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# College students' perceptions of barriers to career development

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## Abstract

The present study examined the types of career-related barriers perceived by college students and gender differences in perceptions of barriers. Subjects ( $N = 48$ , 50% of each sex) responded to a free-response, thought-listing instrument containing five stimulus statements representing common career-related experiences, plus a sixth statement eliciting "special concerns for women." The resultant responses ( $N = 1098$ ) were sorted into categories within each stimulus topic, and categories were further coded as social/interpersonal, attitudinal, or interactional barriers, based on a modification of previous classification systems. Results of the categorization indicated that (a) subjects did perceive the existence of barriers in each of the six stimulus topics with some topical variation in the number of barriers listed, (b) the number of initial categories within topics ranged from 17 to 19, with several categories that were common across topics, and (c) interactional barriers were more frequent than attitudinal

barriers, which in turn were more frequent than social/interpersonal barriers. A repeated-measures MANOVA indicated significant topic  $\tilde{A}$ —category differences; no significant gender differences were observed.



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