

Summary
of
Evaluation
Findings

Year One

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Introduction

EXPLORING CHILDHOOD is designed to acquaint students with the processes of growth and development in young children and also to engage them in children's lives through readings, films, and work with children at fieldsites. The classroom component of the program, which utilizes ethnographic films, booklets, records, posters, and a range of activities, is divided into three modules: Working with Children, Seeing Development, and Family and Society. Working with Children prepares students to begin working at fieldsites (nursery schools, kindergartens, day care centers, etc.) for several hours a week. Seeing Development focuses on the processes of growth and development in young children. It draws on common activities such as water play and working with clay to illustrate these processes, and suggests ways students can learn about the needs and abilities of the children they work with. Family and Society turns from the inner growth of the child to the socializing forces that influence his or her growth. It helps students to understand these influences and also to see the interaction between children and those who influence their behavior: children are not only being shaped by others but also actively influencing the behavior of those around them.

Field work with children, which continues throughout the program, gives students direct experience observing and working with children. This allows students to develop confidence and competence with children, to test ideas raised in class, and to

try out activities and ways of behaving that can later be discussed and evaluated with their peers.

Between 1973 and 1975, a national field test of EXPLORING CHILDHOOD was conducted in all parts of the country. During this period, the program's evaluators gathered information in three broad areas:

- *Implementation.* To inform course developers and users whether the program provides sufficient guidelines and support for organizing and maintaining the program in schools, and what additional support is needed.
- *Revision.* To inform course developers about which aspects of the program function effectively for teachers and students and which need revision.
- *Accountability.* To inform school administrators, teachers, and federal and state agency personnel of what students learn from participation in the EXPLORING CHILDHOOD program.

This two-year evaluation follows several earlier stages of formative evaluation. During the first year of the program (1970-71), field research helped to shape the program's goals and objectives. During 1971-72 early materials were tried out in several classrooms to learn about teacher and student preferences for different formats and approaches. During 1972-73, a full-year set of materials was tested. Feedback from this test provided the basis for developing the Experimental Edition used in the national field test.

RATIONALE
FOR AN
EXTENSIVE
EVALUATION

There are many reasons why a broad evaluation effort was deemed necessary. As a program based on field work, EXPLORING CHILDHOOD calls for active and reciprocal relationships between high school and community child care personnel. Communication, scheduling, and transportation issues needed to be understood in order to help teachers implement the program.

Second, the program draws course teachers into new roles, some of which require special support and training. Teachers need to be knowledgeable about child development, to arrange for fieldsites, to observe and supervise adolescents' work with children, and to handle a variety of classroom learning approaches and activities. Fieldsite teachers also have special responsibilities: identifying and supporting the competencies of adolescent staff members, maintaining communication with the course teacher, and helping fieldsite parents understand adolescents' roles with their children.

Third, in placing adolescents in responsible roles with young children, it was necessary to know what conditions contribute to the adolescent's experience of success and failure.

Finally, EXPLORING CHILDHOOD's most basic concern is increasing adolescents' knowledge of and sensitivity to children. In order to know whether the program was achieving this goal, it was necessary to find out whether adolescents were in fact learning about children's growth process, developing skills in caring for children, and forming positive attitudes toward children as a result of participating in the program.

NATIONAL
FIELD
TEST
GOALS

Specifically, the goals of the first year of the national field test were:

- to identify aspects of program implementation that were most and least difficult for schools to carry out in the first year of the program;
- to describe teacher and student responses to program materials and learning approaches;
- to assess the effectiveness of the program's teacher education and support networks.

Findings from the first-year study were used to inform the revision of materials, to point up the need for supplementary materials, and to strengthen the teacher education program.

The second-year study provided a follow-up to the first year. Its goals were:

- to document how and what change occurred in students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills in working with children as a result of participating in the program;
- to identify how implementation needs changed in the second year of the program;
- to assess the strengths and limitations of alternative teacher education models--a regional field coordinator model, which provided teacher training through full-time staff; and a community-based leadership model, in which second-year teachers collaborated with parents in a teacher training program;
- to document program usage in a variety of nonschool settings.

Second-year findings will be used to strengthen the teacher support alternatives. Also, they will enable us to inform administrators, teachers, state and federal agency personnel of the organizational demands of the EXPLORING CHILDHOOD program, and of its effects on participating teachers and students.

This document describes the way information was gathered during the first year and summarizes the major findings and recommendations. A similar report on the second-year test will soon be available. Full evaluation reports, which document and discuss the findings in detail, are available on request from Education Development Center.*

Test Sites

SELECTION CRITERIA

Two hundred thirty-four public school sites (224 high schools, 10 junior high schools) in all ten Office of Child

*The evaluation documents from which the overview summary is taken are listed in the Appendix.

Development regions participated in the 1973-74 field test. They were selected from a pool of volunteer sites, with the criteria that they use EXPLORING CHILDHOOD materials comprehensively (though not necessarily exclusively); that males constitute at least 20 percent of the class group; that the total test population approximate the ethnic composition of the national population in terms of major minority groups; that programs involve a minimum of three hours class work per week; and that each student be provided with field work responsibility.

TERMS OF AGREEMENT

The sites received full classroom sets of EXPLORING CHILDHOOD materials without cost, and agreed to provide ongoing evaluation feedback from course teachers, field teachers, and students. Materials were shipped to the sites as they were produced throughout the year. Pairs of sites in close proximity shared one set of classroom films.

POPULATION PROFILE

The sites represented a broad cross-section of the population. Sites were located in 45 states. Four levels of population density were represented, with the heaviest concentration of sites in urban areas.

DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF TEST SITES

	<i>No. of Sites</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Urban		
Large city (100,000+)	69	29
Small city (100,000-)	70	30
Suburban	40	17
Rural	55	24
<i>Total</i>	234	100

The regional mean family income, as reported by school officials in each site, ranged from \$5,379 to \$10,329. The mean family income of the entire population of test sites was \$8,730, somewhat less than the national average.

SCHOOL
DEPARTMENTS

At most sites (80 percent) EXPLORING CHILDHOOD was located in home economics departments; 10 percent of the sites offered it as a social studies course; and the remaining sites connected it with such areas as guidance, vocational education, and community services. Most teachers brought a home economics background to the program.

Student Population

Four thousand one hundred forty (4,140) students enrolled in the test program, which was offered at all sites as an elective course. After gathering background information on the full population, a random sample of sites was selected to receive student questionnaires. A comparison of the total student population with the students in the sample of programs indicates that they share the characteristics described below.

AGE
SEX
ETHNICITY

Students ranged from 12 to 19 years of age, with most of them being 16 or 17 years old (73 percent). Fifteen percent of the student group was male, 85 percent female.* The ethnic mix

*Sites were unable to meet the 20 percent male enrollment requirement, probably because of general lack of male participation in high school child development programs up to now. The 15 percent male enrollment achieved was substantially higher than child development programs nationally. In one sample survey, carried out by the National College of Education (1971-72), male enrollment in Illinois high school child development programs was found to be only 2 percent.

of the student group included approximately 68 percent white, 11 percent black, 12 percent of Spanish heritage, and 2 percent native American. (See Appendix for exact figures.) The relationship of age, sex, and ethnicity to student responses to the program is discussed on pages 23-25.

INTEREST
IN THE
PROGRAM

Students enrolled in the test program voluntarily. They were mainly interested in working with and learning about children, and in understanding more about parenthood. Training for eventual careers with young children and understanding their own development were important to some but not most students. Few students enrolled simply to gain graduation credit or because school personnel persuaded them to do so.*

EXPERIENCE
WITH
CHILDREN

Most students entered the program with some baby-sitting experience, and about 40 percent had extensive baby-sitting experience. Most child-care experience was *outside* the students' own families; 30 percent of the student group had no younger siblings at all. Few students had child-care experience other than baby-sitting.

Most students (over 70 percent) had taken a Home and Family Life course or another home economics course that focused on child care or the family.

*It is not surprising that students with a strong and positive interest in children selected themselves into EXPLORING CHILDHOOD. But what about students with less immediate interest in and positive attitudes toward children--might they also need and benefit from a program such as EXPLORING CHILDHOOD? How can such students be drawn into the program? It is interesting to note that although the student population as a whole was quite confident about working with children, 95 students who expressed less confidence at the beginning of the program became more confident over the year. This suggests that the program may build confidence about working with children in students who are less certain initially about their ability to care for children.

ATTITUDES
AND
EXPECTA-
TIONS

Students' strongest expectation about their coming field work was that they would be warm, supportive companions to children in their play--essentially, the role they must have been accustomed to as baby-sitters. Students were highly confident about their ability to *relate* to children as friends and helpers. And they were confident they could learn about children through observing them, particularly by observing their changes over a period of time.

Students expressed much less confidence about their *knowledge* of young children, particularly about why they behave as they do and what kinds of play activities are appropriate for children of different ages. They were least confident of their ability to "teach" children, which presumably would demand a considerable amount of such knowledge.

A substantial proportion of students entering the program hoped to work with children in the future, as parents, in day care and preschool roles, and in work with retarded or physically handicapped children.

MALE-
FEMALE
DIFFERENCES

Both boys and girls entered the program expressing interest in the intrinsic goals of the program and confidence about working with children. Fewer boys than girls had taken related courses before entering the program. And while boys were confident about the same child-care skills as girls, their overall *level* of confidence was lower. Most boys cited an interest in children as a primary reason for enrolling. But more boys than girls cited a desire for course credits or persuasion by school staff as additional reasons for enrolling. Essentially, although boys and girls entered with strong interest in the intrinsic goals of the course, to learn about and work with children, girls held these attitudes *more strongly* than boys.

This background material on students suggests that while students entered the program enthusiastic about working with children in a close and companionable way, they were more experienced with familial than institutional child-care settings. Therefore, the program demanded new roles of them, which required more knowledge of behavior and development than their previous experiences had required.

Design of the Study

FULL TEST GROUP

The 234 course teachers received six questionnaires during the year. All 4,140 students filled out a prequestionnaire at the beginning of the year, and one questionnaire was administered to the 800 fieldsite teachers.

Ninety high school sites were selected randomly to comprise a sample student population who filled out additional questionnaires during the year. All 10 junior high sites in the program also filled out additional questionnaires. The high school sites were divided into three groups of 30 sites each; student questionnaires were rotated among the three groups (see Appendix for a detailed description of sampling and instrumentation).

INTENSIVE SITES

To form a more detailed picture of the implementation and learning processes in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD, five additional sites, representing the diversity of sites, were selected for intensive study. The intensive sites were located in five different Office of Child Development regions. They represented the full demographic range of the test population and some diversity in type of school and department.

INTENSIVE SITES

<i>Location</i>	<i>Demographic Description</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>Department</i>
Chicago, Ill.	Inner City	High School	Home Economics
Boston, Mass.	Urban	High School	Social Studies
Marysville, Calif.	Rural	High School	Home Economics
Tallahassee, Fla.	Small City	Middle School	Home Economics
Denver, Colo.	Suburban	High School	Home Economics

All students and course teachers in the intensive sites received the survey questionnaires described above. In addition, one trained field worker was assigned to spend approximately two days per week interviewing and observing. At each intensive site, nine students were selected randomly as an interview group.* Each student was interviewed individually at the beginning and end of the course, and twice, in groups of three, during the year. Course teachers were interviewed three times during the year; collaborating fieldsite teachers were interviewed once at the end.

As observers, the field workers recorded the kinds of activities carried out in class and the extent to which those activities drew on students' experiences with children. They also selected two students from the interview group who were observed at their fieldsites. Using a standard time-sample approach (15 seconds of observation followed by 15 seconds of recording), they documented the kinds of activities students carried out at their fieldsites.

*Standard procedures for random selection were modified somewhat to assure the presence of boys in the interview group. If the classroom group had four or fewer boys, all were automatically included in the interview group, and a random selection carried out among the girls.

Student Assessment of the Program

One major focus of the first year (1973-74) of the national field test was to give students a chance to describe their experiences in the program and to evaluate which aspects of the program contributed most and least to their growth.*

In analyzing the first-year student responses we asked the following questions:

- How did students feel they grew as a result of participation in the program?
- What classroom approaches, fieldsite experiences, and program materials contributed most and least to growth?
- How might such characteristics as sex, age, grade level, and ethnicity relate to students' experience in the program?

Following is a summary of students' assessment of what they learned about children and about themselves, and which aspects of the program they felt contributed to each major area of growth.

*This is only one step toward evaluating the program through students. A second step involved, assessing student growth through reliable and valid measures of learning outcomes, was part of the second-year study. If "growth" is defined both as the changes students experience and articulate as well as the changes pointed up by a measuring instrument, both kinds of information are necessary.

Learning About Children

AREAS OF GROWTH

Students described two major areas of learning about children, both of which corresponded with central course goals. First, understanding how children think and feel: 75 percent of the students in the 100-site sample felt they grew a great deal in this area. That understanding included an awareness that children's needs, emotions, and abilities are different from those of an adolescent or adult.* Interviews with intensive site students provided numerous examples of this awareness. Many students described the unrealistic expectations they had initially, particularly of what children of different ages are able to do. One high school girl recalled one child and said, "We were always putting responsibilities on him and always yelling at him...and couldn't realize that he's only three years old!"

Students expressed an awareness that they were learning not to attribute adult motives (particularly aggressive ones) to rough play behavior. One boy said: "They would just get on my nerves by the things they'd be doing.... I used to hate them. But now I can put up with it and I know that because I'm older than them, I should be trying to teach them instead of...stopping them from doing things. When they mess up, they just do it because they enjoy it."

Understanding more about how children think and feel included not only an awareness of the differences between children and older people but also the realization that no two children are alike: each responds differently because of his or her values, home life, and experiences.** Students realized that

*See coded responses to Student Questionnaire items and intensive site interviews reported in the full evaluation report on student responses, available from EDC.

**Course teacher, fieldsite teachers, and field research assistants have all reported that students seemed to grow most in their awareness of children as individuals.

initially they had expected children, particularly children of the same age, to be alike. Both the student sample as a whole and the interview groups expressed surprise at discovering wide differences in the vocabulary, physical development, and social ease exhibited by the children they worked with.

The second major area of learning was the ability to respond better in actual interactions with children: 60 percent of the students in the 100-site sample felt they grew substantially in this area. They felt, for example, that they developed more patience, and could interpret children's needs and reasons for behaving in particular ways more accurately. They attributed this to an increased ability to relate to children on their own level, particularly to talk with and listen to children, and to be able to control children in difficult situations.

WEAKNESSES

At the end of the course, students did not feel like "authorities," or able to carry out a "teacher" role. They felt less equipped to conduct a class, work with a group, "keep children interested in learning," or create and carry out group activities than to work in a close one-to-one way with individual children. Also, they felt they lacked the authority to control behavior problems as effectively as they would have liked. "They won't stop fighting because you're not the teacher," was a typical student comment.

Aspects of the Program That Contributed Most and Least to Learning About Children

FIELDSITE EXPERIENCES

Most students in the 100-site sample (80 percent) agreed that they could not have learned what they did without the field-site experience. They viewed direct experience with children, particularly face-to-face contacts with children around simple,

everyday activities, as the most powerful source of learning. Such experiences apparently *demonstrated* in dramatic ways what children understand. As an example of the insight into children's age-level abilities one could gain from the most routine kind of activity, one girl recalled telling a child to face her so that she could button her coat. When the child did not respond, the student thought the child was resisting. She began to realize that the child "didn't know what I meant; so I tried it on a couple of the other kids and none of them knew what 'face me' meant."

Students also mentioned that the fieldsite provided a setting for practicing alternative ways to work with children. Many students in the interview group had discovered that joining a child's work in a supportive way could motivate them more effectively than telling or forcing them. One girl recounted that at the beginning of her field work she would get angry or ignore the children if they became difficult to handle. She would say, "If you're going to act that way, I'm just not going to work with you." After a while she discovered that "if I just try to start doing writing with them, then they usually calm down." Another student said that early in the year if "the kid gets smart...gets into something they're not supposed to do, I would have whipped him.... But now...I'll just...sit down and talk to him or make a little game out of it and then he'll understand it better than getting the whipping."

Although a great many students in the interview group could describe this kind of change from directive to supportive behavior, their responses cannot be generalized to the student sample as a whole. Objective attitude measures were used in the 1974-75 field test to enable us to assess the extent to which EXPLORING CHILDHOOD students develop less authoritarian attitudes as a result of the program, and come to practice more supportive strategies in their field work.

Students felt that three limitations prevented them from getting as much out of field work as they would have liked. The most universal, persistent complaint was that there wasn't enough time to build continuous, effective relationships with the children. Second, they would have liked to spend more time with the fieldsite teacher discussing the children, clarifying what the teacher expected of them, getting direction and feedback about their work. Students also felt they could have handled more responsibilities: besides being companions and helpers to the children, they thought they could have learned more and contributed more if allowed to plan activities and provide feedback about the children.

Undoubtedly, the time constraints on their field work (generally around two hours a week) as well as fieldsite teachers' expectations (that students would assume a helper role) contributed to these limitations.

CLASSROOM APPROACHES

Discussing their own experiences with children was viewed as the most useful approach, because "we get different opinions from all the students." Reading how children develop, trying out children's activities ("If you've never fingerpainted, you're not going to know how the kid's feeling"), discussing hypothetical situations with children ("They explain what *might* happen to you"), and viewing films of children and of adolescents working with children, were all rated "very useful" by more than half of the sample.

On the whole, students had difficulty relating journal-writing assignments to learning about children. Role playing and listening to taped materials were seen as less useful than some of the other classroom learning approaches. From past evaluation findings we know that these approaches are unfamiliar to many teachers, and demand some special training before they can be useful to both teacher and students.

At the end of the course, in open-ended survey questions and in intensive site interviews, students were asked what aspects of the program they would change. Many students voiced the feeling that class discussion could be more effective if, in some cases, there was less teacher domination of the conversation and, in other cases, more open student participation. If only "students would come out with what they really have on their minds...it would have more force," students said.

PROGRAM
MATERIALS

Print
Materials

The majority of students reported that the reading level was appropriate to their age level, that the amount of reading was about right, that the content was moderately interesting, and that the booklets were very interesting visually. In interviews, students suggested that ideas presented in the written materials, guidelines for what to look and listen for in working with children, and alternative interpretations about children's behavior were valuable. They expressed a wish for more ideas about working with children, particularly for very specific activities they could use with children at their fieldsites. *Children's Art*, one of the most extensively used and valued units, was seen as providing very specific ways to observe and understand children's creative activities in the fieldsite. *Child's Play*, *A Child's Eye View*, and *What About Discipline?* were particularly valued for providing topics around which students could discuss their fieldsite experiences. The latter booklet was seen as the one most directly relevant to students' fieldsite situations.

Not all booklets were viewed as equally effective in helping students understand and respond to children. *How the World Works* was the least-read unit and was evaluated by students as providing the least connection with their work with children. There is some evidence from student interviews that the way children understand the physical world--the subject of *How the World Works*--may be a particularly difficult aspect of child development to grasp.

Also, the abstract approach of *How the World Works* may contribute to students' difficulty in learning from this unit.

Making Connections, which deals with development on a general, theoretical level, was also little read by students; few of its activities were carried out.* Three "learning gaps" consistently evidenced in student interviews pointed tentatively to a need for material that would be more effective than *Making Connections* in helping students clarify and integrate their views of development. The three "gaps" are:

- Students tended to exaggerate the influence of the preschool on the child and to imply that "parents don't teach."
- Students seemed to lack specific concepts to discuss the needs and goals (such as desire for competence and mastery, desire for attachment to other children) that motivated the child's learning process.
- Many students seemed unaware or confused about how maturational factors affect growth; they seemed confused as to whether or not children, *with practice*, could learn any skill at any age.**

Revised teacher guides for the two units attempt to provide more concrete ways to introduce students to intellectual development in children, to balance the students' view of preschool and parental influence, and to emphasize the interaction of maturation and experience in the child's development.

Films

Students generally found course films interesting and about the right length, though they complained consistently about not having enough opportunities to view films. In most cases,

*The fact that these two units were the last Seeing Development units to be delivered to the sites may partly explain teachers' more limited use of them.

**"Learning Gaps" are discussed in more detail in *Seeing Development. An Evaluation from the Student Viewpoint*. Available from EDC.

because of problems in the film-sharing system, students saw only about half of the course films. Students complained about the audibility of the super 8-mm films, particularly the films of children at home and at school. (The films are now available in 16-mm format only.)

The most extensively viewed and enjoyed films of the Seeing Development module were "Gabriel" and "Half a Year Apart" and two films from the art unit, "Racing Cars" and "Clay Play." Of the "Children at Home" and "at School" films from Family and Society, the two films about Howie were most extensively viewed and enjoyed.

Learning About Themselves

When students entered the program, they expressed less interest in learning about themselves than in learning about children. Self-knowledge became more important during the year, however: at the beginning, half of the student sample said they found it an appealing goal, whereas by the end of the course 70 percent said they found it appealing. By the end of the program, close to half of the student sample felt they had learned a great deal about themselves as a result of the program.

This understanding took two forms. One was an awareness of what they were doing and feeling as they work with children. In interviews, students gave examples of "discovering" their own assumptions and personality characteristics in the process of working with children. For example, one student said: "If a kid does something wrong, I get mad.... It's normal for you to get mad, but I think I need to do something about my temper. If you have a bad day, talk it over with someone, and you won't take it out on the kids." Students also became aware of ways they

"project" their own self-critical attitudes onto children: "When kids didn't want to act right it used to get me. I used to say *there must be something wrong with me*. I realized they got moods just like we do. Sometimes they just don't feel like doing it... still gives me trouble." Together the quotes suggest a struggle that seemed typical: students' efforts to understand how their behavior may affect the children they work with, without *exaggerating* the degree of their influence on the children.

The second area of self-understanding related to parenting: 60 percent of the student sample felt they understood a great deal more about the responsibilities it involved. Although students entered the program with the strong belief that parents have a great influence on children,* that belief seemed to become more personalized by the end of the program. What impressed students most was the degree of responsibility involved. When asked how they felt about being parents after taking the course, students typically echoed this student's sentiment: "I know it would be nice to be a parent, but having to watch after them and making sure they grow up right...you need to be really responsible." Most students in the sample expressed a strong interest in parenthood, but almost universally they agreed that it was a serious undertaking, to be put off for some time.**

Aspects of the Program That Contributed Most and Least to Students' Understanding of Themselves

Particular fieldsite experiences, classroom approaches, and course materials contributed to students' awareness of their

*See discussion of Prequestionnaire, attitude items, in full report on student responses.

**See discussion of Postquestionnaire, and Final Intensive Site Interviews, in full report on student responses.

attitudes and assumptions in working with children, and to their attitudes toward themselves as parents. Because students did not have the opportunity to work extensively with Family and Society materials, which focus on family and socialization processes, we lack sufficient information to report definitively which of these materials students found most and least valuable to their understanding of parent-child relationships.

FIELDSITE
EXPERIENCES

Student interviews suggest a tentative, theoretical framework for understanding the process by which adolescents move from a condition of "egocentrism" to one of "self-awareness." In the egocentric stage, the adolescents' interactions with children are motivated primarily by their own needs for recognition and acceptance. The student is not a "good observer" at this stage since he or she has a limited capacity to think of the child as a separate, autonomous entity with individual needs and impulses. At a more child-centered stage, the student sees the child as a separate person, whose needs and feelings may not be immediately apparent. Rather than attempting to forge a "special bond" with the child, the adolescent talks with and listens to the child in order to learn *from the child* how and why he or she feels and behaves in certain ways.

At the self-aware stage, the adolescent sees both him- or herself and the child as directed by particular needs, feelings, and ideas. Awareness of one's own needs and feelings, and concern about how these affect interactions with children, become important. The adolescent is most fully a "participant observer" at this stage: close enough to his or her own reactions and attitudes to *experience* them, while distant enough, at critical times at least, to exert some control over them; close enough to the child to care about the child's welfare and empathize with the child's needs and feelings, but distant enough to refrain

from projecting his or her own needs onto the child or imposing an explanation when more information is needed.*

Further research is needed to verify that these constitute a sequence of stages, and to document in specific ways what kinds of program experiences and materials stimulate growth from egocentrism to self-awareness. Survey and interview data from students suggest that growth in self-awareness is promoted by the interaction of intensive fieldsite experiences with children, new information about child behavior and development, and continuous opportunities to reflect on and connect experiences with conceptual learning.

Student interviews illustrate one way that fieldsite experience may affect students' attitudes toward parenthood: the responsible role in the fieldsite may provide a bridge between viewing parents completely as "others" and beginning to identify with an adult caretaking role. As one boy put it when asked whether and how the program had affected his view of himself as a potential parent: "Like, I'm in school and I feel like--I'm not even going to say a *little* kid, but much younger than the teachers. When I get over there (to the fieldsite) I feel older, you know, and responsible."

Once again students reported that time affected their learning potential. They felt that lack of time to develop intense, continuous relationships with children limited their opportunities to learn about their own assumptions about and reactions to children. Once they became aware of their reactions, there was little time to examine them with fieldsite

*This tentative framework derives from a cross-sectional rather than a longitudinal analysis of student interview materials, and thus must be considered a hypothesis for further exploration. "Three Development Stages in the Adolescent's Ability to Take the Child's View" is included in an evaluation report entitled *Seeing Development. An Evaluation from the Student Viewpoint.*

teachers, or to question them for more information about the children.

CLASSROOM
APPROACHES

Students reported that discussion of fieldsite and family experiences was most valuable: discussion helped them become aware of their own assumptions about children and develop their ideas about parenthood. They specifically mentioned activity discussions focused on *values* and film discussions focused on the *process* by which family members attempt to influence each other as being most helpful in understanding parent-child relationships.

While role play has great potential for helping students dramatize and analyze family interactions, these students apparently did not have much success with it (probably because of the teachers' inexperience with this approach) and did not utilize it extensively for learning about themselves.

COURSE
MATERIALS

Because so little time was spent with Family and Society materials, relatively few students were able to evaluate materials aimed at increasing awareness of personal values and assumptions and understanding of socialization processes. Less than 30 percent of those students whose questionnaires were returned had read selections from the booklet *Children and Society*. Probably because of film-sharing difficulties as well as lack of time, less than half of the students saw any "Children at Home" or "at School" films. Less than 15 percent of those returning questionnaires saw many of the films. Those students who did have the opportunity to use and review materials reported that the family films increased their awareness of how family members influence one another. They also said that activities and discussions having to do with exploring values for children made them "more aware of my own as well as others' values."

The Relationship of Age, Sex, and Ethnicity to Students' Responses

AGE

For the purpose of exploring age differences, students were grouped in three categories: 15 years and under, 16 and 17 years, 18 years and over. Age apparently made little difference in the kinds of roles students took at the fieldsites or in their assessment of the value of field work. Younger students did find the field activities somewhat more *difficult*, however, which may suggest a need for additional guidance and preparation. The youngest age group read less of the Seeing Development materials and carried out fewer of the activities suggested in that module. When they did carry out the activities, they generally found them as valuable as did older students.*

One aspect of the program that seems to relate to age is students' response to the basic learning approaches of the course. All students in the program found direct work with and observation of children to be the *most* valuable learning approaches. At the end of the program, the youngest age group was more positive than the other groups about several classroom activities, including journal keeping, brainstorming ideas about children, and viewing films. The oldest age group was much more positive about approaches that allowed them to work outside the classroom: visiting child-care centers and talking with experienced adults, for example.

SEX

In general, boys and girls responded to the program approaches and materials fairly differently at the beginning of

*This suggests that the differences between younger and older students' use of materials may reflect differences in teachers' goals, choices, and expectations rather than differences in students' interests.

the program. Their responses grew more similar over the course of the program. After several weeks of the program, girls were more positive than boys about several learning approaches, particularly film viewing, role playing, brainstorming, and reading about development. The difference between their responses lessened by the end of the year, both because males became more positive about some approaches and because girls grew less positive about role play, listening to tapes, and brainstorming. Males grew considerably more positive about film viewing over the course of the year.

The finding that males were less positive than females about the early materials of the program may relate to a number of factors. They might have had less positive attitudes toward school, although we do not have information to confirm this hypothesis. Their status in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD as a "minority group" may have been significant, as well as the somewhat different attitudes and experience they brought to the program.

Boys and girls responded similarly to the Seeing Development units, with the exception of the art and discipline materials. Boys reported participating in fewer art activities and finding them less productive than girls. Given the sex stereotypes of our culture, it seems possible that boys might enter the program with different attitudes and experiences with art than girls. Available data did not help us answer the interesting question of why boys might see the discipline materials as less effective resources than did girls. Boys also tended to value a more directive role at the fieldsite (telling the child what to draw, correcting the child's "mistakes") than did girls.

There was no significant pattern of differences between girls and boys in their evaluation of the Family and Society materials; neither did boys report different roles and perceptions of their fieldsite experience.

ETHNICITY

Developers of EXPLORING CHILDHOOD have attempted to create materials that are useful, interesting, and relevant to teenagers with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In comparing the evaluations of students representing major ethnic/racial groups in the program (white, black, Spanish heritage), we found no strong differences in responses to questions about whether the course materials fostered growth in understanding of children and themselves. Various units or films appealed more to some groups than others, however. For example, students in the white group read more of *Child's Play* and enjoyed the film "Rachel at School" more than the other two groups. Black students used *Looking at Development* more extensively and felt most strongly that it gave them "many ideas for working with kids." Black students also saw and enjoyed the films "Oscar at Home" and "Howie at Home" more, and did not find them as difficult to hear and understand as the white students. Students of Spanish heritage read more of *What About Discipline?*

One interesting pattern of differences emerges in comparing the fieldsite experiences of the three groups. In comparison with white and black groups, students of Spanish heritage perceived the development of children's cultural identity, speech skills, and understanding of their communities as much more important goals for children at their fieldsites. They also seem to have had less active and satisfying fieldsite experiences. They reported doing less of such activities as giving children individual attention, talking and playing with children, supporting planned activities. They also felt more strongly than the other groups that fieldsite teachers did not provide enough opportunities to plan activities or discuss the children they were working with. In order to understand better the experience of Spanish-heritage students in the program, questionnaire data from the fieldsite teachers who worked with these students is being analyzed further.

Implementation Issues

Two program goals--diversity of experience and integration of experience--are critical to the success of EXPLORING CHILDHOOD. To determine whether the program was implemented well at different sites, the program's evaluators looked for evidence that:

- a rich variety of resources and experiences, both inside and outside the classroom, was provided;
- strategies, techniques, and materials were adopted that helped students integrate these diverse experiences in ways conducive to meaningful learning.

Diversity and integration were the primary foci of the 1973-74 implementation study. Accordingly, the major findings presented in the pages that follow were selected on the basis of their relevance to these goals.

The Student Program

DIVERSITY OF STUDENTS

Students are valuable educational resources in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD classrooms. Their different backgrounds and interests introduce alternative perspectives on work with children, and each student's unique combination of childhood and adolescent experiences can enrich the learning opportunities of all. For these reasons teachers were encouraged to solicit different

types of students and to make special efforts to interest boys in the program.

During 1973-74, all but one of the 177 course teachers who supplied information about recruitment stated that they actively recruited students for their EXPLORING CHILDHOOD class. The recruitment procedures used most often were informing guidance departments of course availability (reported by 138 teachers) and discussing the program with individual students (noted by 124 teachers). A fairly large proportion of teachers (61 percent of respondents) made special efforts to attract boys. The variety of strategies teachers used in this regard is illustrated by the following questionnaire replies:

"I talked to physical education and shop teachers, asking them to talk about the course with their students."

"I asked girls to involve their boyfriends and try to get them interested in taking the course."

"We told our guidance people to stress the fact that little children need male models and that boys have a definite role to play."

These comments and others like them indicate that many EXPLORING CHILDHOOD course teachers are to be commended for their resourcefulness and energy in recruiting boys. The fact remains, however, that 69 respondents (39 percent) reported making no special effort to interest boys in the course. If more teachers adopt more recruitment procedures to reach students and particularly boys they did not know previously (e.g., working through homerooms and physical education classes rather than announcing the course in their other classes), more diversified classes are likely to result.

DIVERSITY
OF
FIELDSITES

The developers hoped that field work with children would give students a variety of experience with young children. Exposure to different age groups, they believed, would help students focus on patterns of behavior that reflected different developmental stages. At the same time, experience with several children

in a particular age or developmental group would help students appreciate the uniqueness of each child. Attainment of these objectives was contingent on students from one class being placed in a variety of fieldsite settings; by comparing experiences in class discussions they would then have a broad base of developmental information to draw upon. It was suggested, therefore, that course teachers select a mix of sites from the preschools, day care centers, and primary school classrooms available in their area.

Of the 150 course teachers supplying information on the number of fieldsites they used, only 57 (38 percent) said they used fewer than three sites. A comparable number (37 percent) placed students in five or more different sites. The remaining teachers (25 percent) selected three or four sites for student field work.

However, the actual number of fieldsites used is of interest only insofar as the numbers represent different types of sites. The fieldsite profile (included in the Appendix) clearly illustrates that decisions to use two or more sites were decisions to select different types of sites. All told, 64 different combinations of fieldsites were selected by course teachers.

One of the most interesting findings is that the chance of a particular type of fieldsite being selected was partially dependent upon the number of fieldsites used. Most course teachers using a single site, for example, selected either a lab school or a preschool. When four different sites were chosen in combination, day care centers were included frequently. Community health centers were never selected unless four or more additional sites were used.

Thus, most EXPLORING CHILDHOOD students did have the opportunity to learn about a variety of field settings through sharing experiences with peers; and the range of opportunities available to a class was in part a function of the number of fieldsites selected.

IMPLEMEN-
TATION
PROBLEMS

Some of the difficulties inherent in setting up a cross-age program include: establishing communication with potential field-sites; being a liaison among selected sites; scheduling field-site time and transportation for students. Consequently, the program's developers anticipated that problems in implementing the field work component would surface during the 1973-74 test. Major findings regarding these issues are summarized below.

• Contacting Fieldsites

Most course teachers knew of at least five potential sites before they started to initiate field-site arrangements. All but 16 teachers (10 percent of questionnaire respondents) knew of at least one possible site when they became involved with the course. There were no significant correlations between the number of sites known and prior experience with cross-age programs. It appears, then, that the field-site selection process (hence, diversity of sites) was not influenced significantly by course teachers' prior information on field-site availability.

• Securing the Cooperation of Fieldsites

Of the 713 field-sites contacted by 196 course teachers reporting information, 588 (83 percent) expressed interest in the EXPLORING CHILDHOOD program. Moreover, the association between the number of field-sites first contacted with the number of field-sites used was highly positive ($p = .001$). Since initial interest resulted in eventual participation with almost no attrition, there is every reason for future course teachers to expect a favorable initial response to lead to involvement.

• Transportation

Thirty-nine teachers (37 percent of questionnaire respondents) stated that problems in arranging field work affected field-site selection. Of these, all but two mentioned transportation as their primary difficulty. In all cases, public transportation was not available and students were either

too young to drive or had licenses but no access to cars. Teachers coped with these problems by arranging car pools or bus and taxi transportation. But approximately 12 percent ruled out potential sites because of transportation difficulties.

• Student Scheduling

Another problem, mentioned by 18 course teachers, was accommodating student schedules to fieldsite hours and activities. When it was impossible to rearrange student programs (12 percent of reported cases) potential sites were dropped.

We can conclude that with the exception of a few cases where transportation and scheduling precluded site selection, the combination of course teacher awareness and fieldsite cooperation created numerous field work opportunities for students during 1973-74.

INTEGRATION
OF FIELD
AND COURSE
WORK

Because field work is intrinsic to EXPLORING CHILDHOOD, it was suggested that teachers visit their students' fieldsites and supervise their work. It was assumed that such visits would enable course teachers to monitor the successes and problems of individual students while amassing a rich set of experiences to use in class discussion.

It was also assumed that talking to fieldsite teachers would improve the course teachers' understanding of fieldsite goals, conditions, and problems, and that fieldsite teachers would come to understand the relationship of course objectives to students' field work. Adequate communication, therefore, was seen as a necessary prerequisite for an integrated (hence, well-implemented) program.

Of the 177 teachers reporting on the frequency of their visits to fieldsites, 48 percent observed on a weekly or biweekly basis; 24 percent observed field work less than once a month or

not at all; the remainder (28 percent) observed monthly. That almost half of the course teachers made frequent visits to field-sites is a very positive finding. But it is disturbing that 24 percent did not engage in active supervision, particularly since complementary findings show that teachers who did not observe students regularly tended not to compensate by substituting other supervisory and/or fieldsite liaison activities.

Teachers who did observe once a month or more were, on the average, more likely than other teachers to discuss their perceptions with students. However, there was no relationship ($p = 7.5$) between the frequency of teacher observations and the frequency of discussions with fieldsite teachers about students' progress. It appears, therefore, that many course instructors did not perceive fieldsite teachers as integral to their plans for supervisory follow-through with students. Consequently, opportunities for student learning were diminished due to course teachers' failure to communicate their perceptions to fieldsite teachers.

EFFECTIVE-
NESS OF
COURSE
MATERIALS

The Working with Children materials, which seek to prepare students for field work, were used widely. At least 80 percent of the teachers reporting used each of the student booklets. Despite difficulties that year with the film-sharing plan, each Working with Children film was shown in at least 76 percent of the classrooms. Teachers reported that the materials contributed to goal attainment, stimulated class discussions, and generated ideas for working with children. Their only major criticism had to do with the amount of time curriculum developers suggested they spend on the module (six weeks): teachers were anxious to move into child development issues, and students were eager to start working at their fieldsites.

Seeing Development materials allow students to learn about child development in the classroom at the same time that they are

gaining direct experience with children at their fieldsites. Four Seeing Development booklets--*Looking at Development*, *Child's Play*, *Children's Art*, and *Child's Eye View*--were used by more than 90 percent of the course teachers who reported their reactions to the unit. The number of classes using these booklets and their accompanying films, together with the average amount of class time devoted to each piece, suggests that collectively they were considered the core materials for Seeing Development, if not for the entire course. Course teachers reported that these materials stimulated class discussions and contributed to activities both inside and outside of the classroom. Two other booklets--*Making Connections* and *How the World Works*--were found less satisfactory. But the Seeing Development booklets and films as a set were judged especially valuable in helping students to:

- gain deeper insights into how children develop;
- understand the value of children's play;
- apply developmental concepts to work with children.

Course teachers found the booklets and films less successful in helping students to appreciate the continuity between childhood and adulthood, or to understand how to support the identity of each child.

Compared with the Seeing Development booklets and films, materials for Family and Society were not used as extensively nor judged as successful in attaining their intended goals. However, since late delivery limited the time available for use of Family and Society materials, and the questionnaire response rate was significantly lower for this module, the findings must be interpreted with caution. Numerous possible explanations for the limited implementation of Family and Society in 1972-73 were explored in the 1974-75 study.*

*The first-year field test identified implementation problems and successes. The second-year study, which will be reported in a subsequent document, will identify how different patterns of program implementation influence what students learn.

The Teacher Education Program

Teacher education was provided primarily through a series of workshops held during the year, which were attended by groups of classroom teachers and led by regional field coordinators (RFCs) employed by EDC. Fieldsite teachers and other people interested in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD attended some of the meetings.

GENERAL RESPONSES

Classroom teachers were consistently satisfied with the performance and competencies of workshop leaders and they did not feel that the workshops were either too structured or too unstructured. Ninety percent of the teachers expressed the opinion that the workshop leaders should have been more informed about adolescent development. This view is probably influenced by the teachers' own training and experience in working with adolescents.

Many teachers (56 percent) felt that the workshops could have been improved by videotaping classroom demonstrations of specific teaching techniques; others (49.5 percent) wanted more opportunity for participants to share ideas and experiences.

ROLE OF REGIONAL FIELD COORDINA- TORS

Teachers who reported that they needed assistance with particular problems indicated that they requested help from the RFCs for technical, logistical, or administrative matters (e.g., film distribution problems) more often than they did for help with pedagogical problems (e.g., student grading). This suggests that teachers *perhaps* view the RFCs more as informational and technical resources than as teacher educators or trainers. No clear finding exists in this direction. It may be that technical and administrative problems associated with the program were of uppermost concern. Because of the predominance of technical difficulties in implementing the course, teachers may not have had much opportunity to deal with pedagogical issues.

DEVELOPING
TEACHING
TECHNIQUES

Classroom teachers (61 percent) reported that they generally found the workshop presentations very helpful in clarifying course concepts and illuminating course goals. Some teachers found the workshops less helpful in dealing with pedagogical techniques such as teaching observation skills (17 percent) and helping students articulate their feelings about their childhood experiences (14.5 percent). However, over the year some course teachers found the workshops progressively *more* helpful in using the following techniques: developing a support group among students (15 percent), introducing alternative explanations of child behavior in the classroom (14 percent), and leading small-group discussions (16 percent).

Appendix

List of Documents from Which Summary Was Made

A Profile of the Population of Students Electing
EXPLORING CHILDHOOD

Karen C. Cohen

Implementing the EXPLORING CHILDHOOD Program

Eileen Peters

Student Response to the Alternative Learning
Approaches in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD

Catherine M. Cobb

Evaluation of the EXPLORING CHILDHOOD Materials
from the Student Viewpoint

Catherine M. Cobb

Report on the Teacher Education Program and
the RFC Support System

Martin D. Chong

Ethnic Mix of Student Sample

<u>Ethnic and Racial Groups</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>	<u>Percentage of Students</u>
White	873	67.8
Black	141	10.9
Native American	29	2.3
Eskimo	1	0.1
Mexican-American	48	3.7
Puerto Rican	6	6.5
Other Spanish heritage	20	1.6
Japanese	1	0.1
Chinese	2	0.2
Other Oriental heritage	1	0.1
No answer	166	12.9

The table records the ethnic and racial breakdown of students from the sample of 90 high school and 10 junior high programs who responded to the postquestionnaire.

Field Test Design: Population, Sampling, and Instrumentation

<u>Population and Sampling</u>	<u>Instrumentation</u>		
	<u>Questionnaires</u>	<u>Interviews</u>	<u>Observation</u>
STUDENTS			
Total Population (4140)	Prequestionnaire		
Survey research sample (From 234 test sites, 90 high school programs, selected at random, plus all 10 junior high sites)			
Sample A (30 sites)	6 administered at regular intervals		
Sample B (30 sites)	3 of the 6		
Sample C (30 sites)	3 of the 6		
Sample D (10 junior high programs)	6 administered at regular intervals		
Intensive site sample (5 sites)	6 administered at regular intervals	9 students interviewed periodically at each site	10-20 classroom observations per site 5 observations each for 2 stu- dents in each site
COURSE TEACHERS			
Total Population (234)	6 administered at regular intervals		
Intensive site sample (5)	6 administered at regular intervals	3 at regular intervals	10-20 classroom observations
FIELDSITE TEACHERS			
Total Population (800)	1 administered in March		
Intensive site sample (30)	1 administered in March	1 conducted individually or in pairs	10 at regular intervals per intensive site

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