DEVELOPMENT OF THE "GETTING READY FOR YOUR NEXT JOB" INVENTORY FOR UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

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This article describes the development of a self-administered inventory to provide unemployed job seekers of varying education levels and backgrounds with insight into their job search. The inventory was refined in 5 phases with multiple samples. Evidence for predictive validity was provided by examining the relationship between the inventory components (job-search intensity, Internet use, job-search confidence, job-search clarity, support, stress and worry, skills, barriers, job-search experience, difference between last wage and wage desired, time spent in job search, and number of interviews in last 2 weeks) and employment outcomes several months later. The inventory, titled "Getting Ready for Your Next Job" (YNJ), is shown in the Appendix. Interested users may download a PDF or Microsoft Word version of the YNJ from http://www.ynj.csom.umn.edu/.

2008 and 2009 brought an onslaught of layoffs and a sharp uptick in the unemployment rates worldwide (Baker, 2009). For the individuals experiencing it, job loss is often a stressful life event, characterized by financial hardship, uncertainty, loss of social networks, and lower levels of psychological well-being (Price, Friedland, & Vinokur, 1998). Recently, research has focused on identifying variables associated with effective job search and reemployment success (Côté, Saks, & Zikic, 2006; Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001; Saks, 2005; Saks & Ashforth, 1999; Tay, Ang, & Van Dyne, 2006; Van Hooft, Born, Taris, & van der Flier, 2004; Vinokur & Schul, 2002; Wanberg, Hough, & Song, 2002; Zikic & Klehe, 2006).

This emergent research base along with ballooning unemployment rates creates an opportunity for engaged scholarship (Bartunek, 2007; Van de Ven, 2007; Van de Ven & Johnson, 2006), combining academic knowledge with practitioner experience to create interventions to help unemployed job seekers navigate their job search. Although there are several potential ways of helping job seekers including more extensive interventions (Caplan, Vinokur, Price, & van Ryn, 1989; Joseph & Greenberg, 2001), this article describes the development of a self-administered inventory to provide job seekers with quick insight into and feedback about aspects of their job search they should attend to or modify. This article contributes to a literature that has no such tool available, responds to scholars who have noted such a tool should be valuable (Saks, 2005), and also illustrates an engaged scholarship approach to scale development.

The inventory, hereafter referred to as the Getting Ready for Your Next Job (YNJ) inventory (see Appendix), was developed for the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MDEED). Although developed for immediate use in Minnesota, the inventory development was supported by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and is meant to be available for free use by any state or private agency or counselor assisting unemployed job seekers. The tool was developed in response to two needs. First, similar to other states, the state of Minnesota works with thousands of unemployed individuals each year. Although workshops are available to help job seekers with tangible skills such as networking, there was a desire to develop an assessment tool covering several areas related to the job search to help job seekers and job counselors identify issues that may present a problem. Second, although some individuals visit state job or workforce centers to receive help with their job search, others prefer to help themselves. A self-assessment tool was viewed as something that could be mailed to individuals or made available to individuals online.

There were three major goals associated with the inventory's creation. First, the inventory was to focus on areas for which basic feedback could be provided to the job seeker. Concise feedback boxes were to be provided to job seekers based upon their responses to the inventory, with the possibility for job counselors to expand upon that feedback in one-on-one consultations or group workshops. The feedback boxes are highlighted segments of text following each topic within the inventory, including advice, job-search tips, or information about available resources and specific actions to increase success in job search. Second, the inventory was to be both highly accessible and sufficiently general to allow administration to job seekers from diverse occupations and varying levels of job experience, education, and cognitive ability. A potential solution of multiple inventories was discarded as too difficult (and sensitive) to implement with the thousands of job seekers in the state's unemployment system each year.

Third, the inventory was to be designed to allow self-administration by the job seeker in instances where individuals do not wish to speak to a job-search counselor or when such a counselor is not available. At the same time, the inventory could be used to help guide discussions between a job seeker and counselor when this service is available. As a first step, the tool was to be in paper rather than electronic form because not all individuals have access to a computer.

The engaged scholarship model was chosen as a means of proceeding with this project. Engaged scholarship is defined by Van de Ven (2007) as "a participative form of research for obtaining the different perspectives of key stakeholders (researchers, users, clients, sponsors, and practitioners) in studying complex problems (p. 9)." The goal of the current project was to produce an inventory that was research based but informed, and ultimately used and seen as valuable by SMEs working with unemployed individuals on a daily basis as well as the unemployed individuals themselves.

The YNJ was developed in five phases. Phase 1 involved item generation and extensive consultation and piloting to get feedback on the desired content of the inventory. In Phase 2 we used exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to examine the factor structure of the items and to reduce and refine the inventory items. In Phase 3 we confirmed the factor structure with a separate and geographically distinct sample of job seekers. In Phase 4 we examined the relationship between the subscales and several indices of job search and reemployment success (e.g., unemployment insurance exhaustion, reemployment status, number of job offers, and person-job fit and pay satisfaction for those reemployed). Finally, in Phase 5 we added feedback boxes to each section of the inventory. We then collected data regarding perceived usefulness of the instrument, suggestions for improvement of the feedback boxes, and time taken to complete the inventory.

Phase 1: Item Generation

A first draft of the inventory was developed; this draft included 98 items representing 17 variable categories supported as relevant to central reemployment success outcomes. The 17 variable categories along with the purported theoretical or supported empirical relevance to job search and reemployment success are outlined in Table 1. The inventory content was developed based upon Wanberg et al.'s (2002) theoretical model of reemployment success as well as Kanfer et al.'s (2001) meta-analysis depicting major correlates of employment outcomes. Available measures of constructs such as job-search behavior (e.g., Blau, 1994) and career change adjustment (e.g., Heppner, Multon, & Johnston, 1994) were consulted and proved valuable as an aid for item generation and in ensuring the content representativeness of our inventory. The Wanberg

TABLE 1
Description of 17 Variable Categories in the First Draft of the Inventory

Variable category	Definition	Example item	Nature of relationship with job search or reemployment success	Retained in final inventory	Suggested use for feedback
1 Job-search intensity	Extent of engagement in specific job-search activities.	How many times in the last 2 weeks have you telephoned or visited a possible employer?	This item category assesses job-search behavior with relation to what job-search methods are being used and how often. Higher search intensity is related to probability of reemployment and increased number of job offers (e.g., Kanfer et al., 2001). Items refer to the last 2 weeks in order to promote accurate recall as well as to provide information on current behavior.	Yes—See items A7–A15 in Appendix.	The counselor can review whether the job seeker is using a variety of search methods and how often they are using them. They should encourage use of a variety of methods, and make sure that the person is using networking.
2 Job-search persistence	The extent to which individuals are able to self-regulate their search behavior; continuing and persisting over time.	It's hard to stick with my job-search activities (reversed).	Also taps job-search behavior, however, more specifically elicits information about the ability to persist over time (Kanfer et al., 2001).	Eliminated in Phase 1; information in categories 1 and 16 deemed sufficient to capture information on search behavior.	

TABLE 1 (continued)

Variable category	Definition	Example item	Nature of relationship with job search or reemployment success	Retained in final inventory	Suggested use for feedback
3 Job-search confidence	Self-confidence/self-rated skill for being able to do a good job with specific aspects of the job search.	How confident do you feel about being able to do a good job of writing a good cover letter?	Considered a proximal, self-evaluative antecedent, job-search self-efficacy is related to faster reemployment (e.g., Kanfer et al., 2001; Saks & Ashforth, 1999); Interview self-efficacy is related to number of job offers (e.g., Tay et al., 2006).	Yes—See items A16–26 in Appendix.	The counselor can watch for responses where job seeker indicates they are "not at all confident." Tips may be provided, and courses or reference room materials may be recommended.
4 Reemployment confidence	Self-confidence about being able to find a suitable job.	Overall, how confident are you that you will get a job that you like?	Incorporates aspects of what Kanfer et al. (2001) term expectancy antecedents (perceived control and optimism). Premise is that individuals with higher confidence in their ability to find jobs will experience higher reemployment success.	Eliminated in Phase 1; considered too general to be helpful for feedback purposes.	
5 Job-search clarity	Having a clear idea of the type of career, work, or job desired.	I need help planning a career change (reversed).	Clarity helps individuals conduct a focused job search and find a job they like faster (e.g., Côté et al., 2006; Wanberg et al., 2002; Zikic & Klehe, 2006).	Yes—See items A28–A29 in Appendix.	The counselor needs to know if a person has a clear goal in mind. Those that don't can be directed to resources to help them resolve their uncertainty.

TABLE 1 (continued)

Variable category	Definition	Example item	Nature of relationship with job search or reemployment success	Retained in final inventory	Suggested use for feedback
6 Job-search support	Having a network of individuals who provide information, advice, counseling, or encouragement.	I have friends or family who I can talk to when my day hasn't gone well.	Considered a social capital antecedent by Wanberg et al. (2002), social support may provide information, advice, or encouragement relevant to the job search and facilitate continued efforts (Kanfer et al., 2001; Vinokur & Caplan, 1987).	Yes—See items A34–A35 in Appendix	Individuals with low levels of support may be directed to networking groups or may be encouraged to reach out to friends, family, or colleagues for information and advice.
7 Job networks	Possession and use of social capital in the job search.	I plan to talk to some people I know about possible jobs.	Also a social capital antecedent (Wanberg et al., 2002), the use of personal networks aids reemployment and reemployment quality (Boxman, De Graaf, & Flap, 1991).	Incorporated into Job-Search Intensity in Phase 2 EFA (Items A14–A15)	
8 Skills and qualifications	Sufficiency and currency of skills, training and education.	My skills for doing the type of work I want to do are up-to-date.	Considered a human capital antecedent, self-reported skill is related to reemployment speed (Wanberg et al., 2002).	Yes-See items A36–A37 in Appendix	Training or continuing education options may be discussed.

TABLE 1 (continued)

Variable category	Definition	Example item	Nature of relationship with job search or reemployment success	Retained in final inventory	Suggested use for feedback
9 Financial hardship	Having insufficient financial resources to the extent that it is difficult to make ends meet.	I must find a job very quickly as I need the money.	Individuals with stronger financial hardship have a greater motive to find employment; financial hardship has been associated with conducting a more intense search (e.g., Saks, 2005; Kanfer et al., 2001).	Incorporated into Barriers section–See item A42 in Appendix.	Budgeting strategies can be discussed; however care must be taken not to eliminate focus on reemployment goal.
10 Job-search barriers	Situational factors that might limit an individual's job search or reemployment success.	I have access to a phone where employers can call me; I know how to use a computer; I have access to the Internet and e-mail; I have reliable transportation to get to work and interviews; There are other issues that will affect my chances of getting a job (disability, health problem, child care, financial hardship).	Labeled "job-seeker reemployment constraints" by Wanberg et al. (2002), the basic premise is that a variety of circumstantial obstacles may hurt individuals' chances of reemployment (Dayton, 1981).	Yes—Items A28–A42	The counselor can help the individual navigate and find ways to reduce the impact of these barriers.

TABLE 1 (continued)

Variable category	Definition	Example item	Nature of relationship with job search or reemployment success	Retained in final inventory	Suggested use for feedback
11 Stress and worry	Experiencing negative affect such as anger, nervousness, or worry.	How have you felt most of the time in the last 7 days? Angry, easily upset, worried.	Neuroticism is negatively associated with later reemployment status and number of offers (Kanfer et al., 2001). Stress and worry during unemployment are negatively associated with reemployment quality, perhaps because individuals are driven to accept unacceptable jobs (e.g., Vinokur & Schul, 2002).	Yes—See items A30–A33 in Appendix.	The counselor can help determine a search plan which may alleviate some anxiety; job-search networking groups may be recommended; individuals may be referred for additional help as needed.
12 Conscientiousness	Tendencies and behaviors related to dependability, achievement striving, and planfulness (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001).	Organized, hardworking, dependable	Another personality antecedent, meta-analytic data show a −.12 correlation with unemployment duration (Kanfer et al., 2001).	Eliminated in Phase 1 for reasons discussed in text.	

TABLE 1 (continued)

Variable category	Definition	Example item	Nature of relationship with job search or reemployment success	Retained in final inventory	Suggested use for feedback
13 Extraversion	Tendencies and behaviors related to sociability, dominance, ambition, and positive emotionality (Barrick et al., 2001)	Assertive, outgoing, self-confident	Another personality antecedent, meta-analytic data show a −.10 correlation with unemployment duration (Kanfer et al., 2001)	Eliminated in Phase 1 for reasons discussed in text.	
14 Job-search experience	Extent of experience looking for a job.	How many different times have you had to look for a job with a new employer in the past 10 years (not including now)?	Search experience should facilitate an understanding of how the job-search process works and should presumably facilitate job-search quality, an antecedent discussed by Wanberg et al. (2002).	Yes—See item A27 in Appendix.	This item allows the counselor to see at a glance how many times the person has been through the job-search process in recent years. Individuals who have not gone through the process in the last 10 years are typically much more uncertain about the process.

TABLE 1 (continued)

Variable category	Definition	Example item	Nature of relationship with job search or reemployment success	Retained in final inventory	Suggested use for feedback
15 Last wage–wage desired	Wage of the last job minus the desired wage for a new job.	"How much money did you make at your last job" compared to "What is the minimum pay that you would be prepared to accept if you were offered a job?" A small or negative difference indicates an unwillingness to go down in wage.	Another potential reemployment barrier. If an individual is not willing to go down at all in pay, or if they expect to actually go up in pay, they may experience longer unemployment durations (e.g., Jones, 1988; Wanberg et al., 2002).	Yes—See items A3–A4 in Appendix.	The counselor benefits from knowing the pay level of the job the individual is looking for. Some individuals are wildly unrealistic in their expectations. The items also help the job seeker think about desired wage—not all job seekers have done so.

TABLE 1 (continued)

Variable category	Definition	Example item	Nature of relationship with job search or reemployment success	Retained in final inventory	Suggested use for feedback
16 Job-search hours	Number of hours spent in job search	In the last 2 weeks, I spent a total of __ hours looking for a job.	Similar to categories 1 and 2, this item assesses job-search behavior. However, this single item is designed to elicit specific information about effort (Saks, 2005). Barron and Mellow (1981) demonstrated a 10 hour per week increase in search time is associated with a 20% increase in employment probability for the average unemployed individual.	Yes—See item A5 in Appendix.	Although it is still unclear exactly how much time individuals need to put into their job searches, counselors can be alerted to levels that seem too low. For example, a small percentage of individuals in a sample reported by Wanberg, Zhu, and Van Hooft (in press) indicated they spent 0–1 hours a day looking for a job over a 3-week period (a level that is likely too low).
17 Number of job interviews in the last 2 weeks	Number of job interviews in the last 2 weeks	In the last 2 weeks, I had a total of __ job interviews.	A proxy for job-search quality and a signal of human capital (Wanberg et al., 2002), more interviews are related to more job offers (Saks & Ashforth, 2000). This item can also signal to a counselor how the individual is faring on the job market to date.	Yes—See item A6 in Appendix.	Counselors in our SME group noted that if individuals have not had any job interviews in the last 2 weeks, search methods or materials may need revision.

Note. Item numbers shown in the "retained in final inventory" column correspond to items in final inventory shown in Appendix.

et al. (2002) and Kanfer et al. (2001) frameworks support inclusion of a slightly broader array of constructs (i.e., Agreeableness, Openness to Experience, optimism, self-esteem, and employment commitment) than we included in our draft content. For our purposes, those variables with the most established, proximal relationships with employment outcomes as well as those having least overlap with other constructs were chosen. For example, of the Big Five, Agreeableness and Openness to Experience were not included because fewer studies have associated these variables with reemployment success and effect sizes have been smaller than for the other three constructs (Kanfer et al., 2001). Biographical antecedents, such as age, gender, and race were not included in the inventory because the DOL prohibits incorporation of these variables into processes where the elements may be used in ways which could unfairly favor some individuals over others with respect to their need for reemployment services (Social Security Act of 1949).

This initial draft of the inventory, including several feedback boxes suggesting what individuals might do to improve their chances of obtaining reemployment success, was used for several months across the state of Minnesota by 30 WorkForce Center counselors in one-on-one as well as group interactions with thousands of job seekers. Following this trial period, we assessed the opinions of counselor and job seeker SMEs about the item pool and inventory. An advisory board of 10 WorkForce Center staff members was assembled, and the researchers were able to meet with all 30 of the counselors using the initial draft of the inventory. Two focus groups of job seekers were also conducted. These SMEs were consulted extensively with regard to item readability (including issues such as length, reading level, clarity, and grammar) and content (including content deficiency, content redundancy, and face validity; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006).

Readability

Overall, the pilot inventory was very successful, to the extent that the decision was made to continue use of the pilot form statewide until the final inventory was complete. Strong feedback was provided, however, with regard to its length (too long) and reading level (too difficult for individuals with lower reading levels and English as a second language). With regard to the length of the inventory, 98 items were considered too long to hold the attention span of some job seekers. With regard to reading level, an evaluation using the Flesch–Kincaid method (Flesch, 1948) indicated the pilot items were at a grade level of 6.2. Consistent with literacy experts who suggest accessible reading is at the 5th- or 6th-grade level (Doak, Doak, & Root, 1996; Weiss & Coyne, 1997), the SMEs

believed simplification of the items was important to enhance usability. Because polysyllabic words contribute to higher reading levels, before moving on to Phase 2 we replaced several words in the inventory draft having three or more syllables with simpler words (e.g., "consulted with" was replaced with "talked to").

The format of the response scales for items was also considered. The recommendation on the part of the advisory board and WorkForce Center counselors was that the tool should increase its use of dichotomous, or "yes"/"no," response scales (rather than Likert scales) to simplify the instrument for individuals with lower education levels. From a psychometric point of view, such an approach is suboptimal. DeVellis (2003) notes that a serious disadvantage of binary items is that each item will have lowered variability between individuals. Assessments of internal consistency are also attenuated, as responses to pairs of items can only agree or disagree with each other. To roughly explore the equivalence of a dichotomous and Likert response format, we completed a pilot study with 54 unemployed job seekers with a mean education level of 13.2 years ($SD = 2.63$). Individuals completed two versions of the inventory, one with all Likert scales and one with predominantly yes/no scales. The two versions were counterbalanced so that half of the group completed a Likert scale version first, and half of the group completed a yes/no version of the survey first. Responses on the two versions were correlated; correlations between the subscales in each version ranged from .63 to .85. A majority of the respondents reported the yes/no version was simpler to complete. Based upon the strong need for the inventory to be simple for all job seekers, and because the item correlations from Likert and yes/no versions were high, items with the yes/no format were used wherever possible in the inventory.

Content Validity

Our SMEs provided a content review of the pilot items. In the content review discussions, no item deficiency was noted. However, there were three sections of the pilot inventory (assessing reemployment confidence, extraversion, and conscientiousness) that were identified as lacking face validity and/or being ineffectual for feedback purposes. Reemployment confidence (e.g., "Overall, how confident are you that you will get a job that you like?") items were seen as too general and far less amenable to feedback than specific search efficacy questions such as confidence about writing a good resumé. The practitioners' logic for excluding the other personality items was twofold: (a) the items were not easy to link to services available to job seekers and (b) other inventory items could be used as more proximal indicators of these constructs. For example, rather than including items assessing Extraversion, more proximal items assessing

job-seeker behaviors that seem to be facilitated by Extraversion were incorporated (e.g., networking, writing thank you letters to an employer). Recent empirical work has suggested that personality tends to play a more indirect and distal role in the job-search process (Brown, Cober, Kane, Levy, & Shalhoop, 2006; Caldwell & Burger, 1998). It was furthermore noted that from the job seekers' perspective, the personality items (a) are seen as invasive, (b) lack face validity, (c) may make individuals feel they have the "wrong" personality, and (d) added unnecessary length to an already long inventory. One additional section, job-search persistence, was deemed as redundant and not adding incremental information above and beyond the job-search intensity and time spent in search items and was therefore eliminated. Last, financial hardship was incorporated into a more general job-search barriers section. Counseling efforts were often dominated with efforts to help individuals cope with their financial hardship at the expense of emphasizing finding reemployment. In the job-search barriers section, individuals are asked to what extent financial hardship is acting as a barrier to reemployment, thus helping to focus discussion on the reemployment goal.

Phase 1 culminated with a total of 70 items and 13 variable categories. Essentially, all item categories in Table 1 were retained, with the exception of reemployment confidence, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, and job-search persistence.

Phase 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis

The goal of Phase 2 was to use EFA to examine the extent to which items load on the construct category they were written to represent and to identify poor performing items as a means of further reducing the item pool.

Sample

The sample was composed of 1,328 job seekers from across the state of Minnesota. A total of 1,460 individuals who attended unemployment insurance orientation workshops were asked to complete the survey; the response rate was 91%. The participants were 48.3% women, 84.0% White, mean age of 40.7 years ($SD = 12.4$), and unemployed 10.5 weeks on average ($SD = 10.3$). Their levels of education (i.e., 5.1% had less than a high school degree, 66.8% had a high school degree and/or some college or associate degree, 15.5% had completed a college degree, 12.6% had additional education) and last occupational category (i.e., 38.8% professional, 27.1% clerical or sales, 11.1% service, 23% other) varied. The seasonally adjusted state unemployment rate at the time of this data collection was 4.6% (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.).

Results and Discussion

With the exception of five diverse job-search barriers items (i.e., see row 10 of Table 1) and four one-item measures (see rows 14–17 in Table 1), all items were entered into an EFA with oblique rotation. During five iterations of EFA analyses, we dropped items based on eigenvalues, interpretability, item loadings, and cross loadings. In a traditional scale development project, we would have finalized this process with the retention of 38 items that cleanly loaded on seven identifiable factors. However, discussions with our SME group indicated the inventory would have enhanced usability if we could eliminate additional items. Accordingly, we eliminated a total of nine more items that seemed to be redundant or less valuable in their content.

Table 2 displays the factor loadings of the EFA results for a pruned set of 29 items. These items loaded on the same seven factors as the longer 38-item solution mentioned above: job-search intensity (7 items), Internet use (2 items), job-search confidence (10 items), job-search clarity (2 items), support (2 items), stress (4 items), and skills (2 items). The seven factors accounted for 62.0% of the total variance in the items. The construct categories replicated those discussed in Phase 1, with the addition of Internet use. The Internet use factor consists of one item measuring the intensity of using the Internet to locate jobs and another item measuring confidence in using the Internet in a job search.

As Table 2 shows, all of the items had loadings of at least .32 on their primary factors (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). Three items had cross-loadings (underlined) that exceeded the .15 difference rule recommended by these same authors but were retained for further consideration because the overlap was deemed useful rather than problematic as it might be if a personality item was divided between two factors. For example, the item "Sent a resumé to a possible employer or turned in a job application" had some overlap with the Internet factor, likely because resumés are often (but not always) submitted by Internet.

The reduced set of 29 items shown in Table 2 plus the 5 items in the job-search barriers scale (see row 10 of Table 1) and the four one-item measures (see rows 14–17 of Table 1) were used in Phase 3.

Phase 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Sample

Phase 3 involved confirming the factor structure of the reduced set of items with a sample of 668 job seekers from a geographically distinct state in southwestern United States. Surveys were mailed to 2,000 job seekers eligible for full-duration unemployment insurance claims who

TABLE 2
*Phase 2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Results for Subscale Items
With Oblique Rotation*

Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
Factor 1 job-search intensity							
Describe how many times you have done each of the following in the last 2 weeks.							
Talked to my friends or relatives to get their ideas about possible job leads	.75						
Talked to previous employers or people I used to work with about possible job leads	.76						
Consulted a temporary agency or search firm	.48	.31					
Sent a resumé to a possible employer or turned in a job application	.53	.47					
Telephoned or visited a possible employer	.75						
Tried to learn more about the places where I am applying for work	.62						
Asked for a referral to someone who might have helpful information or advice about my career or industry	.79						
Factor 2 Internet use							
Describe how many times you have done each of the following in the last 2 weeks: used the Internet to locate job openings		.83					
How confident do you feel about being able to do a GOOD JOB of . . . using the Internet in your job search		.78					
Factor 3 job-search confidence							
How confident do you feel about being able to do a GOOD JOB of . . .							
Using networking or personal contacts in your job search	.26		.34				
Identifying the skills you have to offer an employer			.62				
Writing a good resumé			.76				
Tailoring your resumé to specific jobs			.79				
Writing a good cover letter			.83				
Finding information about companies before an interview			.60				
Presenting yourself well in an interview			.59				
Explaining why you no longer work for your last employer			.43				
Writing thank you letters to employers following an interview			.73				
Negotiating salary or other conditions of employment			.59				

continued

TABLE 2 (continued)

Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
Factor 4 job-search clarity							
Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement							
I need help deciding if I should make a career change.				.88			
I need help planning a career change.				.91			
Factor 5 job-search support							
I have someone I can turn to for advice or comfort.					.89		
I have someone who encourages me when I need it.					.89		
Factor 6 stress and worry							
To what extent do the following words describe how you have felt most of the time in the last 7 days?							
Angry						.85	
Easily upset (replaced with depressed in Phase 3)						.87	
Worried						.69	
Are these feelings interfering with your job search?						.69	
Factor 7 skills							
My level of education is sufficient for getting a job in my area of work							.85
My skills for doing the type of work I want to do are up to date							.77

Notes. $N = 1{,}328$. Absolute values of the loadings are reported. Underlined values are cross loadings that exceed the .15 difference rule recommended by Worthington and Whittaker (2006). Other cross-loadings are omitted for clarity purposes. Five diverse job-search barriers items (i.e., see row 10 of Table 1) and four one-item measures (see rows 14–17 in Table 1) were not included in this EFA.

had recently lost their jobs.[1] We excluded individuals on temporary lay-off. Three one-dollar bills were sent with the survey as an incentive. With 63 undelivered mail surveys, the response rate was 34.5%. Among the 668 respondents, 45.2% were women and the average age was 43.7 years ($SD = 12.3$). The participants had been unemployed for an average of 6.63 weeks ($SD = 6.57$). The ethnic composition of the sample was as

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[1]Unemployment insurance is available to individuals who lose their jobs through no fault of their own (e.g., they did not quit and were not fired for misconduct); individuals also have to be available for work and seeking full-time employment. Benefits per week ranged from $84 to a maximum of $240 and are calculated by the state from recipients' earnings data—higher earners are eligible for a larger amount per week than lower earners. Individuals in this sample were eligible to receive 26 weeks of their weekly benefit amount.

follows: White 70.8%; Hispanic 17.3%; African American 4.6%; American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut 3.8%; Asian and Pacific Islander 2.1%; and other 1.4%. In terms of education, 10.8% had completed 11th grade or less, 37.4% completed 12th grade, 30.0% had some college or an associate degree, 12.2% had a college degree, and 9.6% reported higher-than-college education. The three major occupation categories of their last held positions are professional, technical, managerial (43.6%); clerical or sales, data processing, couriers, stock, customer service, travel (25.0%); and welding, cutting, body work, electrical, painter, carpenter, construction (11.0%). The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in this state ranged from a low of 3.9 to a high of 6.1 during Phases 3 and 4 of the data collection (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.).

We had access (from the state's department of economic security) to basic demographic information (including age, gender, and education level) of the 2,000 individuals who were asked to participate. The 668 respondents are higher in age ($t = 9.68$, $df = 1998$, $p < .001$) and education ($t = 7.31$, $df = 1998$, $p < .001$) than the nonrespondents. In addition, more respondents were female ($\chi^2 = 9.48$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$). There is no difference in the dollar amount of eligible unemployment benefits for the respondents versus the nonrespondents.

Results

Confirmatory factor analysis using the software Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 2007) was conducted on the seven factors (29 items) that were identified in Phase 2. Similar to the EFA analysis in Phase 2, the four one-item measures (job-search experience, last wage–wage desired, job-search hours, and number of interviews in the last 2 weeks) and the five diverse barriers items were excluded in the CFA analyses. We randomly combined the 10 items for job-search confidence into three parcels before entering the analysis in order to achieve a higher ratio of sample size to the number of indicators (e.g., Cattell & Burdsal, 1975; Chin, 1998). The robust weighted least squares estimator (WLSMV, Muthén & Muthén, 2007) recommended for CFA modeling with categorical data were used in the analysis.

The hypothesized 7-factor model showed satisfactory fit ($\chi^2 = 233.1$, $df = 70$, CFI = .94, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .06). Of the 7-factors, five were attitude oriented (job-search confidence, clarity, support, stress and worry, and skills) and two were behavior oriented (job-search intensity and Internet use). The 7-factor model was compared with two plausible alternative models. In the first alternative model, behavior-oriented items were combined to load on a single factor and other items loaded on their respective factors, resulting in a 6-factor model. This model showed a

poorer fit ($\chi^2 = 307.2$, $df = 62$, CFI $= .91$, TLI $= .94$, RMSEA $= .08$) and a significant chi-square difference in comparison to the 7-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 74.1$, $\Delta df = 8$, $p < .001$). In the second alternative model, attitude-oriented items loaded on a single factor and the two behavioral factors were left independent, resulting in a 3-factor model. This second model also showed a poorer fit ($\chi^2 = 974.7$, $df = 41$, CFI $= .66$, TLI $= .64$, RMSEA $= .19$) and a significant chi-square difference ($\Delta\chi^2 = 741.6$, $\Delta df = 29$, $p < .001$). In sum, the CFA analyses suggested that the hypothesized 7-factor model more accurately represents the data than do these alternative models.

Table 3 provides the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the demographic variables, the seven factors in the CFA model, the barriers scale, and the four one-item measures (job-search experience, last wage–wage desired, job-search hours, and number of interviews in the last 2 weeks) based on this sample. The correlation coefficients between the factors show distinctiveness of the constructs measured by the subscales. We did not compute alphas for the barrier items because of their intended diversity. The other alpha coefficients are moderate but must be interpreted in terms of the boundaries imposed by our very small number and dichotomous nature of our items. In addition, the goal of a short inventory produced the need to reduce overlap in items, an engaged scholarship goal that is at cross-purposes from traditional desires to enhance alpha levels.

Phase 4: Predictive Validity

Phase 4 used a predictive design to examine the relationship between the subscales measured in Phase 3 and five indices of reemployment success (e.g., unemployment insurance exhaustion, reemployment status, and number of job offers, person–job fit, and pay satisfaction for those reemployed) several months later.

Sample

The design involved a follow-up of the sample of 668 job seekers described in Phase 3. Unemployment insurance exhaustion data were obtained from official state records for all the 668 Phase 3 respondents. Additional outcome measures were gathered via a follow-up survey 8 months after Time 1. A total of 418 completed surveys were returned (63%). Nonresponse analysis showed respondents to the follow-up survey had a higher age (45.4 vs. 40.7 years, $t = 4.91$, $df = 666$, $p < .001$), higher education (13.5 vs. 12.7 years, $t = 4.40$, $df = 655$, $p < .001$), and lower level of job-search intensity at Time 1 (2.89 vs. 3.06, $t = -2.72$, $df = 666$, $p < .01$) than nonrespondents. There was no difference between respondents

TABLE 3
Means, Standard Deviations, and Scale Intercorrelations for the Phase 3 Sample

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1 Female	.45	.50	—														
2 Age	43.73	12.65	-.06	—													
3 Education	13.34	2.28	.06	-.03	—												
4 Weeks unemployed at Time 1	6.63	6.57	.01	.08	-.04	—											
5 Job-search intensity	2.95	.81	.04	-.06	.10	.01	(.79)										
6 Internet use	.00	.89	.13	-.19	.36	.00	.25	(.74)									
7 Confidence	2.31	.42	.03	.05	.26	-.02	.30	.35	(.82)								
8 Job-search clarity	.61	.45	.03	-.04	.01	-.07	-.01	.14	.30	(.84)							
9 Support	.87	.32	.08	-.13	.02	-.04	.04	.13	.18	-.19	(.89)						
10 Stress and worry	1.83	.51	.01	-.15	-.05	.01	.05	-.06	-.30	-.32	-.24	(.78)					
11 Skills	.82	.32	.01	-.01	.25	-.07	.03	.04	.24	.19	.13	-.20	(.55)				
12 Job-search barriers	.12	.15	-.06	.11	-.38	.05	-.10	-.39	-.32	.20	-.22	.25	-.70	—			
13 Job-search experience	2.58	2.11	-.11	-.26	-.04	-.07	.04	.07	-.05	.00	.02	.06	-.01	.01	—		
14 Last wage–wage desired	3.66	6.45	-.11	.11	.08	.05	.00	.04	.14	.03	-.04	-.04	.01	-.04	-.18	—	
15 Job-search hours	26.63	21.89	-.04	.07	.09	-.01	.32	.20	.11	.08	-.03	.07	-.04	-.02	-.06	.07	—
16 Number of interviews at Time 1	2.47	5.15	-.02	.11	.00	.06	.12	-.01	.10	-.01	-.03	.06	.03	-.02	-.03	.30	.35

Notes. $N = 668$. For $|r| \geq .08$, $p < .05$; $|r| \geq .10$, $p < .01$; $|r| \geq .13$, $p < .001$. Reliabilities are reported in the leading diagonal. Scale scores are the simple averaged scores of the items. Items in the Internet Use scale are on different scales (5-point vs. 3-point); thus, the items were standardized before obtaining the mean score. All items have been coded such that high scores reflect high levels in that scale.

and nonrespondents on other demographic variables or the subscales used in the inventory.

Measures

Unemployment insurance exhaustion was defined as whether individuals had exhausted their base unemployment insurance account to less than 5% of the allocated amount 40 weeks after Time 1 (0 = *no* and 1 = *yes*).[2] Overall, 29.0% of our Phase 3 sample (*n* = 194) exhausted their unemployment insurance and 71.0% did not (*n* = 474).

Reemployment status 8 months after Phase 3 was measured by asking survey respondents to identify their status as "currently unemployed" (*n* = 129) or "currently employed" (*n* = 289). For the 418 Phase 4 respondents, the correlation between unemployment insurance exhaustion (0 = *no* and 1 = *yes*) and reemployment status at Time 2 (0 = *no* and 1 = *yes*) was −53. This correlation is comparable to that reported in other studies (Wanberg et al., 2002). It is possible for an individual to not have exhausted their base unemployment insurance within 26 weeks but to still be unemployed because they may not have chosen to draw upon their unemployment insurance.

Three additional criteria were measured from reemployed individuals. First, *number of job offers* was measured by asking those reemployed to indicate the total number of job offers they had received. Reemployment quality was measured with two indices. *Person-job fit* was assessed with seven items (e.g., "My new job measures up to the kind of job I was seeking") from Saks and Ashforth (1997) and Abdel-Halim (1981). Responses ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*; the scale had an internal consistency of .87. The second index, *pay satisfaction* (e.g., "The pay is good"), was assessed with three items on the same 5-point Likert scale (Voydanoff, 1978). The internal consistency alpha was .70. The correlation between person-job fit and pay satisfaction was $r = .59$ ($p < .01$).

Results

Correlations between the reemployment success measures are shown in Table 4. Table 5 shows the predictive relationships between the

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[2]In this sample, individuals who exhausted their regular unemployment insurance (e.g., 26 weeks of their weekly benefit amount) and who continued to meet eligibility requirements could apply for up to 20 weeks of extended unemployment compensation due to an extended unemployment compensation program enacted nationally in July of 2008 in response to high unemployment rates. We focus on exhaustion of the base unemployment insurance account.

TABLE 4
Correlations Between Outcome Measures in Phase 4 (Predictive Validity)

Variable	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Unemployment insurance exhaustion (0 = *no*, 1 = *exhausted*)	668	.30	.46	–				
2. Reemployment status (0 = *unemployed*, 1 = *reemployed*)	418	.69	.46	−.54**	–			
Reemployed individuals only								
3. Number of job offers	289	.86	1.41	−.09	.09	–		
4. Person-job fit	289	3.69	.98	−.10	−.11	.20**	–	
5. Pay satisfaction	289	3.19	1.09	−.08	−.06	.19**	.60**	–

**p < .01.

inventory components and the reemployment success criteria. The two digit numbers without brackets or parentheses are simple correlations. Below these correlations and in the first two columns, we also report *d*-statistics as an index of the relationship between the inventory components and the two dichotomous criteria, that is, unemployment insurance exhaustion at Time 2 and reemployment status at Time 2. Correlation coefficients are affected by the departure from a 50/50 split on the dichotomous criterion whereas the *d*-statistics do not suffer from this problem. The two sets of results are consistent.

The results shown in Table 5 demonstrate that each component of the inventory was related to one or more of the indices of reemployment success with the exception of Internet use. Unlike the other variables in the set, Internet use is one variable that may be related more to reemployment success for professionals than for nonprofessionals. Examination by subgroups showed this was the case. For example, the correlation between Internet use and UI exhaustion was −.15 for individuals in professional occupations and .01 for individuals in nonprofessional occupations ($z = -2.00, p < .05$). The correlation between Internet use and reemployment status at Time 2 was .17 for individuals in professional occupations and −.07 for individuals in nonprofessional occupations ($z = 2.39, p < .05$).

Across the board, inventory components were associated with the outcomes in the directions predicted by the literature (e.g., see Table 1), with the exception of one variable, job-search hours at Time 1. Contrary to expectations, higher time spent in search was not associated with increased reemployment and decreased unemployment insurance exhaustion. Higher time spent in search was associated with less person-job fit. This may reflect a tendency for individuals who were looking more at Time 1 (e.g., because they really want a job) to take the first job that

TABLE 5
Correlations Between Subscales Measured at Time 1 and Reemployment Success Criteria at Time 2

Subscale	Unemployment insurance exhaustion (0 = *no*, 1 = *exhausted*) (N = 668)	Reemployment status (0 = *unemployed*, 1 = *reemployed*) (N = 418)	Reemployed individuals (N = 289)		
			Number of job offers	Person-job fit	Pay satisfaction
1. Job-search intensity	−.03 [−.03] (−.20, .13)	.11* [.24] (.03, .45)	.18**	.16**	.05
2. Internet use	−.05 [−.13] (−.30, .03)	.05 [.11] (−.10, .32)	.12	−.05	.01
3. Job-search confidence	.01 [.02] (−.14, .19)	.02 [.05] (−.16, .26)	.09	.10	.14*
4. Job-search clarity	−.12** [−.25] (−.41, −.08)	.12* [.25] (.04, .46)	.01	.17**	.11
5. Support	−.08* [−.20] (−.37, −.04)	.14** [.30] (.09, .51)	.04	.21**	.16**
6. Stress and worry	−.02 [−.05] (−.21, .12)	−.02 [−.04] (−.25, .17)	.00	−.12*	−.09
7. Skills	−.05 [−.09] (−.25, .08)	.02 [.05] (−.16, .25)	.07	.12*	.12*

TABLE 5 (continued)

Subscale	Unemployment insurance exhaustion (0 = no, 1 = exhausted) (N = 668)	Reemployment status (0 = unemployed, 1 = reemployed) (N = 418)	Reemployed individuals (N = 289)		
			Number of job offers	Person-job fit	Pay satisfaction
8. Barriers	.09* [.21] (.05, .38)	−.14** [−.30] (−.50, −.09)	−.06	.04	.03
9. Job-search experience	−.09* [−.20] (−.37, −.04)	.05 [.11] (−.10, .31)	−.08	.12*	.04
10. Last wage–wage desired	.03 [.05] (−.12, .23)	.12* [.26] (.04, .48)	−.03	−.15*	−.09
11. Job-search hours	.00 [.01] (−.16, .17)	−.01 [.01] (−.20, .22)	.10	−.13*	−.08
12. Number of interviews in last 2 weeks at T1	.04 [.07] (−.10, .23)	.11* [.23] (.02, .44)	.19**	−.04	−.07
13. Total score (sum of 1–8, with 6 and 8 reverse coded)	−.04 [−.08] (−.24, .09)	.11* [.24] (.03, .45)	.17**	.17**	.13*

Notes. Values appearing in the table without parentheses or brackets are simple correlations. Given that unemployment insurance exhaustion and reemployment status are both dichotomous variables, we also provide *d* statistics in square brackets and the 95% confidence intervals around the *d*-statistics in parentheses for these two variables.

*p < .05, **p < .01.

comes along, even if it is not the one they want. Examination of possible demographic or experience-related moderators did not produce insight into this relationship. Among the various outcome variables, the least number of significant correlations were found with number of job offers. This outcome measure has a highly skewed distribution with many individuals reporting zero or one offer, thus reducing variability and making it difficult to observe a significant relationship.

Although the inventory is not intended to be used in practice with a total score, we also created a total score from the first eight subscales shown in Table 5 (variables 9–12 were on very different metrics, such as number of times, dollars, and number of hours, not easily incorporated into this total). The correlation between this total and the study outcomes is shown across the bottom row of Table 5. Supportive of the overall content of the inventory, the total score correlates in expected directions with four of the five outcome measures shown in Table 5.

The effect sizes shown in Table 5 are small. Statistically, most of our subscales are composed of dichotomous (and small numbers of) items, providing a very conservative estimate of predictive validity. In addition, criteria validity estimates tend to be lower for predictive designs than for concurrent designs, as shown in the personnel selection literature (Van Iddekinge & Ployhart, 2008). Based on the results shown in Table 5, we concluded there was sufficient predictive validity evidence supporting the retention of all constructs in the inventory with the exception of job-search hours at Time 1 and perhaps (across all types of unemployed) Internet use. Given available literature supporting job-search hours as relevant to finding work (cf., Barron & Mellow, 1981) and the pervasiveness of Internet use as a job-search tool (Westaby, 2005), we chose to leave these items in the inventory. Although the jury is still out with regard to the effectiveness of Internet searching (Kuhn & Skuterud, 2004), counselors find it valuable to know if job seekers are including this tool in their search package and feel strongly it should be incorporated into one's job-search tool chest even for nonprofessional occupations, given that employers are starting to advertise a broader variety of positions online. Within the final inventory, we incorporated these two Internet items into the broader set of job-search intensity items.

Phase 5: Finalizing the Inventory and Assessing Perceived Usability and Ease of Use

Phase 5 involved organizing the retained items into a logical flow for an inventory, finalizing the feedback boxes, asking for SME evaluations of perceived usefulness of the revised inventory, and assessing final reading levels. The final inventory is shown in the Appendix.

Organization of Items in Final Inventory

Careful attention was paid to organizing surviving items into logical inventory sections. Not all of the items are labeled with their variable names. For example, items 28 and 29 as shown on the top of page 5 of the Appendix assess job-search clarity, or Factor 4 from Table 2. These items are under a more general section labeled "Your Job-Search Skill and Confidence."

Five additional items were added to the final YNJ as shown in the Appendix. Items A1 and A2 were added per counselor feedback that it is useful to begin with a sense of what job the person previously held versus what type of job the person is trying to find now. Similarly, item A8, "Posted my resumé and searched for jobs on www.MinnesotaWorks.net," was added because Minnesota counselors prefer that their clients are all registered on this database. Two summary items at the end of the inventory (see items B1–B2 of Appendix page 7) were written as a means of helping job seekers transmit their learning into a tangible and specific plan of action (Bandura, 1989). The first of these two items asks the job seeker to "*Look over your answers to this survey. What are three issues that might limit your success in finding a job*?" The last item asks respondents to "*List at least one step you will take within the next week to address any of the issues identified in this booklet*." Goal-setting research suggests that having short term or proximal goals will increase performance and keep the participant focused along the way rather than becoming distracted or overwhelmed by the complexity of the distal goal of finding a job (Bandura, 1989; Morgan, 1985).

The final YNJ also includes several footers, such as "Keep working on your job search each day," and "Believe in yourself." These footers were based on research from Van Ryn and Vinokur (1992), which has established the importance of self-affirmation and inoculation against setbacks in the job search.

Feedback Boxes

Concise feedback boxes were written to provide brief pointers to job seekers after each item set (i.e., see shaded boxes in the inventory shown in the Appendix). The content of the feedback boxes was based upon findings from the research literature, supplemented with information secured from our panel of SMEs. For example, on page 3 of the Appendix there is a section labeled "Job-Search Methods." The content of the feedback box is drawn upon a rich array of literature that suggests (a) higher search intensity is related to reemployment success (Kanfer et al., 2001), (b) informal methods such as networking may be particularly valuable to use

within the job search (Granovetter, 1995), and (c) some individuals feel uncomfortable with networking and need to be especially encouraged to use this method (Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2000). Feedback boxes were purposely kept short. Our pilot testing suggested longer feedback boxes were not read by the job seekers.

Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use

Perceived usefulness of the YNJ was examined from the perspective of the population of counselors ($n = 17$) who will use the inventory in the state of Minnesota (due to restructuring of roles, the available group is smaller than that available in Phase 1). All of these individuals had had experience using the pilot version of the inventory. These individuals reported an average of 14 years with the WorkForce Center system.

First, the counselors were asked about perceived usefulness of the inventory for practitioners using the following items: "This inventory will be useful to me as a counselor," "This inventory helps counselors identify key issues that job seekers need help with," and "The feedback boxes provide information that I would like job seekers to have." Responses ranged from $1 = $ *strongly disagree* to $5 = $ *strongly agree*; mean reported agreement was 4.66 ($SD = .60$). Comments from the counselors provided insight into *how* the inventory is useful for practitioners working with job seekers. For example, one counselor wrote:

> It [is] very useful as we can look at the [inventory] and get a good idea of what is happening with the job seeker. I feel it is a time saver as we have much of the information we need before sitting down with them . . . . It is also nice to say to the applicant 'I see that you checked (whatever) and I was wondering how we can help with that.' It breaks the ice, so to speak, with the [individual].

An additional comment suggested, "You get a very good idea by scanning the inventory as the discussion begins, as to the [job seeker's] weaknesses, strong points, and areas where they need help." Other comments suggested that because the inventory is used statewide in several workforce centers, the inventory helps to provide consistency across locations and ensures the many relevant areas related to job search are assessed. All 17 agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the length and reading level of the final inventory.

Second, the practitioners rated three items about the usefulness of the inventory for the broad spectrum of job seekers with whom they work (e.g., "This inventory will be useful to job seekers."). Responses ranged from

1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*; mean agreement was 4.36 (*SD* = .90). Comments based on use of the pilot suggested the inventory works well for job seekers with different occupations, industries, levels of work experience, age groups, and across both rural and urban regions of the state. An exemplar group that may benefit from use of the YNJ, according to these practitioners, is individuals who have been completely separated from their employment due to a business closure or layoff. The SMEs noted that highly unskilled individuals and individuals with literacy problems may benefit less from use of the inventory and that the inventory may be less helpful for individuals with extensive job-search experience.

Perceived usefulness of the revised inventory from the job seeker perspective was also directly examined from a small group of job seekers (*n* = 24) from a state neighboring Minnesota. These individuals were unemployed for an average of 11 weeks (*SD* = 6.4), and all were at a local employment center when asked to participate. Following completion of the inventory, the job seekers were asked about perceived usefulness of the inventory (i.e., "This inventory will be useful to job seekers"; "This inventory will help job seekers identify areas they may need assistance with"; "The content of the inventory is relevant to job seekers"; "The inventory will be of practical value to job seekers"). These items were rated on five-point scales where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*. The internal consistency of these items was .86. Supporting the perceived usefulness of the inventory from the job seeker perspective, the mean of these four items was 4.16 (*SD* = .62).

The job seekers were asked "What insights, if any, were provided by taking this inventory?" and "What did you find to be most helpful in this inventory?" Responses indicated that job seekers found the inventory and feedback boxes to be valuable and prompted a level of self-reflection that they had not achieved on their own. Example comments included: "I may not be as prepared to do a great job search and land a job as I thought. It forced me to think about my resumé, my skill level, classes I could take or just . . . are my feelings normal?"; "The action plan after the inventory and getting to that part. I realized maybe I could do more and maybe I do need some help"; and "That I'm not by myself, there is more help available than I have been utilizing . . . think outside the box, explore more, research more and spend more time looking for my next job." These individuals were timed while taking the inventory. Individuals took, on average, 15 minutes to complete the inventory.

As the final step of Phase 5, we assessed the reading level using the Flesch–Kincaid grade-level statistics provided by Microsoft Word. Compared to the 6.2 grade level of the inventory at Phase 1, the final YNJ is at a reading level of 5.2.

Discussion

The focus of this manuscript was on development of the "Getting Ready for Your Next Job" inventory that assesses 13 primary content areas relevant to job search for unemployed individuals (job-search intensity, Internet use, job-search confidence, job-search clarity, support, stress and worry, skills, barriers, job-search experience, difference between last wage and wage desired, time spent in job search, and number of interviews in last 2 weeks). There are several ways the YNJ might be used. First, the inventory can be self-administered by the job seeker, preferably early in the unemployment spell. The inventory provides a "big picture" for job seekers, introducing them to several issues of which they should be aware. Second, the inventory can be used by a practitioner or outplacement consultant to help job seekers identify solutions to potential problem areas. For example, someone who scores low on support might benefit from joining a networking group where support can be provided by other job seekers. Or, workshops can be recommended to help boost job-search skill where individuals indicate they have low confidence. Counselors who used the longer pilot version of the inventory noted that they became experienced with scanning the inventory for problem areas and making referrals to services available for job seekers. Counselors can also urge individuals to follow-up with the personal goals that are written in the summary section (see Appendix items B1 and B2). Individuals who set goals will be more likely to have more goal clarity and will be more likely to implement a plan of action (Locke, 1996). Other suggestions for counselor use of the inventory components appear in the last column of Table 1.

Although developed for use in Minnesota, the YNJ can be modified for use by any agency or counselor assisting unemployed job seekers, or can be used as a resource provided to individuals in mass layoffs. For example, the inventory has recently been adapted/modified by a job-sourcing firm for use with both employed and unemployed high-end job seekers. In the YNJ shown in the Appendix, several feedback boxes have Minnesota-specific terminology or resources listed (i.e., "WorkForce Center," the Minnesota career information page at www.iseek.org, or the 1-800-GETJOBS phone number that is for Minnesota job seekers.) We encourage agencies to list their location-specific resources in these feedback boxes. Modifications of the inventory can be cited as adapted from the YNJ with reference to this manuscript. Interested users may download a PDF or Microsoft Word version of the YNJ from http://www.ynj.csom.umn.edu/.

It is useful to mention study limitations as well as to discuss the potential for future work in this area. Predictive validity correlations between the YNJ components and the criterion components were small and likely

substantially impacted by the dichotomous nature of the items and short-ness of our subscales. At least a few of our scale development decisions such as the use of dichotomous response options might seem at odds with typical academic practice with regard to scale development but were well-suited and necessary in the applied context. Importantly, each component of the inventory has broader empirical relevance to the job-search pro-cess, with many of the variables having meta-analytic evidence support-ing somewhat larger effect size relationships with reemployment success (Kanfer et al., 2001) than we reported. This evidence combined with the utility reported from job seekers and counselors suggests this tool can be useful with regard to helping job seekers think through issues related to their job search (see also Prentice & Miller, 1992 who argue small effect sizes can be valuable). Further work will be helpful to examine alternative item sets that may improve the predictive validity (and utility) of the YNJ.

Our study did not explicitly address the question of whether unem-ployed job seekers who complete the YNJ are more likely to experience reemployment success than individuals who do not complete the YNJ. With regard to this question, although we think such an exploration would be of value, we look at the instrument as a needs assessment tool. Similar to a training needs assessment, *identifying training needs* of employees within an organization does not guarantee *training success* or skill devel-opment. For example, it may be the case that the YNJ is able to help a job seeker realize she is not using a broad enough portfolio of search methods. This insight, however, does not guarantee that the individual will change his or her habits. Regardless of the action later taken, needs assessment is a necessary foundation of a performance improvement process.

There are several potential improvements that may be made to the YNJ. For example, with regard to improving the feedback that is provided following specific item responses, there is a clear need for understanding how to give good, differential feedback for reemployment *speed* versus *quality* outcomes. It is also apparent that we need to understand the in-tricacies of the value of different search strategies and methods further so as to provide optimal feedback and suggestions to job seekers. As our knowledge develops, we may be able to tailor feedback to specific types of job seekers (those with higher vs. lower education, etc.). At this point, in-formation regarding antecedents of reemployment success is general and has not uncovered extensive moderators in terms of different strategies being important for different demographic groups and so on.

It may also be useful to develop a version of the inventory that can be taken and scored online. An electronic version would allow individuals to click for expanded information and feedback on problem areas. Infor-mation could also be stored electronically for easy access by job-search counselors as individuals come in to receive help. Due to both privacy

and accessibility issues, the decision was made to focus at the present time on a hard-copy inventory. For example, with regard to privacy issues, the inventory asks individuals some questions that may not be in a state's interest to store electronically, such as item A31 that asks to what extent the individual has been feeling depressed. In addition, at this time, the purpose of the inventory is markedly "developmental" (meant to help individuals find work sooner)—electronic storage of information could be for competing purposes such as to disqualify individuals from their unemployment insurance benefits (e.g., if an individual does not report enough job-search activity).

In summary, the purpose of this article was to report the development of the YNJ, an inventory designed to provide insight and brief feedback to unemployed job seekers. The inventory assesses 13 distinct areas that are relevant to diverse reemployment success outcomes, and our data suggest that both practitioners and job seekers find the inventory useful. Furthermore, despite the dichotomous nature of several of our items, our results still showed solid relationships with reemployment outcomes.

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APPENDIX

Getting Ready for Your Next Job

Every job seeker is different. Some people know how to go about looking for a job. Others are not so sure about where to start. This booklet will help you think through your current job search.

Directions: Complete the questions in this booklet. After each set of questions, there will be a feedback box. Read the feedback boxes for ideas that may help.

If you are scheduled for an Orientation Session, please bring this form along with you.

Your name: _____
(Please print clearly)

Today's date: _____

Your last full day of employment: _____

PART A: YOUR JOB SEARCH

Fill in the blanks:

1. What was your last job? _____

2. What job do you want now? _____

3. How much money did you make at your last job?

   $_____ *per hour* OR *per year* (circle one)

4. What is the lowest pay that you would accept if you were offered a job?

   $_____ *per hour* OR *per year* (circle one)

> It is important to think about your wage needs. Do research on the normal pay for your job and industry. Don't set your goal too high, but have a pay level in mind.

5. In the **last 2 weeks**, I spent a total of _____ hours looking for a job.

6. In the **last 2 weeks**, I have had a total of _____ interviews.

> Looking for a job *is a full time job!* Research has shown that successful job seekers treat their job search as if it were their job. We suggest you spend at least **30 hours** a week on your job search.
>
> If you are not getting interviews, have someone you know or someone at your local WorkForce Center review your resumé or job search methods.

TAKE ONE STEP AT A TIME. YOU WILL BE SUCCESSFUL.

2

Job-Search Methods

How many times have you done each of the tasks listed below in the last 2 WEEKS?

Check one answer for each item.

	Never *0 times*	Rarely *1-3 times*	Some- times *4-6 times*	Often *7-9 times*	Very Often *10 + times*
7. Looked for job openings on the Internet.					
8. Posted my resumé and searched for jobs on www.MinnesotaWorks.net					
9. Talked to a temporary agency or search firm.					
10. Sent a resumé to a possible employer or turned in a job application.					
11. Telephoned or visited a possible employer.					
12. Tried to learn more about the places where I am applying for work.					
13. Asked for a referral to someone who might have info or advice about my career or field.					
14. Talked to my friends or relatives to get ideas about possible job leads.					
15. Talked to past employers or people I used to work with about job leads.					

Did you answer "Never" or "Rarely" to any of the questions above? Every one of these activities is important. Use a variety of methods in your job search. Think about your answers to the last three items in the above section (items 13, 14, and 15). People often find jobs through **networking**. Networking is talking to people you know, then asking to talk to people they know. Build a network list in the space below. Start by listing past coworkers, friends, and relatives.

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

Call these people within the next week. Contact at least five new people each week. Ask for advice, information, and introductions to others who can help you.

WRITE NOTES TO YOURSELF ON THIS INVENTORY ABOUT YOUR NEXT STEPS.

3

Your Job Search Skill and Confidence

How confident do you feel about being able to do a GOOD JOB of …

	Not at All Confident	Somewhat Confident	Highly Confident
16. Using networking or personal contacts in your job search?			
17. Using the Internet in your job search?			
18. Identifying the skills you have to offer an employer?			
19. Writing a good resumé?			
20. Changing your resume to fit specific jobs?			
21. Writing a good cover letter?			
22. Finding information about companies before an interview?			
23. Presenting yourself well in an interview?			
24. Explaining why you no longer work for your last employer?			
25. Following up with employers after an interview?			
26. Negotiating salary or other terms of employment?			

27. How many different times have you had to look for a job with a new employer in the past ten years (not including now)?

_____ Times

Has it been a long time since you have looked for a job? Did you answer "Not at All Confident" to any of these items? Your local WorkForce Center may have classes that can help. See this website: www.mnwfc.org or call 1-888-GET-JOBS to ask about assistance or possibly free classes available in some areas. Find books on job search at your local WorkForce Center, library, or bookstore.

KEEP WORKING ON YOUR JOB SEARCH EACH DAY!

4

Circle either "Yes" or "No" below.

28. I need help deciding if I should make a career change.   Yes   No

29. I need help planning a career change.   Yes   No

Career information is available at your local Minnesota WorkForce Center or at www.iseek.org Offer to volunteer at an organization to get a sense of whether you enjoy the place or like the type of work that is done there.

Stress and Support

To what extent do the words below describe how you have felt most of the time in the last seven days?

	Not at All	Some-what	Very Much
30. Angry			
31. Depressed			
32. Worried			

Circle either "Yes" or "No" below.

33. Are these feelings interfering with your job search?   Yes   No

34. I have friends or family who I can talk to when
    my day hasn't gone well.   Yes   No

35. I have friends, family, or former coworkers who
    try to help me with my job search.   Yes   No

It is normal to feel upset after you have lost your job. Talk to friends or family about your feelings. Consider joining a **job club**. Ask your local Minnesota WorkForce Center where to find one. During this time of your life, eating right, getting exercise, and taking care of yourself is important.

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF.

5

Circle either "Yes" or "No" for each statement below.

Skills

36. My level of education is adequate for getting a job in my area of work.   Yes   No

37. My skills for doing the type of work I want are up to date.   Yes   No

> If you qualify for the Dislocated Workers Program, the Minnesota WorkForce Centers may have funds available for short-term training. Other services are available for U.S. military veterans and people with disabilities.

Barriers

38. I have access to a phone where employers can call me.   Yes   No

39. I know how to use a computer.   Yes   No

40. I have access to the Internet and e-mail.   Yes   No

41. I have reliable transportation to get to work and interviews.   Yes   No

42. There are other issues that will affect my chances of getting a   Yes   No
    job (disability, health problem, childcare, financial hardship).

   Please explain:

   _____

   _____

   _____

> **Make a plan** to address any problems you identified. Discuss any job search barriers you have with a WorkForce Center staff person.

ASK FOR HELP IF YOU NEED IT!

6

PART B: YOUR ACTION PLAN

Please answer the two questions below.

1. Look over your answers to this survey. What are three issues that might limit your success in finding a job?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. List *at least* <u>one step</u> you will take **within the next week** to address any of the issues identified in this booklet. How can your family, friends or local WorkForce Center help you?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

Look at this booklet again in a few weeks.
At that time, consider how you are doing and
what barriers you see to your job search success.
We wish you the best of luck in your efforts!

TRY, TRY, TRY AGAIN!

7