

Circumscription and Compromise Theory of Career Development

Why are children's aspirations so restricted? How can we expand them?

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1000 newborns



A high-angle, wide shot of a busy, modern transit hub. The scene is dominated by a large, multi-level escalator system. The escalators are crowded with people, and the surrounding areas are filled with a dense crowd of individuals. The architecture features curved, metallic railings and a clean, industrial aesthetic. The lighting is bright and even, highlighting the scale of the space and the volume of people.

1000 newborns,
grown up

Why do they reproduce the
inequalities of the parent generation?

How do these newborns:

- Learn about the world
- Learn about themselves
- Decide “what they want to be when they grow up”

Extraordinarily complex task in modern world!!

World of work: What do they see, and when??



An exercise

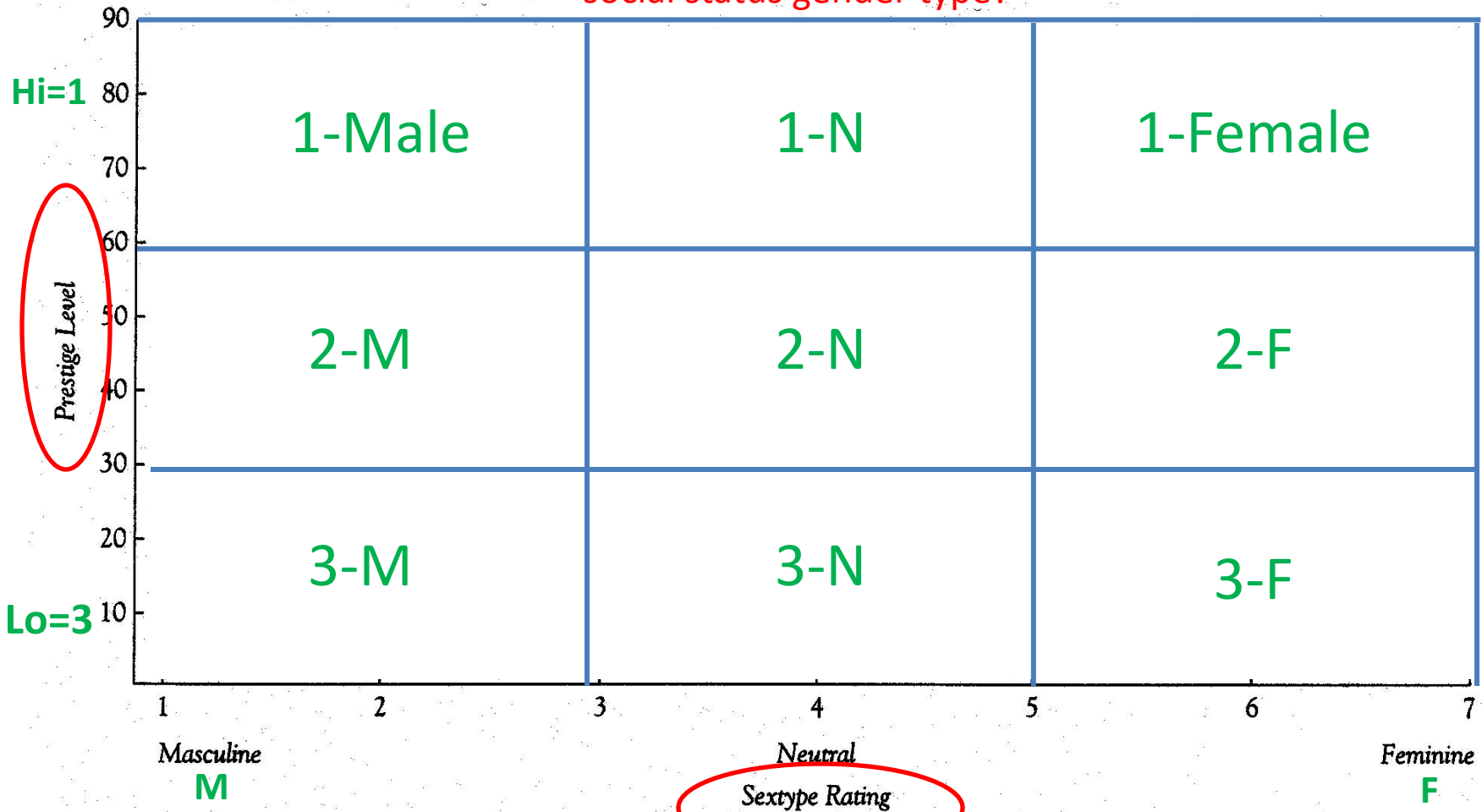
a. artist
 b. auto mechanic
 c. bank teller
 (Kassierer)

d. bell captain
 (Chefportier)
 e. engineer
 f. secondary
 teacher

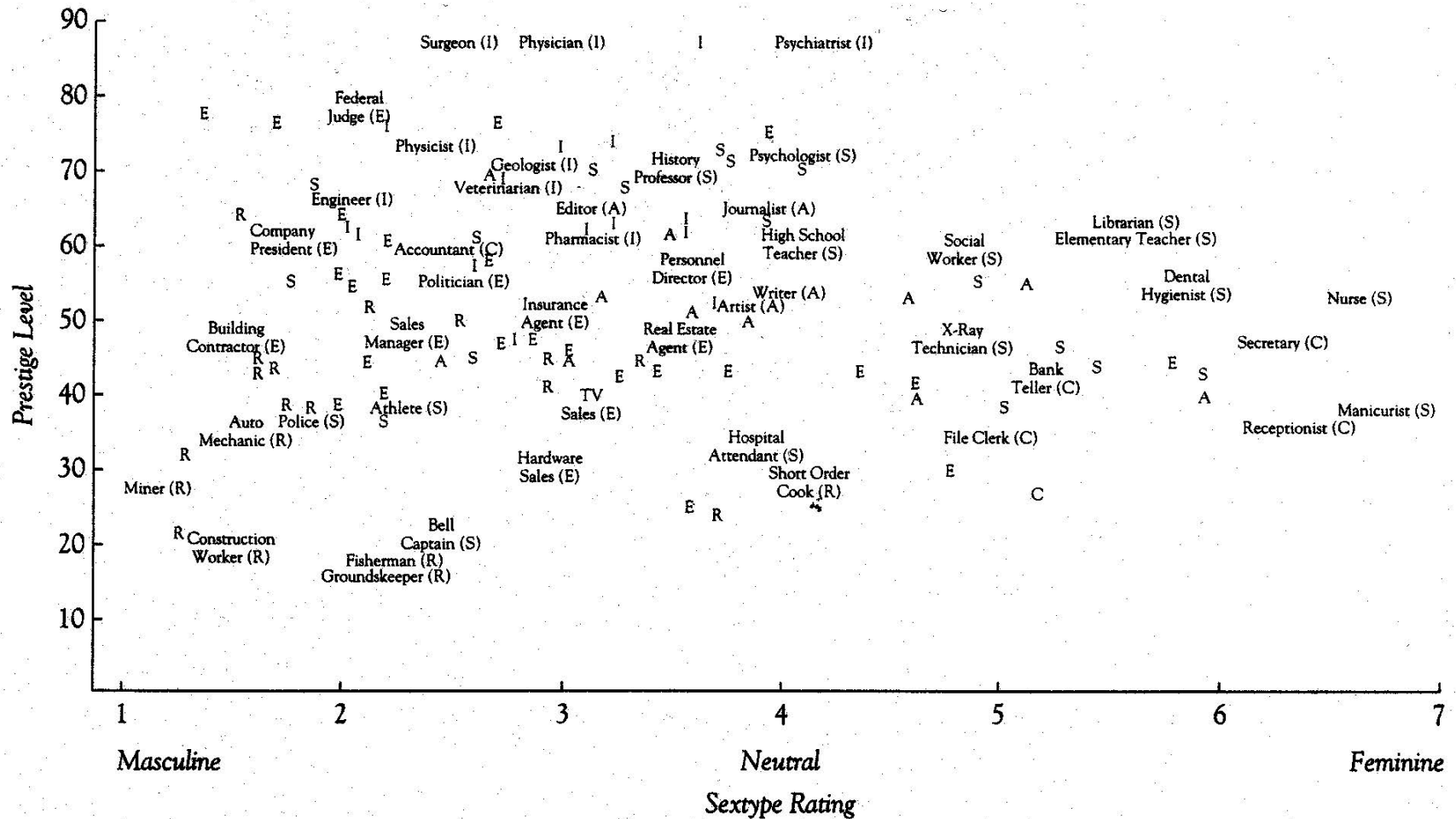
g. miner
 h. nurse
 i. psychologist
 j. real estate agent

k. receptionist
 l. short order cook
 (Schnellkoch)
 m. social worker
 n. surgeon

In what space do you think most adults would classify these occupations by perceived social status gender type?



Shared view among adults: A complex picture!

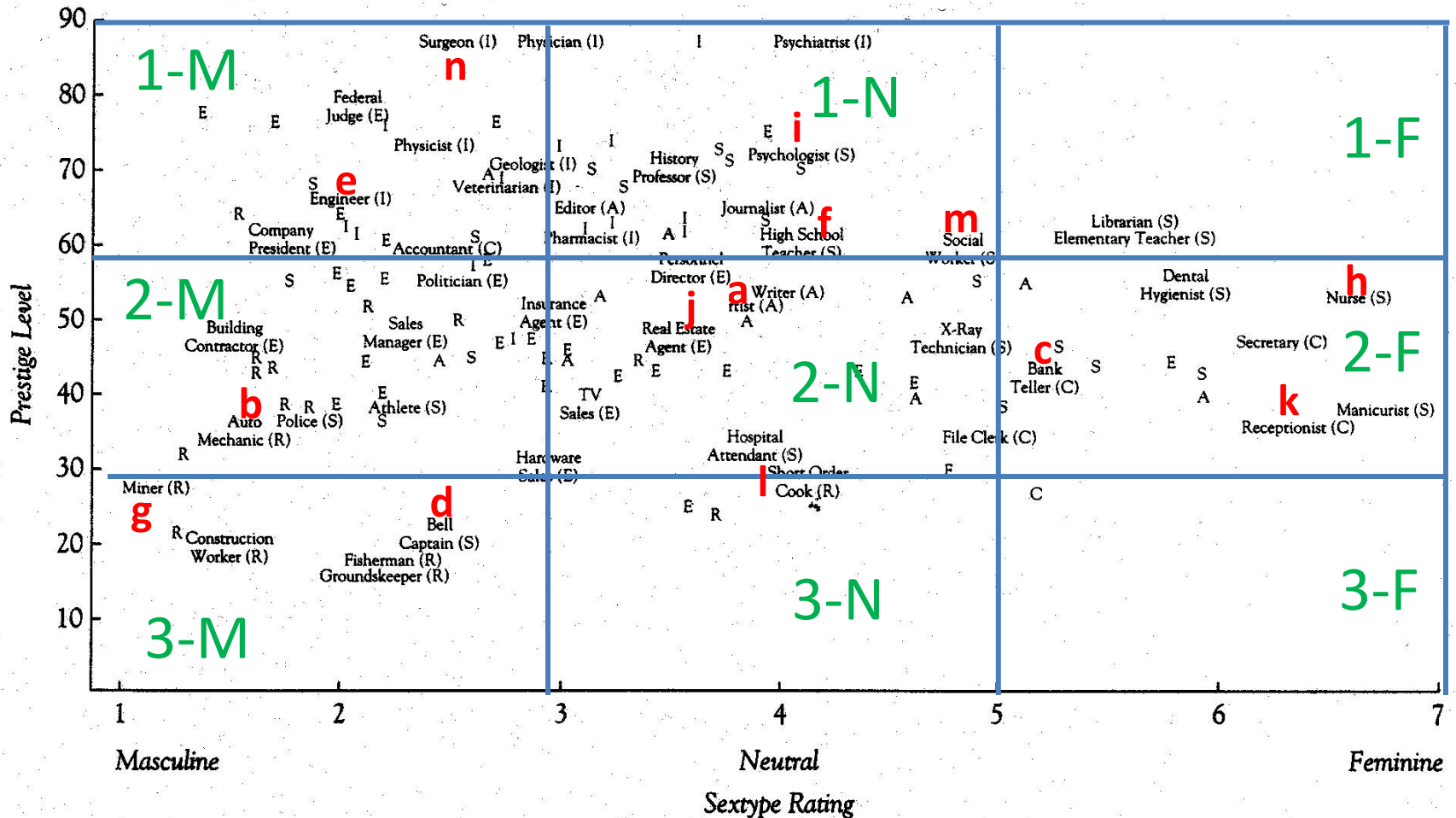


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My focus today

Developmental Processes	Behaviors to be optimized	Counselor strategies	Sample Tools		
			Primary School	Lower Secondary School	Upper Secondary School & Beyond
Cognitive growth	Learning	A: Reduce task complexity B: Accommodate cognitive diversity			
Self-creation	Experience	C: Provide broad menus of experience D: Promote self-agency in shaping own experience			
Circumscription	Self-Insight	E: Facilitate inventory and integration of information about self F: Promote sound conception of fitting and feasible career life			
Compromise	Self-Investment	G: Facilitate assessment of accessibility of preferred career life H: Promote self-agency in enhancing self, opportunity, and support			

Major points

Occupational choice is:

1. Process of elimination
2. Selecting a social self (niche in social world)
3. Begins at birth
4. Mostly complete before adolescence

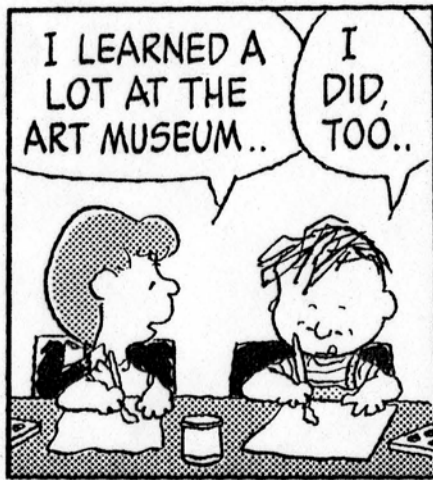
Guidance can:

- Reopen discarded options
- Promote self-insight & self-agency

Process of elimination

Famous American artist

PEANUTS



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SCALZ

Stage 1:
Size and Power
(preschool)

Big, powerful
Adult roles

Worker
Parent

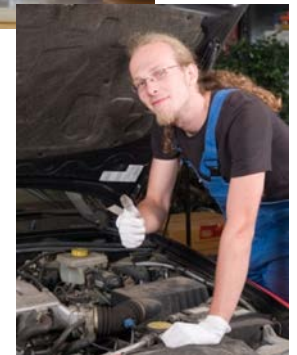
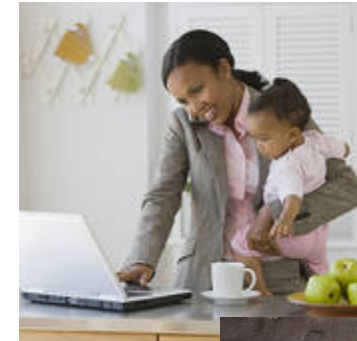
Little,
Child

Develop concept of adult roles

Fantasy



Reality



Stage 2:
Sex Roles
(*elementary school*)

Male
roles

Firefighter
Truck driver
Doctor

Female
roles

Nurse
Teacher
Secretary

Become aware of sex roles

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



- Dichotomous (either-or) thinkers
- Rule out job of “wrong” sextype

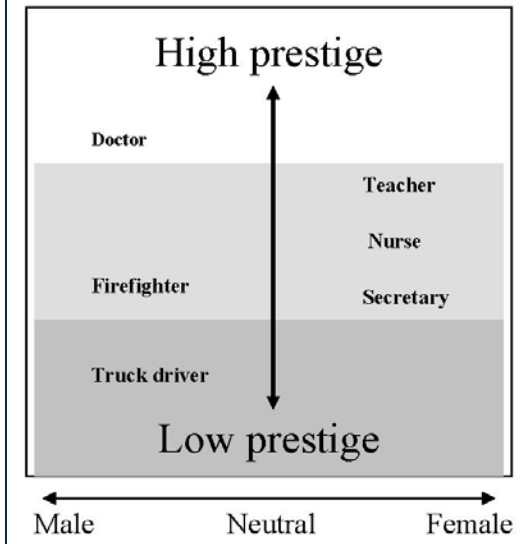
“That’s the DOLL aisle, Daddy.
Somebody might see us!”

Which jobs would primary school students select most often? Why?



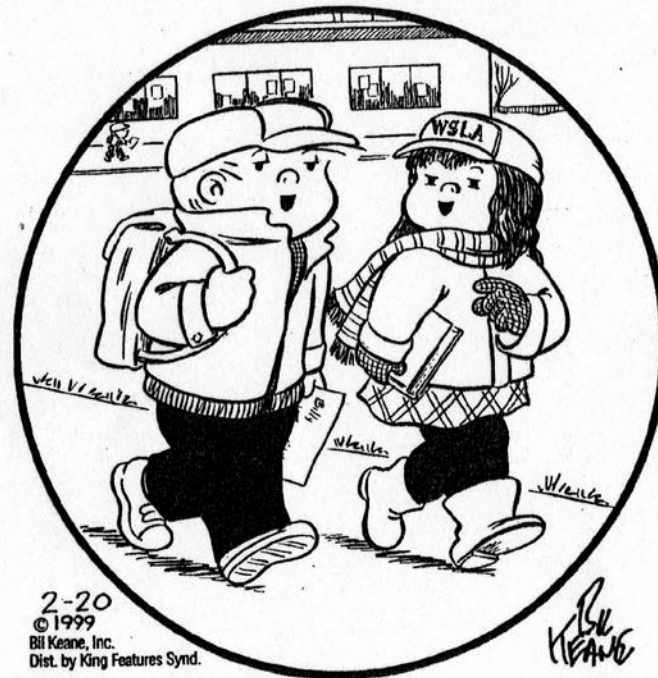
Concretely observable or familiar to them—and “correct” gender

Stage 3:
Social valuation
(middle school)



Become aware of social valuation of occupations

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"I wanna be a doctor and be very rich."
"I wanna be your lawyer."

- Able to think in 2 dimensions
- Rule out jobs that are "too low"

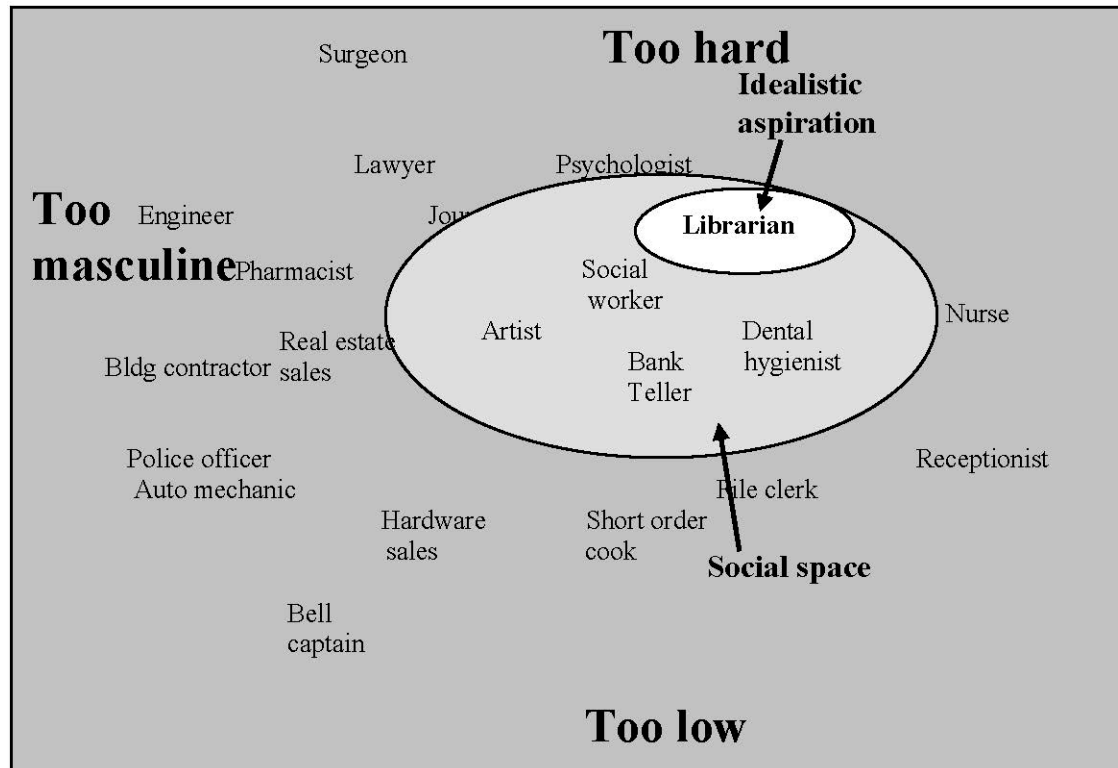
Become aware of what parents consider minimally acceptable

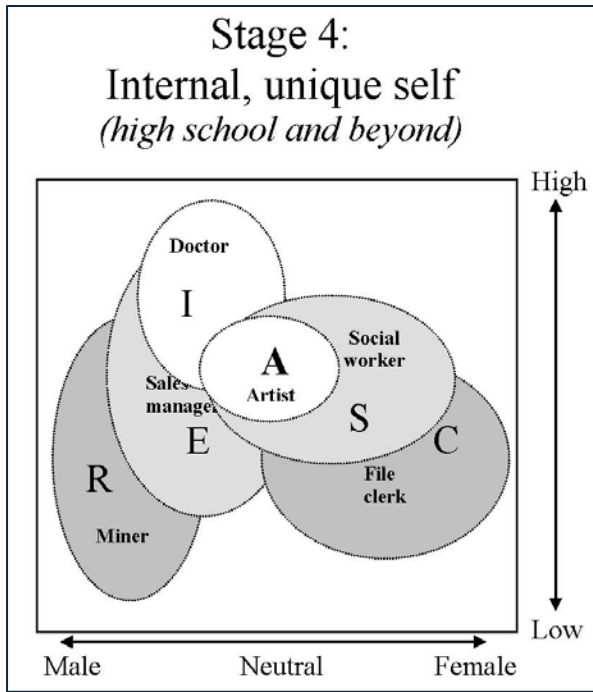
Increases with parent social status



Hypothetical girl

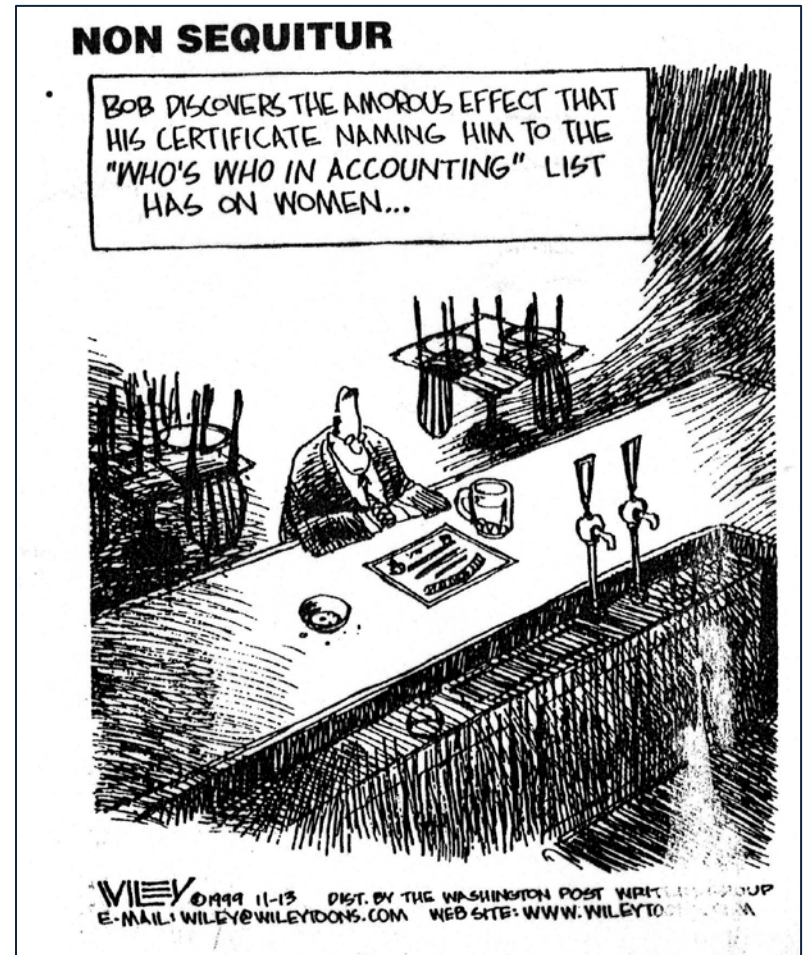
Middle class family





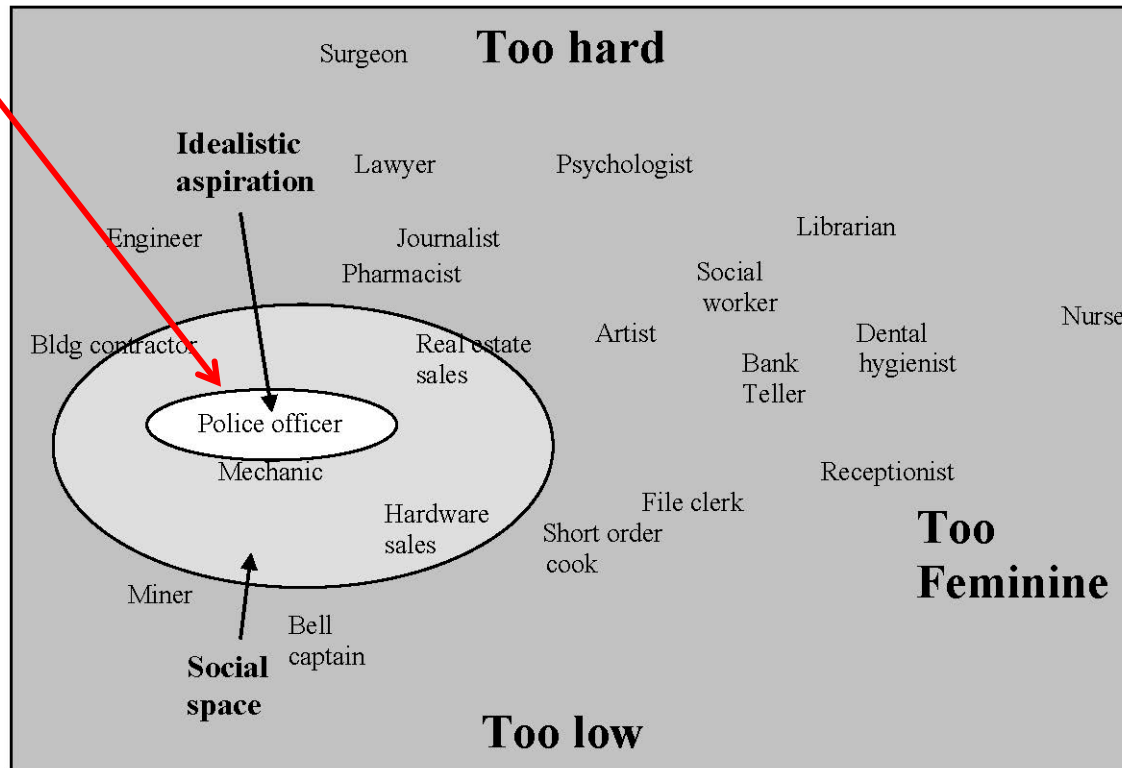
Become aware of occupational personalities—and their own, too

- Requires much abstract thinking
- Start to consider fields (Holland type) of work
- Restrict search to their “social space”



Hypothetical boy

Lower or working class family

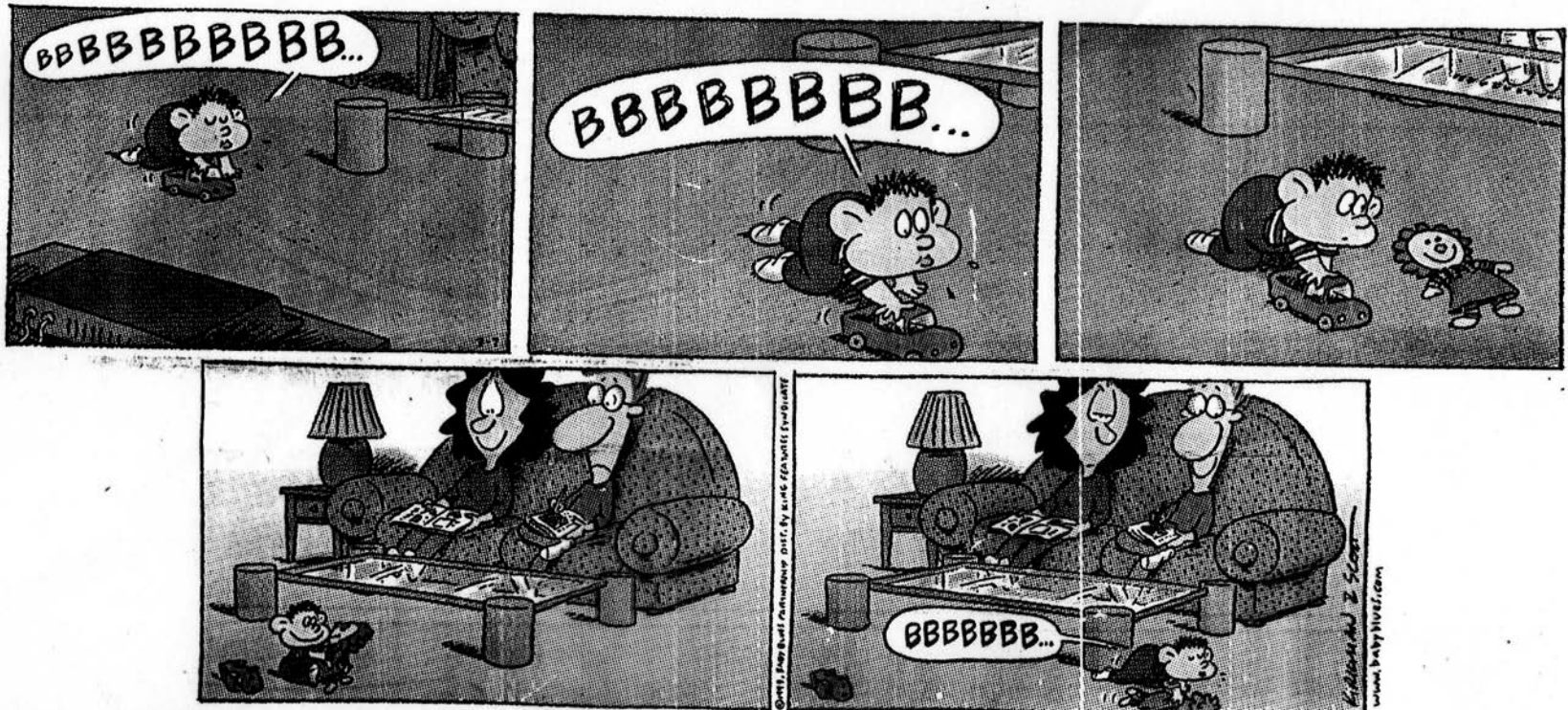


Is it all socialization?

No, we each have our own unique internal compass

“Active gene-environment correlation”

People select and modify their environments

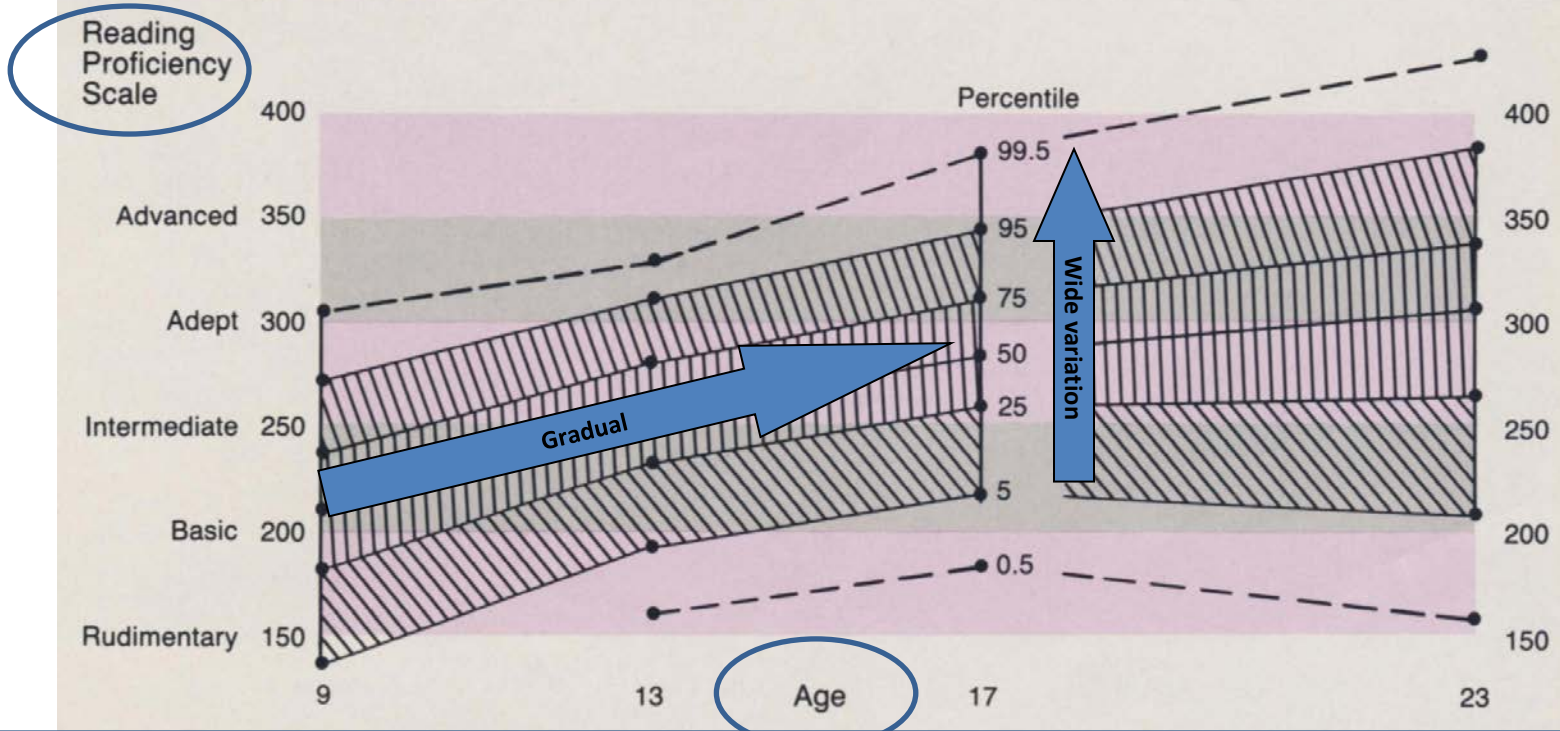


But how do we respect it if we cannot know it??

How do ability differences affect career development?

- Timing of stages
- Occupations for which they are most competitive
- Complexity of information they can best handle

FIGURE 1.
Total Groups, 1984 In-School Assessment,
Plus Young Adult Data, 1985



How do we respect differences in ability—to expand and not limit opportunities?

Degrees received in USA, 2008-09

	Bachelors	Doctorate
	% female	

Engineering and engineering technologies	16.5	21.7
--	------	------

Sex differences

- Why?
- How large?
- Changing?

Degrees received in USA, 2008-09	Bachelors	Doctorate
	% female	
Engineering and engineering technologies	16.5	21.7
Computer and information sciences and support services	17.8	22.4
Physical sciences and science technologies	40.8	32.3
Business	48.9	38.7
Agriculture and natural resources	47.6	44.2
Social sciences and history	49.4	44.4
Total all fields	57.2	52.3
Biological and biomedical sciences	59.2	52.7
Visual and performing arts	60.7	53.7
Communication and communications technologies	62.4	57.9
Foreign languages, literatures, and linguistics	70.2	61.7
Public administration and social service professions	81.7	62.3
English language and literature/letters	67.6	63.5
Education	79.2	67.3
Psychology	77.2	73.0
Health professions and related clinical sciences	85.2	73.7
Family and consumer sciences	87.4	80.2

things



people

Doctorates Earned in US, 2009

things

people



	% female
Engineering	
Nuclear engineering	13.7
Aerospace, aeronautical and astronautical engineering	13.9
Mechanical engineering	13.9
Electrical and electronics engineering	15.3
Systems engineering	16.4
Computer engineering	17.4
Civil engineering	20.9
Total	21.3
Operations research	24.1
Materials science engineering	25.1
Industrial engineering	26.2
Chemical engineering	26.7
Environmental health engineering	35.8
Bioengineering and biomedical engineering	36.5
Psychology	
Cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics	49.2
Industrial and organizational	61.2
Experimental psychology	61.4
Physiological/psychobiology	63.2
Social psychology	63.7
Family psychology	64.7
Total	71.4
Counseling	75.2
School psychology	76.0
Clinical psychology	76.2
Educational psychology	78.1
Human development and family studies	79.3
Developmental and child psychology	86.3

Source of sex differences in career interests?

2 Competing Hypotheses

	Inner compass	Modeling clay
Genetic tilt	50%	0%
Socialization & bias	50%	100%

Which best fits the evidence?

Evidence for some genetic tilt:

Abilities, Interests, Temperament

Average differences	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chromosomes Hormone balance Brain bilaterality Abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Y testosterone less connected spatial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X estrogen more verbal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interests Interest at 1 day old 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> things (not "realistic") mechanical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> people, living things social aces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values Personality traits Response to frustrating task (infant) Mode of aggression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "theoretical," "ideas" "assertive" "dominant" tried again physical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "social," "feelings" "agreeable" "nurturant" stopped & cried verbal

Note large overlap

Persistent, consistent, most confirmed worldwide

Again, how do we respect differences while expanding opportunities??

A few examples

Table 3: Overview of Aims, Strategies, and Sample Tools for a Comprehensive Career Guidance and Counseling System

Developmental Process	Behavior to be optimized	Counselor strategies	Sample Tools		
			Primary School	Lower Secondary School	Upper Secondary School & Beyond
Cognitive growth	Learning	A: <u>Reduce task complexity</u> B: Accommodate cognitive diversity	1: Information and tasks are discrete, concrete, short, and require only simple inferences (NAEP level: 150-225)	2: Information is lengthier; tasks require relating ideas and making generalizations (NAEP level: 200-275); low-ability students require less complex material (see Cell 1)	3: Information can be somewhat complicated; tasks require some analysis and integration of information (NAEP level: 250-325); low-ability students require less complex material (see Cell 2)
Self-creation	Experience	C: <u>Provide broad menus of experience</u> (intellectual, social, & things-related) D: Promote self-agency in shaping own experience	4: Field trips, career days, contact with diverse workers, experience kits, personal portfolios	5: Also—exemplars in novels, biographies, current affairs, & daily life; simple jobs in home or neighborhood, extracurricular activities, hobbies, scouting, school service projects; community visits	6: Also—broad selection of courses, community service, job shadowing, co-op, extern- and internships, tech-prep, clubs, (J)ROTC, FFA, scouting, student government, sports, construction-repair projects; summer jobs
Circumscription	Self-Insight	E: <u>Facilitate inventory and integration of information about self</u> F: Promote sound conception of fitting and feasible career life		7: List tentative life goals, major strengths and weaknesses, family expectations, potential barriers; exercises in identifying role conflicts, job requirements, which occupations they reject and why; simple exercises in setting goals & making decisions	8: Formal assessments of interest, ability, personality, values; analysis of past activities, support, barriers, effects on others; computerized information on person-job match; exercises in setting and balancing career life goals
Compromise	Self-Investment	G: Facilitate assessment of accessibility of preferred career life H: <u>Promote self-agency in enhancing self, opportunity, and support</u>			9: Books and training in writing resumes, interviewing for jobs, skill building and anxiety management; job banks, placement services; aids for <u>identifying best bets and backups, building support system, enlisting mentors</u>

Source: Gottfredson, L. S. (2005). [Using Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise in career guidance and counseling](#). In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 71-100). New York: Wiley.

Thank you!

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