respondents. When asked about the hearing of parents and siblings, 6.8% (5) reported deaf mothers, 5.5% (4) reported deaf fathers, and 30.1% (22) reported deaf brothers or sisters.

The survey instrument (see Appendix A) asked for responses to the above demographic information and contained a list of 27 jobs. The respondents were asked to consider the 27 jobs from three perspectives: 1) Is each job suitable for a woman, a man, or both? 2) Is each job suitable for a hearing person, a deaf person, or both? 3) Do you know a deaf woman, a deaf man, or both who work at each job? The jobs chosen reflect a wide variety of skill levels; stereotypical "male"; stereotypical "female", neutral roles; occupations, often held by the deaf; and some occupations rarely held by the deaf. The intent was to present a varied sample of occupations in terms of both sex and deafness.

I obtained the participation of the high school homeroom teachers at ASDB through the cooperation and interest of a school counselor and a supervising teacher. I attended a teachers' meeting where I presented the survey instrument to the homeroom teachers. I explained the purpose of the survey and how I wanted it administered. Each teacher received a copy of written instructions (see Appendix B) which told him/her to read through the instructions on the survey with the students, to write the instructions on the blackboard if they desired, but not to discuss any other examples and not to offer any additional information or assistance in answering the questionnaire. The survey was to be administered over a three-day period: Day 1 consisting of the demographic information and page 2, the questions concerning sex; Page 3 (deafness or hearing) was answered on Day 2; and the page on role models was answered on Day 3.

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Some of the teachers objected to not being allowed to assist the students in answering the survey. They wanted to be allowed to use signs to convey the concepts of the various jobs to the students. They felt that some of the jobs listed would be unfamiliar to some students, in which case the students would be responding based on their understanding of the vocabulary and not necessarily on their understanding of the job itself. It was stated that, since there was no way to control how each teacher might differ in explanation, the only way to standardize the administration was to follow the written directions and to do no more than that. Throughout the survey there was always an optional answer, "don't know". Students were to be encouraged to answer "don't know" when they did not know. This was done to eliminate guessing and to possibly identify those vocabulary words which were unfamiliar to the students.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

When examining the survey forms, I realized that a number of students had misunderstood the directions. For example, several students indicated that they knew a deaf woman lawyer, a deaf woman doctor, a deaf man doctor. I feel that the statistical percentages are often inaccurate representations of the students' attitudes and knowledge. They are valuable, I feel, when seen in a ranked order. I suggest they be viewed more in this light than as exact figures.

Answers to the question of the sex of the worker were tabulated to determine the sex role stereotyping of the respondents. A response of "both" to an item signified that the job was seen as equally suitable for men and women. All "both" responses to each item were tabulated and a table was constructed based on frequency of response. Jobs with a high score were less dependent on sex (less sex role stereotyped) and those with a low score were more sex dependent (more sex role stereotyped).

Table I shows the combined responses of boys and girls.

TABLE I

dorm supervisor	81.1
school bus driver	76.7
school counselor	73.8
artist	64.0
bank clerk	61.1
cook	60.2
cashier	54.7
doctor	54.1
social worker	54.0
janitor	52.3
computer operator	47.3
farmer	44.4
truck driver	44.3
hairdresser	44.3
lawyer	43.5
office clerk	43.0
drafting	41.9
lab technician	41.9
house painter	37.3
factory worker	35.5
printer	30.6
electrician	30.2
used car dealer	30.1
librarian	24.4
auto body mechanic	16.9
carpenter	15.2
nurse	15.1

Table II shows the breakdown of boys' responses and girls' responses.

TABLE II

GIRLS

school counselor	76.9
dorm supervisor	76.9
school bus driver	76.9
artist	69.2
bank clerk	69.2
doctor	64.1
cook	61.5
computer operator	56.4
cashier	56.4
drafting	51.3
lab technician	51.3
lawyer	48.7
janitor	48.7
hairdresser	46.2
social worker	46.2
printer	43.6
truck driver	38.5
factory worker	38.5
office clerk	35.9
farmer	35.9
electrician	35.9
house painter	33.3
used car dealer	30.8
librarian	28.2
nurse	15.4
carpenter	12.8
auto body mechanic	10.3

BOYS

dorm supervisor	85.3
school bus driver	76.5
school counselor	70.6
social worker	61.8
cook	58.8
artist	58.5
janitor	55.9
farmer	52.9
cashier	52.9
bank clerk	52.9
office clerk	50.0

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truck driver	50.0
doctor	44.1
house painter	41.2
hairdresser	41.2
lawyer	38.2
computer operator	38.2
factory worker	32.4
lab technician	32.4
drafting	32.4
electrician	29.4
used car dealer	29.4
auto body mechanic	23.5
librarian	20.6
carpenter	17.6
printer	17.6
nurse	14.7

In Table II, the top three ranked jobs — school counselor, dorm supervisor, and school bus driver (all school personnel) — were the same for girls and boys. Seven of the top ten were the same in both lists. The rankings are quite similar with the following exceptions. The girls viewed doctor, computer operator, drafting, lawyer, and printer as significantly more able to be done by either sex than did the boys. Social worker, janitor, farmer, and house painter ranked higher by the boys than by the girls.

The number of “don’t know” responses were also tabulated and ranked. It can be assumed that there may be some confusion about the nature of these jobs or the meaning of the vocabulary words themselves. Table III shows the list of “don’t know” responses to the question of sex of the worker.

TABLE III

computer operator	30.7
lab technician	29.2
office clerk	27.4
social worker	23.1
hairdresser	15.2
cashier	14.9
lawyer	13.8
printer	12.7
drafting	12.3
used car dealer	12.1
factory worker	11.2
carpenter	10.8
farmer	7.2
school counselor	7.0
bank clerk	7.0
artist	6.8
electrician	5.7
librarian	5.5
doctor	4.0
auto body mechanic	2.8
nurse	2.8
dorm supervisor	2.6
truck driver	1.3
house painter	1.3
school bus driver	0.0
cook	0.0

The next set of responses, whether the job can be done by a hearing or deaf person, was tabulated in a similar way. All responses of “deaf” or “both” were counted and a table was constructed. High scores indicate a job that is not dependent on hearing (that deaf people can hold the job), low scores indicate attitudes that the job is highly dependent on hearing (that deaf people can not hold the job).

Table IV shows all responses.

TABLE IV

cook	90.4
dorm supervisor	87.3
auto body mechanic	78.4
drafting	77.4
school counselor	76.1
librarian	75.0
house painter	73.8
artist	70.3
farmer	69.5
printer	68.2
carpenter	64.4
janitor	61.9
factory worker	51.7
computer operator	50.9
electrician	46.9
lab technician	44.8
used car dealer	39.7
social worker	38.8
hairdresser	37.2
truck driver	36.6
nurse	35.5
school bus driver	30.5
office clerk	29.3
bank clerk	29.3
lawyer	20.2
cashier	19.4
doctor	17.6

Table V is a breakdown of boys’ and girls’ responses to the question of hearing or deafness.

TABLE V
GIRLS

cook	89.8
dorm supervisor	89.7
drafting	82.1
school counselor	79.5
artist	76.9
librarian	74.3
house painter	71.8
auto body mechanic	71.8
farmer	69.3
janitor	69.2
printer	66.7
carpenter	59.0
computer operator	56.4
electrician	51.3
factory worker	48.8
nurse	43.6
social worker	41.1
hairdresser	41.0
lab technician	41.0
used car dealer	30.8
truck driver	30.8

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school bus driver	30.7
lawyer	28.2
bank clerk	28.2
office clerk	28.2
doctor	23.1
cashier	20.5

BOYS

cook	90.9
auto body mechanic	84.9
dorm supervisor	84.9
house painter	75.8
school librarian	75.7
school counselor	72.7
drafting	72.7
farmer	69.7
printer	69.7
carpenter	69.7
artist	63.6
factory worker	54.6
janitor	54.5
lab technician	48.5
computer operator	45.4
electrician	42.5
truck driver	42.4
social worker	36.4
hairstylist	33.3
office clerk	30.3
school bus driver	30.3
bank clerk	30.3
nurse	27.3
used car dealer	24.3
cashier	18.2
doctor	12.1
lawyer	12.1

truck driver	52.6
lab technician	52.2
social worker	52.0
bank clerk	50.9
computer operator	50.4
nurse	49.9
cashier	47.0
office clerk	44.1
used car dealer	42.6
doctor	42.6
doctor	41.6
lawyer	37.5

A comparison was made between Table IV (deafness and hearing) and Table VI (role models). The lists are extremely similar. The top ten items of each list appear in the other top ten. The similarity continues to be the same throughout the whole list. A comparison of Table I (sex) and Table IV (deafness) shows that many professions and occupations are still seen as closed to hearing impaired individuals (e.g., doctor, lawyer, etc.) and conform to a disability stereotype while they may be not so stereotyped by sex (many traditionally male jobs were scored fairly high).

Respondents were also asked to list the occupations of their mother and father. Table VII is a list of jobs/employment of parents.

TABLE VII

hospital	manager
veterinarian	carpenter
unemployed	computer manager
mines	interpreter
retired	highway patrol
welder	city worker
magician	beautician
teacher	printing
tool and die	Hughes
airlines	teacher's aide
housewife	train
babysitting	grazing committee
farmer	Ken North
salesman	cook
dorm supervisor	medical recorder
painting	Lab Bolander rental
nuclear plant	PCC
Pepsi Co.	executive
AFB	real estate
bus driver	cabinet maker
truck driver	IBM
secretary	cleaners
bakery	airplane mechanic
construction	seamstress
pharmacy	police
waitress	maid

The jobs were listed in the terminology of the students. Often, there was no information about the job itself, no job description. For this reason, no analysis was done on this item. One noteworthy fact is there was

The girls' responses and the boys' responses were remarkably similar. Eleven in the top 12 appear on each list in Table V, although in different order. The bottom of the two lists (jobs less able to be done by a deaf person) are also very similar. Four of the top six jobs on Table IV are occupations connected to a school.

The third area of inquiry was the question, "Do you know a deaf woman, a deaf man, or both who work at each job?" Positive responses were tabulated for each item and a table was constructed. Table VI shows the "yes" responses to the question.

TABLE VI

dorm supervisor	92.8
cook	91.5
school counselor	87.5
auto body mechanic	86.2
librarian	84.5
printer	83.0
drafting	81.8
house painter	78.8
artist	77.5
farmer	67.7
electrician	64.5
carpenter	63.8
janitor	59.2
factory worker	57.0
hairstylist	55.6
school bus driver	54.7

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a high rate of "don't know" or no response, while 10.9% did not know mother's employment and 12.3% did not know father's employment.

Students were also to list the kind of work they would like to do when they finished school. This question was often overlooked. It was placed at the bottom of the last page and was easy to miss. The answers that were obtained were also not analyzed, but are listed in TABLE VIII.

TABLE VIII

- food service
- drama in deaf junior high school
- welder, yardman, or college
- railroad
- lawyer
- veterinarian
- firefighter
- detective
- computer
- computer operator
- writer
- model
- work with the deaf
- graphic arts
- artist
- media technology
- physical education
- carpenter
- IBM
- auto mechanic
- Navaho nation
- hospital
- NOTHING
- farmer
- truck driver
- no goal
- college
- doctor, engineer and admissions
- business like IBM
- engineering, photography
- or model fashions
- drafting
- basketball coach
- welding

This study reports an assumed effect of deaf role models on high school hearing impaired students. Knowing a deaf person working at a job may be directly related to considering the job appropriate for a deaf person, for oneself.

In order to expand the vista of occupations for deaf youth exposure to many deaf role models should be encouraged. Schools should actively recruit deaf employees for jobs at all levels. Career educators and vocational counselors should use a valuable resource in their communities — deaf workers. Deaf women and men working in the community, especially those involved in non-

traditional occupations with respect to sex, deafness, or both, should be identified and made part of an ongoing career exploration program. Students can visit the workplace, learn about the job, and see other deaf people being successful at the occupation. Deaf role models can be an invaluable part of the efforts to increase the possibilities for today's deaf youth.

APPENDIX

1. Age.....
2. Male or Female (circle one)
3. Are you deaf or hard or hearing (circle one)
4. When did you become deaf or hard of hearing?
at birth Yes No
at a later age Yes No what age?.....
5. Is your mother deaf? Yes No
6. Is your father deaf? Yes No
7. Do you have any deaf brothers and sisters?
Yes No
8. Mother's work
9. Father's work

DIRECTIONS:

Please read this list of different jobs.

If you think a woman can do the job, circle Woman.
Teacher Woman Man Don't Know

If you think a man can do the job, circle Man.
Teacher Woman Man Don't Know

If you think both women and men can do the job, circle Woman and Man.
Teacher Woman Man Don't Know

If you don't know, circle Don't Know.
Teacher Woman Man Don't Know

Office clerk Woman Man Don't Know
Doctor Woman Man Don't Know
Librarian Woman Man Don't Know

Auto body mechanic Woman Man Don't Know

Cook Woman Man Don't Know
Drafting Woman Man Don't Know

School bus driver Woman Man Don't Know
Farmer Woman Man Don't Know

Nurse Woman Man Don't Know
Social worker Woman Man Don't Know

Electrician Woman Man Don't Know
Used car dealer Woman Man Don't Know

School counselor Woman Man Don't Know
Computer operator Woman Man Don't Know

Cashier Woman Man Don't Know
Printer Woman Man Don't Know

House painter Woman Man Don't Know
Dorm supervisor Woman Man Don't Know

Artist Woman Man Don't Know
Lawyer Woman Man Don't Know

Janitor Woman Man Don't Know
Hairdresser Woman Man Don't Know

Lab technician Woman Man Don't Know
Carpenter Woman Man Don't Know

Bank clerk Woman Man Don't Know
Truck driver Woman Man Don't Know

Factory worker Woman Man Don't Know

DIRECTIONS:

Please read this list of different jobs.

If you think a hearing person can do the job, circle Hearing.
Teacher Hearing Deaf Don't Know

If you think a deaf person can do the job, circle Deaf.
Teacher Hearing Deaf Don't Know

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If you think <i>both hearing and deaf people can do the job</i> , circle Hearing and Deaf.				<i>this work</i> , circle Deaf Woman and Deaf Man.			
Teacher	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Teacher	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
If you <i>don't know</i> , circle Don't Know.				If you <i>don't know</i> , circle Don't Know.			
Teacher	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Teacher	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Office clerk	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Office work	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Doctor	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Doctor	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Librarian	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Librarian	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Auto body mechanic	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Auto body mechanic	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Cook	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Cook	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Drafting	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Drafting	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
School bus driver	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	School bus driver	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Farmer	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Farmer	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Nurse	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Nurse	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Social worker	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Social worker	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Electrician	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Electrician	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Used car dealer	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Used car dealer	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
School counselor	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	School counselor	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Computer operator	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Computer operator	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Cashier	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Cashier	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Printer	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Printer	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
House painter	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	House painter	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Dorm supervisor	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Dorm supervisor	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Artist	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Artist	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Lawyer	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Lawyer	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Janitor	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Janitor	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Hairdresser	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Hairdresser	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Lab technician	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Lab technician	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Carpenter	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Carpenter	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Bank clerk	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Bank clerk	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Truck driver	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Truck driver	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
Factory worker	Hearing	Deaf	Don't Know	Factory worker	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know
DIRECTIONS:				What kind of work would you like to do when you finish school?			
Please read this list of different jobs.							
If you know a deaf woman who does this work, circle Deaf Woman.							
Teacher	Deaf Woman	Deaf Man	Don't Know				
If you know a deaf man who does this work, circle Deaf Man.							
If you know a deaf woman and a deaf man who do							

(Instructions for teachers available upon request.)

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