

SERIES: WOMEN AND WORK
CAREERS TO DISCOVER

DIRECTED BY GINETTE PELLERIN

Most teenagers don't spend a lot of time thinking about the distant future, but as 14-year-olds Anoushka, Marie-Noëlle and Marjolaine discover, decisions made in high school can limit your career choices in later life. Especially if those career choices require training in math and science.

Aimed at a secondary school audience, *Careers to Discover* encourages young women to continue their studies in math and science and provides them with the facts they need to make an informed choice about the future. Through the example of five women who have chosen science and the applied sciences as their life's work, the film also provides young women with the kind of inspiring role models they need.

A production of the National Film Board of Canada under the Federal Women's Film Program (FWFP). The FWFP is the result of co-operation between the English Program/Studio D and the French Program/Regards de femmes at the NFB and several federal departments and agencies: Agriculture Canada; Department of Justice Canada; Department of the Secretary of State of Canada (Women's Program, Status of Disabled Persons Secretariat); Employment and Immigration Canada (Public Affairs); Environment Canada; Health and Welfare Canada (Family Violence Prevention Division, Health Promotion Directorate, Seniors Secretariat); Industry, Science and Technology Canada (Entrepreneurship and Small Business Office, Federal Business Development Bank, Federal Office of Regional Development (Quebec)); Labour Canada; Public Service Commission of Canada; Revenue Canada, Taxation; Solicitor General Canada; Status of Women Canada.

Script and Direction: **Ginette Pellerin**
Producer: **Chantal Bowen**

Disponible en français sous
le titre *Se donner des "elles"*



Closed captioned for the deaf and hard of hearing.
A decoder is required.

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User's Guide

This film is intended primarily to encourage teenage girls to choose courses in science and mathematics leading to scientific careers. The film is best shown to students in grades 8 & 9 within a group context, and facilitated by a guidance counsellor.

Before you show the film

The following questions will help students identify preconceived ideas or prejudices about the place of women in science-related careers.

- What careers do you think are the most interesting and pay the most?
- Do men or women hold the majority of these jobs? Why?
- What subjects do you need to take to get into these fields?
- Who in the class is better at science and math, girls or boys?
- Why are there so few female engineers and architects, even though girls often do better in science than boys?

After showing the film

- a) The impact of the film on the group's perceptions may be measured using the following questions:
- Which of the professions described in the film seems especially interesting to you? Why?

- In your opinion, why are there more men than women in the occupations shown in the film?
- Is physical strength needed to be an architect or agricultural engineer?
- Does being a mother seem incompatible with these professions? Four of the five women shown in the film have children.
- Do you think it would be a good thing for society if more women worked in scientific fields? In your opinion, what would be their special contribution?

b) It might be useful at this point to remind students of certain facts:

- One hundred of the best paid and most prestigious professions in Canada have a basic requirement in common: studies in math and science.
- In Canada, as students progress, the proportion of women who take math and science courses decreases. However, statistics indicate that the performance of girls in these subjects is equal to, if not better than, that of boys.
- According to recent Canadian statistics, medicine and law now attract about equal numbers of men and women. But women make up less than 20% of students in math, applied science and physics.
- The scientific abilities of women are underused, depriving society of half its potential. The Science Council of Canada and other organizations are predicting a shortage of scientists by the year 2000.



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- A variety of factors impede women's access to scientific and technological careers:
 - expectations — implicit or explicit — of parents;
 - greater attention given by teachers to boys in math and science;
 - the still widespread myth that you have to be good at math to succeed in science or engineering;
 - the lack of female role models as teachers and professionals in these fields;
 - sexism in the workplace (discrimination in hiring and promoting).
- There are also many ways to encourage girls to opt for science and math:
 - making parents aware of sexist stereotypes they may be promoting;
 - making students and guidance counsellors more aware of possible sexism and bias in course content, manuals and teaching methods;
 - meetings between girls and successful female role models in scientific fields;
 - advertising by firms of scientific positions open to women and implementation of equity programs.

Complementary Bibliography

Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women. *What Will Tomorrow Bring? A Study of the Aspirations of Adolescent Women*. 1985.

Canadian Teachers Federation. *A Cappella: A Report on the Realities, Concerns, Expectations and Barriers Experienced by Adolescent Women in Canada*. 1990.

Committee on the Status of Women in Ontario Universities. *Attracting and Retaining Women Students for Science and Engineering*. Report. 1991.

Kathleen Gibson, ed. *Miss-ing Science: Suggestions for Teaching Female Friendly Science*. Vancouver: SCWIST, 1992.

The Ontario Women's Directorate. *Background Materials and Curriculum Resources to Encourage Females into the Fields of Mathematics, Science and Technology: An Annotated Bibliography*. 1991.

Other Resources

The Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology:

A bilingual organization based in Vancouver, SCWIST was established to encourage the professional participation of women in all aspects of science and technology. In addition to acting as a liaison and resource centre, the society publishes a newsletter and arranges for female scientists to talk to secondary students about their own work and the career choices open to women who continue studies in math and science.

The Ontario Women's Directorate

An advocacy agency resource centre established to promote the social, legal and economic equality of Ontario women, the OWD also publishes educational materials designed to assist teachers and counsellors involved in providing career planning assistance to female students.

How to Obtain FWF Films and Videos

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