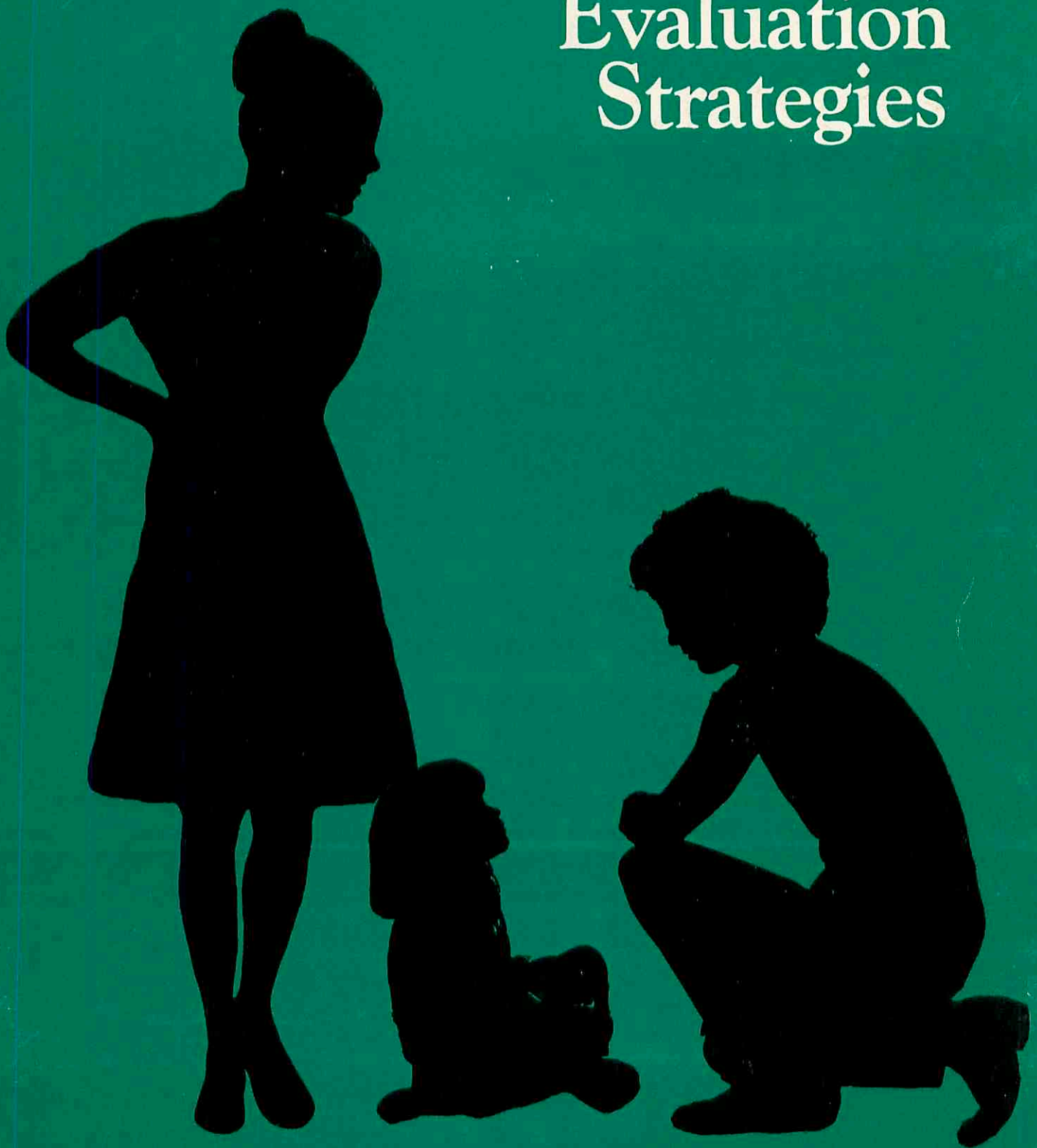
Exploring Childhood

Teaching and Evaluation Strategies



Exploring Childhood

Strategies Teaching and Evaluation

EDC School and Society Programs
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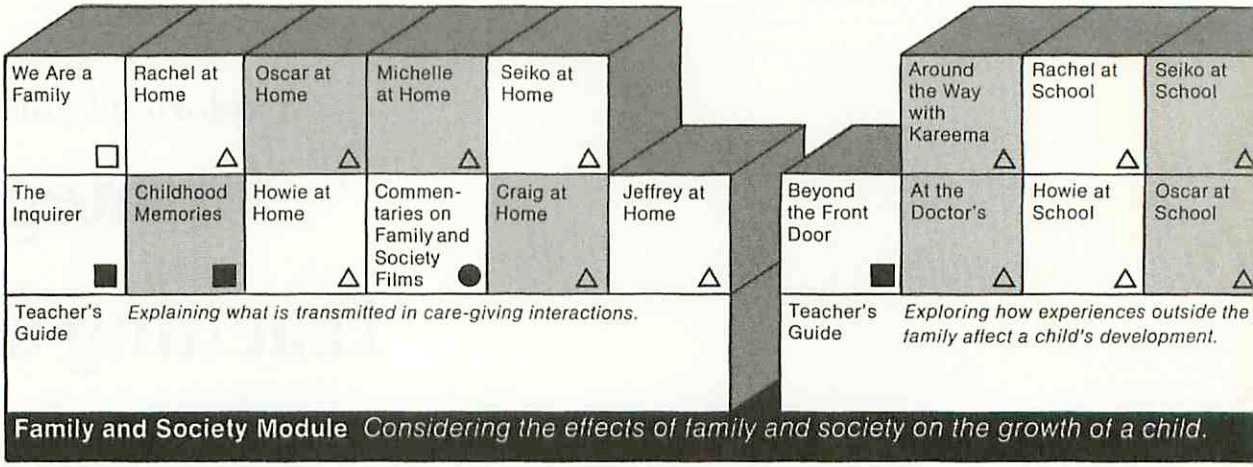
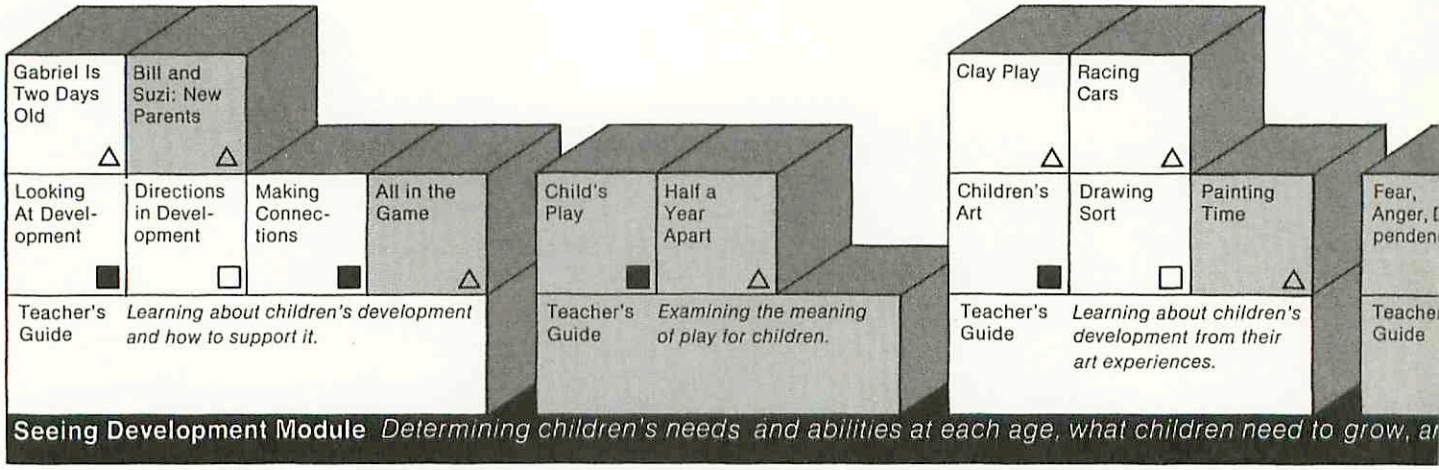
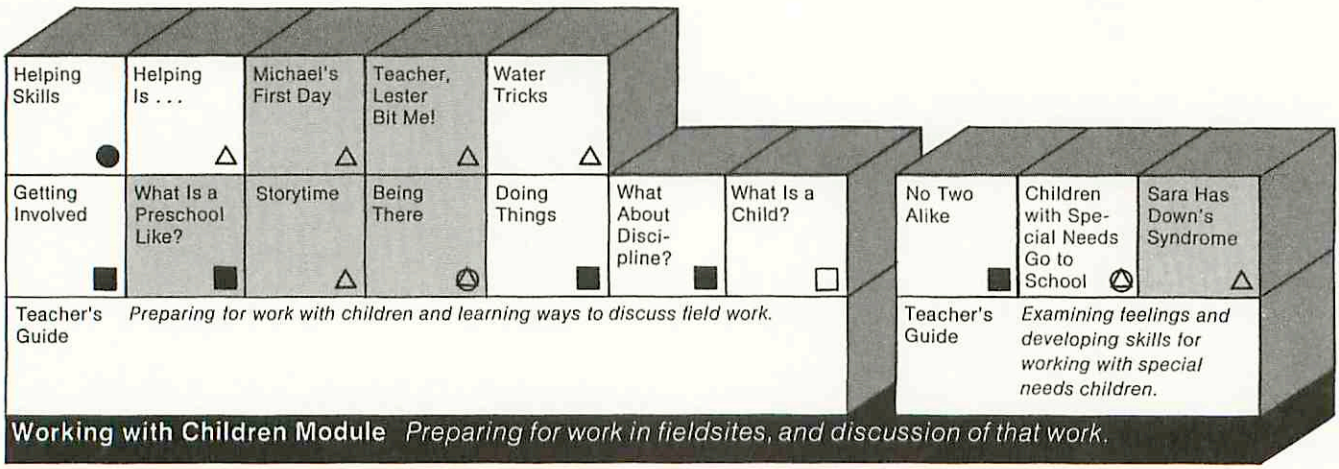


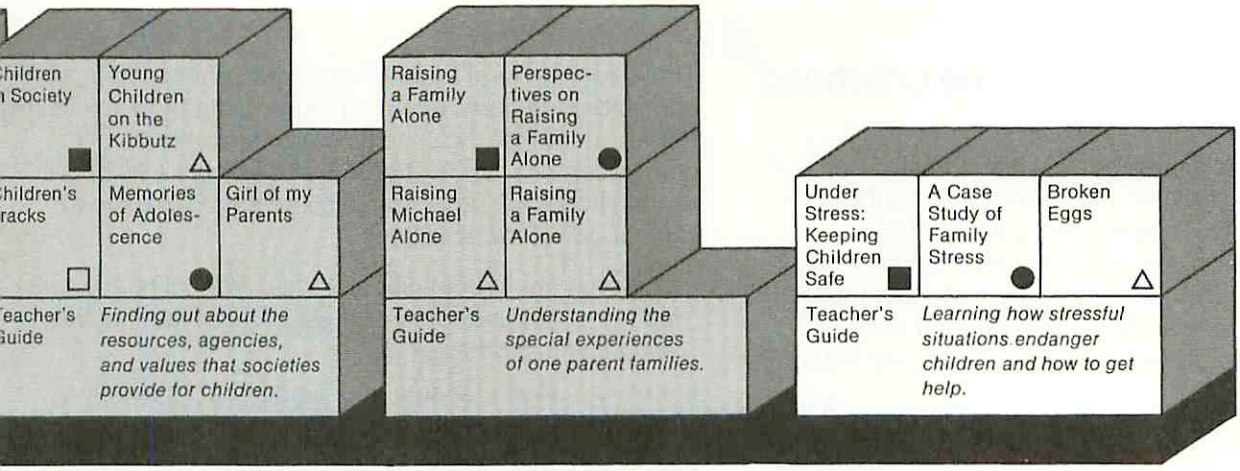


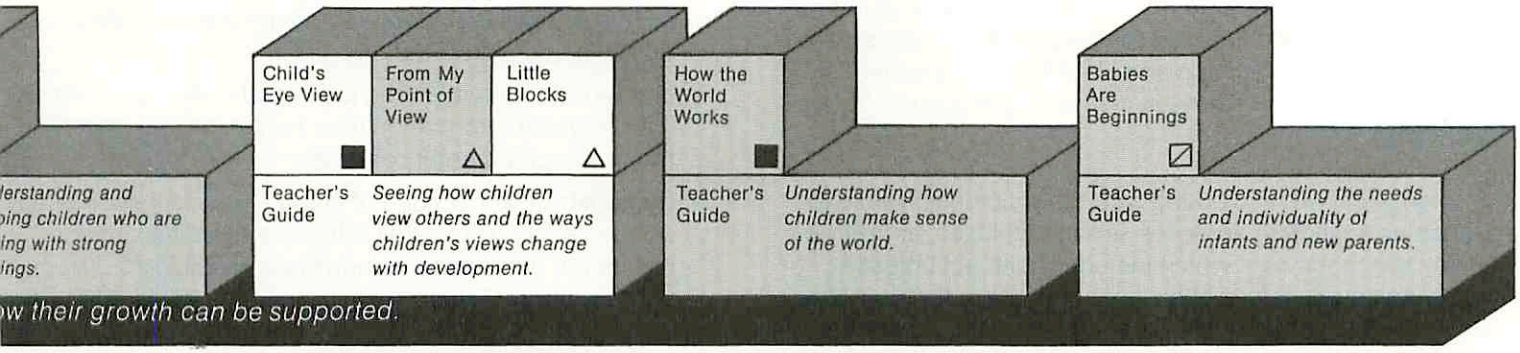


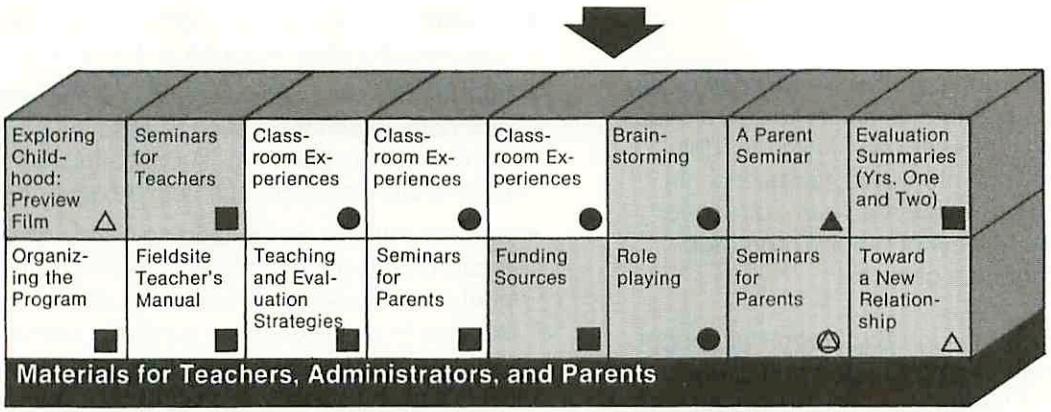
Exploring Childhood

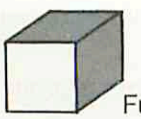
Key

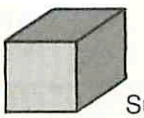
- ■ Booklet
- △ Film
- ◬ Filmstrip and Record
- □ Poster
- ● Record
- ▨ Cards
- ▲ Cassette








Full Year Course Selection


Supplementary Materials

Learning Objectives of *Exploring Childhood*

Exploring Childhood is a program in which the study of child development is combined with work with young children on a regular basis. The program gives students opportunities to develop competence with children, and provides a framework for understanding the forces that shape human development. At its most general level, *Exploring Childhood* promotes learning and growth in four major areas:

- concept development
- skills in working with others
- inquiry and observation skills
- personal awareness

Exploring Childhood students learn about factors that shape human development. Concepts such as maturation, egocentrism, modeling, and reinforcement are considered to help explain caregiving and child behaviors which students observe in themselves and in the children they work with.

Students' growth in working with others comes from experience as an aide in fieldsites serving children, as well as from classroom work which includes such activities as applying course information and concepts to their personal experience. For instance, by role playing and analyzing incidents that involve helping children, students integrate their own experience with new concepts and information about human growth and development. Such understanding can then be put to use in their continuing work with children.

Course pedagogy emphasizes discussion and small-group interaction, which increase students' ability to share experiences, information, and ideas with one another. This view of learning as a sharing, integrated experience, in which students work cooperatively and learn to respect the experience and point of view of others, promotes social skills as well as cognitive growth.

Skills of inquiry developed through *Exploring Childhood* include observation techniques, collecting and using evidence to form and test hypotheses, posing questions and seeking their answers, and analyzing and evaluating data.

In the area of personal development, the course enables students to view the behavior of others and of themselves from several perspectives, to think through relationships with family members, to gain insight into their own behavior, to become more sensitive to the needs and point of view of others, and to recognize how one's values and beliefs shape one's actions.

These four general areas of student learning and growth can be broken down into the following learning objectives. (Please note that the specific goals for each unit of the course can be found in the relevant teacher's guide.) In terms of concept development, students of *Exploring Childhood* will be able to:

- demonstrate a recognition of the universal needs and patterns that underlie individual development in themselves and in others.
- show an understanding of development as a lifelong and multifaceted process.
- identify some of the changes in abilities and needs that occur as a person develops, particularly from birth to age eight, but including the full development cycle (e.g., significant aspects of adolescence and stages of adulthood).
- use the developmental theories of Erikson and Piaget as hypotheses in understanding the behavior they observe in children they work with.
- combine sensitivity to the individual child's uniqueness with relevant information about universals in development (developmental patterns).
- demonstrate knowledge of cultural values held in different societies, values that influence the behavior and emotional patterns of caregivers and children.
- demonstrate an understanding of the significance of play for all ages.
- identify appropriate expectations for children's behavior at various ages (e.g., in children's play, interactions with others, fears, etc.).
- demonstrate an understanding of the child's stage of egocentrism when working with him or her.
- identify possible causes and consequences of strong emotions in children (such as fear, anger, and dependence), and explain how such feelings and ways of coping with them change with development.
- demonstrate an understanding of how stress can affect a caregiver's ability to keep children from harm by analyzing causes of stress and potential sources of support in cases of stress involving caregivers.

In working with others, *Exploring Childhood* students will gain in ability to:

- consider the point of view of others involved when solving problems.
- work cooperatively with other adults in the fieldsite.
- carefully observe and listen to children in order to be sensitive to their needs, interests, and perspectives, and to identify when children need help and when they are best left alone.
- recognize and expand opportunities for children to

express themselves and stretch their emerging capabilities (e.g., through art, fantasy, vigorous play, or manipulation of materials); to expand such opportunities by providing children with appropriate settings and materials, and emotional and intellectual support.

- use age-appropriate levels of communication and discipline when working with children.
- show respect for the traditions, life styles, and values of families different from their own.
- recognize messages that are damaging to a child's sense of self-esteem, consider ways to limit such messages, and help children cope with them when they occur.
- affirm the capabilities of children and others in seeking mutual goals.
- demonstrate in class a notion of learning as a shared experience, through participation in cooperative classroom ventures and through the exchange of information.

Exploring Childhood students develop many skills, including the ability to:

- demonstrate skill in observing and recording behavior, forming a question, taking notes, collecting data, keeping a journal, and setting up situations or activities in order to diagnose specific abilities in children.
- organize data collected, present findings, and plan actions based upon what has been learned.
- separate fact from inference when reporting, discussing, and analyzing children's behavior.
- focus on the details of observed natural behavior (from life or film) and offer careful interpretations of what values they see reflected.
- identify factors in the neighborhood, community, and society that influence children's development (e.g., people, institutions, traditions).
- take into account the influence on children of the values and expectations of parents, caregivers, and society when considering the behavior of children.
- identify messages transmitted in everyday interactions between children and caregivers.
- analyze the means people use for influencing children's behavior, in terms of the values that are reflected and the underlying theories of how children learn.
- analyze differences and similarities between the values and expectations of a child's home and those of his or her school.
- identify resources families need for raising children, and indicate how to obtain some of these resources in their own community.
- assess the suitability of play environments for children, and, where possible, make positive contributions to the quality of a play environment.
- identify suitable adaptations in a school, family setting, and society to help children with specific special needs.
- recognize factors that contribute to childhood accidents and identify accident prevention measures appropriate to children of different ages.
- draw on their own values for children to propose some concrete, specific improvements in how their own community (and/or society) can meet the needs of children and their families.

Finally, *Exploring Childhood* students develop greater personal awareness, becoming able to:

- articulate their own values for children, their theories about how children develop, and their feelings about issues of child care, and identify ways in which these beliefs and feelings affect their behavior with children.
- assess their own strengths and limitations as caregivers, and take these into consideration in working with children.
- articulate significant factors in their own lives, past and present, that have contributed to their sense of who they are (as individuals and as caregivers) and where they are headed.
- apply the concept of egocentrism in understanding their own behavior.
- recognize signs of stress in their own lives, and develop ways of dealing with personal feelings of anger or frustration and of gaining help or support in stressful situations, especially with children.
- recognize their growing competence in helping children meet their needs.

Preface

This booklet was developed with two goals in mind: to answer the need expressed by several teachers to understand better the teaching strategies utilized throughout EXPLORING CHILDHOOD; and to provide some general methods for assessing students' learning and growth. Part One, "Teaching Strategies," discusses in depth seven techniques used in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD, explaining why and when each technique is useful, what problems you might encounter, and what kinds of learning it promotes. The section is intended to give background about the nature and uses of each technique so that teachers can use them more effectively. Part Two, "Evaluating Student Learning," describes three methods for collecting and analyzing information about what students are learning. These general methods can be introduced at any point. They supplement the Evaluation Approaches found in the teacher's guides, which are intended to be used with specific units and activities.

Contents

TEACHING TECHNIQUES

E.D.C.

E.D.C.

Teaching Techniques

Overview

A central goal in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD is to help students integrate course concepts, their field work with young children, and their own family and childhood experiences. Making the classroom an open, supportive environment, in which students as well as the teacher contribute to the learning process, is an important step in attaining this goal. To help you build this environment for group learning, several teaching strategies are recommended for use throughout the program. Some of the teaching strategies in this booklet may be new to students and teachers alike.

- Brainstorming

  This nonjudgmental technique for eliciting ideas from everyone in the group is an extremely effective way of looking for new ways to think about a problem or question. It is important that the ideas generated be used, either in discussion or to plan an activity or new approach to a problem.

- Role Playing

  By taking the place of a particular person--trying to see a situation and act from that person's point of view--students and teachers can develop greater sensitivity to the needs and perspectives of others. Role playing offers a chance to practice behavior that might be used later at the fieldsite.

- Journal Keeping

  This activity, done individually, is an opportunity for students and teachers to keep a record of what they are observing and learning throughout the year, and also a chance for them to deal privately with ideas or

feelings about what they are experiencing. Looking back through entries kept over a period of time helps them see ways in which particular children they have been observing have developed, and also to reflect on how they themselves have grown and changed. It offers them a chance to work out feelings and ideas before discussing them in class.

- Discussing

A process familiar to most students and teachers, discussion in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD has certain characteristics that may be new. It frequently emphasizes group participation rather than a question-and-answer exchange between the teacher and a single student. It is intended to be a support mechanism--an opportunity to look at problems together, to share and test ideas, experiences, and feelings, to help each person learn from the experience and insights others can offer. Discussion occurs in small and large groups, and also between students working as partners on a particular project.

- Working in Small Groups

In small groups, each class member has more opportunity to contribute than in whole class discussion. Small groups are also useful when a project can be divided into several parts, each group taking responsibility for one part and then sharing what it has learned with the rest of the class. Small groups work best when cooperation is emphasized.

- Observing

An information-collecting process in which students and teachers learn to look for details in a situation: setting, participants, conversation, concrete behavior, action, etc. This technique is used at fieldsites, when viewing course films, and when watching members of the class role play or practice such activities as interviewing. Besides helping students develop an eye and ear for detail, it trains them to separate fact from inference.

- Film Viewing

Films in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD are not offered as models of good or bad behavior; rather, they are situations substituting for firsthand experience, which teachers

and students observe and analyze just as they might examine an incident at the fieldsite. Films allow participants to see episodes that would otherwise be outside their range of experience, such as children at home with their families or children from other societies. Films also give students a chance to see how other students have dealt with fieldsite problems and situations that may be familiar to them. Unlike work at a fieldsite, which may involve only one or a few students, film experiences are shared by the group as a whole.

Each of these techniques is discussed in detail in the pages that follow. It is hoped that this information will both acquaint you with processes that are new and help you develop your own sense of how best to use them. Because you may want to discuss some of these processes with your students, to help them understand why they are being asked to do something, some sections have been written directly for students. These sections, marked with a ☼, can be duplicated if you want, and handed out for students to refer to during the discussion.

In addition to this material, five records have been prepared that demonstrate these techniques being used by EXPLORING CHILDHOOD teachers and students. Three records, entitled "Classroom Experiences," contain examples relating to each of the three modules (Working with Children, Seeing Development, and Family and Society). There is also one record entitled "Brainstorming" and one called "Role Playing." Both the records and the written material on teaching techniques were developed in direct response to EXPLORING CHILDHOOD teachers who asked for explanations of the techniques and concrete examples of their use.

How to Use the Materials

The written material and the five records can be used on your own, with other teachers, or with students.

On Your Own

- Read through the booklet once to familiarize yourself with each strategy. (Even if the strategy isn't new,

skim the material to see what specific applications are made of it in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD.)

- Consult the booklet before using a technique if you are not sure of all the steps involved or if you want to make certain that it will fit your purpose. Ask yourself:

  What are my goals? Should I use the strategy exactly as suggested or modify it?

- Refer to the booklet if the teacher's guide suggests one strategy but you would like to try something different.

- Listen to the records. Ask yourself:

  What is the teacher trying to achieve? Is he or she successful?

  How does this "classroom experience" compare with my own? Would I change anything--either use another technique or use the same technique differently?

- If you are having trouble starting a brainstorming session, or if students are having trouble talking about fieldsite experiences, review the materials on brainstorming and listen to the record. Ask yourself:

  How can I change what I am doing to make the discussion more successful?

- If you are unfamiliar with role playing, review the steps in this booklet, listen to the record on role playing, and then listen to the band entitled "Peter's Goodbye" on the "Classroom Experiences" record for Working with Children.

With Other Teachers

- Form your own group of course and fieldsite teachers, possibly including parents and students, to discuss the materials, listen to the records, and try out the techniques. One teacher might listen to the records and read the written material before the group meets, in order to plan how to use the materials with the group. To practice a technique, choose a situation from your own experience, or use suggestions from the materials.

- Group members may want to brainstorm approaches to a particular problem they have encountered at the fieldsite, or role play an event such as a meeting of the course and fieldsite teachers with a student. For practice in small-group work, group members can each design a small-group activity of their own, then discuss and critique it with colleagues.

- Analyze the steps in one of the teaching techniques at a teacher education workshop by applying it to a piece of material from the course. Try it out later with students and compare results with other teachers.

After listening to "Peter's Goodbye" (from the Working with Children "Classroom Experiences" record) at a teacher workshop, one teacher said:

> *I think the teacher really had a problem getting the kids to discuss. I think that this is the trial and tribulation of every teacher--how do you get the kids to open up and to discuss? I think if you look at the record from that point of view, you can identify how many times have you done that, you know, and it's almost like hearing yourself.... So that you're not really in that sense putting her down. What you're doing is that you're able to examine why did she get certain kinds of response and why didn't she get other kinds of responses. How many of these questions can I use myself? And how can I take that question that she may not have followed up on and follow up on it? I think that's the purpose: to begin to think out, you know, what are those little pit holes that we fall into.*

This excerpt shows some of what can be learned from analyzing actual teaching situations. This teacher used the opportunity to relate one teaching problem on the record to her own experience as a teacher.

With Your Students

- Provide this booklet (or sections) as a resource for your students to help them understand the purpose of particular techniques (small-group discussion, for example) and to help them improve their skill in using it.

- Play portions of "Brainstorming" and "Role Playing" or share the example of class discussion (from the Family

and Society "Classroom Experiences" record) so that they can discuss and improve on their own skills.

- Meet with students individually once or twice during the year, and ask whether they are having difficulty with any of the techniques.

Brainstorming

> *In all of our other classes we have fact, fact, fact, and in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD we deal with feelings. It's hard to make the switch, but brainstorming helps because you can shout out what you think or feel and no one knows it's you.*
>
> --Student

Brainstorming is a rapid-fire process of generating and recording ideas without much preparation, evaluation, or discussion. It can be done as a whole class activity or in small groups.

✲ Why Brainstorm?

- To spark one's own ideas.
- To involve people who are reluctant to share their ideas.
- To enable people to consider points of view expressed by others.
- To make every person's ideas valued and legitimate.
- To stimulate spontaneous discussion. ✲

When to Brainstorm

Many situations arise in class for which brainstorming is an appropriate technique. Brainstorming can help vary the pace in a classroom, or can be a concrete task around which to have a small-group discussion. Brainstorming is appropriate for considering:

- Why a particular event might have occurred. For example, a group might list as many hypotheses as possible about why a child might have hit another child with a block. One person could describe the situation with the others listing all the possible reasons for the behavior. One teacher used brainstorming in his class to find out why students were having trouble discussing. From the brainstormed list, the class and teacher were able to see reasons they hadn't thought of for the poor communication, thereby improving the class discussions.

- Alternative responses to a particular problem or situation. For example, a group might make suggestions about how to act when a child won't share toys in order to try out those behaviors that seem most effective.

- Ways of implementing ideas, such as when a group wants to find a new way of presenting an activity to children.

☼ Steps

The following steps are discussed on the "Brainstorming" record:

- Select an issue or question. (This could be an issue from a fieldsite experience or a question, such as "What would you do if you asked a child to play with you and he started to cry?")

- Select someone to record ideas where everyone can see them (e.g., blackboard or newsprint).

- Review the rules:

Say anything that comes to mind. Any idea can be a catalyst for generating others.

Don't evaluate ideas (either good or bad).

Don't discuss suggestions (the goal is to collect as many as possible).

Repetition is permitted.

Adding to or piggybacking on other ideas is fine.

It is all right to have periods of silence. Often this means that people are thinking and will have new ideas to offer momentarily.

In brainstorming no idea is labeled right or wrong. ☼

How to Deal with Potential Problems

Lack of Spontaneity

Writing down brainstorming suggestions on the blackboard or a newsprint sheet may interfere with quick, spontaneous responses. When teachers record, they write all the suggestions, often rewording them in a shorthand which allows them to keep up with the group. This rewording can give students the message that their own phrasing was not good enough, or can result in changing the original idea, sometimes to resemble more closely an idea of the teacher. Asking two students to jot down suggestions as they are made by the class can avoid this problem and also leave you free to conduct the brainstorming session. Or, you might break the class into small groups for a brainstorming session and have each group generate its own list of ideas, which is later shared.

Premature Discussion

It is sometimes tempting to pause over a particular suggestion, to discuss, expand upon, and evaluate it. Here you have to make a decision: Should the class proceed with the brainstorming--following the rules--or should the class delve into a deeper discussion of one of the ideas raised? If the purpose of the brainstorming session was to stimulate

students' thinking, and they have already listed several possible approaches to a problem, then it might be appropriate to analyze one idea in greater depth. If the purpose was to get out as many suggestions as possible, and the class has only just begun, then continue to brainstorm without any discussion or evaluation. Always make clear to the class when the brainstorming is over, and when the discussion generated by it is starting.

Getting Started

Getting the brainstorming session started is difficult when the issue is too general for the students to get a handle on it, such as "Brainstorm all the reasons why babies behave the way they do." A more focused topic would be "Brainstorm all the reasons a baby might cry."

Petering Out

Students may lose enthusiasm if the teacher inadvertently interrupts, or stops to evaluate each suggestion, or if the brainstormed list is never utilized.

How to Learn from Brainstorming

If the class has participated in the brainstorming and there is a large list on the board, there are several possible routes to take.

- Go over the list and begin to focus in on the suggestions. Eliminate those that seem, on second thought, to be inappropriate, and group similar approaches into categories. Choose the three suggestions that the class feels are most important.

- As a class choose one suggestion to pursue further by discussion or role playing. For example, if the group brainstorms ways of helping small children to feel liked, accepted, or successful, you might form pairs to role play each idea from the list to discover its effectiveness.

If small groups are brainstorming, each should have a recorder to write down ideas.

- Share the lists orally with other groups, or post them where everyone can see them.

- Each group might say which ideas on other groups' lists they prefer, or add new ideas of their own.

Be sure to do something with the brainstormed list; if it is not used people will think it's not worth the effort they put into generating it. Suggestions should always be tried out and reported on in class.

Role Playing

> *How great it would be to have a mini course in role playing. I know we've had some helpful information, but to make it more believable...if the course teacher could have the art of taking a situation that is being discussed right there, and then stopping and saying, "Let's role play that, let's work it out," rather than having set-up kinds of role playing. I sort of need the ability to use that technique--and I find that when it comes up spontaneously, that is a more believable experience for the high school students to go through.*
>
> --Teacher

Role playing is a method of acting out an imaginary situation as if it were really happening at that moment. The role taker is put in a situation, and fills the role according to his or her own feelings (how he or she feels now) and perception of how it would feel to be in that situation (a child left out of a game, for instance).

✲ Why Role Play?

The purpose of role taking is not to entertain an audience, but to experience something for yourself and perhaps to help others see an enactment of something you experienced and they did not. More specifically, role playing:

- puts you in another person's place so that you can try to understand the thoughts and feelings that situation evokes in that person.

- lets you try out new ways of behaving to see if they bring the results you intend, or to see how the behaviors actually feel.

- helps you learn how others react to your attitudes and behaviors in a practice situation.

- allows you to take risks with new ways of behaving, without fear of failure. ☼

When to Role Play

- To share an experience which a student has had in order to give the group a common frame of reference from which to talk. For example, "Show us how Jimmy acted when you came in. You be Jimmy and choose someone who was there to play your role and come into the room."

- To imagine oneself in the role of another person: "As you watch this movie, imagine you are the youngest child in the family and see how it feels to have brothers and sisters who treat you the way they do."

- To act out in advance what a future experience might be like in order to prepare for it. This anticipatory role playing can be used by teachers to prepare students for a particular experience, such as a conference with the fieldsite teacher. In turn, students at the fieldsite can use role playing to prepare children for doing something for the first time, such as going to the dentist, or taking a field trip to a new place.

One group of teachers used role playing to explore their reactions to "mainstreaming," having children with special needs join their class. One teacher played the role of a mother of a normal child who did not want her child's education disrupted by a handicapped child. She became increasingly angry and vocal, with the teacher unsure of how to cope with her. When they stopped the role play, the teachers discussed how the "mother" had echoed some of their own feelings and how they might handle a similar situation.

For a demonstration of role playing with observers, listen to the role play and discussion about Joanne, a student, talking to her supervisor, Mr. Smith, about a problem she encountered at the fieldsite ("Role Playing" record, side 1, bands 3-7).

☼ Steps

The following steps are discussed on side 1, band 1, of the "Role Playing" record.

- Determine the goal.
- Describe the situation carefully but briefly.
- Choose the role takers from volunteers or by selection, keeping the particular role in mind.
- Brief the role takers and observers verbally or on file cards. Give the observers a definite assignment. For example, suggest that they look at one role taker or watch carefully the exact interaction.
- Start the action.
- Cut when enough has happened to discuss, or when the role takers don't seem to be producing any new information (three to five minutes).
- After the role play, have observers report on what they saw and felt. Then ask the role takers how they felt. As a group discuss:

  What happened?

  Why did it turn out the way it did?

  Do you like the way it turned out?

  Who would have to do what to make it turn out differently? ☼

Often spontaneous situations come up in class that lend themselves to role playing. For example, a student in class says she would ignore a dependent, clinging child. You

think role playing would be a way of exploring the effect that this behavior might have on the dependent child. Here's how you could apply the steps in role playing to that example.

- Establish your goal. (Let's find out what ways this behavior might affect the child in question.)

- People already know the general situation, but you might ask if they need more information.

- Choose the actors. You might say, "You be yourself, the student aide in the fieldsite." (Or, if you like, "You be the dependent child.")

- Brief the actors. Sometimes it is a good idea to let the person who has brought up the problem do the briefing since he or she knows the situation better. Give the observers a task. For example: "This half of the room should watch to see what the teenage helper is saying and doing and how he might be feeling. This half should watch the child's reaction and think about how the child is perceiving what the teenager is doing."

- Set up the action. If the person who posed the problem has no definite idea about what he or she wants to portray, you can set up the scene: "You are at a table where the dependent child is coloring. You say to the child, 'What are you making?'"

- Start the action. ("Okay, begin.")

- Cut the action at an appropriate place. ("Let's stop there.")

- Lead the discussion. Have observers report their observations. How do they think the child felt? What in the teenager's behavior made her feel that way? Check out the observers' impressions with the person who played the child: Did the observers come close to how the child was really feeling? How do the observers think the teenager felt? Why did she do what she did? Again, check their responses with the person playing that role. Then ask the group: "Would you act the same way with the child at the fieldsite? What might you change? Relate the discussion to the section in *Fear, Anger, Dependence* called "Dependence and Development and How You Can Help."

How to Deal with Potential Problems

Holding Back

Students may be reluctant to participate. Sometimes it helps to have one role taker pick out the second role taker. When the class is role playing for the first time, the teacher may want to take one role, as in "Peter's Goodbye" on the Working with Children "Classroom Experiences" record.

Depending on the purpose, you may want to select certain students for a particular role-play situation. For example, there may be a shy student who would tend not to volunteer, but would know very well how to role play a four-year-old child. You might put a student in a role opposite from the one he or she might usually take, to let the student see his or her usual role from a different perspective. A sense of humor and reassurance that a role play is not supposed to be a polished performance can also help persuade students to

take a role. Tell role takers that whatever they do will be useful--"making a mistake" in the role is not only safe, it can be very valuable.

Type-casting

Be careful not to put a person with a particular kind of problem in the role of someone who has the same problem--don't cast a bully in a bully role, for example. The bully will learn by watching someone else take that role, and won't be exposed or identified publicly as having that problem.

Role Takers Unclear

The role takers may not understand exactly what incident they are supposed to be portraying. Be sure to brief them on the situation and on the characteristics of each role. This can be done publicly or privately. If the purpose of the role play is to show that it is a good idea to guess why a child is acting a particular way before intervening, it might be good to brief the child and the student separately and privately--in real life people usually don't know the reasons for other people's actions. (Side 1, bands 6-7, of the "Role Playing" record offer examples of private briefings.) Private briefings can also be written, as they are in the teacher's guide for *Getting Involved*.

Observers Unclear

To make observer roles and assignments clear:

- You might ask the whole class to note what takes place in the interaction as a whole, without taking either role taker's point of view.
- You might assign different people to observe each role.
- You might divide the class into groups, with each group observing one role and then sharing their perceptions with the class as a whole after the role play.
- If the role playing is done in small groups, there might be an observer in each group. The observers should be clear about whom to observe and what to look for. The observers should have a focusing question, such as "What does the dependent child do?" "How do you think he feels?"

Inappropriate Behavior

Occasionally, in a role play that is designed to see what students know about a particular situation, a student may show inappropriate behaviors, such as using ten-year-old language and thinking when playing the role of a four-year-old. This situation is also valuable; it provides a chance to give some information about children that might otherwise not have come up.

✲ How to Learn from Role Playing

- Brainstorm alternative approaches to the problem portrayed.
- Discuss ways a role-play episode related to field work with children or other experiences you may have had.
- Show how the issues raised in the role-playing situation connect to broader concepts about children or caregiving.
- Try having children at fieldsites role play an incident, to gain a firsthand view of the development of role-taking skills in young children.
- Decide if there are any fieldsite experiences you would like to role play with the class to see how other students would react. ✲

Journal Keeping

> *I just started writing what happened each day and how I felt about it. I used the journal to get out my frustrations or feelings about a particular student. One girl kept sulking at the fieldsite and it really bothered me. I didn't feel ready to share the journal with my students, but I love reading it now to see how I felt and how I changed last year.*
>
> --Teacher

A journal is a record of experiences. It becomes a place where you can talk freely to yourself as well as a personal notebook for observations and reactions, ideas and questions. Journals are for teachers as well as students. The teacher quoted above kept a journal of her classes and of the teacher seminars she attended, recording events and feelings.

If students feel they are keeping journals because "they have to," they may not benefit from the experience. Journals can help students gain perspective on their work with children and insight into their own development. There is a tremendous value in encouraging students to write down what is going on inside them--it is a chance to overcome the fear of confronting confusing feelings and ideas. The very process of articulating impressions helps students to sort them out, and can be invaluable preparation for discussing them later on.

To help students see the value of journal keeping, you may want to discuss how it can be meaningful. The following points are addressed to students, but remember--journal keeping can be equally valuable for you.

☼ Why Keep a Journal?

- By recording the behavior of the children you observe, you will come to know each child better. Becoming aware of individual differences and needs will help you be a better helper. You will begin to notice characteristics that seem to relate to the children's stages of development; these observations, and your reflections about them, will add insight to the ideas and information you are discussing in class.

- By keeping a record of your actions and reactions, you will be able to look back during the year and see how you have grown and changed.

- By assembling and organizing information in your journal, you may discover that events which seemed unimportant or unrelated actually fit into a pattern--a pattern that might not even be visible until you have collected a lot of observations.

- You can keep track of which activities planned by you worked and which were unsuccessful. This information will help you plan later activities. As you reflect on what worked and what didn't you may develop insights that would be useful to your classmates.

- You can write about things that bother you and things that give you the most pleasure. You can make lists of things you think you do well and things you want to do better. If something upsets you you can write about that--sometimes, putting your feelings down on paper can help you sort out what went wrong, why you are upset, how you can keep the same thing from happening again.

- You can make notes about things you want to discuss later with the teacher or with your classmates.

- You can "make connections" between your course work, what you are doing at the fieldsite, and your experiences outside of school, both now and when you were a child. ☼

When to Write

- Writing can be done during class, at the fieldsite, or at home.

- Some time for journal writing might be set aside just before a discussion, to give students a chance to sort out their thoughts and feelings. These writing sessions, primarily for jotting down notes, can be very brief.

- Sometimes you might give students a few minutes after viewing a film to write down their reactions.

- You might suggest that students write whenever they are struggling with a problem or want to develop an idea about what they are doing at the fieldsite or want to record some incident.

Hints

- Show students samples of kinds of notebooks to write in: composition books, stenographer's pads, and so on.

- Introduce journal keeping in the first few days of class, and ask students to bring their journals to each class. At first you might want to set aside a few minutes for journal writing, to get students started. You might suggest topics:

  What do you remember about your first day of school?

  What are your expectations about field work?

  How do you feel about working with a group of children?

- Later, students might write mostly on their own time, but you may still want to set aside class time occasionally. Mostly they will write about topics they choose, but you can make suggestions if they get "stuck":

Reflections on a day at the fieldsite

The thing I worry about most when I'm working with children is...

I wonder why young children...

A hypothetical dialogue with a piece of fieldsite equipment (paintbrush, doll, guinea pig)

A hypothetical conversation with a child's parent or the fieldsite teacher

A reaction to the way the fieldsite teacher handled a particular situation

What I like best about this course is...

What I like least about this course is...

My worst day...

The best thing that happened this week...

Reactions to a film

I think I'm getting better with children because...

I think discipline means...

How I deal with stress

Reflections on reading a children's book or watching a children's program on TV

Reactions to a reminiscence of childhood read in a book or told by someone in class

- If any former students are willing to share entries from their journals, read them to your students; this may spark their interest in keeping track of their own developing ideas and series of experiences.

- Discuss the differences between observable facts, inferences, feelings, and value judgments (see p. 52) when students are using their journals to record observations. Help them see that facts can be recorded immediately, and reactions can be added later. (For such entries, it is suggested that students record their observations on the left side of the page, leaving room for commentary on the right.)

- Encourage students to share recording techniques they have developed--shorthand for making observations, for example, or an indexing system to locate entries about particular children.

- Encourage them to include poems, drawings, stream-of-consciousness prose, dialogues, or even samples of children's artwork.

How to Deal with Potential Problems

Relevance

Some students may feel that writing down their thoughts and observations is not important, particularly since the journals are not evaluated by the teacher. Reading from former students' journals is one way of stimulating interest. Also, if it is possible to share some entries from this year's class without making students feel they *have* to share their private thoughts, this may help illustrate how journals can be a valuable learning tool. (For one example of how one student's journal entry sparked a class discussion, listen to side 1, band 3, of the Family and Society "Classroom Experiences" record.) You might also discuss with students the idea that learning does not have to be seen by others in order to be valuable. Another suggestion is that students discuss or write reports sometime during the year about how their journals have been helpful.

Reluctance or Inability to Write

Some students have trouble putting their thoughts on paper or feel they are poor writers. The fact that their writing will not be judged may help alleviate this anxiety. Also, encouraging students to try other forms of expression--making a collage, or even taping some of their observations--may help them become more comfortable about expressing their observations and reactions. Individual conferences with students from time to time may also be helpful.

Monotony

If students are primarily writing up fieldsite observations,

journal writing may become boring. You might suggest that they write about something else for a change--one of the topics suggested on page 21, or a question that comes up in class discussion. You might also suggest that students go back through their entries and try to synthesize them into an autobiographical report which can be shared with the class: a report about changes they have seen in particular children as well as changes in their own attitudes, skills, and sense of competence.

How to Learn from Journals

The basic paradox about journal writing is that students want to use journals both as a private communication with themselves and as a vehicle to share experiences with others --teachers and students. To deal with this paradox we have suggested that the journals be considered private. However, students may want to share some journal entries with you or their classmates. In this case, anything students want to share might be copied on a separate piece of paper or else discussed in class. You might give feedback to individual students on areas where you think they have grown or may need help.

- In class you can use journals as a data source for activities or exercises. For example, ask students to read through their journals and write about a problem at the fieldsite on a separate piece of paper for sharing with others.

- Listen to Working with Children "Classroom Experiences" record, side 1, band 3, for an example of a class problem-solving an issue raised in a journal excerpt.

- Ask students to look through and use their journal entries to plan specific activities or strategies for fieldsite use. For example, an entry about a child coloring in a picture might trigger ideas about different art activities such as painting or clay work.

- Share insights from journal entries about fieldsite experiences with the fieldsite teacher--if the student is willing.

- Role play an episode suggested by a student's journal entry.

- Use material adapted from the journals in fieldsite conferences--with individuals as well as with all the students working at a particular fieldsite.

- Talk with students about the importance of recording actions, thoughts, and feelings. Later in the year suggest that they browse through their entries to see if their ideas or attitudes toward children or themselves have changed.

- Remind students that they can use their journals to write an autobiography at the end of the year, which charts their growing competence in working with children and their own development as a person.

- Ask students to comment, in writing or verbally, on journal keeping:

  How has journal keeping helped them learn about development, about particular children they work with, about themselves?

  Has it helped them in other ways? Explain.

Discussing

> *Discussion is a problem because the kids aren't used to talking about their ideas and observations or listening to the opinions of others. They're not encouraged to do these things in my school.*
>
> --Teacher
>
> *My students can't express what they see and how they feel; they have more trouble with this than anything else in the course.*
>
> --Teacher
>
> *I think the classroom discussions and the actual experience with the children are heavily related because a lot of things we discuss in class happen at the fieldsite, sometimes in different ways. You feel that when you're discussing things in class they are never going to happen, but a lot of times they do happen at the fieldsite.*
>
> --Student

Class discussion is one of the teaching techniques used most in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD. It is also one of the most difficult to do. "Discussions" all too often consist of simply asking students to respond to particular questions or to report anecdotes sequentially. This kind of discussion is fine as far as it goes, but it is extremely limited. It tends to involve only one student and the teacher at a time, rather than the whole class. As a format it doesn't allow students to build easily on each other's comments. It is a series of finite fragments rather than a growing conversation.

A true *class* discussion, as opposed to a one-to-one exchange, occurs when a group of people share experiences, debate ideas and theories, discuss personal memories, work together on common problems. The conversation engages many participants, who add to one another's comments, contribute a variety of viewpoints, and act as resources to each other.

☼ Why Discuss?

Discussion is a natural way to bring various aspects of EXPLORING CHILDHOOD together: reflections on one's own childhood experiences, anecdotes from the fieldsite, insights and information about children and society drawn from course films and materials.

Specifically, discussion helps you to:

- share personal memories and information about field work with children.
- learn from each other (for example, one student may have discovered a way to deal with a specific problem, such as helping a left-handed child use scissors).
- vent feelings, test ideas, raise questions that concern you. ☼

☼ When to Discuss

Discussions happen all the time, but do not necessarily address a particular need you may have. Following are some examples of times when discussion may be particularly valuable.

Students

- When you have gone through a puzzling or upsetting encounter at the fieldsite and want to hear how others view it. For example, if you aren't sure you did the

"right" thing, you may want to know how other students might have handled the situation. Or, if you are bewildered by a child's behavior, you may want to know how others "see" that child.

- If you have decided on a particular way to remedy a situation such as a child cheating in games with other children, you may want to try out your idea on your classmates. It is often helpful to hear what the class as a whole considers the best possible action in a specific situation. ☼

Teachers

- When you want students to toss around ideas and opinions on issues that have no one right answer, such as why children pick on each other (discussed on "Classroom Experiences," Seeing Development, side 2, band 3), or why Craig's mother gives him a choice of cereals.

Steps

Plan Ahead

- Determine the goal of the discussion and make sure this is clear to students.

- Arrange the room in a circle or a horseshoe so students can easily talk face to face.

- Try a "trigger" device to start students talking: a film, a "Fieldsite Preview" (in *Getting Involved*), a selection from a record. You might ask students to write responses to a particular question or stimulus (film, etc.) in their journals and then open up the discussion. This gives them time to collect their thoughts and plan what to say.

Keep the Conversation Flowing

- If students direct their comments or questions to you, direct them to other students. Ask "Do you agree?" "What's your reaction to that?" To get participants

talking to each other, and not simply to you, it is important that you not be cast in the role of leader. Other strategies to keep in mind:

Look at other students in the class, not just the speaker--this gesture signals that other listeners besides yourself are included in the conversation.

Wait for others to respond, even when it seems to take a long time.

Participate sometimes in student activities, not as a leader but as another learner: keep your own journal, for example, and share your own responses and feelings. (Be careful not to dominate or make students feel that your opinions are the only ones that count, or the conversation may freeze.)

- Avoid filling in when there is silence. Intervene only when you think it is absolutely necessary to:

  clarify or request clarification (You can train students to do this, too. "Did you understand that? Well, ask Jim to explain it then.")

  point out alternatives that the group has not yet considered.

  add your own ideas.

  summarize the information (or ask a student to summarize).

  suggest (or ask a student to suggest) ways of using the information.

  point out inconsistencies and contradictions in views expressed that the group may not be aware of, but with sensitivity and good timing; do not stop the flow with a niggling point of information.

- Keep track of how the discussion is going. Encourage students to stay aware of the task at hand, to take responsibility for moving things along, to support or disagree with points made by other students, and to elicit comments from "quiet" students.

- Beware of giving "double messages." Sometimes teachers say one thing, but *communicate* another. For instance, a teacher may say that students should respond directly

to each other; but by his or her stance and eye movements the teacher may in fact be communicating the expectation that students channel their responses through him or her.

How to Deal with Potential Problems

Lack of Participation

Students might be reluctant to talk or lack the skills of participating in an open discussion. As one teacher put it:

> *In our school, for a variety of reasons, I don't know why, we have trouble getting the students to discuss freely. So at times it's like pulling teeth. You might spend 20 minutes of a 40-minute period trying to get people to talk about these things. Sometimes there are discussions but as a general rule they don't talk. So I think next year I want to find out for myself the art of having students discuss openly. I want to deal with that myself before I start dealing in the classroom. I find myself having a lot of anxiety that classes haven't gone well because they either don't want to discuss openly, or I don't know how to bring it out of them.*

Following the steps outlined above--helping students to learn the skills of building on a previous statement, summarizing, clarifying, giving feedback on the discussion process--can help. Sometimes students are bored or else feel they have nothing worthwhile to contribute. You may be able to engage these students by asking them if they agree or disagree with what another student has said or if they have any questions about the topic being discussed.

Several Groups Talking

Small groups of students may start debating a particular aspect of the discussion among themselves; if this happens, ask them to share their comments with the class. Sometimes students talk among themselves because they can't hear what people are saying in other parts of the room; seating arrangements can help avoid this problem.

Ganging Up on One Student

You might intervene and try to support something that the student has said and redirect the discussion, or you might encourage another student who shared the same experience to add to the discussion.

Saying What the Teacher Wants to Hear

Arranging seating so students aren't all focused on the teacher--and refraining from commenting on each contribution --can help students see there is neither a reward for behaving this way nor punishment for being forthright. It may take students a while to believe that you really want them to speak openly about what concerns them, since they may be used to class discussions in which the teacher looks for a particular "right" answer.

☼ How to Learn from Discussion

Students

- Try summarizing the salient points of the discussion for yourselves instead of relying on the teacher to do this.
- Give each other feedback on your roles (Who started it? Who helped to clarify points? Who summarized what was said?)
- Share your views of the discussion process. ☼

Teachers

- Take some action on issues raised in the discussion, such as planning a fieldsite activity (listen to the Seeing Development "Classroom Experiences" record, side 2, band 2, for an example of this) or investigating the topic further through research in the community.
- Refer students to course materials that may inform and expand upon the topics of the discussion. (For an example listen to the Seeing Development "Classroom Experiences" record, side 2, band 3.)

- When students are discussing the selfishness that bothers them in young children, you might mention how a concept like egocentrism could help explain the children's behavior.

In class discussions where the students present conflicting value positions, the teacher's role is important in maintaining open, creative dialogue. What should that role be? Below are three roles described by Newmann and Oliver:

"(1) The *neutral, objective, disinterested bystander* is someone who seldom takes a personal position on issues. Instead, he states arguments for various sides of the issue, summarizes the progress of discussion, and requests clarification on student views. He is a dispassionate moderator, trying to draw the best from opposing advocates, trying to create a civilized group discussion. (2) The *Socratic devil's advocate* also refuses to take a film personal stand, but he is less cooperative and agreeable than the neutral summarizer. The devil's advocate acts as a gadfly trying constantly to expose the weaknesses and confusions in everyone's position. He shifts positions, depending upon what stance is necessary to raise troublesome questions. He is less concerned with producing consensus and closure, and more concerned with demonstrating how none of the advocates have completely defensible views. He tries to point out to everyone complexities and inconsistencies in their positions that they had apparently never considered. (3) The *committed advocate* is concerned primarily with persuading students that his position on a given issue is the most reasonable one. Although the neutral summarizer and the devil's advocate may inform students of their personal views on an issue, they deliberately attempt to prevent these from influencing the outcome of classroom inquiry. The committed advocate, however, not only informs students about his views, he tries to convince students that his views are right. He might use tactics of the devil's advocate and the neutral observer in doing this, but his major intent is neither producing an interesting discussion nor raising self-searching challenges, but to persuade students to adopt a particular stance on a given issue."*

*Reprinted from *Clarifying Public Controversy: An Approach to Teaching Social Studies*, by Fred Newmann and Donald Oliver (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1970), p. 294.

Working in Small Groups

> *I think the first thing you have to start with is how you view the student. If you think of the student as a receptacle into which you pour information, then I think you stay with the traditional format and the teacher having the leadership role. If you see the student as having a great deal to contribute to the class, then you start with a different structure, and small-group work is sure a good way of getting into that.*
>
> --Teacher

Small groups are conducive to maximum involvement and participation of individual students. They work best when they emphasize sharing and cooperation rather than competition.

✲ Why Small Groups?*

Working in small groups offers many opportunities:

- A greater chance to express and develop your own views, because the group is small enough to give everyone a chance to speak.

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*Adapted from "Learning in Small Groups: Some Guidelines for Teachers and Students," by Nona P. Lyons. In *From Many Perspectives*, workshops for teachers of EXPLORING HUMAN NATURE.

do it alone.

- When you want students to learn techniques of discussion, such as listening, building upon a previous statement, relating ideas, asking for clarification.

- When students are interviewing or doing community action projects, such as those suggested in *The Inquirer*. For example, students might work in small groups to interview community people, parents, children at the fieldsite, or fieldsite teachers for their research project.

- When you want students with different backgrounds or experiences to share their views with each other, such as reactions to the Children at Home films.

- When the subject of discussion is one which students would be more comfortable discussing quietly and informally in small groups.

- Whenever you feel that students are directing all of their thoughts to you rather than exchanging ideas among themselves; you can agree on a discussion topic or task and then divide the class into groups.

Steps

- Both the teacher and student should know the purpose of the small-group work, the amount of time they have, and what use will be made of the finished products or reports. Tell them they can ask for help, and that you will be "dropping in" from time to time.

- Think about the classroom set-up ahead of time. If possible, arrange circles of chairs. Think about noise level: If there is enough space between groups and students sitting close to one another, no one will have to raise his or her voice above a normal tone. Depending on the type of activity--brainstorming, role playing, simulations, or case studies--provide the proper equipment.

- Form the groups, either by numbering off (1, 2, 3, 4, with the 1's in one group, etc.), or by assigning students who are near each other to form a group, or by assigning a topic or task for each group and having students join the group of their preference.

- You might want to assign or have group members choose special roles, such as discussion leader or recorder. The leader's role is to keep the group focused on the task; the recorder takes notes and reports back to the class as a whole. More specifically, the discussion leader makes certain that the group understands the task, elicits ways of proceeding, and helps decide how the group comes to some conclusions, even if the conclusion is that the group is stumped. Two key questions a leader should keep in mind are:

  What are we trying to do?

  Are we moving to some conclusion? (The discussion leader should realize that the group does not necessarily have to reach a consensus; "conclusion" may mean that the group has raised three or four alternatives or points of view.)

  A recorder's role can be assumed by the leader, but often it is more useful to have a recorder able to concentrate fully on noting down salient points, summarizing results, recording dissenting opinions, and presenting the group's report to the larger class.

- Although you should be available to give help, and may want to listen in on each group's discussion for a while, sometimes you might do something else--indicating that you have confidence in students' ability to do it alone.

- Help with transitions: Remind students near the end of the session how much time they have left and what they are supposed to be accomplishing.

- Have groups report to the whole class, encouraging discussion and questions. There are several possible techniques of reporting:

  The recorder can present reports orally or summarize them on the blackboard. Other members of the group should feel free to add to the report.

  Reports can be written on newsprint and posted. The class could then circulate to read reports and add their comments. Or reports can be duplicated, then circulated.

  If all groups are working on the same topic, each group might report one or two of their best ideas.

Write these ideas where everyone can see them, so that the class can see how many groups had similar ideas. If there are conflicting reports, students might have a panel discussion in which representatives report on and defend their group's position.

- Each group can prepare a "product," if appropriate: collage, photographs, film or filmstrip, skit or play, exhibit or chart, newspaper or small booklet, role play, oral report, etc. An exhibit might become a major project, in which each group has its own station with materials to show. If a product is produced, it should be used or shared as soon as possible.

How to Deal with Potential Problems

Lack of Experience

If students are unfamiliar with small-group work, and have trouble being productive, the "fishbowl technique" can be useful. Have a few articulate students join in a small-group discussion with you while the rest of the class observes. (If possible have the "audience" form a circle around the discussion group.) Actively guide the discussion. After you have gone through a work session, ask the observers to reflect and comment on what the group accomplished.

To give students practice in working in groups, assign a task and then assign roles within each group.*

There are four different interpersonal "roles" or functions to be assigned within each group. You can write instructions for these roles on 5x8 index cards of various colors (blue, green, white, and pink), with instructions for a particular role identified with a particular color. The instructions on the card for each role are as follows:

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*The following suggestions on roles come from O. N. Aspy, F. N. Roebuck, M. A. Willson, O. B. Adams, *Interpersonal Skills Training for Teachers*, National Consortium for Humanizing Education (Monroe, Louisiana: Northeast Louisiana University, 1974).

- *Task Leader.* In addition to regular participation as a group member, you have been assigned a major responsibility for making sure that the group accomplishes its task. When you think it is necessary in order to help the group accomplish its purpose, you should carry out one or more of the following actions:

  summarize the discussion.

  clarify problems.

  define objectives.

  make task-relevant suggestions of "what is needed next...".

  Your goal is to keep the discussion going in a productive manner and prevent it from wandering around in circles. Be careful not to dominate the group.

- *Facilitator.* In addition to regular participation as a group member, you have been assigned a major responsibility for making sure that each group member is encouraged to participate in the discussion and feels rewarded by his or her participation. When you think it is necessary or appropriate to the group's functioning, look for opportunities to carry out one or more of the following actions:

  reconcile differences of opinion.

  accept another's expression of feelings.

  accept another's idea.

  praise another's contribution.

  ask another to state his or her opinion, give information, or make a suggestion.

  clarify another person's viewpoint.

  Your goal is to ensure individual member satisfaction with the group process. Be careful not to dominate the group.

- *Translator.* In addition to regular participation as a group member, you have been assigned a major responsibility for making sure that each member of the group understands the viewpoints that other members of the

group are proposing. As other members of the group talk, you are to:

listen carefully

decide if the viewpoint proposed has been understood by all members of the group

if it has been understood, take no action

if it has not been understood, try to rephrase it silently without changing the viewpoint

then address yourself to the person who stated the viewpoint, saying something like, "Did you mean...?" or "I think what you were saying is..."

Your goal is to clarify group members' viewpoints to one another. Be careful not to dominate the group.

- *Discussion Helper.* In addition to your participation as a group member, you have been assigned a major responsibility to see that the discussion in your group keeps going at a satisfactory level of involvement. Jot down some questions about the topic under discussion, and pose one of the questions if the discussion seems to lag. Your goal is to keep the discussion active and everyone participating. Be careful not to dominate the group.

Assessing Learning

Another concern that teachers share is the difficulty of gauging if and what students are learning in small groups. As one teacher said, realistically:

> *I think that it's probably not possible for a teacher to make sure that all incorrect statements or assumptions are corrected.*

We have to believe that students do learn from each other, and that the teacher is not the only source of information or ideas in the room. Often you can tell from the product what students have learned.

Space and Noise

Finding space for small groups and keeping the noise level

down are two logistical problems that may arise. Use the four corners of the room, a hall, or even a supply closet. In warm weather students can meet outside.

Lack of Control

Some teachers feel that they have no control over small groups. As one teacher said:

> *When I first tried it I was afraid I might lose control of the class if they weren't all listening to me in front of the room.*

An analogous problem is that some students lack self-control and are not used to being responsible for their own behavior in class. Keep in mind that the basic source of control comes from being interested in what you are doing, from having some choice about what you do, and from knowing that others share your interest or concern. If the goal and time limit of the small-group work are clear, control problems tend to be minimized.

Losing Focus

"Going off the subject" can be a problem, but remember that it can lead to important insights, too. Experienced teachers have often learned to judge when and how long to allow the topic to wander "purposefully." By touching base with each group you can help students keep on--or get back to--the track.

Domination

If a few students are dominating the discussion, you can help shift the focus by "dropping in" on the discussion and redirecting questions to other students. You might also assign the roles of leader or recorder to students who tend to be quiet or withdrawn.

You might want to bring up the issue of domination by deliberately assigning roles--including a dominator--to students working on a group task. On cards hand out the following role descriptions.* Each person should read his or her card

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*Role descriptions come from *Interpersonal Skills Training for Teachers*.

privately and then act accordingly in the group. After the group has met briefly, have each participant reveal what role he or she played. Discuss the effects.

- *Dominator*--aggressively expressed lack of understanding of others' viewpoints, excessively long or detailed "holding the floor," tension, "put-downs" of others, disproportionately violent statements of opposition, etc.

- *Facilitator*--releasing tension by a joke *not* at a group member's expense, reconciling differences of opinion, clarifying another member's contribution, showing understanding of another's position, expressing feelings or accepting another's expression of feelings, helping another person express feelings, giving praise, asking another member for opinion, information, or suggestions, etc.

- *Task Leader*--summarizing, clarifying problems, planning, organizing, coordinating, defining objectives, eliminating irrelevant comments, making task-relevant suggestions, evaluating "where the group is," suggesting "what is needed next...," etc.

- *Nonparticipator*--lack of participation, slight physical displacement from group (chair pulled back or body turned so member faces "out of group"), lack of attention to group process, etc.

Teacher's Role

Problems might also arise if you have not defined your role clearly. Students should know if you plan to observe, to work at your desk, to join in the conversation at some point, etc.

While small groups are discussing, you could visit each group long enough to do the following:*

- identify and reflect the feelings of at least one member of the group.

- give praise to at least one member of the group.

---

*Suggestions come from *Interpersonal Skills Training for Teachers*.

- accept at least one group member's idea and suggest an extension of it.

- where appropriate, help one or more group members fulfill their assigned tasks.

Reports

Be sure students understand the reporting procedure and know how the reports will be used.

✲ How to Learn from Small-Group Work

Students

- Although each person usually plays more than one role in a discussion, try to identify which roles you played:

  initiator of ideas

  information seeker

  information giver

  opinion seeker

  opinion giver

  elaborator (spells out things for others)

  evaluator/critic (sets standards for the group)

  facilitator (tries to determine where the group is and where it should be going)

  recorder (keeps the group's memory)

  supporter (gives encouragement, agreement)

  mediator (keeps communication channels open, prevents polarization into two opposing groups)

- Analyze the various roles members of the group adopted. In your journals, jot down answers to the following questions:

  Which role do you think you played in this small group? Can you give examples?

  Who do you think played a critical role? Why?

  In which role do you feel most comfortable? least comfortable? Can you state why?

- Discuss what you have learned from small-group work:

  Did you understand the task? Did you feel the task was important?

  Did you feel you had enough information to deal with the question?

  Could you see the issue from several perspectives? Could you argue the case from more than one point of view?

  Could you find solutions to the problem? If not, why not?

- If your group has developed an activity for the field-site, try it out and report back to the class. ☼

Teachers

- Have a use for the reports. For example, have students discuss reports, making comparisons if appropriate, or have them test conclusions stated in the reports by making observations or conducting experiments. (Listen to "Child's Play" on the Seeing Development "Classroom Experiences" record for an example.) Or take notes while listening to the reports and use them as the basis for a summary, further task, or question.

Observing

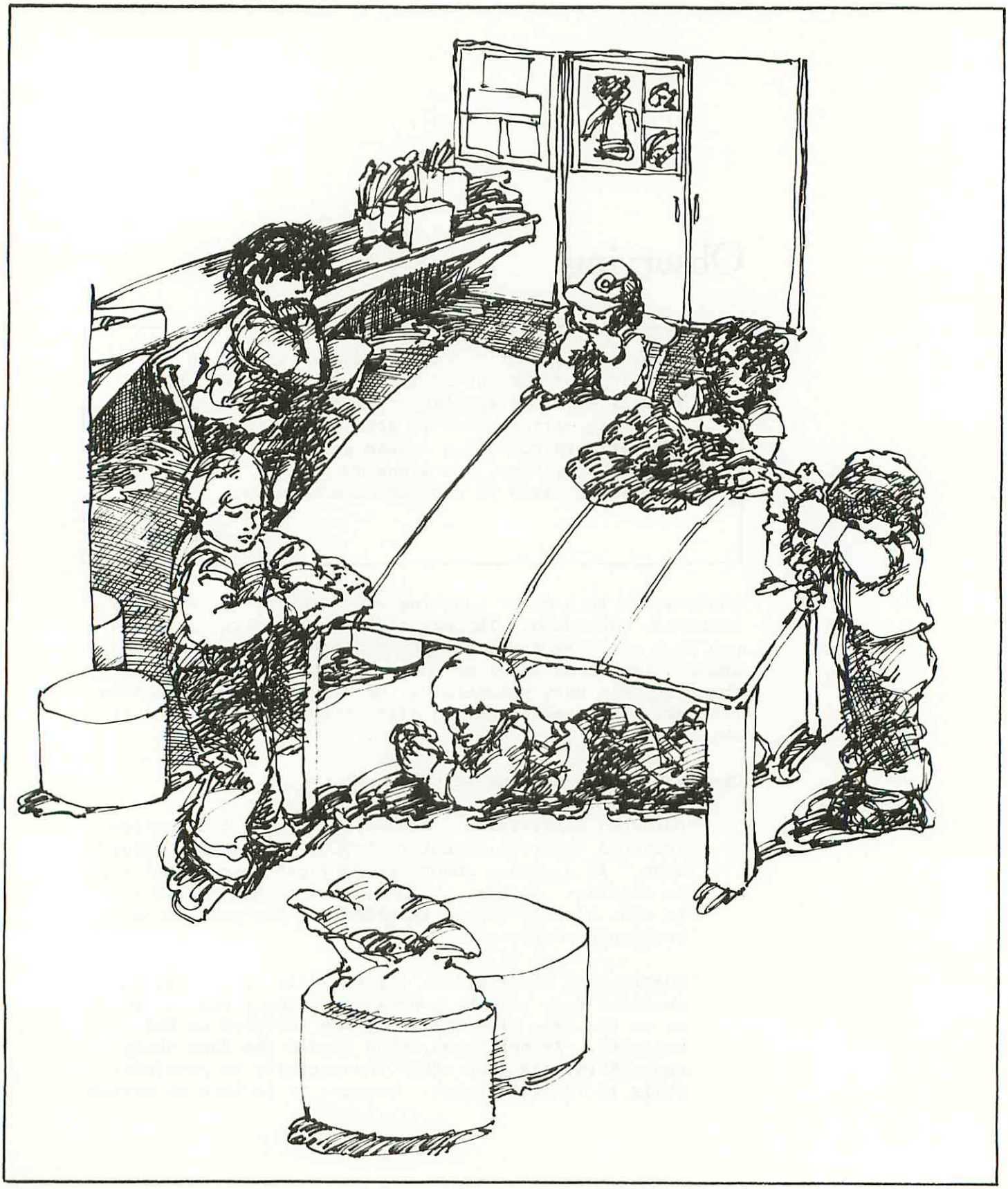
> *Observation, that's good because it gives you time to just get out of the picture and just look, just like you're watching from the outside through a one-way mirror. You're able to set your mind, more able to do things 'cause you don't have the kids saying, "Hey, you wanna do this?" It's a time to get away so you can do something.*
>
> --Student

Observation is a major teaching and learning technique in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD. Through close observation, students can pick up clues about the personality, needs, resources, and developmental level of children. While students find observation a very valuable way of learning about children, teachers often report having difficulty teaching observation skills.

Observation can be done in two ways:

- *Detached Observation.* Students may want to practice detached observation before trying participant observation. As detached observers they can concentrate fully on details: sounds, actions, what is being said and in what tone of voice, reactions of the participants, background activity.

- *Participant Observation.* If they are participating, students have to make mental notes about what is going on at the same time that they are involved in the activity. In this case, they should jot down their observations as soon after the activity as possible, while it is still fresh. Because it is hard to notice



everything that is going on when you are involved, students will probably have to try participant observation a few times before they feel competent to observe and participate simultaneously.

☼ Why Observe?

- To develop your ability to see and interpret situations and behavior; this ability will help you develop your own sense of judgment and your confidence in being a caregiver.

- To become more sensitive to the needs and abilities of each child you work with; this will enable you to be more helpful to each of them.

- As a participant observer, to learn to see the effect of your actions and words on children, and to become able to alter your behavior if appropriate.

- As a detached observer, to clarify your feelings, reactions, and values; to know better what you expect from children; and to develop a sense of whether they can do what you expect.

- As a detached observer, to learn caregiving skills by watching other caregivers handle situations, particularly ones that you find difficult.

- To collect concrete, firsthand data about children's behavior; to look for evidence that ideas and information you are learning in class really apply to the children you work with. For example, you can test the information presented in *Children's Art* by observing children doing art activities at the fieldsite. ☼

☼ When to Observe

Students

- When you want information about a physical setting such as a playground, a child's home, or a fieldsite.

- When there is a problem or question about a child and you want more information about that child's behavior and needs.

- When you are preparing to do something new with a child and you want to decide if the activity fits with his or her abilities and interests.

- When you want to learn something about a child's ability or perceptions, such as learning about egocentrism through the Birthday Present Game (see *A Child's Eye View*, p. 15).

- When you want to check other people's impressions of a particular child.

- In class, during a role play, when you want to speculate about what a person is feeling in a particular role.

- In class during small-group work, when you want to analyze the roles different people played or the steps taken to accomplish the task. ☼

Teachers

- At a teacher workshop, to give others feedback about teaching techniques, experiences, questions.

- During class activities, to develop your own judgment about how and when to intervene to help a discussion or activity along, or to help students deal with tensions or differences of opinion.

- At the fieldsite, to see how your students are developing skills in working with children, to see how a project planned in class worked with the children, or to get a sense of the different styles of fieldsite teachers.

☼ Steps

Plan Ahead

- Determine the goal of the observation. Is there

anything in particular you want to observe, such as the way the fieldsite teacher talks to a child who is crying?

- Define your question and make it specific. For example, "What activities did Joey get involved in over a five-minute period?" is a better question than, "What does Joey like to do?" You cannot gather enough information in five minutes to answer the second question.

- Notice who is involved, when and where the event takes place, and how long it lasts.

- Decide if you are going to participate or watch the activity.

- Decide how you will record your observations. As an outside observer, will you try to write down everything you see, or will you do "time sampling"--observing for two minutes every ten minutes? If a tape recorder is available (and it won't disrupt the activity you plan to observe) you might try using it. Also, if videotape equipment is available, you might want to film something at the fieldsite (be sure to make arrangements with the fieldsite teacher ahead of time). Or you might want to observe in teams, and compare notes afterward.

- Experiment to find out what works best for you and for the children. If you are a participant, of course, you will not be able to record your notes until after the activity; try to do so as soon after the activity as possible.

Practice

- Sit in one place for several minutes recording one sensation you normally do not pay much attention to--smells, sounds, tactile sensations. Ask yourself: Why is it important to collect information about sensations other than sight?

- Practice recording only what you observe, not what you feel or think about it.

- Learn to recognize when your emotions are coloring what you observe.

- Watch one person in a crowd to train yourself to concentrate on one person's actions only.

- Practice with other students: while two of you engage in some activity (playing basketball, singing, discussing a movie), two of you can observe the activity. All four of you might then discuss and critique the two observers' notes. Then switch roles and repeat the process.

Discuss Your Observations

When you are discussing an observation it's important to be clear in your own mind when you are relating facts, when you are guessing how someone is feeling or why he or she is acting a particular way, and when you are interpreting the observation in terms of a theory (your own or another person's). ☼

How to Deal with Potential Problems

Lack of Interest

Often students prefer to play with the children and not be distant watchers. Perhaps, then, the first time they observe they might plan to participate in the activity, and jot down their observations directly afterward. One way to help students begin to "see" everyday situations in a new way is to ask them to record all the sights (or sounds, or smells) they observe on the way home from school. It is a familiar route, but once they concentrate on noticing details they will begin to discover features they never "saw" before.

Oversights or Forgetfulness

As participants, students may not remember some critical information after the activity is over. (For instance, some students organized children to learn musical rhythms and then marched around in a parade. When the students were questioned about their observation later, they did not know whether the children were three, four, or five years old.) To guard against overlooking something important, students might devise memory aids, have a friend observe with them, or use the omission as a basis for insight or further observation into the situation.

Logistical Problems

Finding time to observe in a busy field work schedule, avoiding a curious child who comes to talk to a student who is observing three feet away--such problems can interfere with productive observation. Students should work out observation times with the fieldsite teacher, so that he or she expects students to observe from time to time. The teacher might want to explain the observer's role to her children. If a child comes to a student who is observing with a question or request for help, the student should respond and then continue observing, recording the interruption in his or her notes.

Confusing Facts with Opinions

Gathering information without imposing interpretations too early may be a problem for some students. The next section (p. 52) offers some ideas for helping students separate observable facts from their own inferences.

Confidentiality

There may be a problem about confidentiality (this is especially true if students are observing one child in depth over time). Some fieldsites do not allow "case studies" of individual children based on longitudinal observation. In other instances, especially in a close-knit community, it would be inappropriate to discuss details of a child's or family's behavior in class if several students know the individuals involved. Students and course teacher should check with the fieldsite teacher (and, if appropriate, the parent of the child) to explain the purpose and procedure of the observation. Parents are often glad to have their children observed as long as the purpose is clear and the information is shared with them. If parents object, students should respect their wishes.

Unclear Focus

Students may have trouble developing a question that is neither too broad nor too narrow to focus the observation. It will help if students first think up a question, then think of ways to get data on that question, and then observe. As they practice observing, more specific questions may occur to them. For example, a student who starts by asking, "What is going on in the kindergarten?" may end up looking

for information about how five-year-olds work with paints. (See sample dialogue in the teacher's guide for *Getting Involved* on getting a focusing question for observing children in toy stores.) Students may get hung up on the *technique* of observation and lose sight of the goal, which is to put the data to use.

✲ How to Learn from Observation

Students

- Analyze observations, either during class discussion or while writing in your journal, in order to separate out facts, inferences, value judgments, and feelings.

> *Facts:* What the observer actually sees or hears (actual details of the general situation, the behavior of the children).
>
> *Inferences:* The observer's ideas about how the children feel, why they act the way they do.
>
> *Value Judgments:* The observer's opinion about what he or she sees, or what he or she thinks "should" have happened (whether it is good or bad, right or wrong, positive or negative).
>
> *Feelings:* The emotions the observer experiences as he or she observes.

- Ask yourself: What can I learn about myself by examining my reactions to certain situations or children? How will this influence my future actions?

- Read aloud several written observations and brainstorm inferences that could be made.

- Examine other students' observations to see whether feelings and reactions were recorded as facts. (This works especially well if you and another student have observed the same situation.)

- Put the observation to some practical use. For example, if you observe that a child *always* picks on other children while preparing for a field trip, what action might you take? Speculate about reasons: the child's insecurity in the face of the unknown, the breakdown of normal classroom structure, etc. Next time you might pay special attention to the child: prepare him or her for the trip by describing where you are going, how, what to look for, etc. Or you might help to see that the procedure for leaving is carefully organized. ☼

Teachers

- Share your own observations (either of a teacher workshop or of your class) with your students, to show how you changed an aspect of your teaching as a result of observation.

Film Viewing

> *What I liked was the film ["Gabriel Is Two Days Old"] brought that room and the mother and the baby into our [class]room so we could see it as if we were there.*
>
> --Student

Many teachers have told us that the films in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD are a "whole new ball game." There are two major differences between these films and most educational films: they are not didactic (there is rarely a narration telling you what to see); and what you see is intended not as a good or bad model, but as case study material. The films represent a slice of life--a documentary record of a period of time in the lives of children, teenagers, and adults as they grow and interact together. Except for "All in the Game," an edited version of a BBC film, all of the films were produced by EDC.

If you are unfamiliar with films that show actual classroom and family behavior, it is difficult to know what to look for, or even why the film is important. At first viewing many teachers and students "don't see anything" in the films and wonder why they are spending time watching a small boy paint one picture or a family eating breakfast. It is, therefore, important to learn to identify behavior--to learn what to look for--so students won't respond, "well, nothing happened."

Think of classroom film viewing as a three-stage process, with a "before," "during," and "after." Select techniques that give students a focus for viewing and relating what they see to the goals or intentions of the lesson. Unlike

real life, documentary films offer the chance to go back and review particular instances of behavior as a way of clarifying what actually happened. Separating "fact" from "personal inferences" is a way of sharpening teacher and student observation skills.

✲ Why View Films?

- To prepare for a particular experience. For example, "Michael's First Day" or "Helping Is..." show difficult roles you might take at a fieldsite before you actually start to work with children.

- To practice making observations and analyzing experiences. When you view "Water Tricks," for instance, you might discuss Paul's experience at the fieldsite, his preplanning and his discussion of the experience in class, as a way of understanding how you can relate what you are learning in class to your fieldsite experiences.

- To see how people communicate with one another. A true-life experience happens once and is over; it can never be relived. But a film of a true-life experience can be seen again and again. If you think something happened, but you're not entirely sure of all the details, you can look at the film again. Thus, films can help you become a good observer by allowing you to check what you thought you saw. This skill can then be used at the fieldsite.

- To provide a shared experience. If you and your classmates are working in different fieldsites, a film can provide one incident, and one set of characters, for you to observe and discuss together.

- To introduce experiences that are not available at fieldsites. Other kinds of information and experience, besides your fieldsite experience, can help you to understand children and their needs. Films that offer other perspectives include:

"Gabriel Is Two Days Old," which focuses on infancy.

"Half a Year Apart," which examines differences in development.

The Children at Home films, which show four-year-olds with their families.

"Sara Has Down's Syndrome," in which a family discuss their one handicapped member, Sara, and share their feelings and experiences.

"Girl of My Parents" and "Young Children on the Kibbutz," which introduce a different culture and way of raising children.

- To provide examples of situations that may relate to your own experiences. Seeing another student trying to cope with a situation which isn't going right ("Broken Eggs") may make it easier to understand and talk about problems or distressing situations you have encountered at the fieldsite. Viewing children at home may give you insight into experiences with your own family. ☼

When to Show Films

- The teacher's guides for each unit make suggestions about when to use specific films and how they relate to the skills and concepts being taught.

- Sometimes a class gets mired in a routine of reading and discussing booklets. Showing a film might be a welcome change of pace, which allows students to take a fresh look at an issue.

- When you are familiar with the content of the films you can use them in additional ways to those recommended in the guides. For example, show some of the Children at Home films in the Seeing Development module to observe and discuss aspects of development in the children.

Hints

(The following suggestions are not intended to be used each and every time you show a film in class; rather, they are a range of suggestions from which you can choose. If possible, view each film before showing it in class. If this can't be arranged, read the transcripts in the teacher's guides ahead of time.)

Just Show the Film

Show the film straight through once. It is often helpful to give students a brief summary ahead of time of who is in the film and what occurs. While the film is being shown, you can observe the students' reactions for clues about their concerns or moods.

Images

Before showing a film, you might give several clues or sets of clues to the class. For one of the Children at Home films, for example, the clues "breakfast," "getting dressed," "father," "cereal," "brushing teeth," "eggs," "doing hair," and "kisses" might be used. Ask students to state or write down the images these words call to mind. After the film is shown, repeat the exercise and see in what ways students expand their list of images. Discuss: How are the filmed situations like or unlike the images they formed?

First Impressions

After the class has seen a film, ask each student to mention specific images or sounds they remember. For example, if you ask students to close their eyes after seeing "Gabriel Is Two Days Old," they might come up with images of the doctor pressing the baby's stomach, or the mother breast-feeding. This process often begins a chain reaction--one student's recollections of images and sounds spark the memories of other students. These comments can begin an open discussion in which students discover how their impressions compare. Where differences occur (as they are likely to) the class may want to look again at the film, or at parts of it, to think further about what seems to be going on. This exercise also makes the point that different people, depending on their experience and values, focus on different things in a film (not to mention in real life!).

Noting Feelings

Throughout a film, all viewers have personal reactions and emotions. Ask students to jot down their feelings about the film in their journals. You can encourage them to discuss their feelings if they want to.

Looking for Nonverbal Communication

With "Oscar at Home," since the conversation is in Spanish, you might encourage non-Spanish-speaking students to consider how tones of voice, actions, and body language transmit the emotional impact of the film. Ask them how they feel about not being able to understand what is being said. Students should not see the translation until after viewing and discussing the film.

With students who are not fluent in English, many of the other films can be used for this exercise. Also, any film can be studied for nonverbal communication simply by turning off the sound. When doing this you might want to try some of the following ideas:

- With any film, discuss ways in which messages are exchanged nonverbally. What does the glance say? the use of the body? how close or far people are from one another?

- In "Little Blocks," "Broken Eggs," "Bill and Suzi: New Parents," or "Around the Way with Kareema," comment on the emotional quality of the scene. Do a person's movements, gestures, and expressions give clues to anger, happiness, joy, calmness, etc.? Do you sometimes misinterpret "body language"? Why? (For interesting cross-cultural reading on this subject, see *The Silent Language* by Edward Hall.)

Comparing Film and Real Life

Try to relate students' own experiences to what they see on film. For example, when viewing the Children at Home films, students might describe breakfast at their own homes, and you might describe yours. Encourage students to go beyond the mechanics of getting ready for the day by asking them to think what kinds of interactions go on among family members. How do these contribute to the mood in which family members leave their home? How do they influence behavior during breakfast? Students might also think about how everyone is

awakened, what roles and responsibilities each person has, and what is done for young family members, if there are any. The purpose of this kind of discussion is to get students to talk about differences they find between the films and their own homes, and to think about how they feel about those differences. (Such discussion should be encouraged only if students are comfortable about discussing their family lives; if they are not, the exploration might be done as a private journal-writing activity.)

Stopping the Film

Stopping the camera at certain points allows time to jot down notes and to discuss what just happened, what's coming next, or what viewers would do next. In "Rachel at Home," you might stop the film after Jenny is hurt but before the father enters the scene. Ask students what they would do in that situation, and then compare their views with the father's way of handling the situation.

Second Viewing

Teachers have found that when they show films a second time they (and students) notice things they hadn't seen before. Show a film again:

- to answer a question or disagreement raised in discussion.
- with a new focusing question.
- to have students observe the interaction from a particular point of view.

Role Taking

This strategy is best used after a film has been seen once or twice, because its success depends upon knowing the situation. It is intended to help students observe more keenly the obvious and subtle ways in which children and adults influence each other's behavior. When used with the Children at Home films, this technique can help students see how parents educate and influence their children in ways other than direct teaching.

Ask each student to focus on a particular person. Give instructions like the following:

"Imagine yourself in the role of the person you have chosen. Watch 'yourself' on the screen carefully, and try to get into the thoughts and perceptions 'you' might have been having during this period of time. Be ready to report to the class afterward about the following:

"What interactions did 'you' start with others? How did you start them? What effect did they have?

"What behaviors of 'yours' were encouraged? How?

"What behaviors of 'yours' were discouraged? How?

"What behaviors would 'you' change and why?"

This technique is particularly recommended with "Broken Eggs"--with some students taking the role of Cal, others being the children, others the students and the teacher--because the situation is one students can identify with readily. Also, it will give them a chance to think how they might handle their anger if they should ever be in a similarly distressing situation. You might also use it with "At the Doctor's" or in "Home" or "School" films like "Craig at Home." In the case of "Craig," final discussion might deal with how different people view Craig and his role within the family.

Discussing Films

The discussion of a film might proceed through three stages:

- *Clarify the facts.* Ask students to relate the facts of the film: What presents did Benjamin choose in "From My Point of View"? Who broke the eggs in "Broken Eggs"? What did Leah make in "Clay Play"? This baseline can be returned to later if interpretation seems to be straying too far from the facts.

- *Make inferences about feelings and motivations based upon facts.* Once the factual data has been established, students can make inferences about what is going on in the film. It is never possible to know for sure whether inferences accurately reflect the filmed individual's motivations and feelings, but the more facts students can use to support their inference, the better.

- *Interpret the film in terms of theory.* After examining the facts and making inferences from them, you might ask students to apply a coherent theory to the film--their own or one or more of the theorists in *Making Connections* (Piaget, Montessori, or Erikson). For example, with "From My Point of View," after discussing how each child responded to the questioner, and what inferences students draw from those reponses, see how the concept of egocentrism provides a theoretical explanation for the children's behavior. Other suggestions: Apply Piaget's theory of cognitive development to "Half a Year Apart"; apply the concept of reinforcement (in *Beyond the Front Door*, p. 11) to Children at Home and at School films.

How to Deal with Potential Problems

Misunderstanding of the Films' Purpose

Many students (and teachers) think that the films are intended to show models of good or bad behavior, which is not their purpose. The following exchange of letters between an EXPLORING CHILDHOOD teacher, Phyllis Hudler from Cloquet, Minnesota, and the EDC staff, describe our approach and purpose in making the films. Ms. Hudler wrote:

> *I am concerned about your film, "Rachel at School." I feel the stick situation [Rachel and other children threatening each other] needed redirection as it was potentially dangerous (granted, they* did *work it out)! I did not feel the situation portrayed Rachel's sharing, creativity, loving attitude, resourcefulness that I feel came across so well in "Rachel at Home." Also, I do not feel it is good modeling to "pick up the toys"--rather, a pick-up time before a structured activity or at the end of free play would be much more appropriate.*
>
> *I feel you need to revise the film, since the message to new people working with children is not clear and is, in fact, contrary to good child development techniques--and it does not follow through with the "ideal" child-centered approach that Rachel's family conveyed.*

Will you clarify for me exactly how you feel we can help students understand this film? What were your goals for it?

The EXPLORING CHILDHOOD staff explained their use of the film in the following way:

In EXPLORING CHILDHOOD we stress that the films and other materials are not models of behavior but rather examples of real behavior that invite analysis and discussion. We provide several films because we feel that it is important to offer several examples of home or school behavior in order to show variety and to reflect reality.

In the case of "Rachel at School," the very fact that the teacher picked up the children's blocks, for instance, has proved to be a powerful stimulus for students to discuss how they feel children should be taught responsibility. Viewers tend to object to the teacher picking up after the children; then suddenly they recognize that sometimes they themselves do so "because it's easier." This kind of experience gives them fresh awareness of how their own behavior may or may not jibe with how they wish to work with children.

Similarly, questions such as "How would you have handled the situation in which the girls argue?" or "How do you decide when and how to intervene in children's arguments?" (see Beyond the Front Door *teacher's guide) encourage students to probe their own behavior, and their own ideas about teaching children self-control while protecting them from harm. We have avoided "models" because often an ideally resolved situation, seen on film, precludes students from facing the problems involved and considering how they would behave and why. We want students to think through what consequences there might be and what role they think a teacher or aide should take. Our policy in the course is to distribute no films or other student materials without an accompanying teacher's guide. The guides assist teachers in helping their students to probe the implications of what they see and to arrive at their own understanding of how they should behave with children and why.*

Perceiving People as "Actors"

Students may wonder whether or not families in the Children at Home films would have acted differently if the film makers had not been there. They may even dismiss the films as "false" or "contrived." The "Commentaries" record includes a brief interview with the film makers, who talk about how the families reacted when they saw themselves on film (they loved it) and how the families behaved according to their own values. You may want students to hear this. Or it might be interesting to discuss these questions:

> If a film crew came to your house to film your family and asked you to act naturally, how would you act?
>
> Even if you didn't act naturally, or if you "acted for the camera," what would your actions reveal about you and your values?
>
> Do you think a camera would change behavior in different ways for different people?
>
> If you think some of the families might have acted differently if the camera had not been there, what are some of the things they might have done differently, and why?

A homework assignment might be for students to imagine they and their families are being filmed tonight at supper or tomorrow at breakfast, and to come to the next class prepared to write about or discuss their reactions to the experience.

Based on what students know about the egocentrism of small children, they might consider these questions:

> Are children less self-conscious than adults when being filmed?
>
> Are they thinking about how others view them?
>
> Are there different ages at which people become more (or less) self-conscious?
>
> How do teenagers feel when being filmed?

Reluctance to View Films Again

Occasionally students (and teachers) do not see the value of

seeing a film a second or third time unless there is a concrete task for them to do. Therefore, a focusing question or role-taking exercise for students is much more necessary for the second showing than the first. Ask:

> What did you notice the second time around that you didn't see before?
>
> Did your opinion about any of the people or interactions change? How? And why?

✲ How to Learn from Films

Students

- After you have seen a film once, make up a question for focused viewing to practice your observation skills.
- View a Children at Home film and brainstorm the kind of preschool you think the child should attend and why.
- Use films as a vehicle for integrating field work, class work, and your personal experiences. For example, you can look at "Water Tricks" and compare your own process of planning, carrying out an activity at a fieldsite, and discussing the activity later in class with that of Paul in the film.
- Ask the fieldsite teacher(s) to show certain films, such as "Half a Year Apart" or "Teacher, Lester Bit Me," to fieldsite children. They love seeing other children doing similar things, and you will have a chance to see the similarities and differences between a child's reaction and your own. One teacher showed "Half a Year Apart" to a group of retarded preschool children who loved the music and soothing quality of the water play. ✲

Teachers

- Use films as a way of involving parents, both of high school and of fieldsite students, in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD. Invite fieldsite parents to view the Children at Home films with the students, and to comment on them from their perspective as parents of young children.

Evaluating Student Learning

Overview

This section of *Teaching and Evaluation Strategies* is designed to acquaint teachers with three general approaches to evaluating students' progress:

- observing students in class and fieldsite
- interviewing students
- developing and analyzing questions

These strategies, which can be used at any time during the program, are ways to gather information about what students are learning and what aspects of the program may be difficult or confusing.

In presenting both these approaches and the specific, unit-related evaluation strategies in each teacher guide, we are assuming that the more teachers know about what their students are learning throughout the course year, the more responsive they can be to the learning needs of individual students and the class group. While the approaches can be used as a basis for grading students at various points in the program, they are intended primarily as tools to help students appreciate what they know and to help teachers assess what issues, concepts, or skills need special attention. They should help students themselves to realize what they know and to see more clearly what issues and ideas are valued by the course. In discussing the general approaches, we will suggest ways teachers can use them to help students appreciate what they have learned and where they can expand their skills or understanding.

Evaluation approaches should provide students with alternative ways of expressing what they know. There are many ways students can demonstrate a particular kind of learning.

While one student can best express understanding of a development concept by writing about it, another student can more easily talk about it or demonstrate it by the way he or she works with a child. The range of approaches suggested here should enable students to express their growth and learning needs in ways suited to their individual strengths.

At the same time, evaluation should provide teachers with information about how different aspects of the program, such as choice of materials, teaching approaches, or fieldsite conditions, may be affecting student growth. Teachers may be focusing on one set of skills when another set is needed more by students; they may use reading materials that are too abstract for their group. Problems in field work may make it difficult for students to contribute and learn in the classroom. The approaches suggested here can be used to learn not only about the effects of the program on students, but also about the particular aspects of the classroom and fieldsite that may be contributing to those effects. The overview chart on page 70 suggests which of the three evaluation approaches are most appropriate for gathering information about the effect of various aspects of the program on students' growth.

If a program encourages multiple kinds of learning, it should also provide a variety of assessment strategies that are appropriate to those different goals. EXPLORING CHILDHOOD encourages at least five kinds of growth:

- Classroom Support Skills

  So that students can exchange and analyze their experiences with children in a supportive way in the classroom, EXPLORING CHILDHOOD encourages the development of such group skills as recounting experiences, listening, formulating questions, comparing anecdotes, and asking for or giving advice.

- Conceptual Understanding

  The developers of EXPLORING CHILDHOOD have selected concepts and issues from the social sciences and from the field of human development that enable students to "understand and explore the world of children."

- General Skills in Working with Children

  The program aims to increase students' basic caretaking skills, such as planning an activity appropriate for a child's age and abilities and being aware of how children are changing over time.

- Specific Skills in Applying Particular Child Development Concepts to Work with Children

  The program aims to have students not only understand specific development concepts and issues but also apply them in their everyday contacts with young children.

- Attitudes Toward Children and Themselves

  A major aim of the program is that as students understand more about children's needs and their development process, they increasingly accept children's strengths and limitations and tolerate their pace. The program also encourages students to develop an awareness of their own responses and feelings while working with children, a concern for the responsibilities involved in parenthood, and a sense of competence in working with children.

Each of the three general evaluation approaches described here is more appropriate to some learning goal areas than others. The accompanying chart suggests which approaches are most useful for assessing each area. Though each of the three approaches provides very different information about your students, they are intended to build on one another, providing a multifaceted view of your students' abilities and growth in the program.

What Can You Learn About Your Students?

	Classroom Support Skills	Conceptual Under-standing	General Skills with Children	Skills in Applying Development Concepts	Attitudes: Child and Self	Program Aspects Affecting Student Growth
OBSERVING	X		X	X		
INTERVIEWING		X			X	X
DEVELOPING ESSAY AND SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS		X				

Observing

Observation, as a strategy for assessing student learning, is the technique of focused looking and listening to what students say and do. Teachers can use observation as a learning assessment strategy most appropriately when they are evaluating student learning in the area of skills rather than students' thinking processes. This is simply because skills are more demonstrable in student behavior--that is, what they say and do--than are their thinking processes. A student's thinking is usually only partially expressed in everyday behavior and therefore needs to be probed by additional techniques, such as interviewing, to be assessed adequately.

What Is Involved?

Using observation as an assessment strategy involves four basic steps: preparing for the actual observation, conducting the observation, analyzing the information collected, and utilizing it to assess and support student learning.

Preparation involves deciding on your purpose:

- Which particular skill or set of skills do you want to assess?
- Do you want to assess the skill level of a single student, a group of students, or your entire class?
- Do you want to assess learning at one point in time or changes in learning over time?

The specific techniques of observation can then be selected as tools to help you achieve your particular purpose.

Conducting the observation involves:

- determining your role as an observer (participant or nonparticipant)
- structuring how you look and listen to those behaviors that are relevant to your predetermined purpose
- recording the factual events and behaviors that occur

Analysis of the information involves:

- reviewing the recorded information
- interpreting the information, on the basis of your previous knowledge of the student(s) and the fieldsite, on the basis of what the factual information suggests with respect to the intended purpose of your observation, and on the basis of additional information from the student(s) being observed about his or her behavior, the children, and conditions at the fieldsite
- identifying areas to follow up--the skills you want to find out more about, either by means of further observation or by use of another assessment strategy

The information can be utilized as:

- a diagnostic tool, to assess students' strengths and weaknesses in the skill areas observed
- a basis of feedback to students
- a framework for classroom discussion
- input for planning future classroom activities and assignments
- a means of integrating classroom work more closely with fieldsite activities
- a way of clarifying how the fieldsite teacher might further promote student growth, and a take-off point for discussion with the fieldsite teacher
- a basis for deciding future learning assessment needs and appropriate evaluative strategies

When Should You Observe?

EXPLORING CHILDHOOD emphasizes three categories of student skills: classroom support skills, general skills in working with children, and skills in applying specific course concepts to work with children. While classroom support skills are probably best observed in your classroom, skills related to work with children are best observed during your field-site visits.

Observing in the Classroom: Student Support Skills

There are a number of skills involved in being part of a supportive group; through observation, you can see how well students are developing:

- the ability to contribute ideas and experiences with children to a class or small-group discussion
- the ability to listen to other students' experiences and ideas
- the ability to give and seek advice
- the ability to exchange ideas and experiences in a problem-solving mode

Observation can allow you to:

- get an overview at one point in time for the entire class
- assess changes in student support skills by observing on a periodic basis (e.g., once a month)
- evaluate the skills of a single student or small group of students, either at one point in time or over a period of time

You may want to focus on a particular kind of activity--for example, a whole-class discussion. As you observe, ask yourself:

- How many and which students contribute to the discussion?
- How often does each student contribute?

- Does one student pick up and extend what another student has said, or are students' remarks discontinuous with each other?

- Do students present their experiences to other students with detail, background information, and a clear idea of the problem, so that other students have enough information to comment meaningfully?

Observing in the Fieldsite: Students' General and Specific Skills in Working with Children

Visiting your students' fieldsites can serve many purposes. It allows you to maintain contact with the fieldsite teacher, and to judge for yourself how well the student is getting along with both the fieldsite teacher(s) and the children with whom the student works. Problems for which you and the fieldsite teacher feel responsible can be discussed and resolved. In addition, observing your students at the fieldsite can provide insights into your students' learning and help you to integrate classroom work with their fieldsite experiences.

At the fieldsite you might select certain general skills and observe how students work in those particular skill areas. For example, you might observe how students:

- engage in certain kinds of roles (caregiver, participant in children's activities, planner of activities, etc.)

- structure activities to take into account children's abilities and needs

- seek children's reasons for their behaviors and ideas

- appreciate and support the reasons for individual differences among the children

- use any of the observational techniques (watching/listening, collecting things, keeping a journal) suggested by the course

A second focus of observation might involve selecting ideas and activities from the course materials you are currently working on in class and observing student fieldsite work in these areas. For example, if classroom work is currently centered on children's play, you might focus your observation on students' abilities to:

- encourage children to explore the many functions or values of play
- encourage children's spontaneous play
- provide materials that are appropriate and interesting for the age group and ability level of the children
- suggest ideas and encourage children to use familiar materials in new ways

What Approach Is Best?

To select an observational approach for assessing student learning you must decide what your role will be (participant or nonparticipant), how you will record your observations, how often you will observe, and how long each observation period will last. For each decision there are several options. Your choices should take into consideration the purpose for the observation, your own personal style and preferences, and such practical constraints as amount of time, number of students, number of fieldsites, and so on.

Participant Versus Nonparticipant Role

As mentioned in the Teaching Techniques section of this manual, participant observation means being involved in the activity you are observing, whereas nonparticipant observation means standing outside of the activity. There are advantages and disadvantages to each approach.

Participant Observation

advantages	*disadvantages*
Can continue in role as teacher	Can probably not remember all critical information
Students are less aware they are being watched	You may be less aware or objective about your influence on students' behavior
Probably will gain more "feeling" for the situation or the problems of a particular student	

advantages	*disadvantages*
	Will probably have more difficulty separating fact from emotional response and personal opinion
	Need to record afterward

Nonparticipant Observation

advantages	*disadvantages*
Can probably gather more detail	Students may not act as "naturally"
Can probably focus on more students--obtain a global picture	Need to suspend role as teacher
Can probably be more objective	Students will have to work on their own
Can keep a running record of what students say and do	

Recording Observations

One possibility is simply to keep "mental notes" of what is happening. However, human memory being what it is, one tends to forget much of the detail of what has happened. Without some written record, it is difficult to recall facts and to separate them from your interpretations of past events. And it is nearly impossible to keep distinct the events of many observations. Therefore, we recommend that you record your observations in one of the following ways:

- writing down pertinent facts
- developing some kind of observation form
- using a tape recorder or videotape equipment

Frequency of Observations

How often you observe depends in part on the kind of information you are seeking. If you are trying to get a "feeling" for student learning in a given skill area, one

observation might suffice. If you are trying to get a substantial sense of student skills, however, you will need to observe several times to get a composite picture--no student displays his or her full skill in a given area during a single class or single fieldsite period. Finally, if you are interested in assessing changes in students' skills over time, you will need to observe students periodically.

Length of Observations

This can vary considerably, depending on your purpose and how often you plan to observe. In general the more information you want and the more students you observe at a single time, the longer your observation period needs to be. But if you plan to observe frequently, the amount of time needed for a single observation is reduced. For example, if you are observing your entire class in a certain skill area once a week, 10 or 15 minutes each time may suffice. But if you are observing the entire class once a month, you may need 30 or 40 minutes.

Illustration: Observing at the Fieldsite

Preparing for the Observation

- Select three general skills the course intends to foster in students' work with children: certain kinds of roles, structuring activities that are appropriate to the ability level of the children, and responding to children's interests.
- Select two specific concepts the course intends students to apply to their work with children: encouraging self-discipline in children, and probing children's reasons for their misbehavior.
- Observe each student at the fieldsite for about 30 minutes, once a month.
- Observe in a nonparticipant role.
- Develop an observation sheet to record your observations, or use the sample provided on pages 80-81.

Conducting the Observation

- Place yourself where you can clearly hear and see the student being observed but do not get involved in the activities.
- Record behaviors as they occur, according to your observational form.
- Continue recording for a 30-minute period.
- Discuss your observation with the student who was observed, so that the student can clarify why he or she acted as he or she did. This discussion will give you a more complete picture and will help you to interpret the factual events you observed.

Analyzing the Information

After a single observation:

- Determine the roles in which the student is spending the majority of his or her time.
- Identify the skill areas that show greatest weakness and greatest strength.
- Look for themes in the student's behavior across the general and specific skills.

After several observations:

- Identify patterns in a single student's behavior, for each of the five skills observed.
- Look for changes in these skill areas.

Compare observational records of many students:

- Summarize common weaknesses and strengths in each skill area.
- Look for commonalities and differences in roles students engage in frequently.
- Determine similarities and differences among the group of students observed in terms of their patterns and areas of change.

Utilizing the Information

- Identify how you can help students, on an individual basis and as a group, in the activities and assignments in your classroom.

- Share your observations and interpretations with the students and the fieldsite teachers; invite them to help plan ways to increase students' skill development at the fieldsite.

- Identify areas where the connection between course materials and their application at the fieldsite needs to be strengthened.

Observation Form

Student's name:_____ No. of children at fieldsite:_____

Fieldsite:_____ Age of children:_____

Date of observation:_____ No. of teachers at fieldsite:_____

Time observation begins:_____ No. of other adults at

Time observation ends:_____ fieldsite:_____

General Skills

A. How much time does the student spend in the roles listed below?

Role	*Minutes student spends in role*
Being a friend or playmate to the children	_____
Joining in (purposeful participation with children to promote learning)	_____
Supervising an activity with a group of children, planned by the teacher or the student	_____
Initiating or planning an activity for a child or group of children	_____
Observing (watching/listening to children, keeping a journal, collecting things made or said by children, watching/listening to teacher or other adults work with children)	_____
Collaborating with teacher in decision-making and planning of classroom activities	_____
Setting up and cleaning up classroom; administrative/clerical work	_____

B. What does the student do to support children's learning in play activities?

1. What does the student do that is appropriate or inappropriate in terms of the children's abilities?

Behaviors appropriate to the ability level of children	*Behaviors inappropriate to the ability level of children*
a. _____	a. _____
b. _____	b. _____
c. _____	c. _____

2. What does the student do that is responsive or unresponsive to the interests of the children?

Behaviors responsive to children's interests	*Behaviors unresponsive to children's interests*
a. _____	a. _____
b. _____	b. _____
c. _____	c. _____

Specific Skills

A. What does the student do in discipline situations with children?

1. What does the student do to encourage or discourage self-discipline in children?

Behaviors encouraging self-discipline in children	*Behaviors discouraging self-discipline in children*
a. _____	a. _____
b. _____	b. _____
c. _____	c. _____

2. What does the student do to probe the child's reasons for misbehavior?

Behaviors probing children's reasons	*Behaviors not probing children's reasons*
a. _____	a. _____
b. _____	b. _____
c. _____	c. _____

Interviewing

Interviewing is the most effective approach for forming a detailed picture of what your students think and feel about a subject and how they connect, synthesize, and express their ideas and feelings. One literal meaning of "interviewer" is the peephole in the entrance door of a house that allows the person inside to gaze at visitors without being seen. Interviewing students in the program can serve much the same purpose, allowing you to "see" or learn about students' thinking and opinions while refraining from correcting students or expressing judgments about their ideas.

What Can You Learn?

Interviewing differs from teaching in that the immediate purpose is to learn about students rather than to instruct them. Interviewing is more goal-oriented than casual conversation, since it enables one person to gather information from another, in a systematic, though open-ended, way. The interviewer refrains from voicing personal ideas and opinions during the interview, in order to draw out the students' ideas.

By interviewing a sample of students periodically, you can become more aware of the diversity of opinions and levels of understanding in the class group, and thereby more responsive to students' individual needs. At the same time, you can discover commonalities in the group, such as shared areas of mastery or confusion, and you can use this information to redirect teaching in areas where students are most in need of help.

Of the six kinds of information listed on page 70, interviewing is most effective for learning about students' conceptual understanding and about their attitudes toward children and themselves; combined with other evaluation approaches, interviewing can help you learn what aspects of the program, including your own teaching strategies, students feel are contributing to their growth in the program. In each of these three areas, interviewing can provide a number of different kinds of information.

Areas of Conceptual Understanding

- Ideas and assumptions about children and development which students bring into the program. For example, do students have a realistic idea of a four-year-old's abilities when they begin the program?

- Understanding of particular concepts and issues emphasized in program materials. For example, do students understand that egocentrism operates in adolescents as well as young children?

- Skills in recalling and synthesizing a variety of field and class experiences around particular concepts. For example, in what ways have they seen four-year-olds show that an activity is too difficult for them?

Attitudinal Areas

- Attitudes toward children's behavior that students bring to the program. For example, how do students feel about and respond to children fighting?

- Attitudes toward fieldsite setting and staff. For example, are students aware of and tolerant of differences in their own views of children and those of the fieldsite teacher?

- Sense of competence. For example, do students feel they can plan an activity that is right for a child's age and abilities?

Program Aspects Affecting Growth

Interviewing combined with a survey approach may be the most effective way of learning students' opinions about program materials, teaching approaches, or fieldsite conditions. A

simple checklist (see sample on facing page) can identify problem areas; follow-up interviewing can explore the reasons behind students' preferences or difficulties. Some areas that can be explored in this way are:

- Students' perceptions of the usefulness and difficulty of various class and fieldsite learning approaches. (Results from the checklist could be explored in interviews with several students.)

- Students' perceptions of fieldsite problems, such as working with children, communicating with staff, and finding transportation. (Again, a checklist surveying fieldsite conditions can help you identify problem areas that may need to be explored by interviewing.)

How Do You Prepare for Interviewing?

Five steps to planning an interview are described below.

Determine Your Purpose

You will learn about students' thinking in more depth if the interview tries to get at just one general area--conceptual understanding, attitudes, or learning conditions, for example.

Select Specific Concepts, Issues, or Attitude Areas

You will learn about students' thinking in more depth if you focus on forming a full picture of students' thinking about only two or three key issues or concepts.

Form a Set of Interview Questions

Choose questions that ask students to demonstrate their ability to analyze a problem--to synthesize information or explain attitudes--rather than to recall information or give one-word answers.

Sample Survey Checklist

Below are several approaches to learning about children that we have been using in the EXPLORING CHILDHOOD program. Check the columns that indicate how often you have done the approach, whether you would like further practice or training in it, and how useful you find it for learning about children.

	How Often?			More Training?		How Useful?		
	Several Times	Once or Twice	Never	Yes	No	Very	Some-what	Not Very
Classroom								
role play	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
read materials on development	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
view films	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
try children's materials	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
write in journal	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
Fieldsite								
observe children	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
observe teacher	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
join play	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
collect children's stories, drawings	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
plan activities	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

poor	*better*
Can you name three kinds of play materials in your nursery?	Can you describe some play materials that could help a four-year-old develop coordination?

Give students a specific idea of what you want them to discuss:

poor	*better*
What are some things you've learned from the program?	What did you find the most difficult about working with children last fall? How difficult is that now?

Allow students to express their own opinions rather than opinions you suggest to them:

poor	*better*
Why do four-year-olds need freedom to draw whatever they please?	What kinds of art activities would you provide for three-year-old children? Why?

Select Students to Interview

If the purpose of the interview relates to the class group as a whole, randomly select approximately 20 percent of your class group.

If the interview is to focus on a subgroup identified, for example, through a survey checklist, select from that group.

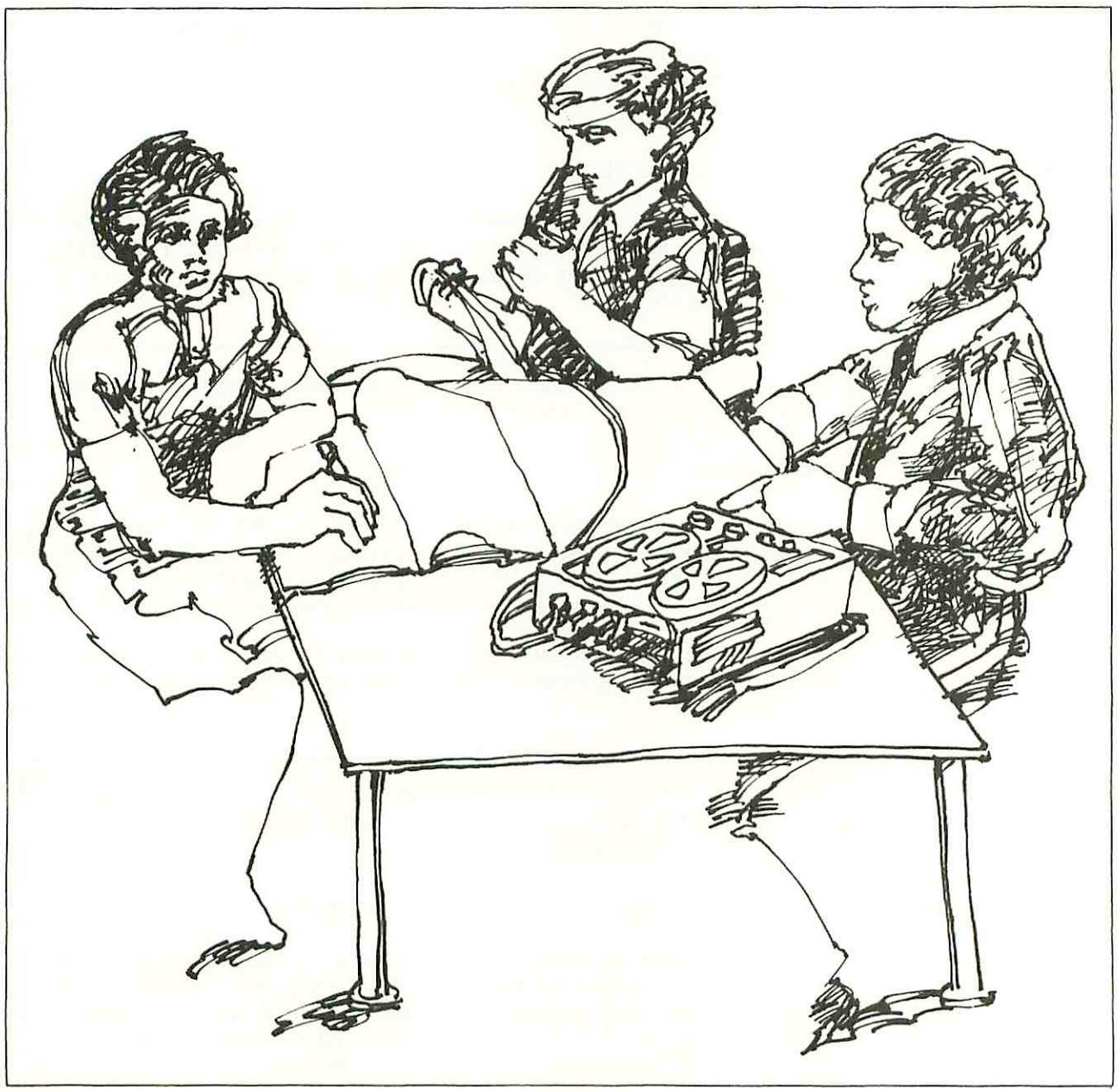
There are both advantages and disadvantages to interviewing students in pairs or in groups of three rather than individually:

advantages	*disadvantages*
Students may stimulate each others' thinking and discuss in more depth.	Less likely to obtain a full picture of each student's thinking process.
May create a relaxed context and encourage openness.	Convergence around a common viewpoint may occur unless teacher works to draw out different points of view.

Enables more students to contribute ideas.	Teacher may need to attend to discussion process, i.e., taking turns, listening, relating one comment to another.

Decide Where and How Long

Interviews can be conducted in one corner of the room while a larger group works on its own. A 20-minute interview allows you to explore one or two issues in some depth.



How Do You Conduct an Interview?

Communicate the Purpose and Rules

Students will express their opinions openly only if you assure them that they will not be graded or judged. Encourage them to take turns, listen, speak without raising hands. Explain your role.

Record the Interview

We recommend using a tape recorder rather than taking notes: it frees you to listen and probe, and provides a full and accurate "memory" of interviews.

Probe Initial Responses

No other evaluation approach allows the teacher to follow up and draw out students' first responses, asking for clarification. Good probing draws out ideas rather than closing off discussion.

Student: I don't know how to deal with those boys jumping all over me. They're rough.

poor probe	*better probe*
Teacher: So you're having trouble being an authority with children.	Teacher: Why do you think little boys jump all over you like that?

Good probing also encourages students to express a range of ideas and examples rather than just their first idea or comment.

Student: At first I thought it was because they didn't like me, but the way they do it makes me think maybe they need older boys around.

poor follow-up	*better follow-up*
Teacher: You're probably right. What other problems do you find in working at your...	Teacher: Can you describe what they do? And tell me what you think they need from older boys like you.

How Do You Analyze an Interview?

Several techniques can help you review, summarize, and interpret the interview contents.

- Review your notes or play the tapes through for a general sense of diversities and commonalities in students' ideas, attitudes, and opinions. Note unexpected attitudes and confusions.

- Summarize the major ideas expressed in relation to each interview question, keeping a tally of how often the idea is expressed. Your summary might look something like this:

> *Reasons students gave why four-year-olds draw differently than two-year-olds:*
>
> Have had more chances to practice drawing 𝍸 ||
>
> Have been exposed to more things and people 𝍸
>
> Are better coordinated ||
>
> Preschools care and teach more than parents 𝍸 |

- Interpret the summary with such questions in mind as:

  Which ideas (attitudes, opinions) are discussed most often? Least often? Not at all?

  Of which concepts and issues do students indicate the clearest understanding? Inadequate understanding?

  Which issues or concepts can students connect most directly to their own experience? Least directly?

- Summarize the main things you have learned about your students from the interview.

> *Findings (see previous summary)*
>
> Area of clear understanding: role of experience (practice and exposure) in art
>
> Area of less familiarity: role of maturation (coordination)
>
> Misconception: preschools teach more than parents

How Can You Use What You Learn?

The opening peephole metaphor suggests that interviewing is a one-way process. As an effective evaluation tool it should be two-way in that it "gives back" to students the information gathered and builds on that information to help students grow further.

Some ways to feed back the interview findings:

- Have students assist in summarizing and interpreting the interviews.
- Present your summary and interpretation to the class for their discussion.
- Play one tape for students that you feel illustrates the key strengths and misconceptions that were identified by the group.

Some ways to build on the interview findings:

- Plan a series of lessons that focuses on strengthening weak learning areas identified in the interviews.
- Develop activities, projects, or assignments for individual students to strengthen learning areas identified as weak in the interviews.
- Suggest fieldsite activities that will buttress these learning needs.

Developing Essay and Short-Answer Questions

Well-formulated questions, which students can respond to in writing or by speaking (to you or into a tape recorder), can enable students to express their understanding of course concepts and issues. Although there are no clear rules that tell you exactly when an essay or a set of short-answer questions is the most appropriate way to evaluate student learning, knowledge of the abilities measured by each can help you determine which type of exercise is most suitable for your teaching purposes and your group of students.

Which Type of Question Should You Use?

There are merits and drawbacks to both essay and short-answer questions. Some characteristics of each are described below to help you decide which is more suitable for you.

Essay Questions	Short-Answer Questions
What Is Being Evaluated?	
Ability to recollect and synthesize information drawn from a variety of sources (e.g., personal background and fieldsite experiences).	Ability to recollect and process a small quantity or fairly contained body of information. Therefore, short-answer questions do not emphasize processing or synthesizing skills.

Essay Questions	Short-Answer Questions
Ability to measure higher level skills such as inference and analysis.	The nature of the task--answering one specific question--may not require the ability to draw inferences or analyze a situation.
Ability to abstract ideas and to express ideas fluently in written form.	Because organizational and writing skills are not very important, students can concentrate just on demonstrating what information they possess.
What Can Be Covered?	
A limited field of information, but in depth.	A wide range of information.
What Are the Possible Effects on Students?	
Students are encouraged to organize and express their thoughts; they are rewarded for the ability to do this.	Students who have a fund of information and ideas but have trouble organizing their thoughts on a broad topic are rewarded for their ideas and information.
Students who have difficulty expressing their thoughts and understanding in writing may feel frustrated or penalized.	Students who enjoy drawing on a variety of sources, synthesizing a great deal of information, and expressing their thoughts, may feel frustrated at not being able to use these abilities.

How Can You Develop Better Questions?

Well-constructed questions will give you a better picture of what your students really understand and of areas which call for additional instruction or class discussion. Following are a few techniques to keep in mind when composing essay or short-answer questions.

Give Enough Detail

The question should always provide enough information for students to know exactly what is being asked. If this is not provided, students will become frustrated, stray from your intended subject, and be unable to demonstrate their skills and understandings:

poor	*better*
What influences development?	What are some of the ways you could use play to support the development of a three-year-old?

Avoid Ambiguity

The reason for avoiding ambiguity is similar to the need to provide specific information. A clearly stated question will help students organize their thoughts and think through problems. An ambiguous question will result in a guessing game and a needless expenditure of effort on the students' part:

poor	*better*
Discuss the relationships that can develop between parents and children.	Choose one of the Children at Home films and list some examples of the things the child in the film is learning from his or her parents. Then list some things the parents in the film are learning from the child.

Support Students' Opinions and Store of Information

Whenever possible, phrase the question to indicate that disagreement or alternative opinions and viewpoints are being encouraged. Also, specifically encourage students to draw on their experiences as well as on the things they have read or viewed in class:

poor	*better*
How should the student, Cal, in the film "Broken Eggs" have dealt with the stressful	Think about how Cal in the film "Broken Eggs" dealt with the stressful situation

situation portrayed in the film?	portrayed in the film. Would you have handled the situation the same way or differently? Why? Think of your own fieldsite experiences in answering the question.

How Should You Analyze Student Responses?

- When you formulate the question, jot down all the points you think might be covered in a complete response. Then select those points that you think are essential--the things students should know or understand in order to grasp the problem or issue covered in the question.

- If possible, read all papers or listen to all student tapes before you comment on an individual student's response. Look for areas of common understanding and misunderstanding. Make notes regarding the latter; these can help guide teaching and serve as a basis for class discussion. Positive responses (common to most students) might be discussed with the group.

- Comment on individual responses, noting correct information and evidence of understanding. Select only one or two problems for special attention and correction: an undue emphasis on what is wrong may defeat your purpose by discouraging students.

- Your comments will be much more helpful to students' future growth and learning than will grades. If you must grade, remember that essay grades tend to be unreliable; for this reason alone, numerical scores (e.g., 80, 65) are not recommended.

A Note on Grading

Grading is an ongoing issue in education, with both advocates and adversaries in nearly every school. Regardless of one's beliefs, grading is required in most school systems. Some of the evaluation strategies developed for EXPLORING CHILDHOOD can be used as a basis for grading, although that is not their sole aim. We have provided guidelines for evaluating how students handle each task, but translating the results to a grade remains the responsibility of the teacher. Only the teacher can decide how to weigh various areas of development, keeping in mind such considerations as the importance of content, the development of skills, and participation in group activities. The strategies may equip you with some of the kinds of information upon which grading decisions should be based, and such concrete information can reinforce your intuitive assessment of your students' growth.

If the information you collect by using these strategies is shared with students, students will be able to see for themselves how they are progressing; if it is also used to help determine grades, students will be able to understand the basis for the grades they receive.

Appendix

Teaching and Learning in Exploring Childhood

by Barbara S. Powell

This reading is recommended for both course and fieldsite teachers.

EXPLORING CHILDHOOD course teachers and fieldsite teachers are responsible for helping adolescents:

- have an effective experience with children,
- inform that experience with ideas about child development and socialization, and
- reflect upon the meaning of that field experience and knowledge, as well as their personal and family experience, in order to understand children and themselves better.

The major task of EXPLORING CHILDHOOD teachers is to create an integrated learning experience for the adolescent. An *"integrated learning experience" is one that helps students make connections between field experience with young children, concepts and issues raised by the materials, and the students' own personal and family experience.* This integrated learning experience is the key to an effective EXPLORING CHILDHOOD program. The situation to avoid is one in which the high school teachers conceive of their job as teaching "the concepts" of the course--the information about development and family and social interactions--and the fieldsite teachers see their role as providing an effective work experience for the teenagers. Both teachers should regularly talk to the student about his or her own feelings and reactions to the entire experience of the course. We want to encourage a collaborative situation in which both fieldsite and course teachers share in the education of the high school student.

Creating an Integrated Learning Experience: Children's Art

In order to illustrate how teachers can help students integrate field experience and course work, we have presented an example of one teacher's treatment of the *Children's Art* unit from Seeing Development. The example is a composite of several teachers' experience with the course. Although this particular example focuses on the course teacher, the two fieldsite teachers played a critical role in the students' learning about children's art. The unit was taught over a period of four weeks.

A central goal of the unit is to have students learn about the ways children change and develop by looking at their art experiences. In observing children making a drawing or painting, students can see them using their abilities and giving form to the feelings and experience which tell us where they are in their development.

In the two fieldsites which the high school students attended, the teachers each had different philosophies about the importance and meaning of art for children; therefore, the two sites offered different opportunities--one broad, another quite limited--for students to observe and learn about children's art.

The classroom teacher and students began the *Children's Art* unit by discussing art activities in the fieldsites. As students talked about the art situation at their fieldsite--sometimes describing a particular observation or incident of a child drawing--they began to realize that the point of view about art varied tremendously at the two sites. In one fieldsite students helped children make models of objects prescribed by the teacher (which usually were related to holidays: turkeys, Santa Clauses, cherry trees, etc.). In that fieldsite, according to a student,

> *The teacher had a certain pattern that they cut out. Like it has a set pattern, and if he cuts the eyes in a triangle, the teacher looks at him and says, "No, that's wrong, they're supposed to be circles."**

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*These comments were gathered from students at Hyde Park High School in Boston by Catherine M. Cobb.

In another fieldsite the teacher encouraged the children to draw. As one student described it:

> *Like in my fieldsite the children draw like they please. She'll say, "It's time for you to draw," and they have a certain time they go and draw or paint. But she doesn't tell them what to draw or if it's wrong.*

It was clearly important for the course teacher to understand both the point of view about art and the resources available at each site in order to understand the student's perceptions about children's art and the kinds of experiences with children's art each student was likely to have at the fieldsite. By sharing fieldsite information the students were able to ask how "art" was viewed in their sites, and what opportunities they might have for the kind of observing stressed in the unit. For students who worked in sites where there was little opportunity for children to experiment with art materials, the films, other students' journals and observation experiences, and observing children drawing at home were particularly important in broadening the adolescents' view of how young children could work with art.

Focused Observation

Students then concentrated on doing a focused observation of children participating in an art experience at the fieldsite. Earlier in the unit, they had shared their impressions of art at the fieldsites; now they devised focusing questions to guide their observations. They checked with the fieldsite teacher about the most appropriate time, place, and children to observe.

At the high school they studied the observation form provided by the unit. The questions related to the central goal of the unit: to learn about a child's understanding and abilities, as he or she engaged in the process of making a drawing, painting, or sculpture. They also worked out additional questions that particularly intrigued them: What is the difference between a three-year-old and a five-year-old in what and how they paint? What are the similarities and differences in the way two boys of the same age work with clay?

After they had done their observations and were back in the high school classroom, the students shared their journal entries--both the factual descriptions of observations and

their reactions and interpretations--to compare their different observations of the same topic.

From their observations they realized that three- and four-year-olds were at different "stages of development" in many ways, and the difference was often reflected in their art-making. In observing children of different ages making a painting from beginning to end, students saw that the three-year-olds' experience was different from the five-year-olds'.

For example, they noticed the difference in the way the younger and older children drew arms and legs on people. They also commented on how most of the older children seemed to be drawing houses.

During the observation activity at a day care center, one student witnessed an incident in which a child (a two-year-old) painted the hair of another (who didn't seem to mind). The teenager had been uncertain about what to do at the time, so the course teacher chose to have the students role play the incident with different students acting out how they would have handled the problem.

During the next week the students used the Drawing Sort poster and arranged an array of children's drawings according to age during class. They read in *Children's Art* about how children develop the ability to make and use first lines, then shapes, then symbols. They gathered samples of art work from the fieldsites and analyzed them for lines, circles, squares, and symbolic representation--trying to make the connection between the ideas about development as presented in course materials and the actual paintings done by the children with whom they worked.

They talked about changes in their own behavior as a result of thinking about children's art.

> Louise: *I used to look at little kid's drawings and say, "Oh, that's terrible." It didn't mean anything to me. It was just something they did, but it meant a lot to them. But now that I've read that, I think you can understand what they are trying to express themselves. Even though it doesn't look like what drawings I'm used to seeing from my observation and viewpoint, it is a drawing. It means something to them. Like you see a sun and they make it black, that doesn't mean anything...it's still a sun to them. They observe things differently. I think I learned that.*

Louise began to see that there was a difference in the way children and older people view the world. She now realized that a painting that was "meaningless" to her did have meaning for a child.

Film Viewing

Then the teacher showed the film "Racing Cars," which shows a five-year-old boy, Enroue, in the process of drawing a racing car. Viewing a film of children drawing gave students a chance to learn to look very closely for cues to how Enroue was experiencing the painting.

Later, in a class discussion, they compared the two girls in the film "Clay Play" to children at their own fieldsites, discussing the effects of age, personality style, home experience, "society," and "creativity" on children's art.

> Jeff: *I think children when they're first born are basically very clever and very creative. But I think that our society can definitely stifle a child into nonproductiveness and noncreativity. I mean, at least I see that in certain children. I see it in a lot of public schools.*

At this point the teacher asked about the distinction tween creativity and development in children's art. The teacher wanted to be sure that Jeff realized the difference between stifling creativity--which can be done to people of all ages--and stifling development, which might mean providing inadequate or inappropriate art experiences for children at a particular age.

Planning Fieldsite Activities

Having developed an idea of what art is to a child by using some unfamiliar art materials themselves, by using course materials, and by observing children in fieldsites and on film, the students then began to plan field activities with a new sense of their role in supporting the child's expression.

By this time, the students had a good sense of the kinds of art activities that might be appropriate at their fieldsites. They sat down with the site teachers and, sometimes using the book *Doing Things*, they planned an art activity. One student brought in yarn, cloth, glue, and bits of things for collages. Another collected wood chips from the lumberyard and the children created elaborate structures and cities.

Drawing on Experience

As the students became more comfortable with each other, more secure in the belief that they knew something about children and art and more willing to talk about what they didn't know, they began to bring up their own childhood experiences with art in school.

> Diane: *I was going to say something about what happened to me when I was little. They were always telling me to do it a certain way.... I can remember different times I'd be drawing something, and the teachers would come down and watch you do it, and like, if you weren't doing it exactly right, she'd take the thing away from you and say, "Do it this way."*

In this instance Diane was beginning to think about the effect of her early schooling in terms of the new insights about development she was gaining in the course. This resonance of her own experience with ideas from the course helped give her a surer sense of how she wanted to help children in their art work.

New Roles for Teachers

In creating an integrated learning experience with *Children's Art*, the teacher both utilized a number of teaching techniques and played several different roles. At various times, and sometimes at the same time, the teacher, in addition to being an instructor and a learner, played the role of resource, coordinator, and counselor. These roles overlapped and blended into each other.

Teacher as Resource

Both course and fieldsite teachers have an important intellectual role in the course, acting as a bridge between the students and the larger body of knowledge in the field of child development. Since the EXPLORING CHILDHOOD materials cannot provide all of the information relevant to each area of such a diverse field, you must fill the crucial role of enriching the course to suit the needs of your students and children. You can do this by contributing your own knowledge

and experience to class discussions, and by inviting members of the community--such as pediatricians, child care workers, and parents--to join the class at appropriate times.

Ideas about child development do not come from published scholarly research only. Many of the most useful insights come from seeing familiar situations in new ways. Both field and course teachers should help students develop new perspectives on their everyday experience. (For example, "What did you mean when you said, 'Pam is spoiled'?") You can also help students recognize the processes of their own learning, such as forming theories, applying values, or making assumptions. You can introduce new theoretical perspectives to challenge or inform these assumptions. You should also help students think about their own development both as child care workers and as human beings. (For example, "On your first day at the fieldsite, what did you learn about yourself?" or "Do you approach new situations with children differently now than you did at the beginning of the year?")

Teacher as Coordinator

The first job of the course and fieldsite teachers is to set up and coordinate the practical aspects of the program.* Without adequate coordination, EXPLORING CHILDHOOD programs can become bogged down in logistical and communication problems.

For example, if the high school course is scheduled during the afternoon and the available fieldsites have only morning sessions, there will be a problem. Course and fieldsite teachers have to organize and supervise schedules for students' work with children and transportation to and from the fieldsite.

Another important part of coordinating is informing parents and school administrators about EXPLORING CHILDHOOD. You might have to enlist the support of the guidance department and teachers when classes occur directly after fieldsite time.

Course and field teachers should communicate regularly about such issues as the course materials the students are using at a given time, logistics of observing, and ideas for

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*Organizational matters are dealt with in detail in the manual, *Organizing the Program*.

activities to be carried out at the fieldsite. For fieldsite teachers, the major coordinating task involves scheduling students when they can actively work with children (for example, don't have students come just during nap time) and organizing activities that are both consistent with the goals of the fieldsite and allow the high school students to learn and build on their own strengths.

The course teacher must also coordinate the use of various course materials. Each component of the program is designed to meet certain needs of students and to deal with certain aspects of the fields of child development and socialization. Individual classes (as well as individual students) vary in what is most useful, relevant, and interesting to them during the year. Other components, such as *Doing Things*, are resources to be used throughout the year. You can plan when and how these resources will be used depending on your particular program and the needs and interests of your students.

Teacher as Counselor

From time to time both field and course teachers have to play the role of counselor. Students may have real anxieties about working with children. What should I do? Will they like me? How should I help them? Your task here is to provide adequate training for field work without undermining the strengths and confidence the student brings to this program. As counselor, you will be identifying and working with students' strengths--just as in their field work students will be drawing out the strengths and capabilities of the young children.

Since one objective of the course is to help students move from an emphasis on themselves to a concern for the young child, and back to a new awareness of themselves, you should try to observe and be receptive to what your students are feeling. Students might talk about fears or inadequacies to you privately, or to their friends. Close communication between course and fieldsite teachers and observation at the fieldsite can help identify student needs.

Students must realize that it is all right to talk about these emotions--both joys and fears. At the same time, it is important not to pressure them to talk if they don't want to--you should respect the students' right to keep their emotions private if they prefer. You should help the class comment in a supportive way on the feelings that are expressed--extracting general issues from personal experience--

so that students come to realize that expressing how they feel can genuinely increase understanding.

At times during class, a student may want to talk about his or her own childhood. There may be moments of sadness or anger. Occasionally adolescents feel a sense of irrevocability about the past and a sense that they can't do anything about who they are. You might try to bring perspective to this problem by discussing the continual nature of development and the resources that each person--child, adolescent, adult--has for changing throughout life.

When class discussions turn to personal experience, you must deal with expressions of emotion in the way you feel most comfortable. It is important for you to be aware of your feelings about your own experience (such as your own childhood or your reaction to a film) and about your students (are you angry because a student doesn't seem to care about a child?).

It may take time for some students to feel comfortable and accepted by the fieldsite teacher and the children. Fieldsite teachers can help students by talking about their relationships with the children and about incidents or problems --even if it is for just a few moments at the end of the day.

Occasionally problems will arise with a particular student at the fieldsite, such as poor attendance, inability or unwillingness to participate, or a difficult relationship with a child. The fieldsite teacher may want to talk to students about these problems immediately when they arise. Problems of this nature should be communicated to the course teacher.

EXPLORING CHILDHOOD teachers are in an interesting role relationship with their students. The teachers are students, learning new techniques, new roles, a new pedagogical approach. And the students are teachers. The skills that you need in order to do your job are the same skills that adolescents need in order to work with children. Students will learn about their role in large part from the kind of model that you present.

Classroom Experiences Records

The three records entitled "Classroom Experiences" (one record for each module) illustrate teachers' ways of using some of the materials in each module. They also address important issues such as "Building a Support Group" (Seeing Development record) or "Dealing with Personal Issues in Class" (Seeing Development and Family and Society) which are not specific to any one module. They are intended to help you analyze your own teaching techniques by giving you the perspective of another teacher's experience.

The records might be used in a number of ways:

- At the start of a new module, listen to the record for that module to help build a picture of the kinds of discussions and activities the module offers.

- Just before introducing a particular unit in class, analyze a recorded use of that material. Look at its strengths and weaknesses and compare the excerpt to problems and possibilities in your classroom. For example, in *Child's Play*, students are asked to divide into small groups to discuss how children of different ages would use the toys pictured on page 23. Before introducing this activity, listen to the Seeing Development record, side 2, band 2: Reporting on Small-Group Work. Ask yourself:

  How does the teacher encourage interaction between groups?

  How does she expand the learning that took place in the groups?

  How can I make small group reporting meaningful and not just a check on whether groups did their tasks?

What problems have I experienced in using small groups with my students? What successes?

- Play a selection such as the "Children's Tracks" band on the Family and Society record (side 2, band 1). Think about your reactions to the recorded classroom excerpt. Ask yourself:

  What problems am I apt to encounter when using this material with my students? How should I deal with them?

- In seminars you might conduct a problem-solving session using role play. For example: After listening to the Seeing Development record, side 1, band 3 (Discussing Personal Experience in the Classroom), one participant might say that in her class students are reluctant to discuss their own childhoods--"They always say, 'I don't remember.'" At the leader's suggestion, other participants might suggest some solutions they have tried with their students--writing in journals before talking to remove threat of making public statements, using photographs to trigger memories, starting with specific phrases such as, "The worst thing my friends ever did to me was...."

  You might then ask the participant who raised the problem to choose one of the suggestions and, role playing the teacher of her class, "teach" it to the rest of the seminar participants who role play her students. Then discuss the effectiveness of the technique used in the role play:

  Did the "teacher" feel comfortable using the technique?

  Did the technique accomplish her goals?

  Did the "students" find the technique effective?

  What suggestions would the "students" make to the "teacher" for further use of this technique?

Contents of the Records

Working with Children

Side 1

1. Introduction--suggestions on how to use the record.

2. Fieldsite Preview, "Peter's Goodbye"--large-group discussion of reasons for the child's crying in which students discuss how they would help the adolescent in the preview; a brief attempt to role play the adolescent. Use to discuss: ways to use "Fieldwork Previews."

3. Observing and Journal Keeping--teacher reads an observation from a student journal and uses it to problem solve ways to help the child described. (Remember, sharing of journal entries should be optional.) Use to discuss: ways to encourage journal keeping, ways to make use of journals and observations in class discussion.

4. Discussing Fieldsite Experiences in the Classroom--teacher notes observations on board, helps students remember and discuss a preschool art experience she herself did not see. Use to discuss: how to integrate fieldsite experiences and class discussion.

5. What About Discipline?--students discuss attitudes toward discipline and problems they experience with children. Use to discuss: ways to problem solve discipline or other fieldsite issues.

Side 2

1. Water Play--teacher has control problem in conducting water play activity; discussion focuses on what students learned about children from activity. Use to discuss: problems and potentials of using manipulative activities in class.

2. A Fieldsite Teacher/Student Conference--teacher discusses field work with two adolescent girls. Use to discuss: need for individual conferences about field work, ways to have fruitful, supportive dialogue.

3. A Fieldsite Teacher/Course Teacher Conference--problems in establishing work relationships with fieldsites, need for communication with field teachers. Use early in the year.

Seeing Development

Side 1

1. Introduction.

2. Looking at Development: Brainstorming--students list observations of Josh and Rachel in "Half a Year Apart." Use to discuss: how to practice observing with film, what can be learned from observing in general and from this film, problems and potentials of brainstorming technique.

3. Looking at Development: Considering Personal Issues in the Classroom--using photographs, students do "Looking Backward" exercise and relate childhood memories. Use to discuss: how teachers can encourage personal sharing, ways to relate personal memories to development issues, ways to use "Directions in Development" poster, teacher attitudes toward classroom discussion of personal issues.

Side 2

1. Children's Art: Building a Support Group--students share observations and drawings collected at a fieldsite and discuss ways to support children drawing. Use to discuss: issues in children's art such as the effect of experience on drawing; ways to encourage classroom interaction.

2. Child's Play: Reporting on Small-Group Work--students report on discussion of how children of different ages would use various toys. Use to discuss: how to apply small-group work to further activities, how to encourage class dialogue about small-group reports.

3. Child's Eye View: Integrating Course Issues and Student Concerns--in four different classroom excerpts the issue of egocentrism is raised. In some excerpts the teacher outlines the concept to students; in another, the concept is relevant to student discussion but is not interjected by the teacher. Use to discuss: how students most effectively learn a new concept; when it is relevant for teachers to enter a discussion; ways to use the "Directions in Development" poster (and the "Ideal Child" exercise in the guide for the Children at Home films).

Family and Society

Side 1

1. Introduction.

2. Using Journal Excerpts--a teacher reads student journals at relevant points in student discussion of the "Ideal Child." Use to discuss: ways to encourage journal keeping, helping students feel their ideas are significant, issues raised by values clarification exercises, the role of the teacher in encouraging interaction among students.

3. Children at Home Films--teacher uses fantasy activity to introduce "Rachel at Home," then encourages sharing of childhood memories; the teacher's colleague discusses how teachers can deal with personal issues raised in classes. Use to discuss: film-viewing techniques, pre-film warm-up activities, the potential of the Children at Home films for raising personal issues, the problems and possibilities in considering such issues in the classroom.

Side 2

1. Children's Tracks--following a small-group listing activity with personal documents, the group discusses the moral issue of record keeping. Use to discuss: giving clear directions, how to set up small-group activities, ways to use the "Children's Tracks" poster, how to draw conclusions from small-group work, techniques in leading a discussion.

2. Controversial Issues in the Classroom--a small group of students working on an *Inquirer* project discuss abortion; a group of teachers, having heard a tape of this conversation, discuss how they would handle it in class. Use to discuss: problems and potentials of assigning students to independent community research, ways to handle unexpected or controversial issues arising in class discussion.

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EXPLORING CHILDHOOD has been developed by the School and Society Programs of Education Development Center under grants from the Office of Child Development and the National Institute of Mental Health, and with the support of the Office of Education.

Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) is a publicly supported nonprofit corporation engaged in educational research and development.