

Computing Educators Oral History Project

An Interview with *Joy Teague*

Conducted Saturday, January 14, 2006

In Clifton Springs, Victoria, Australia

Interview conducted by Barbara Boucher Owens

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1 [0:00]

2 **Barbara Owens:** This is an interview with Joy Teague, recently retired from Deakin
3 University, conducted by Barbara Owens. The interview is being recorded on the 14th
4 of January 2006 in Clifton Springs, Victoria, Australia. It's part of the Computing
5 Educators Oral History Series. [clock chimes] Hi Joy!

6

7 Joy Teague: Hi, Barbara.

8

9 **B:** Did I pronounce your name correctly?

10

11 J: Yes, you did.

12

13 **B:** OK. I would like you to begin telling me something about your parents. For example,
14 what did they do for a living?

15

16 J: My father was a farmer. Before my mother was married, she — during the War she worked
17 in a government department in ... she was a shorthand typist. After she was married, she was
18 a farmer's wife. Wheat and sheep farm. I grew up in the north of the state on a farm. When I
19 turned ... when I finished high school, my parents moved to Melbourne because I was going

20 to be moving to Melbourne anyway. My mother never liked living on a farm.

21

22 **B: Hmm. Did either of your parents have any degrees? What were their educational ... ?**

23

24 J: No. No. I don't think I have ... apart from my brother on my father's side I don't think I have
25 ... I'm sorry, that's not true ... but my brother and I were the first people in our families,
26 either side, to get degrees.

27

28 **B: Were you a good student when you were in school?**

29

30 J: Yes, I was a very good student. Yes.

31

32 **B: Did you take courses in mathematics and science?**

33

34 J: I did. I took typical physics, chemistry, two maths, English Year 12. There were ... the
35 school I was at there were thirty-two of us, I think, in Year 12. In the science/maths strain,
36 there were three boys and three girls. In fact, there were two boys and two girls who had
37 come through with me. The third girl had failed Year 11 and repeated and joined us. And
38 there was a boy who had failed Year 12 and joined us in Year 12. We were equally divided
39 male and female, which was probably fairly unusual.

40

41 **B: Were there people that were particular influences on you when you were in school in
42 those early years? Positive or negative.**

43

44 J: Well, my mother, who hadn't had much education, pushed ... wanted me ... wanted us to
45 have education. Apart from that she didn't really think women should do anything with their
46 education. She didn't think women should go out to work and take jobs from men. When
47 they were married she thought that they should be staying at home and looking after their
48 men. And [giggles] ... she actually did her degree ... she started when my brother and I were
49 both at university. I went to university as a part-time student. My brother and I graduated
50 together. My mother was still studying at that time. She did an arts degree.

51

52 **B: What was your ... she did an arts degree? What was your brother studying?**

53

54 J: He was doing ... well, he got a Ph.D. in applied maths.

55

56 **B: So both math. Is there ... you said your father had been a sheep farmer and moved to
57 Melbourne. And what was he doing in Melbourne?**

58

59 J: Well, he retired in his early 50s and then they bought a hardware store, for more or less
60 something for him to do. Oh! He was driving trucks, delivery trucks, for a bit. Because he
61 was still fairly young and he needed something to occupy himself, so he just ... and that's the
62 sort of thing that he did.

63

64 **B: Can you attribute why both your brother and you were following the math curriculum?**

65

66 J: Well, my brother actually was sent to a technical school from Year 7, which ... because he
67 was going to be a farmer. But he was not terribly interested in going off to farm. So he went
68 — technical schools finished at Year 11 — but he went to a technical school until Year 11
69 and then changed to a high school after that.

70

71 **B: I see.**

72

73 J: And we were just both interested in maths and science.

74

75 **B: I see. I see. So your parents encouraged you both, but you brother more so — because**
76 **of what you'd said about your mother — or ... ?**

77 [5:03]

78 J: No, no. I mean my father didn't see much use for education because nobody he knew had
79 been educated. In fact when I was about fourteen or fifteen [years old], fifteen probably, he
80 said to me that if I left school he'd buy me a little red car. Well, I would have been too young
81 to drive anyway, but he was going to buy me a little red car when I got to eighteen. He
82 thought I should be at home helping my mother, which is what girls did in his family.

83

84 **B: Hmm! I see.**

85

86 J: But my mother didn't want that.

87

88 **B: Can you think of anybody else that was a big influence on you during those years — a**
89 **teacher, a friend?**

90

91 J: I probably ... no, not really. I remember my maths teacher more than anyone else. But I don't
92 know that he was particularly either encouraging or discouraging. I guess we just had him for
93 more classes throughout the latter part of schooling than anyone else. In terms of me
94 continuing on, it was just what I wanted to do and I guess I just do what I want to do.
95 [chuckles]

96

97 **B: I see. Why did you choose to go to school in Melbourne?**

98

99 J: Well, I didn't actually. I ... by the time I was finished Year 12, I was tired of studying and I
100 went looking for a job. And in fact at the end of Year 11 — and I guess this is an influence
101 on me — at the end of Year 11, we were down in Melbourne for holiday and I somehow
102 went to — the University of Melbourne had a career guidance center and somehow I went
103 along there — because up to that time, I had decided I was going to be a pharmacist or,
104 rather, I think probably my mother thought that that would be something for me to do. And I
105 thought ... in Year 11 I was ... thought I'd find out if there was anything else I might be
106 interested in doing. And I went along and I met a man who spoke to me, told me about this
107 job as a computer programmer. I thought that sounded interesting. I didn't have any idea
108 really what it was. But whatever he told me, it sounded interesting.

109

110 At that time — that was 19 ... I finished school in 1964, when no university courses taught
111 computers — and I went looking for a job as a programmer and was interviewed for a

112 number of places and just missed out on a couple of jobs. And my brother had joined the
113 state savings bank and he said that the bank had a computer. And my parents — my mother
114 in particular — was getting a bit pushy about me staying at home and not having a job. I
115 mean, this was only about a month after I finished school anyway. But ... anyway I joined
116 the bank, started doing a part-time course. And I was working in a branch for a few months
117 and then the ...

118

119 **B: Can I stop for a minute and ask you? You said you were looking for a job as a**
120 **programmer. [background tones from computer] Just a couple of questions. How did**
121 **you know you wanted to be a programmer? And secondly is that what the bank hired**
122 **you to do?**

123

124 J: The reason I wanted to be a programmer was because of this vocational ...

125

126 **B: ... fair? The Centre that you'd ... ?**

127

128 J: Yes. At that time they were hiring ... programming positions were generally being filled by
129 people who had started university but not completed. [background tones from computer] So I
130 was just a bit under-qualified, I guess. But they hired people by giving them aptitude tests
131 and interviewing them, and anyway. I went for three or four interviews and got the ... just
132 missed out on a couple of jobs. And then I joined them, the bank, because they had a
133 computer, but I was not employed [background tones from computer] in that area at that
134 time.

135

136 **B: I see. I see.**

137

138 J: And I started doing a course at Caulfield Institute ...

139

140 **B: At where? I'm sorry.**

141

142 J: Caulfield Institute of Technology.

143

144 **B: Could you spell that?**

145

146 J: C-A-U-L-F-I-E-L-D.

147

148 **B: OK. Thank you.**

149

150 J: It's now part of Monash University.

151

152 **B: It is part of? You said it is part of ... it is part of Monash?**

153

154 J: It is now part of Monash.

155

156 **B: OK. OK.**

157

158 J: And it was a separate institution then.

159

160 **B: OK.**

161

162 J: And the accountant, I think, at the branch I was at knew the head of the programming area
163 and phoned him after some months saying that I was in the branch doing this course. And
164 then I went for an interview at that time. Then I was employed as a programmer.

165 [10:05]

166 **B: I see.**

167

168 J: Four weeks training at IBM, which was the standard at that time, and became a programmer!

169

170 **B: Were there other female programmers ...**

171

172 J: Yes.

173

174 **B: ... in your area and ... ?**

175

176 J: Yes, at the time I was there, there were five of us, I think.

177

178 **B: And how many males? What does that number “five” mean?**

179

180 J: I don't really remember ... I don't ... maybe ... I've sort of got a figure of twelve in mind,
181 but I don't know whether that was really the total number of us, probably.

182

183 **B: So fairly well balanced.**

184

185 J: Yes.

186

187 **B: How about management? What was the ...**

188

189 J: Well, it was bank policy ... the bank policy was that there was a career path for men. They
190 started off as clerks, then they became tellers, and then they became accountants, and then
191 they became managers. And there were various levels within that. Women started off as
192 clerical assistants, I think, and that's where I finished!

193

194 **B: So a programmer's title if she were female would be “clerical assistant”?**

195

196 J: I think that was probably true.

197

198 **B: Mm hmm! I see.**

199

200 J: Because I think people just fitted in the standard structure of the bank. And while I was there
201 they brought in a salary classification range for women above the promotional range for
202 women. There were six scales, six levels, and the highest level paid less than a junior teller.

203

204 **B: Oh dear! I see.**

205

206 J: And at the time I left I was on the highest level with a special allowance on top of that. So
207 \$200 a year extra, which made me the highest paid woman in the bank.

208

209 **B: So, at level six of women, then you were still being paid what a clerk would have been
210 paid at a much lower level male.**

211

212 J: Male. Yes.

213

214 **B: I see. I see. I see. When did you start your academic work?**

215

216 J: About ...

217

218 **B: And what caused ... what precipitated that shift toward academics?**

219

220 J: My mother did! My mother sort of suggested that I might do a university course because she
221 was, as I said, always keen ... she wanted more education for herself, so she pushed me
222 towards that. And I started doing some Year 6¹ subjects at night school because at that time I
223 needed to have a language at Year 12 level to do an arts course and — I think that for some
224 reason I was thinking of doing an arts course — but I actually ... so I did some Year 12
225 subjects. But I actually then went into ... got admitted to a science course at Monash. But I
226 didn't actually need the language anyway.

227

228 **B: I see. I see. What would have been a problem was not, in other words.**

229

230 J: Yes, that's right. I remember writing a letter, but I don't know why. I remember getting an
231 answer saying that I was exempt from something, but I can't remember exactly what it was
232 that I was exempt from.

233

234 **B: So when did you ...**

235

236 J: Now, I started doing the Year 12 study ...

237

238 **B: Yeah, when did you sort of make that decision that ... ? When you first started
239 university, you hadn't — let me see if I understood what you said — hadn't particularly
240 set on a course of study and ... ?**

241

242 J: No, at the time ... I started taking doing the night class courses at Year 12 level, to get some
243 extra ...

244

245 **B: In order to be able to get into the university.**

246

247 J: Yes.

¹ This should have been "Form 6" rather than "Year 6".

248

249 **B: And that was ... you were thinking of an arts [degree] at that point and then you ...**

250

251 J: [clock begins chiming loudly in background] And then I got accepted into science, which ...
252 and the bank actually paid for me.

253

254 **B: I see.**

255

256 J: [clock continues to chime] And so they determined what subjects I would do to a certain
257 extent. That's mainly why I did mathematics. I mean, I would have liked to have done, for
258 example, more psychology. But that wasn't something that was seen as being useful for the
259 job I was doing and therefore I had to do maths and I did ... [clock continues to chime]

260

261 **B: Could we stop until the clock stops? [removed about 9 seconds of chiming] The bank
262 was supporting you, was paying for the maths ...**

263

264 J: Yes, and also giving me time off, because I went to Monash. Monash was near where I lived
265 but they didn't ... they didn't have night classes, so I had to attend day classes. So I tried to
266 get first thing in the morning, late afternoon. But sometimes ... a couple of days, one day a
267 week, I would spend the whole day at Monash and work at Monash. So they were supporting
268 me. To that extent, however, I was required to make up the time that I was in classes. I did
269 that. They didn't give me any less working time. There were a couple of other people who
270 they had taken on who were being supported full-time at the University of Melbourne. They
271 only came to the bank ...

272 [15:10]

273 **B: Were those other people male or female?**

274

275 J: One of each. At that point I didn't ... I'm not sure why I was low. On the other hand, at that
276 time there were several others that were doing part-time classes like I was, but at the
277 University of Melbourne, they went to night classes. So it just depended, I guess on ... I'm
278 not sure why those two were being supported full time the way they were.

279

280 **B: How did that make you feel, I mean ... ?**

281

282 J: Well, for one, I ... I think they were already there when I got there, they were already doing
283 it. And because there were other people like me who were doing it part-time. That was ...

284

285 **B: I see. And how long were you doing this part-time going to Monash and part-time
286 working?**

287

288 J: I did four years part-time and then I left and did my last year, then, full-time.

289

290 **B: And is normally the course of study four years?**

291

292 J: No, it's a three-year course.

293

294 **B: Three year. And so it took you five years, three years by doing part-time and then one**
295 **year — I understand.**

296
297 J: I did the first two years ...

298
299 **B: And what diploma did you have? A maths diploma, is that what ... ?**

300
301 J: I had a bachelors of science degree. Yes.

302
303 **B: Bachelors of science. I see.**

304
305 J: Australian university courses typically are three-year courses.

306
307 **B: I see.**

308
309 J: And then ... at that time I had a husband, [Barrie,] who was working in Geelong and I
310 wanted to come down here to Geelong. And that's one reason that I did the course full-time,
311 because I wanted to leave the bank anyway and come to Geelong. I wanted to get finished.

312
313 And he was working at the Gordon Institute of Technology. I was looking for a ... expecting
314 to get a programming type job and there weren't too many in Geelong. There weren't many
315 computers in Geelong. A lecturing ... assistant lecturer position became available at the
316 Gordon and I was conscious of that, so we were working together.

317
318 **B: In what field?**

319
320 J: In computers. In computing.

321
322 **B: But had you had any formal courses at Monash in computers?**

323
324 J: One, just one.

325
326 **B: Just one course.**

327
328 J: I had the only one that was available. In fact that ... I did ... when I did my second-year
329 classes there were no computer classes at second-year level. When I went on into the third
330 year, they had then introduced a second-level unit. Sorry. The year ... the last year that I was
331 doing ... the second year that I was doing my second-year units, they introduced a second-
332 year unit in information ... information science they called it. But I had already done a unit
333 of that number of credit points. I could only have do one — well, I could have done more,
334 but there was no need to do more. I had actually gotten an exemption from that second-year
335 unit to do the third-year unit. I got the exemption on the basis that I had been working in
336 computing

337
338 **B: I see.**

339

340 J: So I just did the one.

341

342 **B: So now you're on a lectureship at Gordon.**

343

344 J: Yes.

345

346 **B: In teaching computing. And what was the atmosphere like at Gordon and how**
347 **supportive were they? Were there other women there for you to ... ?**

348

349 J: There was one other woman there for the first year I was there, I think ... first couple of
350 years. Almost all men. I was assistant lecturer. Probably the other woman was as well. All
351 the men were lecturers — or about. And I was there for 1965 to ... from ... not 1965. I was
352 at the bank seven years.

353

354 **B: You said you started at the bank in 1964.**

355

356 J: Yes.

357

358 **B: So it was 1971.**

359

360 J: 1971, that's right! 1972 I was a full-time student, so I started at the Gordon in 1973. And at
361 that time the Gordon offered — in computing — offered a diploma. It was a ... like your ...
362 do you have ...

363

364 **B: A master's degree?**

365

366 J: No. It's not a university degree.

367

368 **B: Like a certification.**

369

370 J: No, the sort of course ... like your colleges that are not universities. Gordon Institute of
371 Technology was not at that time equivalent to a university, did not offer degree courses. They
372 offered diplomas.

373 [20:01]

374 **B: I see. It would probably be like a certificate in the States, but we can ...**

375

376 J: Anyway, yeah. They were first off going through a process of getting ... all of these colleges
377 were in the process of getting ... upgrading to being able to offer degrees, so there was this
378 first step. Staff were being encouraged to take ... to get master's degrees and Ph.D.s. and
379 taking the time to do that.

380

381 **B: Did you feel that you were being encouraged to do that?**

382

383 J: I was being encouraged to do that, but I didn't at that time want to do it. Barrie did a Master's
384 of education. He thought about doing an education degree and just did the accounting and got
385 a Master's of education.

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431

B: And for those that might not know, Barrie is your ...

J: Husband. I really didn't want to be heading off up to Melbourne and studying and et cetera.

B: I see.

J: But we used to teach ... well, our students used to have to do accounting, and they all failed
dismally usually and I sort of did some accounting to find out why they did so badly and I
did very well. I never did understand why our students did so badly in accounting. So I
actually went on and did a commerce degree at the Gordon.

B: This is another bachelor's level degree?

J: Yes.

B: So you have two bachelor's level? You have the degree in sciences ...

J: And one in commerce.

B: ... and one in commerce. I see.

J: We got our ... we were able to offer degrees. But the next thing that happened was the
government decided it was going to create a country university. And they decided they would
put it in Geelong and that Geelong didn't need two tertiary — two institutions offering
tertiary degrees — and therefore that the Gordon would cease to exist when Deakin started.

And then they went through a sifting process with the staff to decide which staff they would
take on and which they wouldn't. Well, back then they did at least take care of people. So the
people who had teaching degrees who were not taken on to Deakin went into the education
department, went back as teachers — which is where they mostly had come from anyway.
And the people who didn't have teaching degrees were given jobs in the state government,
not necessarily in Geelong. But everybody ...

B: Everybody found a job.

J: Everybody found a job, yes.

B: No one felt terribly threatened that they would lose their livelihood, or ...

J: No, that didn't happen. But it did disrupt their lives. And there was a woman in commerce
who was very beat up because I think she was just about the only person in the department
who didn't get a job at Deakin.

B: That does not sound like she would be happy.

432 J: No, she was not happy.

433

434 **B: But you did not have a degree in education and yet they kept you on at Deakin. Is that**
435 **correct, am I understanding?**

436

437 J: That's true. They were not concerned about ... Deakin sifted people on the basis of their
438 suitability and apparently they didn't know what to do with the computing people. Our head
439 of department just sort of worked through everybody in the department and said, "Well, yes,
440 we need this person because ... we need this person," et cetera. And all the computing people
441 were transferred across and that was a big relief to everybody. The majority of staff were
442 moved across except in the humanities area, where their — I don't remember the term that
443 was used back then — but the dean in that area was just not supportive and quite a number of
444 them didn't get taken.

445

446 **B: So you were fortunate.**

447

448 J: Yes. Yes.

449

450 **B: I see.**

451

452 J: But I got appointed as a principal tutor, which was a scale which, in salary terms, was similar
453 to lecturer — which is where most of the men went. But principal tutor, the increments
454 weren't quite as big, cut out at a lower level, and it was definitely — had I been a man, I
455 wouldn't have been on that.

456

457 **B: And this was true of all the women that ... how many women were with you who were**
458 **in the programming area?**

459

460 J: Just me. Just me.

461

462 **B: It was just you. So there were men in the programming area and they all became**
463 **lecturers and you were the only tutor in your area?**

464

465 J: I was the only assistant lecturer anyway.

466

467 **B: I see.**

468

469 J: So all the men were lecturers or above. But I should have been taken across as a lecturer,
470 because I was appointed at the same salary level but on a different scale — which didn't have
471 the same opportunities.

472 [25:07]

473 **B: I see. I see. So when did you decide to study for a master's degree? Or why did you**
474 **decide to start to study for a master's degree?**

475

476 J: I guess that was the early 1980's. There was a man appointed as a senior lecturer and he was
477 ... just going back a little bit. The Gordon Institute was much more ... was a teaching

478 institution, rather than ... not a research institution.

479

480 **B: I see.**

481

482 J: And the courses that were offered were fairly ... were much more vocationally oriented than
483 universities tended to offer. When we got transferred to Deakin there was some pressure then
484 for the university staff should be doing research, et cetera. And there was an appointment
485 made where the person appointed was — part of the reason he was being appointed — was to
486 improve the research effort from the school. And he encouraged me and one of the men to do
487 a Master's with him supervising. [clock chimes]

488

489 That is when I started doing the Master's. He wasn't much of a supervisor. He'd just finished
490 his Ph.D. and I think a problem that often people have when they are supervising their
491 colleagues is, because their colleagues are essentially their equals, they're not very good at
492 taking on the role of supervisor for them.

493

494 **B: I see.**

495

496 J: And he never ... he really didn't do much supervising. He's never read my thesis, my
497 Master's thesis.

498

499 **B: Oh, my goodness!**

500

501 J: He went...

502

503 **B: Did you go directly to the thesis? Where was the coursework? No coursework involved?**
504 **It's just ...**

505

506 J: We don't have coursework.

507

508 **B: I'm sorry, I didn't understand.**

509

510 J: There are coursework Master's, but in Australia, Master's and Ph.D. traditionally — it's like
511 the English system traditionally has been — research and thesis.

512

513 **B: I see.**

514

515 J: Typically there is a ... to get into a Master's program you normally would need to do an
516 honor's year and the honor's year is sort of the preparation for doing research. It's got
517 coursework. And it's got some thesis work. And that's where students are taught to do
518 research. Master's is one and a bit years of research.

519

520 **B: What was the area of research? I'm sorry, I don't know ...**

521

522 J: For me? I was comparing ... (I can hardly remember it now! And I don't even have a copy of
523 my Master's thesis.) Looking at children learning a bit of programming — and this was

524 lower secondary students learning programming — to see if it helped them learn
525 mathematics.

526

527 **B: I see!**

528

529 J: Logo and BASIC and the results were very inconclusive. There may have been a slight
530 indication that if they were doing a little bit of programming that they did a little bit better at
531 mathematics, but it was certainly not conclusive by any means.

532

533 **B: Did you enjoy that experience of conducting research in doing your Master's?**

534

535 J: It took me the maximum time, and I deferred, so I think it probably took me six years to do
536 it. No. Four years, I guess. Because I was working and the workload was pretty high. No I
537 don't think I did enjoy doing the master's. I enjoyed the Ph.D. a lot more.

538

539 **B: So you went directly ... you were still teaching. You were doing the Master's. You got
540 the Master's. And this is about when?**

541

542 J: Early 1980's. I can probably check on the date ...

543

544 **B: On the wall. Let's look at the diploma on the wall ...**

545

546 J: ... to see when I actually graduated. And I didn't ...

547

548 **B: And how much time was there between the time when you received your Master's and
549 then you went on for your doctorate?**

550

551 J: Actually, I think that I received the Master's in 1989, because I was away for the graduation.
552 I think I was in Russia.

553

554 **B: I think I was in Russia, too, at that time.**

555

556 J: [both laugh] And it didn't bother me one little bit that I wasn't going to that graduation, I was

557 ...

558 [29:59]

559 **B: Was it ... it sounds like you're saying it was not a pleasant experience. Is that ... ?**

560

561 J: Yeah, I didn't ... it was not so much that it was unpleasant. It's just I didn't ... it was not all
562 that interesting, and I was not terribly interested in getting another ... didn't really feel that it
563 was something that I ... I had done a tremendous amount of work and I know I was happy
564 with it. As I said my ...

565

566 **B: Were there any influences during that period of time that changed your direction or
567 any particular people or events that made a big difference as you ... ?**

568

569 J: No, I don't think so. I was doing something, which was in part involving the psychology

570 people, who were also doing research in the same sort of area. They were doing research with
571 Logo and with the same students, some of the same students. I was working a little bit with
572 them, but not really discussing what *I* was doing with them.

573
574 And my supervisor used to have a chat with me about once a year. At the time I finished,
575 he'd gone overseas, so he wasn't available to read my thesis and ... But one thing that he did
576 do was that the fellow who had started the same year that I did — we started together, I
577 deferred for 12 months somewhere along the way. The other fellow also took the maximum
578 time, but because he hadn't deferred for a year he finished 12 months before me. And his
579 thesis got sent off to somebody in Sydney who was working in the same area, was not
580 actually known to the fellow who was supervising us. Came back and the whole thing had to
581 be re-written, re-done. It was an enormous ... you know, it just didn't fit in with the...

582
583 **B: Oh, dear.**

584
585 J: It was just a terrible job for him. He spent 12 months working pretty much at home, had a
586 fairly light teaching load, redoing everything. So my ... our supervisor then realized that you
587 need to be careful about who you select as examiners. And so he did sit down with me and
588 we talked about people that we knew who might examine this and who might ... well, who
589 weren't going to have strong views that were different as had happened with that fellow in
590 Sydney. And my thesis was sent out to two examiners and it came back and I didn't have to
591 do anything to it!

592
593 **B: So this was 1989 and you now had a ...**

594
595 J: 1989 I graduated.

596
597 **B: Uh huh.**

598
599 J: And 19 ... Now, the thing that happened that really changed my life — in 1987 I got invited
600 to a People-to-People tour of China. And went to China with a group. We got very friendly
601 and ...

602
603 **B: What was the topic of this People-to-People?**

604
605 J: Computing education. And they had a reunion in November — we went in May — in
606 November that year they had a reunion in New York, which was ... sort of put up as a
607 symposium. So I was sent an invitation to a symposium, which we all knew was really just a
608 reunion, but there was an opportunity for us to give papers. I took it along to my head of
609 department. And I ... he knew what it was I was going to. But he happened to have some
610 money left in his budget for sending people to conferences and he paid my trip to New York
611 to what was basically a reunion, and I gave a short paper on something or other. And I'd also,
612 when we went to China, presented a couple of papers I think. But that was the first
613 experience I'd ever had at actually presenting papers.

614
615 **B: So this was 1987. It was prior to doing your Master's or during the period of time you**

616 **had just started your Master's?**

617

618 J: Well, I must have finished my Master's. I think I had actually finished my Master's at the
619 start of 1988, because it then had to be sent to be examined. And I did it. And the graduation
620 was 1989.

621

622 **B: I see.**

623

624 J: But when I went to New York, my roommate from the China trip had come there from a
625 conference in — I've forgotten where the conference was — but it occurred to me that the
626 following year I could probably present at that conference myself. So I then started working
627 towards being able to write a paper that I could present at that conference. And that's really
628 what got me started in research, in really doing research.

629 [35:08]

630 **B: What conference was it, do you remember?**

631

632 J: It was a ... it was a not one that I went to regularly after that. I went to a couple of them. I
633 think it was an information systems conference. And it was in Dallas, I remember, in 19 ...
634 probably 1989. But I don't remember which one it was. So that was what actually got me
635 started in doing research. And then in...

636

637 **B: Were there particular people on that trip — you said that that changed your life and**
638 **giving papers — were there particular people who encouraged you in that group or was**
639 **it just the being part of this group?**

640

641 J: Just being part of the group and having an opportunity to go.

642

643 **B: Was that group balanced with men and women?**

644

645 J: Oh! No, no. It was I guess predominately men. I think there were about 32 of us. There were
646 three couples, one of whom was professional; the two of them came as computing
647 professionals. And there were maybe five other women. So it was predominately men.

648

649 **B: I see. But very welcoming.**

650

651 J: Yes.

652

653 **B: I see. So now we're back and it's 1989. Did you become part of professional**
654 **organizations? Fit in when you went for your Ph.D. and how you just made that choice**
655 **and how you became professionally active ... in addition to this process ...**

656

657 J: Well, I started doing the... I went to the Women, Work, and Computerization conference in
658 1991. And that came about because I was talking with one of the psychologists who — with
659 whom I then did most of my research — about the conference, which was in Finland. And I
660 said, "I know some people in Finland, I met them on ... And we could go and stay with them
661 and go to the conference!" So we wrote a paper together and it was accepted and then she

662 decided she couldn't go to the conference, so I went on my own anyway. But we, from that
663 point on, we were working together and doing research into the under-representation of
664 women in computing. She was doing it because she was a social psychologist and she'd
665 started working in that direction and I happened to be the only woman in the computing
666 department.

667

668 **B: You've been there for ... almost 20 years at this point, at Deakin or Gordon.**

669

670 J: Yes.

671

672 **B: And the number of women hasn't grown?**

673

674 J: There was a female, a part-time tutor, and me, I think.

675

676 **B: I see.**

677

678 J: Sometimes there were part-time maths maybe, it was a department of computing and
679 mathematics, so a couple of part-time maths tutors, female. But apart from that they were all
680 men.

681

682 **B: I see.**

683

684 J And around that time, it was just a little earlier, I read that article by Ellen. Ellen Spertus.

685

686 **B: Mm hmm!**

687

688 J: And that also had a major influence on me because I had never felt discriminated against. I
689 mean, my colleagues didn't discriminate against me, they treated me as an equal. I read her
690 article and I realized just how much discrimination there was.

691

692 [recording ended and restarted as Joy became emotional and took a break]

693

694 **B: We are resuming the conversation with Joy Teague after a short break. At the time we
695 were just talking about how Ellen Spertus had been a major influence, having read her
696 paper.**

697

698 J: Yes. So much of what she said I could see related to me. And prior to that I had never
699 thought of myself as being discriminated against. I ... all of my colleagues always treated me
700 as an equal. But I had a heavier load than anybody else in the department. I was more junior
701 than most of the people in the department. And there were all sorts of things in Ellen's paper
702 that I said, "Hmm! That applies to me." So I started to view the world differently then.

703

704 Just going back a little bit, I mentioned the man who had been my Master's supervisor. At
705 the time that he was appointed, the position was advertised as being for either a lecturer or a
706 senior lecturer. And they were going to appoint him, but what they actually did was
707 appointed me to a lecturer's position and then created — prior to that I had been a principal

708 tutor—they appointed me to a lecturer’s position and then changed my principal tutor
709 position to a senior lecturer’s position and then appointed him. And that was done that way
710 because the head of department and, I think, the dean realized that I was ... I should have
711 been promoted anyway and it was not possible to get promotion from principal tutor to
712 lecturer. I could only get it in response to an advertised position. So even though they wanted
713 to appoint this other person they actually did it in a roundabout way in order to get me
714 promoted, or to get me further up the scale.

715 [40:49]

716 But even so, by the ... when I read Ellen’s paper, if I’d been a man I would have been a
717 senior lecturer. I was still a lecturer at that time. So that’s when I started taking an interest in
718 women in computing and discrimination and that sort of thing and started to work more
719 closely with Val Clarke, who was the psychologist. We were on the same floor of the same
720 building and her interest was social psychology. One of her areas of interest was women in
721 computing. And so we started to work together and worked on a variety of projects and
722 papers. A bit further along ... I forgot what I was about to say there.

723

724 **B: We ... at some point you decided to get the Ph.D. Was that part of that?**

725

726 J: Yes. That sort of ... that happened after we’d written several papers together and Val said to
727 me that I could continue with the work that we were doing and use some of the work that had
728 already been done and do a Ph.D. And I had some trouble getting enrolled to do a Ph.D.
729 because I couldn’t do it in psychology where she was because I didn’t have a psychology
730 degree. And my head of department and the other professors didn’t see what I was wanting to
731 do as being computing. And I talked to the women’s studies people, but they — again, I
732 didn’t have a women’s studies background. I eventually enrolled in the department where I
733 was working. And Val was my secondary supervisor and there was somebody up in
734 Melbourne who was appointed as my supervisor. And once again, I had a supervisor that ...
735 Val did all the supervision. The actual supervisor did nothing. But ...

736

737 **B: Is this person at Monash that ... was the university in Melbourne?**

738

739 J: No, he was at ... sorry. In the early 1990s the government decided that there were too many
740 tertiary institutions and they didn’t want any of the ... what we call “colleges of advanced
741 education.” They all had to become universities and merge together so that there were less of
742 them. So we actually ... Deakin by that stage, or as a result of that, became five campuses:
743 three in Melbourne, one down at Warrnambool, and one at Geelong. And ... because they
744 merged with an institution at Warrnambool and one in Melbourne, which was the result of an
745 earlier merger of three institutions. So there were three campuses in Melbourne, one in
746 Warrnambool, and one in Geelong.

747

748 **B: What was the second name? I got Melbourne, Geelong, and the...**

749

750 J: Warrnambool.

751

752 **B: How do you spell that?**

753

754 J: W-A – double R – N-A-M-B – double O – L. One of the men up in Melbourne was
755 supervising me, sort of. Normally my supervisor ...

756

757 **B: In ... in computing?**

758

759 J: In a women in computing ... study.

760

761 **B: I mean, was that his ... what was his area of expertise? Was he in computing?**

762

763 J: He was in computing. I was actually doing it within the department. He was within the
764 department. And I'm not quite sure why it was that he was chosen to supervise me. Or
765 elected to supervise me. And he ... I think he became sick and wasn't able to continue, and I
766 transferred to somebody on the same campus who also didn't do very much supervision. And
767 meanwhile I just sort of went along working with Val and doing it myself. An a result of
768 these mergers we had a ... had another professor appointed and ... Barrie retired in 1993, I
769 think. So he was home here. I was working 60 hours a week in an environment that I was not
770 very happy with.

771

[45:15]

772 One of the results of the mergers was that the people in the top echelons had this view of
773 where the university was going and everything was wonderful for them. They just forgot to
774 tell anybody lower down. I was an enrollment officer advising students, second and third
775 year students. The students would tell me what the new regulations were because it just never
776 got passed on. That sort of ... so where previously people had worked together as a team,
777 there was no feeling of that. The new head of department ... got to the point I wouldn't go
778 into his office. If I had to talk to him, I'd wait until I met him in the corridor. He just made
779 my skin crawl. Anyway I decided to leave.

780

781 **B: And this is when?**

782

783 J: I left at the end of 1995. And I didn't want to continue with the Ph.D. in the same department
784 and because he would have been ... I would have been his student without any power at all.
785 And I transferred to management information systems. One of the men there took me on and
786 I was given a scholarship. I'd done most of the work I needed to do in the women in
787 computing area, but Val thought the Ph.D. needed a bit more. And one of the things that had
788 interested me had to do with personality types, the sort of person that goes into computing.
789 We added a second part to the thesis looking at personality types of people in computing. I
790 wrote up the women in computing work. The university, or the faculty rather, gave me a
791 scholarship, which went for three years. Now, I'd already been enrolled; I really should have
792 completed the Ph.D. in 18 months. But they'd sort of overlooked the fact that I had done
793 quite a bit of work and gave me a three-year scholarship, so I took three years to do it. The
794 facilities for students were just appalling!

795

796 **B: And where physically were you?**

797

798 J: I worked at home because, as I said, the facilities in there were appalling. There was a
799 common room for students, but I didn't ... I wouldn't have had my own computer terminal

800 there ...

801

802 **B: This was at Deakin?**

803

804 J: At Deakin.

805

806 **B: At Deakin. In Geelong?**

807

808 J: In Geelong. In management information systems. It was actually the faculty of commerce
809 and law, I think. If I had stayed where I had been — computing, computing and mathematics
810 — I would have had a computer on my desk and that sort of thing, but in management
811 information systems I wouldn't be able to sit in there all day without having my own
812 computer and there wasn't one for me. And so I just worked at home. I wrote up the work I
813 had done on the women in computing, gave a chapter to my supervisor — Val was still my
814 secondary supervisor and still doing all the work with me — for him to read. The next few
815 times that I saw him — I didn't see him all that often — he started reading it. And then he
816 didn't like the way I had written it. And he thought that perhaps that I needed to re-write it.
817 He never actually finished reading the first chapter, so I never bothered giving him any more.

818

819 **B: I see.**

820

821 J: And I guess it sort of took three years. I mean, I didn't spend three years working on it by
822 any means, but I worked over the three years and did a lot of other things. Didn't have to go
823 in there. Occasionally I'd go in and say "hello" to him and talk to Val.

824

825 I finished ... I was aiming to finish just before going to a conference. And, of course, it
826 always takes a bit longer than you expect. Well, the day that I was ... the day before I left for
827 the conference I finished at the point where, I thought, it was ready to be examined. Val had
828 read it. I took it in. My primary supervisor wasn't in his office, although I had said I'd be
829 coming, but I hadn't actually specified a time. So I left it on his desk with a note saying, "I'm
830 leaving tomorrow. Please let Val know if there are any major problems, anything that needs
831 to be done. Otherwise she'll send it for printing (this is printing to be sent out for
832 examination) next week." Anyway, he contacted Val and he really didn't ask Val for her
833 comments last night, because she was just appalled that he didn't like the font that it was ...
834 that I had used. He didn't have any comments whatsoever about the content. It was all about
835 the appearance.

836

837 **B: I see.**

838 [50:19]

839 J: The other thing that ... I needed to interview people. Well, Val thought that as the person in
840 computing, he was the one who should be finding people for me to interview, which he
841 didn't do at all, he just left that entirely up to me. And one of the difficulties is that if you're
842 just a student, people take a lot less notice. It would have been a lot easier if he could have
843 found people for me. But anyway, he wasn't happy — he didn't like the way I had written it,
844 et cetera. And once again ...

845

846 We had to list four examiners and the university randomly selected two of them. And I was
847 not allowed to know who they were. I was not allowed to make contact with them. I mean, I
848 knew who was on the list because I'd helped compile it and that was OK. We'd chosen
849 people who we knew who had some interest in the area, once again, would be possibly
850 thinking along similar sorts of lines. One of them happened to be the person who had been
851 my supervisor for my Master's. And, as it turned out, it was sent to him. And, once again, he
852 didn't read it.

853

854 **B: She chuckles here.**

855

856 J: He did eventually send it back. But it took him so long that in the meantime they had found
857 somebody else to do it. Because he just wasn't doing it. And so they sent it to somebody else
858 on the list who got it back before he got it back in. My ... as I said, my main supervisor, the
859 first bit I'd given him to read, he was not happy about it, he thought it needed to be written in
860 a different way. And once again I didn't get anything that had to be changed and I think two
861 of the three examiners commented on the style of writing in a positive way. Once again, that
862 supervisor also had recently got his own Ph.D. and was supervising for the first time.
863 Anyway, it annoys Val intensely that she did all the work and he gets the credit because he
864 was the primary supervisor and she was the secondary supervisor.

865

866 **B: But eventually it passed the examiners.**

867

868 J: Yes, the two who did actually assess it, as I said, they didn't require any changes and it just
869 passed, yeah. So that was ... I worked on it from ... I left Deakin at the end of 1995, so I was
870 a full-time student in 1996, 1997, 1998. Completed in 1999. I probably graduated in 2000
871 because it took a while to ... for the...

872

873 **B: To get all the paperwork through and ...**

874

875 J: Yeah.

876

877 **B: Mmm hmm.**

878

879 J: I didn't do anything in a work sense for several years. Do you want me to keep going then?

880

881 **B: Well, I think yes, because that's part of your career path, is that you came ... that you**
882 **come back into computing and computing education after you received your degree.**
883 **And you might tell us about how that took and how it is going now.**

884

885 J: In fact, I think somebody — I don't know, I think it may have been Boots Cassel — said to
886 me most people get their doctorate and then go out to work. In my case I finished work and
887 then got my doctorate and then didn't do anything.

888

889 **B: What were your outside interests in that period of time?**

890

891 J: I actually spent quite a lot of time on trading the stock market. I used to do that, sort of sitting

892 watching it during the day, and trading. And then ...

893

894 **B: It would be a good time to be doing that. It was during the up part of the market.**

895

896 J: No, at that time it was when the market was going down. So I worked on it pretty much full-
897 time, but I was doing a lot better than the market was.

898

899 **B: Good.**

900

901 J: The market ... it was when the market went down, not up.

902

903 **B: I see. Mmm hmm.**

904

905 J: I was at least in positive ground. And then we went round Australia, we ... to do that we
906 spent a lot of money we took out of savings. Came back and decided that we really needed to
907 try to replenish that.

908

[54:45]

909 We decided we'd teach computing at home. Set up a classroom downstairs and put flyers in
910 peoples' letterboxes and started doing a bit of that. We used to offer a free class teaching
911 what you could do with a computer. Barrie used to conduct it. The class would arrive and I
912 would take a photo of them all. And then I'd go upstairs and edit the photo and clear away
913 the background clutter, and put paintings on the wall [chuckles], and then email it to them.
914 So that they each got an email with an attachment and they could have a look at this photo
915 that had been taken just a short time before. Basically we were just showing people what you
916 could do with a computer and different sorts of things you could do. And then Barrie talked
917 about when people wanted to buy a computer what they need to look at.

918

919 And then we went along to a meeting, community meeting. And this woman came up to me
920 afterwards and said "hello" and sort of introduced herself. And I knew who she was because
921 I'd — she'd been a student of mine about — well, she said it was 25 years earlier, I didn't
922 remember, but she didn't look too much different. She had just taken over as the coordinator
923 of the local ... the neighborhood house, which offers computing classes ... offers classes in a
924 whole variety of things. Anyway, she wanted some help with their computers. And so I
925 started doing that and became the volunteer computer manager. So I keep everything going. I
926 don't know what it's like for you working in computing, but at Deakin we had a system
927 programmer and we had some technicians who used to fix, maintain, you know, do the
928 hardware-related things, so I'd never done anything like that. However, while I was trading, I
929 talked to the technical support person at my broker's and for some reason he took a liking to
930 me. I don't ... and he was only there a few months and got sacked. And he ... [clock chimes]

931

932 **B: Wait a second while the clock gets through.**

933

[removed about 43 seconds of the clock chiming 12:00]

934

935 J: All right. Anyway he had a ... not a programming knowledge, but a tremendous knowledge
936 of computers in the hardware and systems-type areas — the areas that I knew almost nothing
937 about. And when he got the sack, he started putting flyers in letterboxes and set himself up in

938 his own computer business. So 12 months later we decided to start teaching and did the sort
939 of thing he had done, put flyers in letterboxes. And then somebody else did the same thing
940 and they are offering teaching plus fixing computers. And we decided we needed to do that
941 sort of thing, too.

942
943 I had become involved with a computer user group, small computer user group, up at the
944 neighborhood center. And there was a man there who rather like my friend in — did I say
945 where he was? He was in Perth — with a ... neither of them with any formal training or
946 much education of any kind, but very good with computers. Anyway, I talked to this fellow
947 and sort of ... we got on well and we decided that if something came along in the hardware
948 area that we couldn't cope with we'd get this other fellow to do it. Well, we started doing
949 that, but the problem turned out that once he went to someone's house, he more or less took
950 over. He gave them his phone number and then we lost them. Not that he was doing it in any
951 malicious way; he just liked solving problems and he liked helping people. So that
952 arrangement didn't work all that well. There were various other issues. We set him down one
953 day and said, "Well, here's what we see as the problem." And he said, "Well, I'm not going
954 to change." So then, we're still sort of offering classes and offering other support and I had to
955 learn things. So, somebody would phone and say "I have such and such a problem" and I'd
956 phone Jonathan and say...

957
958 **B: Jonathan's the man in Perth ...**

959
960 J: Yes.

961
962 **B: ... you work with.**

963
964 J: Yes. "Somebody's just called me about such and such, now what do I do?" And so I've been
965 learning as I go now.

966
967 **B: And so currently you are doing that work and teaching at the community center?**

968
969 J: And teaching at the community center, which we started last year, teaching at the community
970 center.

971 [59:58]

972 **B: So very different kind of students from the students you had at Deakin?**

973
974 J: Very. Yes, they're almost all female. They're elderly. They're ... they enjoy themselves. I
975 mean, they don't have to go home and do assignments. They don't have exams. It's just an
976 interesting ... nobody cares if they do work or they don't. We teach them ... the classes last
977 ... well, their classes typically were lasting three or four weeks. We are extending that this
978 year, and sort of slowing them down, really, and spreading them out over eight weeks for
979 reasons related to the funding that the center gets. We've built up a number of classes.

980
981 We also do some teaching at Ocean Grove, which is another neighborhood center. Because
982 the person who had been doing their advanced classes got sick and couldn't. And, in fact, the
983 classes that we're offering at Springdale, which is our local one, came about because we'd

984 been asked to offer them at Ocean Grove and then, because we'd prepared material for them,
985 we then started offering them at Springdale.

986

987 **B: I see. I must say to the mike that your face has lit up as you talk about teaching those**
988 **classes. Does that ...**

989

990 J: Yes, yes. Well, it's different. And I teach one class ... have been teaching one class down at
991 Queenscliff, which is another neighborhood center, on how to use your mobile phone, which
992 is ...

993

994 **B: Not the thought that you had when you started your academic career, that you'd be**
995 **doing this. If you'd look back on it, what advice would you give a young woman about**
996 **to start out in computing education?**

997

998 J: First of all, nothing that I have done has ever been planned. I just fall into things. It was never
999 my intention to be an academic. In fact, when I was at school, most of my friends were going
1000 to be teachers, because at that time there was a shortage of teachers. The government used to
1001 pay them from the time they started university, or from the time they started their training. So
1002 a lot of my classmates went on to teaching because they got paid ever since they started. And
1003 I always said "No, I don't want to be a teacher." The way I got into teaching was because
1004 Barrie moved to Geelong and I wanted to come down to Geelong and that's where a job
1005 happened to be. And similarly, the Gordon there was no research. When we became a
1006 university I was not particularly interested in doing research until I went to China and the
1007 way to see the people I had been to China with was to do research and get papers accepted
1008 overseas so that I could go to the conferences.

1009

1010 **B: But what would you tell a young woman who is interested in it?**

1011

1012 J: Who was interested in it. [pause – removed about 9 seconds of silence] I'm trying to think.
1013 My niece actually has just recently started in computing. And I'm trying to think what I have
1014 said to her in the past about it. Not that I've spent a lot of time talking to her. But you're
1015 talking about a young woman who wants to become an academic? In computing?

1016

1017 **B: In computing. In computing.**

1018

1019 J: Well, what I found was that my colleagues, people I worked with, always respected me and
1020 treated me as an equal and I think that the sort of discrimination that I know I faced in a lot of
1021 areas I didn't find in my immediate working environment. I think that if — my life has
1022 always been if I want to do something, go ahead and do it. And that's what I ...

1023

1024 **B: Your advice to someone else.**

1025

1026 J: That's the advice I'd give to somebody else.

1027

1028 **B: If you could change one decision you made, which one would it be? You said ... and you**
1029 **also said that you didn't really make the decisions straight out, but you fell into them ...**

1030

1031 J: No, no!

1032

1033 **B: ... but if you made one, what would that be?**

1034

1035 J: Yeah, yeah. Yes, it's interesting how some people say "I want to do this" and they spend
1036 years working towards it. And other people just fall into things. So, if I could change one
1037 decision ... [pause – removed about 12 seconds of silence] Can I tuck it back in?

1038

1039 **B: No, no! [both laugh]**

1040

1041 J: Well, I'm thinking that being the only woman in the department, I used to be on all the
1042 interviewing committees. And therefore, I was on the interviewing committee that appointed
1043 the head of the department that was there at the time I left. There was another candidate. I
1044 would have voted for the other candidate if I'd known. I don't know, it probably wouldn't
1045 have made any difference, but ...

1046

1047 **B: I can understand. Thank you for spending all this time. And I know that some of this**
1048 **was very painful for you. Some of it I hope was enjoyable for you. And I really want to**
1049 **thank you for letting us interview you today.**

1050 [64:57]