

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED LEARNING EXPERIENCES
IN THE AREA OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS
TO INCREASE EMPATHIC ABILITY
OF HOMEMAKING STUDENTS

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In an era where change, automation, loss of significance as individuals and mass grouping are characteristic, the pressing need for greater understanding and improvement of interpersonal relationships is most evident. Because of the computerized age many individuals experience a feeling of alienation and loneliness. Reisman, Glazer and Denny (50) depict the "lonely crowd" as symbolic of our society today and suggest that we are lonely in the middle of a crowd as long as our relationships are restricted and segmental.

The family as a basic unit in our society today is an institution which may provide a framework for meaningful interaction among individuals. The American family has lost many of the important functions it performed in the past, but the primary basic function of giving satisfaction of ego-needs through marriage and family interaction still exists. Parsons and Bales (48) state that by ego-needs is meant the desire of the individual to achieve emotional satisfaction from the giving and receiving of meaning and importance in interaction with another person. If the family carries out this function the sense of alienation may be dissolved for individuals in our fast moving society. Blood (5) observes that only when we are able to establish a fully personal relationship with another individual do we escape the sense of estrangement that so often afflicts modern man.

Interpersonal relationships is a significant concept to consider in relation to this state of estrangement and loneliness felt by individuals. It is important because of its relation to the general well-being and self-actualization of individuals and its basic importance to success in the small nuclear family today as well as to the successful functioning in the American society of today (30).

As an educator in the area of home economics, the writer is concerned with the preparation of young people for meaningful relationships in family life. Interpersonal relationships which are the elements of genuine living and real intimacy are basic to achieving successful family life. Walters and Stinnet (61) recently stated in regard to the teaching of family relationships:

Knowledge which contributes to a satisfying and productive life includes such factors as (a) self-understanding, (b) skill in communication and interpersonal relationships . . . p. 642

Empathy as a factor in interpersonal relationships is basic to successful personal adjustment and effective interaction both within the family and in relationships with individuals and groups outside the family with whom a person interacts (30).

The writer accepts the idea that the ability to empathize is a skill which functions in personal interaction, that it brings about increased understanding and knowledge among people and that it can be developed through understanding the concept empathy, effort and practice (30). Empathy may be considered basic to the development of a mature personality, interpersonal competency and effective personal and family relationships (Hoover, 30).

Dymond states as a result of early research in the area of empathic ability and personality:

Highly empathic subjects seems to come from families where the interpersonal relations were close. The family is a source of support and not an important problem area in the lives of the highs. Quite the opposite was the case in the low group. There was aggression against parental authority, conflict with siblings, hostility against overprotecting mothers and frequently disrupted relationships between the parents themselves (22, p. 348).

Her research, though preliminary in nature, is significant in showing the importance of empathic ability as a factor in satisfying personal relationships, more specifically in satisfying family relationships. These findings may imply that the ability to empathize may be determined by the quality of interpersonal relationships in one's family life, also that individuals preparing for successful family relationships in the future need experiences which will increase their ability to empathize.

Since home economics programs at the secondary level are oriented toward educating students for the role of satisfying family relationships, it seems significant that a conceptual understanding of empathy and the skill to empathize be considered in the area of family living.

Since subjects for this study were adolescent girls, the reader may question their potential ability to develop empathic ability. Waldon (62) has indicated findings which show that the age at which greatest increases in empathic ability appear to take place is in pre-adolescence and between the age of 14 and adulthood. It is assumed by the writer that, in view of these research findings, home economics students at the secondary level do have the capacity to understand empathy as a process or skill which can be developed.

Because the kind of interaction experienced in the family as well as in other groups appears to depend heavily upon the degree to which empathic capacity develops, one may assume that this skill should be

taught in the home economics curriculum, specifically in the area of family relationships or family living.

Description of Problem

This study is concerned with the concept "empathy" as a factor in interpersonal and family relationships. Empathy was used to develop a unit oriented toward the concept approach of teaching. The problem consisted of identifying the abilities of a group of home economics students to empathize with fellow classmates by use of a pre-test. Students were then subjected to the series of learning experiences directed toward increasing the students' conceptual understanding of empathy.

It was assumed by the writer that a conceptual understanding of empathy would result in the ability of subjects to empathize with fellow classmates. Students were then rated on their ability to empathize with fellow classmates by administering a post-test. The study attempted to determine the ability of home economics students to empathize as a result of participation in specific learning experiences presented to increase conceptual understanding of empathy.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study was to investigate the empathic ability of adolescent girls enrolled in a comprehensive home economics program at the secondary level to determine if participation in learning experiences specifically planned for learning the selected concept would increase the subjects' ability to empathize with fellow classmates within the classroom setting.

Objectives of Study

The objectives of this study were: (1) to determine the ability of students to empathize with fellow classmates by the use of a pre-test; (2) to develop learning experiences which would increase the students' conceptual understanding of empathy; (3) to present learning experiences based on the concept approach which would increase the students' abilities to empathize; and (4) to determine the extent to which students learned to empathize with fellow classmates as a result of learning experiences, by measuring ability with a post-test.

Limitations of Study

The topic for this study has been limited to empathic ability, only one of the skills involved in successful interpersonal relationships. Subjects for the study included 22 junior and senior girls, ages 17 and 18, who were enrolled in Home Economics IV, a comprehensive homemaking class in the vocational program at Fairview High School. All students had completed Home Economics I and II at Fairview High School. The study was limited to a concentrated unit of study specifically developed to increase the students' abilities to empathize. The unit was carried out during a four-week period. A fifty-minute class period, the normal class length, was allowed for learning experiences. A two-hour period was held for the pre-test and post-test administration.

Definitions of Terms Used in the Study

The writer presents here a suggested definition of terms used in this study. Realizing that many possible definitions are available for

each term, a workable definition for the writer as used in this study is presented to the reader.

Empathy. Empathy is the ability to interpret correctly the attitudes, values and intention of others and to anticipate and predict accurately another person's behavior while preserving a state of good will toward that person (15, p. 28).

Interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal relationships refers to interactions - mutual or reciprocal relationships among individuals in various situations (30, p. 56).

Family relationships unit. This refers to a unit of instruction at the secondary level, designed to prepare students for successful marriage and parenthood, a unit which focuses upon (a) the understanding of human personality and behavior as related to the development of emotional maturity and satisfying relationships and (b) the development of skills essential to effective family participation.

Concept. A concept is a relatively complete and meaningful idea in the mind of a person. It is an understanding of something. It is his own subjective product of his way of making meanings of things he has seen or otherwise perceived in his experiences. At its most concrete level it is likely to be a mental image of some actual object or event the person has seen. At its most abstract level it is a synthesis of a number of conclusions he has drawn about his experience with particular things (67, pp. 81-99).

Family life education. Family life education may be defined as a course designed to educate people emotionally and intellectually so that they will be able to make intelligent and well informed choices from among the many competing forces. Family life education involves

the study of growth and development, personality, character, human behavior, masculinity, femininity and the roles the individual plays in society, marriage and the family (64). The terms family life education and family relationship units may be considered the same for the purposes of this study.

Generalization. This means a statement which expresses an underlying truth, has an element of universality, and usually indicates relationships. A generalization is supported by facts and applies to many situations (46, p. 6).

Learning experience. This is an act in which a student engages for the purpose of learning; it involves the interaction of the student with external conditions in the environment (46, p. 6).

Behavioral objective. Behavioral objectives may be defined as the aims or purposes of a student's learning (46, p. 6).

Procedure Used to Develop Study

The following steps were followed in carrying out this study.

1. Behavioral objectives were determined which would help students learn to empathize or to understand the concept of empathy.
2. Basic generalizations which would relate to the concept of empathy were identified.
3. Learning experiences which would direct the students' learning toward basic generalizations were developed.
4. Behavioral objectives, generalizations and learning experiences developed for teaching concept of empathy in interpersonal relationships were approved.
5. The Social Work Questionnaire was administered to two sections

of junior and senior students enrolled in Home Economics IV classes.

The first administration of the Questionnaire provided pre-test scores.

6. Learning experiences were carried out during the regular classroom setting.

7. The Social Work Questionnaire was administered again as a post-test. Scores were recorded.

8. The relationships between pre-test and post-test scores on the Social Work Questionnaire were determined.

9. Conclusions of the study were stated and recommendations for further research presented.

The writer has attempted to present a brief overview of the study in this chapter. Chapter I explains the scope of the study - its limitations and procedure to be followed in developing the content of the thesis. Basic assumptions by the author and a definition of terms as used in this study have been presented. Chapter II will present a theoretical background for the study.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Family Living in the High School Curriculum

As an instructor interested in the area of family relationships, the writer is concerned with strengthening personal philosophy about the significance of family living units or courses at the secondary level. In order that the reader might obtain an understanding of the setting and reasons behind this study, a review of current opinions and beliefs as found in the literature about family relationships in the curriculum is presented. Since the basic teaching approach employed in this study was the concept approach to teaching-learning, a review of concepts, behavioral objectives and learning experiences, which served as guidelines in actual planning carried out by the writer, is presented. The concept of empathy is reviewed briefly in order that the reader might gain some insight into the meaning of the concept.

The concern of educators over curriculum development and what is to be included affects all areas of study. Education for family life and its place in the curriculum is of great concern to educators in the field of home economics and in family life.

Westlake (64) expresses this concern in relation to curriculum, indicating that the present curriculum of our schools, especially that of secondary schools, is crowded. It is deemed important for students to take foreign languages, English, mathematics, science, history,

economics and physical education, to name a few of the currently prescribed prerogatives. On the other hand, our periodicals decry our concern with family breakdown as evidenced by divorce, desertion and marital problems.

Family life education or family living can meet an important need in the lives of high school students, and thus our future society. Force (25) believes that the responsibility of the school in educating for family life is no longer a matter of debate. The tasks of the school in supplementing and complementing those of the home and of the social structure in which children and youth are growing and developing their attitudes, character, and capacities for relating themselves to other people are now recognized as inescapable in a total balanced education.

The trend in contemporary society toward youthful marriage has been the focus of numerous sociological studies. This trend is receiving considerable encouragement from the adolescent milieu which is saturated with the vocabulary and symbols of romance, love and marriage. In view of this trend a clear challenge faces the secondary school educator, for family life specialists agree that marriage and family education on the junior and senior high school level can play a significant role in reducing the number of youthful marriages and providing an education which not only imparts facts but will develop meaningful attitudes and values toward a sound marital experience in contemporary life (13).

It is a generally accepted fact that the first responsibility of the school is to reflect the needs of the community and help solve its social ills. The community looks to the school when society is unable to cope with its social problems because it is recognized as being the

last stronghold in dealing with such matters. A recent subject to be added to the school curriculum is family life education. This is a responsibility shared by the parents, community and school, since the program must reflect the social and economic levels and values of the community. The school is not relinquishing parents from their responsibility to educate in this field. The school is merely reinforcing and supporting the family (32).

The literature provides studies which show the number of high schools in selected areas that include family life education in their curriculum. Today an increasing number of cities offer family life courses as a part of the public school curriculum. Some public high schools have a course called "Family Living," but more commonly the subject is covered as a part of the senior year course in home economics (32). Dager (17) found 90 per cent (600 out of 661) principals offering family life education in some form in 1959. Sperry and Thompson (55) found in North Carolina that of the 611 principals who responded to the question, 470, or more than three fourths, reported that no family life education course as such was offered. Family life education courses that were conducted were located in the home economics, sociology, physical education and biology departments. Only 3.6 per cent of the total student population studied were registered for a course in this area. Bradley (7) wrote that 69 per cent of the schools offered family life education in the home economics department. She stated that, although 75 per cent of the principals favored family life education, only 45 per cent believed the school board would be positive and only 42 per cent thought the community would favor this instruction.

Landis and Kidd (33) reported that in 286 schools surveyed, 76 per

cent had units or semester courses in family living; 24 per cent did not. Forty-four per cent teach it in social studies, 12.6 per cent in home economics, and 19.2 per cent in other departments.

These findings generally show that family life education is not included in the curriculum of most high schools surveyed. According to Bayer and Nyle (2) the studies of family life education permit the following generalizations: (1) The greatest percentage of family life courses are offered in home economics and social studies. (2) More girls than boys are enrolled in high school family life courses. (3) Most family life courses are elective rather than required and most are offered to both sexes. (4) Most of the family life teachers are women, and practically all are married and have had college preparation in home economics. (5) Areas involving marriage, dating and courtship receive the most attention in family life courses; sex education receives the least.

The literature indicates many goals and purposes of family life education in the high school curriculum. Avery and Lee (1) indicate the ultimate goal of family life education is the development of stable families contributing constructively to the society in which we live. To this end, many groups, institutions and agencies must cooperate.

Family life education is the study of the behavior of people as family members. It is based on the findings of the social sciences, psychology and a number of other disciplines. While historical and cross cultural perspective is sought, the emphasis is largely on contemporary attitudes and activities in the United States. This is to broaden the student's understandings of the alternatives from which he can choose in his functioning as a family member in a changing society

which brings new responsibilities and opportunities in spousal, parental, filial, sibling and grandparental roles (37).

Concept Approach to Teaching Family Relationships

The concept approach to teaching has been accepted by many educators as the one approach which best allows the learner to develop conceptual understandings and to develop the ability to think. The thesis of the concept approach is to teach people to think, to learn, to see the correlation, to evaluate, to use concepts and generalizations, and to help teachers be aware of what they are teaching and why (39). Simpson (52) supports the view of teaching for the development of concepts and generalization, stating that:

1. The transfer of learning from the classroom to the home and community, and to the employment situations, is more likely to result when students have been guided to draw warranted conclusions in the form of generalizations.
2. In a rapidly changing world the specifics may change, the concepts and generalizations have more enduring value and meaning.
3. One of the purposes of education is preparation for the future. Meaningful organization of the subject matter of a field is facilitated through understanding the concepts and related generalizations and how they are developed.

Tyler (59) further projects that in view of the knowledge explosion a step which helps to make significant education possible is to select and organize the content in a way that can be understood by the student and used by him effectively. Content can be organized for teaching and learning so as to aid the student in understanding its

structure. This can be done by determining what concepts are basic in this subject to give order and meaning to its specific purpose.

Definitions of Concepts

The literature reveals many views on the meaning of concepts and the part they play in organization of content within a curriculum. Dressel (18) has suggested that concepts come in different kinds of packages. They may be in the form of ideas, rules, generalizations, principles or laws, theories, problems or areas of living. Simpson (52) advocates that a concept may be embodied in a word or phrase and this has sometimes been called a concept in its purest form. It is this word or phrase idea of a concept that many people find most useful. Another definition frequently used in connection with the development of curriculum materials in home economics is:

Concepts are abstractions which are used to organize the world of objects and events into a smaller number of categories, these in turn can be organized into hierarchies (52, p. 239).

McLendon also writes that a concept classifies particulars that have relatable features. At this point he indicates that it should become clear that concepts differ in size of the areas they embrace. While some cover a wide spectrum, others cover a relatively small field. It is not proper, however, to infer that there is any relationship between the magnitude of a concept and the complexity of it. In effect it becomes even more complex when one realizes that a concept may be part of another even larger concept. What one eventually has is a hierarchy of concepts, all of which may be interdependent. Bruner (8) writes that the working definition of a concept is the network of inferences that are or may be set into play by an act of categorization. He seems by

the word "network" to define a concept as a relationship rather than an entity unto itself. In this case conceptual learning would be learning of relationships between different inferences of a given discipline. According to Tinsley and Sitton (57) a concept is an idea which a person forms in his mind in order to understand and cope with something in his experience. It is composed of meaning and feeling, which may or may not be expressed by words. Moore (43) believes that concepts range from a sensory observation of something very simple to high level abstractions on complex topics; they have a defined meaning fixed by and as extensive as the words used to describe them. Burton, Kimball and Wing (12) suggest that:

A concept is a defined idea of meaning fixed by and as extensive as the term used to designate it. A concept is the amount of meaning a person has for any thing, person, or process. A concept is a suggested meaning which has been detached from the many specific situations giving rise to it and provided with a name. A concept is a word or other symbol which stands for the common property of a number of objects or situations. Concepts are established meanings on which we can rely with assurance (p. 154).

As defined by Morrisett (45) a concept is an abstraction, an idea generalized from a particular case. A concept can be considered as a map that links together certain facts and phenomena into a meaningful classification.

Learning and the Concept Approach

In order for an individual to develop as an adequate person, cognitive learning is necessary. This kind of learning involves mental attainments, facts, concepts and generalizations. Buchheimer (9) suggests that the dimensions of the concept empathy are in part cognitive and in part affective. Concepts perform three major functions in

cognitive learning. First, they serve as systems for organizing subject matter; second, as sources for thinking; and third, as predeterminers of behavior (57). Burton relates two ways in which concepts facilitate learning. First, knowledge which is organized around concepts is easier to recall than is a vast array of facts. Second, concepts as organizing systems are economical, as they permit the relating of classes of events rather than the relating of individual events (12). Hatcher and Andrews (29) state that concept learning involves the development of the ability to make the discriminations by which one concept can be distinguished from another and to identify and relate examples of a concept. In one sense, a concept is never completely learned, for added knowledge and increased experiences with the concept will develop new meanings and new associations. Concepts, as organizing systems, tell the learner what facts to look for and the meaning to assign to the facts. Concepts are formed by thinking about something in one's experiences, and once formed, they become sources for additional as well as for higher levels of thinking (11).

Formation of Concepts

The first step in concept formation is that of sense perception, which is discriminating among things, processes or other items on the basis of immediate experience (66). Reflection about experiences according to Burton (11) is the avenue by which progression from perception to conception takes place. Moore (43) gives seven factors on which perception is based: (1) nature of physical organism, (2) length of time he has lived, (3) opportunities in the past to perceive, (4) current physiological and personality needs, (5) goals and values

he holds, (6) the experience of threat, and (7) the concept he has of himself. Hoover (30) indicates that concepts are apparently acquired through a complex set of learnings which involve the process of discrimination, perception and generalization.

Concept Approach to Teaching

Otto (47) outlines 5 steps involved in the concept approach to teaching: (1) identifying behavioral objectives, (2) identifying and selecting concepts or generalizations which serve as background knowledge to achieve behavioral objectives, (3) listing and documenting background factual information necessary to help the learner understand concepts and their relationships, (4) devising learning experiences which enable the learner to recognize relationships among concepts and give meaning to factual information, and (5) formulating, by students, of generalizations in their words.

The process of concept teaching is viewed by Berger and Braumel (3) as entailing the following procedures: (1) determining previous experience of learner, (2) presenting the situation in such a way that the student desires to reduce the event to a concept, (3) allowing the student to propose hypotheses and explanations (each student should participate in abstracting observed phenomena) and (4) interpreting the observed event in light of suggested hypothesis.

Moore (43) suggests the identifiable steps in sound thinking as necessary in teaching for the concept approach. These include: (1) identify the problem, (2) recognize the central issues, (3) define and understand words and phrases, (4) determine assumptions and their possible implication, (5) formulate possible solutions by recalling

selectively, (6) collect pertinent facts, in the meantime suspending judgment, (7) evaluate information on feeling and facts, (8) utilize effective processes of thinking, and (9) draw a tentative conclusion in the form of a general statement. Tinsley and Sitton (57) believe that teachers who accept and use concepts in teaching do not attempt to give concepts to students because both teachers and students form their own. Teachers provide opportunities for students to: (1) form an accurate idea through varied experiences which show numerous aspects of the concept, (2) identify ways in which the idea directs behavior, (3) expand and/or reorganize an idea, once formed, so that the resulting behavior will be increasingly satisfying to individual and to society, and (4) understand the interactions and relationships between concepts so that learning is made easier and transfer of learning is facilitated.

Concept formation and behavioral objectives are closely related in the process of teaching and learning. A brief discussion of behavioral objectives is presented in order to clarify their meaning and purpose.

Behavioral Objectives

A most important step in constructing curriculum for concept teaching is the identification of educational or behavioral objectives. Tyler (58) states that any statement of the objective should be a statement of changes to take place in students. The most useful form for stating objectives is to express them in terms which identify both the kind of behavior to be developed in the student and the content or area of life in which this behavior is to operate. Mather (40) indicates among considerations in developing educational objectives

that an objective is a statement of intent, of hoped-for behavior on the part of the learner which is to be judged. Statements of hoped-for learning must be specific enough and clear enough that we know what we are looking for. The degree of specificity (how detailed to make objectives) should be at the level of generality of behavior that one is seeking to help the student acquire. Identify a performance which can be valued in and of itself as being effective in the student's life. Each objective should express a purpose which makes sense within the larger purposes of a person's life goals, and this purpose should be distinguishable from others. Since performance seems to be the key, a description of hoped-for behavior must contain a good "strong" verb, a verb referring to observable human objectives. Mather (40) concludes that well-stated educational objectives guide the behavior of the teacher; they help her communicate with herself and to her students. We are aided in our teaching and evaluating by being specific, precise, and realistic when stating objectives.

Bloom (6) explains that by educational objectives we mean explicit formulations of the ways in which students are expected to be changed by the educative process. That is, the ways in which they will change in their thinking, their feelings and their actions. Bloom suggests that educational objectives must be related to a psychology of learning. The use of a psychology of learning enables the teacher to determine the appropriate placement of objectives in the learning sequence, helps them discover the learning conditions under which it is possible to attain an objective, and provides a way of determining the appropriate interrelationships among the objectives. In order to attain educational objectives, meaningful experiences must be employed. How

learning experiences are planned and used will be discussed.

Learning Experiences

The term "learning experience" is not the same as the content with which a course deals nor the activities performed by the teacher. The term refers to the interaction between the learner and the external conditions in the environment to which he can react. Learning takes place through the active behavior of the student; it is what he does that he learns, not what the teacher does (58). Tyler (58) gives general principles in selecting learning experiences. (1) For a given objective to be attained, a student must have experiences that give him an opportunity to practice the kind of behavior implied by the objective. (2) The learning experiences must be such that the student obtains satisfactions from carrying on the kind of behavior implied by objectives. (3) Reactions desired in the experience are within the range of possibility for the students involved. (4) There are many particular experiences that can be used to attain the same educational objectives. Simpson (52) supplements this idea, indicating guidelines for selecting learning experiences.

1. Learning experiences should contribute toward the achievement of the objectives.
2. Learning experiences should lead to the development of significant content.
3. Learning experiences should provide for continuity and sequential development.
4. Learning experiences should provide for variety with respect to media and senses employed.

5. Learning experiences should provide for student development in ability to think and allow for development of problem solving ability.
6. Learning experiences should contribute to interest in and desire for more learning.

Chittenden (14) suggests questions which will help teachers evaluate in choosing and developing perceptual experiences for their students.

(1) Do students already have a conceptual position in regard to what I want to teach? If so, what is it? Do I want to reinforce it or to change it? (2) Is it possible to present an experience to which the affective response will be positive? (3) Does it offer clear, concise percepts and do they point to just one concept? (4) Does it offer students with a wide range of intellectual abilities and experiences the opportunity to develop some percepts useful in increasing their understanding of the concept? (5) Am I familiar enough with the perceptual experience myself to be able to help students make the best use of it? And do I have the ability to help them make good use of it? In answering these questions the teacher must have some knowledge content to be presented. Identifying important generalizations will be discussed as a part of teaching by the concept approach.

Generalizations in the Teaching-Learning Process

A generalization has been defined as a complete thought which expresses an underlying truth, has an element of universality and usually indicates relationships. Any full generalization or principle is a concept. Some limited generalizations may not be concepts. Concepts are bigger, broader and more fuzzy and will cover more ground

than generalizations (52).

Hatcher and Andrews (29) suggest that the learning of generalizations involves the recognition of factual information that can be broadly applied; that is, related to many situations. There are two ways in which the teacher can help students learn to see relationships. She can present generalizations herself and point out illustrations and applications. Or she can let generalizations emerge as the natural consequences of the class work. It is important for the teacher to guide students to express related information in the form of generalizations. Verbal and written expressions not only help to clarify meanings but aid in the retention of the material. There is no standard form for stating generalizations, but the terminology should be clear and simple. Being able to recognize relationships and to formulate generalizations in connection with class goals is an important aspect of the learning process. The writer feels that generalizations should evolve as a result of participation in learning experiences. Simpson (52) also suggests that a generalization is an outcome of teaching. Students should formulate generalizations in their own words. They are not given to the student nor verbalized for him. A student arrives at a generalization inductively and uses it deductively. Understanding the concepts included in a generalization is basic to understanding the generalization. Understanding concepts contributes to ability to see all relationships between and among them, hence to the ability to develop second- and third-level generalizations. To formulate a generalization, the learner must be able to perceive at least two ideas simultaneously with clarity and meaning.

Generalizations have been identified in three levels by Burton (11):

the first or definition level, wherein concepts or generalizations are usually descriptive; the second level, in which the learner sees and states relationships; and the third or explanatory level, where the learner can give justification, predict and interpret.

The Concept of Empathy

The writer has chosen empathy, a factor in interpersonal and family relationships, as the concept toward which all planned behavioral objectives and learning experiences are directed. In selecting this concept the writer considered Drummond's (19) suggestions as guides in determining what concepts are to be taught. First, a useful concept must be accurate, for otherwise it will lead to faulty generalizations and inaccurate thinking. Second, a useful concept must be recent, or of recently demonstrated work, else it will be outmoded when today's learner comes to apply it in tomorrow's world. Third, a useful concept must be permanent, must be built to last. Some ideas, some values, some knowledge, some skills, some attitudes are of worth because of their continuing relevancy to human existence and problems. Fourth, a useful concept must release the learner's creative instincts. The writer believes that empathy as a factor in interpersonal and family relationships meets these criteria for being considered a useful concept. The meaning of this concept, its significance in interpersonal and family relationships, and its measurement are all reported in the literature. A brief overview of these aspects of empathy is offered here to clarify the concept.

The process of empathy is thought to be a technique necessary to the understanding of persons and of interpersonal communication.

Empathy, far from blurring personal identity, makes it possible. Without empathy, one is locked in isolation, in solipsism, and personal identity is lost (56).

The Meaning of Empathy

The literature indicates a great number of observations on the meaning of empathy. Primarily a psychological concept, it is a factor in counseling and all other areas where interpersonal relationships are involved. Foote and Cottrell (24) indicate that people appear to differ in their ability to interpret correctly the attitudes and intentions of others, in the accuracy with which they can perceive situations from the standpoint of others and thus anticipate and predict their behavior. This type of social sensitivity rests on what we call the empathic responses. Empathic responses are basic to "taking the role of the other" and hence to social and the communicative processes upon which rest social integration. Stewert (56) identifies the importance of empathy, saying that in all efforts to solve personal problems a crude identification of one person with another, of some sort, is initially essential. If we succeed in some measure in understanding what it means to be a person, we cannot fail to take account of the dynamics which make interpersonal knowledge possible. The field of esthetics, ethics, social psychology, psychoanalysis and counseling all share an interest in studying the empathic process (9). In other definitions there is considerable agreement among the theoreticians and experimenters. Fifty years ago Lipps (1909) coined the term *Einfühlung*, which has since been translated as empathy. In Lipps' conceptualization there occurs a taking in of the stimulus and a reintegration of it by

the respondent (9). Robert Katz (31) indicates that when we experience empathy we feel as if we were experiencing someone else's feelings as our own. When a person empathizes he abandons himself and lives in himself the emotions and responses of another person. Dymond (22) identifies empathy as the ability to transpose oneself into the thinking, feeling and acting of another. This "faculty" of being able to see things from the other person's point of view, while it does not insure more respect or admiration for the other, does seem to assure more effective communication and understanding. Stewert (56) has identified empathy as a deliberate identification with another, promoting one's knowledge of the other as well as oneself in striving to understand what is now foreign but which one may imagine, curbed by the other's responses, to be something similar to one's own experience. It is felt to be ethical because it is grounded in feeling, presupposes good will and strives for mutual understanding. It is seen as a sound psychological concept, because the process it stands for produces our most authentic and genuine personal experiences. It is esthetic in its creative and selective activities.

Speroff in 1953 (54) defined empathy as "the ability to put yourself in the other person's position, establish rapport, anticipate his feelings, reactions and behavior." Empathy and role reversal are mutually complementary, according to Speroff.

When examining another term, sympathy, in relation to empathy one can see the implications of the concept. A sympathetic person feels along with another person but not necessarily into a person. A sympathetic person does not need to interact with another person. To feel along with him, he may understand the other person, but he does not need

to communicate the understanding to the other person. Empathic behavior implies a parallelism in the behavior of two individuals (9).

What actually happens during the empathic process is indicated by many authors. Empathy as conceived by Stewert (56) is not just a putting of oneself in the other's place as one casually sees the other, or as one is infected by a stray emotional feeling. Effort and imagination, choice and deliberation, and therefore, creative selection are required by the empathic act. A psychological distance is therefore held between two people in empathy. What goes on is an analogy with one's own experience, but it is an analogy with much of what is below the level of conscious control. Thus a distance is kept between us, each has his own identity, yet each can see himself in the other's setting. The empathic process is envisaged as the ideal means to one's sincerity and, therefore, to one's identity. Identification becomes imitation, imitation becomes genuine resistance (respect for the other) and genuine resistance joins with deliberate re-identification to give a synthesis in empathy, the behavior act essential to personal life (56).

The present thinking in the field of empathy defines it as a process comprising several dimensions. Behavior in these dimensions leads to a consistency of interaction between people. This interaction becomes increasingly convergent or confluent. The dimensions are in part affective and in part cognitive. The behavior is different from projection, attribution, or identification because it is more abstract, objective and generalized. An empathic reaction is not the reenactment of another person's feeling nor does it involve a judgment of another person's act. Empathy has an anticipatory quality. Though affective

in part, empathy is an abstract and abstracting process (9).

The writer is concerned with the importance of empathic ability as a process within the context of family and interpersonal relationships. Womble (65) states that recognition of the emotional needs of the partner is the prime requisite for marital adaptability. Empathy leads to understanding which may then lead in adapting actions to needs. Lee and Lee (35) also support this idea in that the ability to empathize is a prime ingredient of the tender affection which can bind two or more people together through many years. They believe it is crucial to the formation and maintenance of friendship.

Landis and Landis (34) believe that the ability to empathize is extremely important in the adaptable, marriageable personality. The person who rates high in empathy can use his perceptive understanding of the feelings of his mate as a regulator of his own responses and behavior in ways that add greatly to the success and happiness of the marriage. The most marriageable people are those whose own motivations and emotional tensions are not so dominant in their lives that their ability to empathize is weak or non-functioning. Moreover, the most marriageable people use their empathic ability positively, as a basis for becoming more adaptable in their behavior in relationships with others. Blood (5) says in relation to the dating process and empathy that, if dating is to be most satisfactory, both partners must express their own needs and be sensitive to the other's. Dating thrives on empathy in sensing the partner's moods. A skillful empathizer sees through what the date says to the real feelings within.

Burgess and Wallen (10) indicate that a relatively low degree of empathy is manifested by the categorization of one's spouse by a

popular stereotype. A moderately high degree of empathy markedly facilitates marital adjustments. Empathy, if complete, results in sympathetic understanding. When this takes place many of the occasions for conflict vanish. If both husband and wife are empathic there is a blending of personalities. Although all normal adults are capable of empathy in some degree, there are undoubtedly marked individual differences. These differences are, in all likelihood, largely a function of variation in early experiences in the family and the play group. Duvall (20) states that empathy requires the capacity to listen, to be so effectively other-centered that you arrive accurately at the other's answer. Correct other-perception in marriage should be accompanied by sympathy for the spouse, since high empathy alone would make types of manipulation and exploitation possible. Empathy moreover can be used as a test of adequacy of interpersonal communication. It is obvious that empathy is needed to become efficient in solving marital problems.

Measurement of Empathy

The usual method of studying empathy is to measure the disparity between a subject's predictions of the responses of an associate and the response which the associate makes. The total deviation is assumed to be a measure of empathic ability; the smaller the deviation, the better the empathy score (4).

Dymond instigated this approach in 1949 (21). This test was made up of four parts, each containing the same six items. In the first part the individual was asked to rate himself, on a five-point scale, on each of six characteristics. In the second part he was asked to rate some other individual on the same six traits. In the third he was

asked to rate the other individual as he believes this other would rate himself. In the fourth he must rate himself as he thinks the other would rate him. Therefore a measure of A's empathic ability can be derived by calculating how closely his predictions of B's ratings correspond with B's actual ratings. Similarly a measure of B's empathy with A can be obtained by calculating how closely his predictions of A's ratings correspond to A's actual ratings. In other words two individuals, A and B, are being tested for their empathy with each other. Dymond states that this test measured some ability, other than chance, to predict what others will do under certain circumstances which involve taking the role of the other or empathizing with him. Kerr and Speroff (1955) have also devised tests of this type. Speroff's (54) model for the study of empathy is as follows.

X elicits a response from Y by expressing Y's point of view.
Y consents or expresses satisfaction with the point of view expressed by X. Y in turn expresses X's point as he sees it.
X expresses consent or satisfaction with the point of view stated.

The object of role reversal is to effect a "cognitive restructuring" of the situation so that the orientation is towards convergence of the perception. Speroff's model for the study of empathic behavior seems to satisfy the condition of mutuality, interaction and abstraction.

Gage and Cronbach (27) have suggested major pitfalls in the measurement of empathy. These are presented to the reader in order that a broader perspective of the problems in measuring empathy may be conceived. Writers have inadequately specified just what they mean to measure or to what extent the variable they study overlaps the variables in other investigations. Thus, one test of empathy finds out how accurately subjects predict the ratings acquaintances will give them.

(Preference here is to Dymond's predictive approach.) Some writers further state that a generalized trait such as "empathic ability" may profitably be used as a construct if changes in the individual's behavior from situation to situation are small compared to differences between individuals in the same situation. So with accuracy in interpersonal perception, accuracy in predicting another's set of responses. But it is questionable whether this accuracy must be ascribed to an "empathic" process or even genuine understanding. Until a general "ability to understand others" is established, workers should proceed with great caution and define in any theoretical statement or interpretation of results just what aspect of empathy is being discussed. In the bulk of research to date, social perception as measured is a process dominated far more by what the judge brings to it than by what he takes in during it. His favorability toward the other, before or after he observes the other, and his implicit personality theory, formed by his experience prior to his interaction with the other, seem to determine his perceptions. Social perception in most research to date appears to be more a global process than a one-to-one response to clues received from the other.

Thus, the predictive approach to the measurement of empathy is not advocated by all researchers. For the purposes of this study, however, it may be assumed that the predictive approach will measure empathic ability as defined.

Teaching Empathic Ability

In planning learning experiences which would best help students to develop empathic ability, the writer was concerned with employing those

methods and materials which would direct students towards reaching defined objectives. The literature identifies a variety of suggestions on teaching methods and techniques.

Somerville (53) suggests that through an awareness of his own feelings, behaviors, ideals and attitudes as a family member, the student is enabled to grow in sensitivity to others' needs and goals. She suggests that empathic competence can be increased by practice in inferring the effect and the intent of other persons in family interaction.

Through the use of imaginative literature which may be termed a form of vicarious experience, Somerville further suggests that stories provide opportunities for identification and empathy. The student is drawn into playing the role of an imaginary participant in the dramatic events and feels momentarily what is happening to him. Empathic ability can grow as the analysis of the behavior of the story characters provides inference making practice and group discussion offers opportunity for validation.

Walstedt (60) advocates that a "small group" approach, in which the teacher would serve as a model of empathic understanding toward the students and create an atmosphere in which purposive self-revelations could be fostered, would teach empathy. Learning could take place at all levels with intellectual content about the potential uses of empathy wedded to emotional content. Since too much anxiety blocks empathy and not enough dulls it, the teacher should set up a program that reduces personal anxieties about performance, grades, or capabilities. The teacher would behave in a warm, encouraging manner while stimulating or identifying crises in understanding.

Role playing as a method of increasing empathic ability has been used by many carrying out research in this area. Myers (42) used role playing successfully in increasing the empathic ability of social work students. It has been suggested that through training in role playing the individual learns how to empathize more freely and also to correct distortions and blocks in the use of whatever empathic endowment he has.

Fredrich (26) suggests role playing as a device for helping members of a class become aware of the feelings and thoughts of someone else and begin to see some of the significance of another person's point of view. Although it may at first appear to be difficult to use, it can be cultivated to the point that it becomes natural and easy. These guidelines may be followed for successful role playing: (1) identify a problem which is to be discussed; (2) assign class members to the essential roles and ask each one to try to put himself into the frame of mind of the person he is representing; (3) ask the participants to try seriously to think what the person would say if he were involved in person; to speak from his point of view and to act as he would act; (4) caution the role players against any attempt to entertain or pay any attention to the other members of the class while the roles are being played; they are to be serious and intent on their assignments; (5) each other member of the class is to select one of the roles, identify himself with it, and listen carefully as he tries to think what the person might say or do. When these preparations have been made, let the discussion begin. Its length will depend on whether the participants are able to find significant things to say and how long it takes to arrive at a real sense of awareness of the feelings of

those represented. Following the role playing activity, the class should discuss what took place, try to identify explicitly the values and feelings of those involved and identify the conditions which cause them to feel as they do.

These guidelines as given by Fredrick (26) were used by the author in determining procedures used in role playing for this study.

Chapter III presents an explanation of procedures used in developing learning experiences, followed by the procedure used to measure empathic ability of students with each other.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

The major concern of this study was to determine whether the provision of selected learning experiences presented by the concept approach would increase the empathic abilities of home economics students at the secondary level.

The first consideration was to determine what educational or behavioral objectives would best guide the learning process and increase the student's conceptual understanding of the concept empathy. For this study the four major behavioral objectives identified as those given by Hoover (30) were:

1. Becomes aware of the need for empathy.
2. Gains an understanding of the meaning of the concept empathy.
3. Understands how empathy may be developed.
4. Understands how empathic ability can be applied in everyday situations.

After determining behavioral outcomes which were desired, a series of generalizations were formulated which identified major learnings that students were expected to formulate after participation in learning experiences. These major generalizations were obtained from Hoover's study on Measurement of Conceptual Understandings (30, pp. 148-155).

After selecting generalizations which would best direct the students toward an understanding of the concept, learning experiences were

developed. Considering the most widely used methods after a review of the literature, the writer chose those methods best suited for the ability and interest of the homemaking students in the sample and those which best promoted the development of the ability to empathize. The type of experiences planned for teaching empathy were, in most cases, vicarious experiences. Vicarious experiences according to Woodruff (66) are those which are observed by some indirect means, rather than by direct contact with the real object (p. 156). Short stories, case studies and role playing are examples of vicarious learning experiences. It appears to the writer that this type of experience would best allow students to develop an understanding of empathy in a classroom situation. Learning experiences were developed in a sequence which would allow the learner to accomplish the behavioral outcomes in the order listed previously.

Selection of Sample

Subjects for this study included 22 junior and senior girls enrolled in home economics classes. Two sections of students were included. The first section included 10 subjects and the second section included 12 subjects. Ages of the subjects were 17 and 18 years. The sample is believed to be representative of a typical group of adolescent girls living in a rural community of approximately 3,000. Life styles of the families of subjects were generally conservative in nature.

Selection of Instrument for the Measurement of Empathic Ability

The literature suggests several types of research which have attempted to devise an instrument to measure empathic ability. However,

due to disagreement among writers as to the definition of empathic ability, few have accepted any one method as being capable of measuring accurately what is termed empathic ability. For the purpose of this study the writer is concerned with the measurement of the ability of students to predict accurately the feelings of other class members (which is defined as empathic ability in this case).

The Social Work Questionnaire (see Appendix A, pp. 68-72) developed by Dr. Clara Louise Myers to test the empathic ability of social work students at Washington University in 1966 was selected for this purpose and permission was granted for its use. The Social Work Questionnaire, designed to measure empathy in social work students, was based on the work of Rosalind Dymond. The test is made up of four parts, each containing the same six items. In each part the individual is asked to rate himself on each of six characteristics. Dymond's test used a five-point scale on each of these six characteristics, while Myers used only a four-point scale. With this difference Myers identified the test as the Social Work Questionnaire.

In the first part of the test the individual is asked to rate herself, on a four-point scale, on each of six questions by answering topic I, "How do you feel about yourself in relation to her?" In the second part she is asked to rate some other individual on the same six traits by answering topic II, "How do you feel about her?" In the third she is asked to rate the other individual as she believes this other would rate herself, by answering topic III, "What do you think she will say about herself?" In the fourth she must rate herself as she thinks the other would rate her by answering topic IV, "What do you think she will say about you?" In other words, two individuals are being tested

for their empathy with each other. Therefore a measure of A's empathic ability can be derived by calculating how closely her predictions of B's ratings (AIII and AIV) correspond with B's actual ratings (BI and BII). Similarly, a measure of B's empathy with A can be obtained by calculating how closely her predictions of A's ratings (BIII and BIV) correspond to A's actual ratings (AI and AII). Myers (42) concluded that the Questionnaire as a measure of empathy was found to discriminate among the students, to be stable, and to be reliable.

Administration of Social Work Questionnaire

Each student was given a folder containing a Social Work Questionnaire for every other member of the class, each with the name of the person to be rated on each page of the Questionnaire. Students were assigned a subject letter determined by the alphabetical order of the last names. For example, Class 1, subjects A-J, Class 2, subjects O-Z. These subject letters were assigned for the purposes of the investigator to insure anonymity when reporting results.

The Social Work Questionnaire was administered to two sections of home economics students during a regular class period. The first administration of the Social Work Questionnaire served as the pre-test.

Students were seated in alphabetical order around a group of tables. Each student was given a folder which contained the Questionnaires for all other students in the class. Instructions for completing the Questionnaire included the following points.

1. Please do not open folders until told to do so.
2. You will be taking a test in which you are evaluating your feelings and those of your fellow classmates.

3. At no time will you see the results of the way you answered questions in relation to the other students in the class; other members of the class will not know how you rated them. Likewise, you will not know how other classmates rated you.
4. Open folders. Do not start until told to do so. You will notice that in your folder you have a Questionnaire for every member of the class. Read carefully with me the instructions you see on the first page of the Questionnaire.
5. When the signal is given to start you may start the test. You will be given two hours to complete the Questionnaire. If you finish before the time is up you may use additional time to review answers. Make sure all questions have been answered.
6. You may start.

Scoring the Social Work Questionnaire

In order to determine scores for each subject the following procedures were used.

A's answers to topics III and IV and B's answers to topics I and II will indicate A's ability to predict B's answers. In order to determine correct predictions the responses on each of the questions of the four possible levels were recorded. Example:

<u>x</u>			
quite sensitive	somewhat sensitive	somewhat insensitive	very insensitive

If A answers this question under topic III
x
 quite
 sensitive
 and B

answers this question under topic I $\frac{x}{\text{somewhat insensitive}}$, then A was in error

of B's answer two points. A's deviation score would be two, indicating lack of empathy. If A's answer on this question under topic III was

$\frac{x}{\text{quite sensitive}}$ and B's answer on this question under topic I was $\frac{x}{\text{quite sensitive}}$,

then A was able to predict B's answer correctly, showing empathy. This would be recorded as a "right score."

By comparing A's predictions on topics III and IV with all other subjects' answers on topics I and II, one can determine the number of points A was in error of the other subjects' predictions. Also the number of points in which A correctly predicted the responses of all other subjects can be tabulated as "right scores." A scoring form was devised to show the prediction of each subject in relation to responses made by each other subject in the class.

Scoring Form

A III	B I	R D		A IV	B II	R	D	Total R Score	Total D Score
1.									
2.									
3.									
4.									
5.									
6.									
Total									

R - Right Scores

D - Errors or Deviation Scores

Each subject's predictions of each other subject's responses were recorded as shown in Tables I to IV. After obtaining the subtotals these were totaled to determine a right score and deviation score for each subject. This procedure was carried out for the pre-test and the post-test.

Procedure in Carrying Out Learning Experiences

Learning experiences were carried out in the sequence in which they were planned. In each experience the following general procedure was used. (1) Students were given a duplicated sheet giving information to be used during experience, e. g., copy of a case study, quotes, background for role playing situation, etc. (2) A brief explanation of purpose of experience was given by teacher. (3) Instructions were given for each experience. (4) Students carried out experience, e.g., read case study, acted out role play situations, discussed in small groups, etc. (5) Class evaluation was made in form of discussion by class members, summary of important points by teacher, reports from small group discussions, etc. (6) Written responses were made by students, general statements which indicated something learned as a result of experience.

After completion of all learning experiences, the Social Work Questionnaire was administered a second time, following the same procedure used to administer the pre-test.

Scores from the post-test or second administration of Social Work Questionnaire were compared with the scores from the pre-test or first administration of Social Work Questionnaire to determine the difference between the two sets of scores, indicating amount of empathic ability

developed by subjects participating in learning experiences.

The next chapter will present an analysis of the data, both of the results of the Social Work Questionnaire scores and of the learning experiences.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Analysis of Test Scores

In an attempt to determine the abilities of students to empathize with fellow classmates, a series of scores obtained from the administration of the Social Work Questionnaire was analyzed. Since a major area of concern for this study was the concept method of teaching, an analysis and discussion of student responses to learning experiences is also presented in this chapter. The analysis of data in this chapter is not statistical in nature, but rather is presented to show relationships and general tendencies of the students as a group in relation to empathic ability.

By showing the relationship between two sets of scores obtained from administering the Social Work Questionnaire, the writer was attempting to show whether or not a change in the ability to empathize was evident. It was assumed that if there was an increase in empathic ability, the "right scores" would be higher on the post-test than those obtained on the pre-test. It was also assumed that the "deviation scores" would be lower on the post-test than those obtained on the pre-test.

In order to obtain a set of scores for each subject the number of correct predictions was tabulated and termed "right scores." The number of incorrect predictions was tabulated and termed "deviation

scores." The greater the "right score," the greater indication of the subject's ability to predict correctly the responses of feelings of other classmates, which in this study is termed empathy. The higher the "right score," the greater the empathic ability. The deviation score indicated inability of the subject to predict accurately the responses or feelings of fellow classmates, thus, lack of empathy. The higher the deviation score, the lower was the empathic ability.

On the basis of scores obtained from the two tests, it can be concluded that there was an increase in "right scores" and a decrease in "deviation scores" from both classes. As shown in Table I, page 44, "right scores" on the post-test increased for subjects in Class 1. This was true for all subjects except Subject H. Likewise, as shown in Table I, page 44, "right scores" on the post-test increased for all subjects in Class 2, except for Subjects P and T. Subject X obtained the same right score on the post-test as obtained on the pre-test. These results may be interpreted to mean that because of an increase in the "right scores" on the post-test there was an increase in the ability of the subjects to predict accurately the responses or feelings of other classmates, or an increase in the ability to empathize.

Table II, page 45, shows the deviation scores on the pre-test and post-test for Class 1 and Class 2. All subjects in Class 1 showed a decrease in deviation scores on the post-test except Subject H. All subjects in Class 2 showed a decrease in deviation scores except Subject P. Subject Y maintained the same deviation score on the post-test as on the pre-test. A decrease in the deviation scores as shown in Table II, page 45, indicates an increase in empathic ability, or a decrease in incorrect predictions of responses of fellow classmates.

TABLE I
TOTAL RIGHT SCORES* FOR CLASS 1 AND CLASS 2 ON PRE-TEST AND
POST-TEST OF SOCIAL WORK QUESTIONNAIRE

Class	Student	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score	Change in Score
1	A	42	51	+ 6
	B	42	47	+ 5
	C	31	50	+19
	D	43	48	+ 5
	E	38	57	+19
	F	39	44	+ 5
	G	39	43	+ 4
	H	62	51	+11
	I	33	36	+ 3
	J	46	48	+ 2
2	O	54	63	+19
	P	60	56	- 4
	Q	57	58	+ 1
	R	38	40	+ 2
	S	47	57	+10
	T	65	52	+13
	U	67	69	+ 2
	V	53	59	+ 6
	W	49	55	+ 6
	X	54	54	0
	Y	39	50	+11
	Z	59	74	+15

+Indicates a gain in the right score on post-test, indicating an increase in empathic ability.

-Indicates a decrease in right scores on post-test, indicating no increase in empathic ability.

*Right scores indicate correct predictions of fellow classmates' responses on Social Work Questionnaire.

TABLE II
TOTAL DEVIATION SCORES* FOR CLASS 1 AND CLASS 2 ON PRE-TEST
AND POST-TEST OF SOCIAL WORK QUESTIONNAIRE

Class	Student	Pre-test Score	Post-test Score	Change in Score
1	A	73	65	- 8
	B	82	69	-13
	C	104	76	-28
	D	78	69	- 9
	E	83	66	-17
	F	79	77	- 2
	G	88	78	-10
	H	48	76	+28
	I	85	79	- 6
	J	72	64	- 8
2	O	88	79	-11
	P	80	89	+ 9
	Q	95	90	- 5
	R	123	116	- 7
	S	102	81	-21
	T	86	70	+16
	U	72	68	- 4
	V	93	84	- 9
	W	96	82	-14
	X	91	90	- 1
	Y	103	103	0
	Z	95	63	-32

⁺Indicates a gain in the deviation score on the post-test, indicating no increase in empathic ability.

⁻Indicates a decrease in deviation score on the post-test, indicating an increase in empathic ability.

*Deviation scores indicate incorrect predictions of fellow classmates' responses on Social Work Questionnaire.

Another way to show the relationship between pre-test and post-test scores is by means of a profile which illustrates more clearly the change in scores. As shown in the profile in Figure 1, page 47, the "right scores" on the post-test are greater than on the pre-test, with the exception of Subject H. Subject E showed the greatest increase in the "right score." This profile shows only the increase or decrease in the total "right scores" and does not show the relationship between each individual subject and another individual subject.

The profile in Figure 1, page 47, showing pre-test and post-test "right scores" for Class 2 shows less variation in the two sets of scores than does the profile on Class 1. Subject P decreased in "right scores" on the post-test, rather than increased. Subject T showed a greater decrease in right scores than did Subject P. Subject H attained the same score on both tests, indicating no change in empathic ability.

Profiles in Figure 2, page 48, showing deviation scores for Class 1, indicate a decrease in wrong predictions, which shows greater ability to predict accurately the responses of fellow classmates. The profile shows a decrease for all subjects except Subject H.

The profile in Figure 2, page 48, indicates a decrease in wrong predictions or deviation scores for Class 2, indicating an increase in empathic ability. This was true for all subjects in Class 2 except Subject P, who showed an increase in deviation scores. Subject R showed the greatest deviation score of the class. This was true on both the pre-test and post-test. Subject Z showed the greatest decrease in deviation scores, indicating that this subject showed the greatest increase in empathic ability.

O	A
P	B
Q	C
R	D
S	E
T	F
U	F
V	G
W	H
X	I
Y	J
Z	

Subjects

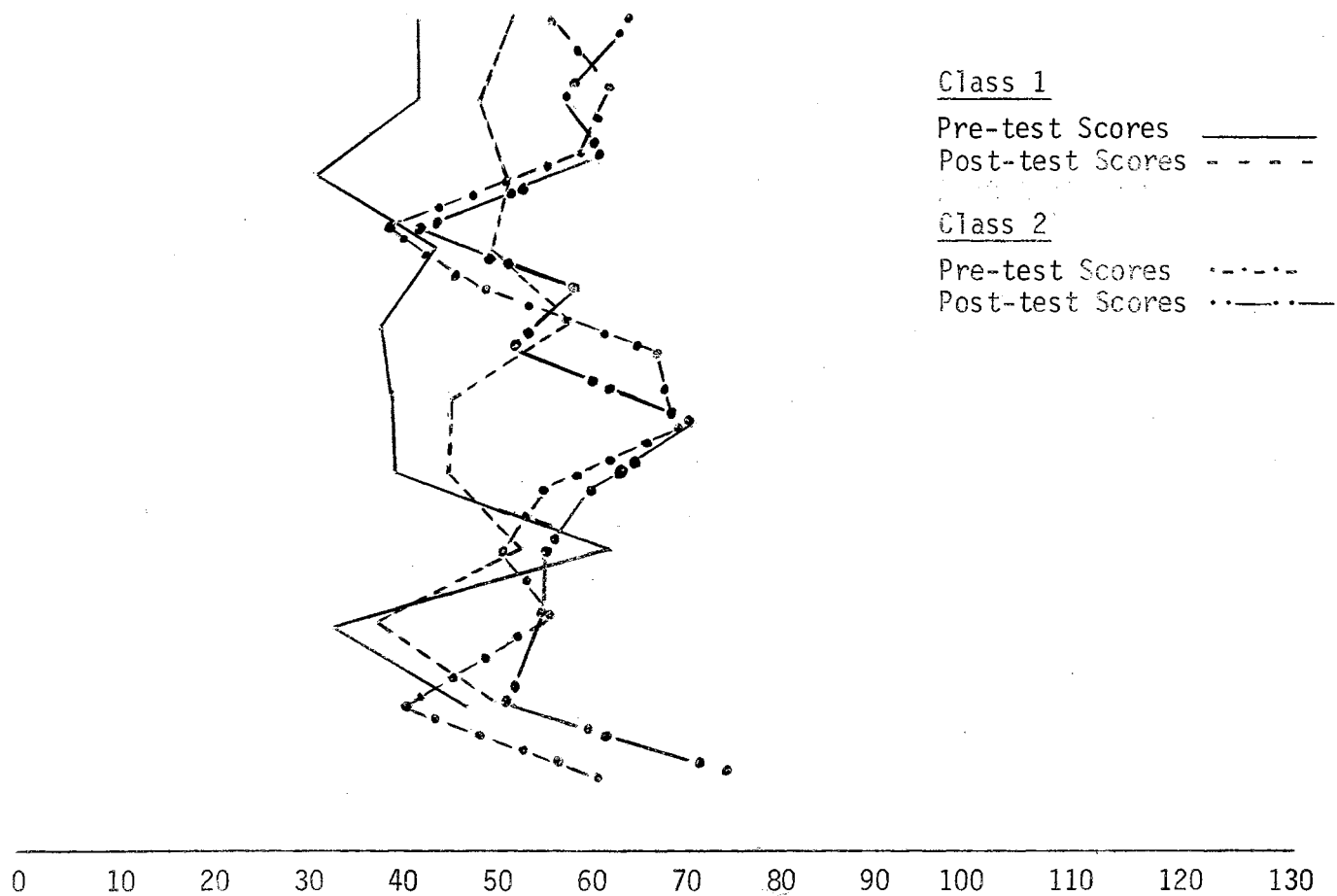


Figure 1. Profile of Total Right Scores - Classes 1 and 2.

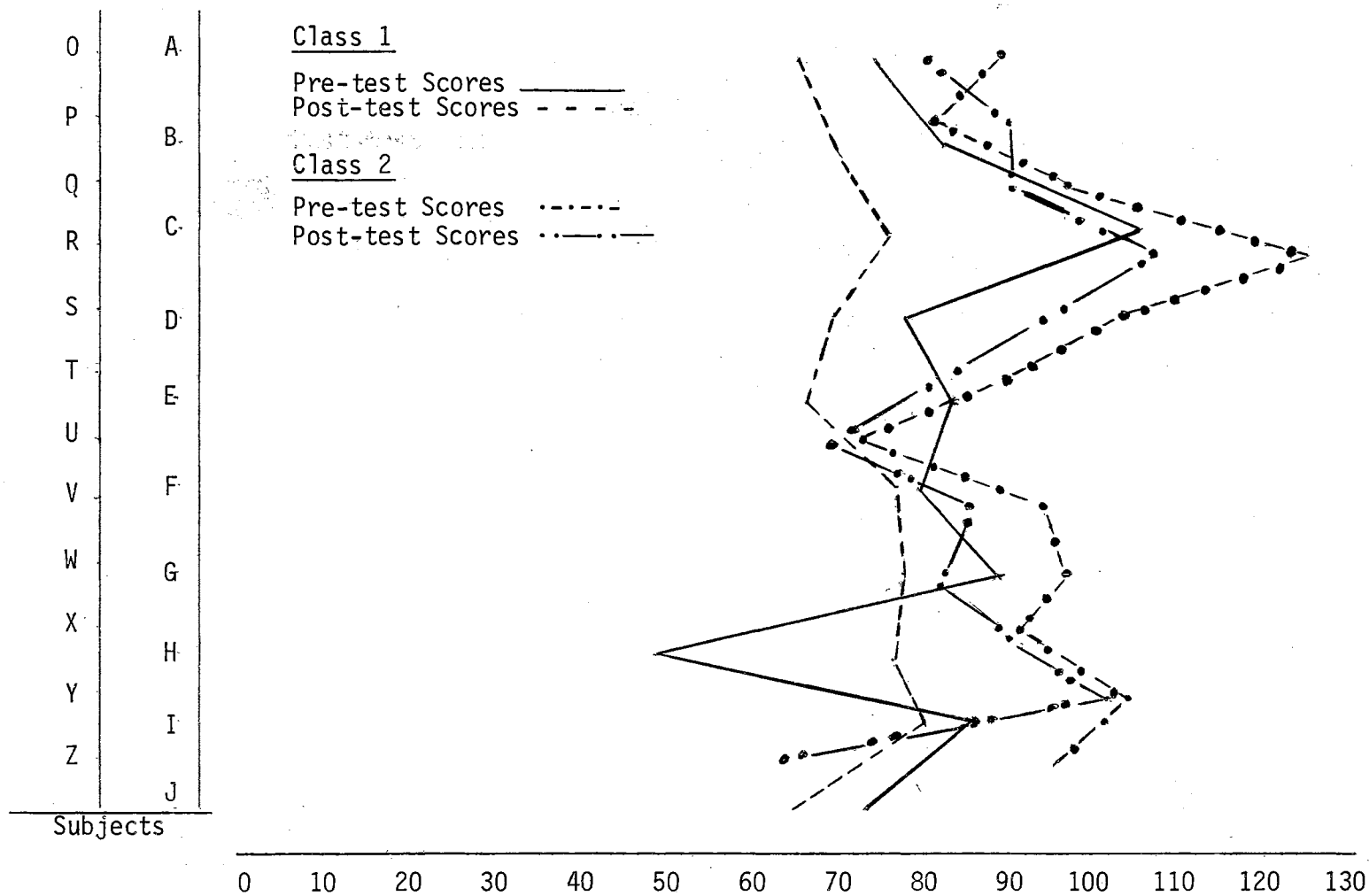


Figure 2. Profile of Total Deviation Scores - Classes 1 and 2.

In order to explain reasons for the inconsistencies within the data, the writer would need to analyze the personalities and backgrounds as well as attitudes and academic abilities of each subject. Since the purpose of this study was not to determine underlying reasons for differences in ability to empathize, information is not available to explain underlying reasons for the results obtained. On the basis of knowledge of subjects as a teacher, the writer presents the following reasons for inconsistencies found within the data.

It would appear that, on the basis of acquaintance with students in this study, personality traits, attitude toward participation in the study, exposure to family or interpersonal relationships where expression of feelings and warm emotional atmospheres exist, and latent empathic ability could have been determining factors in the ways subjects responded to learning experiences and predicted feelings of fellow classmates.

Individual right and deviation scores for Class 2 were higher than for Class 1 because of the greater number of subjects, thus a greater number of responses to be made and a greater number of sub-total scores.

The wide range of scores obtained in both classes may be attributed to several factors: (1) There is a characteristic inconsistency on the part of adolescent girls to maintain the same type of feelings toward members of a peer group over a period of time. In other words, the change of moods in the adolescent who is attempting to empathize contributes to inconsistency of responses. (2) The instrument used was not refined enough to show inconsistency of feelings of subjects. (3) A small sample was used, not giving enough scores to show a general pattern or profile.

Analysis of Learning Experiences

Since a major portion of this study was directed toward organizing selected learning experiences (Appendix B, pp. 74-89) which would increase the empathic ability of homemaking students, a description of the outcome of each experience is presented in order that the reader might see the over-all result of the study in addition to the data analysis.

An evaluation device for each experience was not planned, as this was not a part of the over-all objective of the study. However, since learning experiences were presented by a concept approach, the writer was concerned with responses of students which would indicate an understanding of the concept empathy. For this reason an analysis of the students' responses, some written and some verbal, is included. The responses of the students when analyzed indicated whether the students had been able to accomplish the behavioral objective for each experience. In analyzing the generalizations written by students, the writer was also able to determine the extent to which students understood content as planned by the writer before planning experiences. Each experience under each behavioral objective is described and a sample of results obtained is given.

Behavioral objective 1 was that the student becomes aware of a need for empathy. The first experience under this objective was to answer the question, "Do you think most people know the kind of person you really are, or do you feel that most people do not know what really goes on underneath?" After considering responses by other adolescents, students were asked how they felt in relation to this question. Students were to write in general statements some of their ideas in

relation to this question. Students responded in the following ways:

"I do not think that most people pay enough attention to you to really know you. You learn about others by observation and trying to understand them."

"People don't usually go around telling how they really feel except to a close friend, so how will people get to know you if you don't tell them about your feelings."

"Some people don't know what's going on underneath because I'm not too good at words or I can't express myself good either. I know how I feel about things but I just can't seem to say how I feel, so people don't really know my feelings."

"In some ways some people know how I am, but for the big part I think they judge too much on the outside instead of what is inside that isn't as often expressed."

"I believe that there probably are some of your feelings that other people do not need to know."

"I think close friends care about my feelings more than my parents because I can talk more freely with close friends."

"The person who has had a similar feeling may be the one who will know you best at that time and yet not know you at other times."

The writer would conclude on the basis of these responses that the students who wrote them were expressing a general theme; that in most cases their feelings were not understood by others.

A second learning experience, directed toward the behavioral objective, "becomes aware of the need for empathy," was one in which students were asked to read a case study depicting a poorly integrated teenager and her problems. After reading the study and engaging in class discussion, students were asked to write general statements which indicate the needs of the student in the study. Some responses included:

"A person, if she wants to be accepted and liked by her peer group, should be interested in the ideas, thoughts and feelings of the other members of that group."

"A person should be able to listen to other people's ideas; they should not be so self-centered and should include the pronoun "we" and "you" in conversation."

"A person who is able to 'give and take' a little from other people and give in to their ideas, interests and feelings, is apt to find a closer relationship to one's peer group."

"People will generally react with interest and understanding to those who overcome the 'I' in their lives."

"People first have to know and understand themselves before they can know or understand others."

The above generalizations by students do show in effect a relationship and are all directed toward the recognition of empathy as a needed ingredient in interpersonal relationships. Even though students at this point have not been introduced to the concept empathy, they are recognizing that in certain situations, in this case a peer group interaction, elements of understanding are needed. The writer concludes that the behavioral objective of recognizing the need for empathy was attained to some degree.

A second behavioral objective was to gain an understanding of the concept of empathy. In order to direct students toward this objective, a series of quotes defining empathy was presented. Quotes were discussed. A definition of empathy was discussed, after which students were asked to write two general statements which best defined empathy as they understood it. The following responses are samples of those given by students:

"Empathy is being able to sense another person's feelings and you might say being able to experience the way they feel."

"Empathy is knowing exactly how the other person feels towards something because of having that same feeling yourself at one time or another."

"Empathy is being able to put yourself in a situation similar to another person's and understanding his or her problems."

"Empathy is the ability to perceive someone's feelings and needs."

"Empathy is knowing a person so well that you can predict his emotions or feelings."

"Empathy is knowing the inner person of someone close and being able to understand and feel their feelings."

"Empathy is when you can be close enough to someone to know their feelings about certain things and feel what they feel."

"Empathy is when you can put yourself in another person's place and can, therefore, better understand what that person is feeling inside."

Responses given by students which were not considered examples of generalizations which showed an understanding of the concept of empathy included:

"Empathy is the ability to understand a person from the other person's viewpoint."

"Empathy is trying to help them and sympathizing with them."

"Empathy is being able to help one solve a problem by comforting her or encouraging her in some way."

The writer would conclude on the basis of the above generalizations written by students that many of the students did have some understanding of the concept of empathy. The generalizations were mostly on the first level of the cognitive domain in the classification of educational objectives, that of identification. This shows that a basic understanding of empathy had been established by some of the students. In another learning experience students were to analyze a case study and indicate evidences of empathic ability and lack of empathic ability on the part of characters involved (Appendix B, pp. 77-78).

A third behavioral objective, "Understands how empathic ability can be developed," was approached by learning experiences which allowed students to see examples of behavior indicating the evidence or lack of this ability. Students participated in a skit which was written to help the students recognize an appreciative attitude toward warmth and social sensitivity necessary for healthy relationships with others.

After participation students were asked to write brief paragraphs discussing evidences of empathic ability and lack of empathy. Examples:

Evidence of empathy: There were many evidences of empathy. Sue noticed that Joyce was alone and needed someone and then asked her over to their table. Then they asked Joyce different questions about herself. Debbie asked Joyce to go to the game with her and walked home with her. They included her in their group and realized what it would be like if they were new and didn't know anyone.

Lack of empathy: Lack of empathy was shown in Debbie because she did not possess the ability to put herself in Joyce's shoes and experience the way Joyce was feeling. She thought only of her own reputation and what the kids would say if Joyce did not fit into the crowd, instead of understanding that Joyce was lonely and needed a friend.

These two paragraphs seem to indicate that the students who wrote them were beginning to understand how empathic ability can be developed. Another learning experience directed toward understanding how empathic ability can be developed was to read an article on communicating effectively (Appendix B, p. 85). Students were to write reactions to the statement: "With an increase in the ability to communicate comes an increase in the ability to empathize and vice versa." An example of conclusions drawn by students is given in the following quote:

"I feel that if we know what interests the other person and can show him our interests and feelings, naturally we will be able to put ourselves in his place better and understand or empathize with him. Also, if we are able to see things through that person's eyes, we will be much more able to communicate or are able to talk in terms of his own interests, feelings and problems. There are times if you know the person very well you don't need to talk to them to empathize, but to acquire this you will have had to have communicated and empathized with them a lot in the past."

A further learning experience directed toward the third behavioral objective was listening to a tape recording of a counseling session between the school counselor and a foreign student. The students' responses to questions (Appendix B, p. 79) about the counseling session were an indication of their ability to recognize empathic ability being

demonstrated and thus learn how empathic ability can be developed.

Students' comments included:

"She asked questions to get him to talk and then listened to what he had to say."

"She did not think about herself; she was interested in his problem."

"She was friendly and had an understanding voice."

"She asked questions, made him feel relaxed enough to answer without hesitation, and often perceived or knew what he was trying to say."

"She often restated the student's answers as feelings she also had."

After completing these experiences, related to the third objective, students were asked to write three general statements which indicate how empathic ability may be developed. Some examples of generalizations are given:

"One may empathize simply by listening to another person's problems and considering them his own."

"Empathy involves listening intently to another person and forgetting about self for the time being."

"When empathizing with a person it is necessary to gain his confidence and trust."

"To empathize, one must put himself in the situation of another person and look at the problem from his point of view."

"Empathy may be developed by identifying a person's situation and problems as your own."

"Empathy can be developed by talking with someone in order to understand them."

"Empathy may be developed by having experience in empathizing with many people."

The writer concludes that, on the basis of the above generalizations, students seemed to show some understanding of how empathic ability can be developed.

Final learning experiences were those which would direct students' learning toward the fourth Behavioral Objective, "Understands how empathic ability can be applied in everyday situations."

Small groups discussed written profiles (Appendix B, pp. 86-87) of teenage girls who would have problems similar to those of their classmates. In each case students identified how they would be able to empathize with the girls in the profile.

Role playing was carried out in a number of situations (Appendix B, pp. 87-89) in an attempt to achieve the fourth Behavioral Objective. First attempts at role playing, Situation A, were not termed successful by the writer, as this was a new type of experience for this group of students. Incidents were characterized by a high degree of concern about what students felt they should say for the benefit of other classmates watching. In most cases students were little concerned about the role they were to take and more interested in saying what they hoped was the "right thing." In terms of empathizing in the roles assigned, it appeared to the writer that little took place. When discussing the roles played with students afterward, most said they felt they didn't play the role as completely as they should have, that they couldn't forget their own feelings and the fear of reactions from classmates watching. Discussion after role play revealed that students were not able to feel someone else felt their feelings as they did. Comments from students indicated they didn't think the other person in role play situations really cared about or understood the way they felt.

Situations B and E (Appendix B, pp. 88-89) provided greater opportunity for the students to play the roles assigned, and discussion following role play indicated a greater degree of effectiveness.

Students indicated that they wished someone would do this kind of thing in reality. Comments indicated they wanted someone to experience their feelings the way they experienced them. In reply to discussion questions students felt those taking the role of the person empathizing had understood their feelings more than in first role playing attempts.

Since the purpose of this study was to measure the empathic ability of students with other students in the class, an experience (Appendix B, p. 80) was carried out which would allow each student an opportunity to empathize with each other student in the class. Carried out at the end of several class periods, five minutes were allowed for each subject. Then roles were reversed and the one subject empathized to another. In discussion following each experience, students indicated that it was much easier to express feelings to some members of the class than it was to others.

Although a final analysis of the effectiveness of these learning experiences was the performance of students on the last administration of the Social Work Questionnaire, results of student responses do indicate that behavioral objectives were reached to some degree and that generalizations formed by students show some understanding of the concept empathy.

The concluding chapter will present a summary of this study with conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The present study was concerned with the empathic ability of adolescent girls enrolled in homemaking classes. The objectives of this study were (1) to determine the ability of secondary homemaking students to empathize with fellow classmates by the use of a pre-test, (2) to develop selected learning experiences which would increase the student's ability to empathize with fellow classmates, and (3) to determine the extent to which students developed empathic ability by administering a post-test.

The sample for this study consisted of 22 junior and senior girls enrolled in Homemaking IV, a comprehensive homemaking course at Fairview High School. The study was limited to empathic ability, one of the principles of interaction in interpersonal and family relationships. The study was carried out during the regularly scheduled class period for a period of six weeks. Learning experiences were developed in the area of interpersonal relationships.

The instrument used to collect the data for both the pre-test and post-test was the Social Work Questionnaire, an instrument developed by Dr. Clara Louise Myers (see Appendix A) for measuring predictive empathy in social work students. The Questionnaire was administered before learning experiences were presented to obtain pre-test scores of

empathic ability and after learning experiences to determine whether post-test scores indicated an increase in empathic ability.

Four behavioral objectives as given by Hoover (30) were guidelines for learning experiences. These were (1) becomes aware of the need for empathy, (2) gains an understanding of the meaning of the concept of empathy, (3) understands how empathic ability may be developed, and (4) understands how empathic ability can be applied in everyday situations. Generalizations for each objective were selected and types of vicarious learning experiences were planned. As each learning experience was carried out, students indicated by their generalizations their accomplishment of behavioral objectives.

Data were analyzed to show relationships between the pre-test and post-test scores on the Social Work Questionnaire. Only a slight increase was shown by the post-test scores. Generalizations written by students were analyzed, and they indicated that students showed some understanding of the concept presented. Students appeared to attain behavioral objectives previously stated to some degree.

Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that learning experiences developed to increase the empathic ability of students in the sample had some effect on increasing scores on the post-test. Due to limited experience of the writer in understanding of the concept of empathy and in measuring empathic ability, presentation of learning experiences and evaluation of test scores was perhaps not complete enough to show a true picture of empathic ability of students. Experiences which were provided were limited in scope and the amount of time allowed for

carrying out learning experiences was not adequate for gaining a greater understanding of the concept of empathy, which may be possible reasons for a low increase in right scores on the post-test. Because of the normal self interest an adolescent girl possesses, this may have been a limiting factor in her ability to feel for another or to empathize.

On the basis of generalizations and written responses of students, as well as verbal comments during discussions, the writer feels that students did gain some awareness of empathic ability, even though scores do not indicate a great increase in the ability to empathize.

The writer also feels that to some degree the subjects were able to predict responses of fellow classmates or to empathize with their feelings. Since empathic ability was identified for the purposes of this study as:

The ability to interpret correctly the attitudes, values and intention of others and to anticipate and predict accurately another person's behavior and feelings while preserving a state of good will toward that person (15, p. 28),

the writer feels that the questions on the Social Work Questionnaire were measuring this ability. It may also be concluded that the instrument used in this study measured ability of students to empathize with fellow classmates within the classroom setting. It is hoped that, because the concept approach to teaching-learning allows students greater opportunity for transfer of learning, students would be able to empathize with other members of their peer group and with family members. Students in this study indicated upon several occasions that they had found themselves empathizing with another person and not realizing they were doing so. Some students felt they were able to empathize with other individuals outside of the class.

Recommendations for Further Research

Because this was a very limited study, recommendations for further research include beliefs of the writer as an educator in the area of family and interpersonal relationships. It appears to the writer that principles of interaction, of which empathy is one, are an important part of units of instruction in successful interpersonal and family relationships and that these principles should be taught in secondary level homemaking classes in the area of human and/or family development. As is indicated by many researchers in the area of empathic ability, the writer would agree that a clearer conception of what the empathic process involves is needed. Also more experiences for the development of empathic ability are needed.

A study of empathic ability and the concept empathy should be carried out over a period of time longer than that allowed in this study. A number of the learning experiences could have been repeated had time permitted, and it is felt by the writer that this would have allowed students greater opportunity to practice empathizing with fellow classmates. A greater variety of life contacts might also be arranged to increase opportunity to develop empathic ability. A larger sample would offer greater opportunity to provide data which could be analyzed more effectively. If there were opportunity to test subjects after a greater amount of time had elapsed, one would be better able to determine the extent to which subjects learned to empathize.

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APPENDIX A

COPY OF FINAL VERSION OF SOCIAL WORK QUESTIONNAIRE

Social Work Questionnaire

NAME: _____

INSTRUCTIONS

We are interested in knowing more about the interaction between students in each section of this class. Please answer each question as honestly as possible. Think carefully about each one as you answer it. The only right answers are those which best express your feeling. All responses will be confidential. Your answers will in no way affect your grade in this course. Thank you for your cooperation.

First, we wish to know how well you feel you know each of the other members of your section. Place a check (X) anywhere on the horizontal line within that classification which best reflects your evaluation of the relationship. Do not place the check on any of the vertical lines which divide the classifications. For example, if you know John Doe almost well enough to be a close friend, place the check as below.

John Doe: ' ' X '

	practically a	acquaintance	friend	close
	stranger - see			friend
	in class only			

Please place a check within the classification which best describes your relationship to the following person:

practically a stranger - see only in class	acquaintance	friend	close friend
--	--------------	--------	--------------

There will be four pages of questions on each individual in your section. Be careful not to skip any. Place a check (X) within the classification which best describes your answer to the question illustrated above. Do not place the check on the vertical lines which divide the classifications. The name of the person on whom you are answering the questions is at the top of each of the four pages of the questionnaire.

Social Work Questionnaire

One member of my group is _____

I. How do you feel about yourself in relation to him (or her)?

1. How sensitive do you feel you are to his or her unexpressed feelings?

quite sensitive	somewhat sensitive	somewhat insensitive	quite insensitive
--------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	----------------------

2. How accepting do you feel you would be of any deviant behavior he (or she) may exhibit?

quite accepting	somewhat accepting	somewhat unaccepting	quite unaccepting
--------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	----------------------

3. How able do you feel you would be to gain his (or her) confidence?

quite able	somewhat able	somewhat unable	quite unable
---------------	------------------	--------------------	-----------------

4. How able do you feel you would be to help him (or her) talk freely to you about a personal problem?

quite able	somewhat able	somewhat unable	quite unable
---------------	------------------	--------------------	-----------------

5. How able do you feel you would be to listen with understanding to his (or her) problems?

quite able	somewhat able	somewhat unable	quite unable
---------------	------------------	--------------------	-----------------

6. How willing do you feel you would be to go along with what he (or she) wanted to do?

quite willing	somewhat willing	somewhat unwilling	quite unwilling
------------------	---------------------	-----------------------	--------------------

Social Work Questionnaire

Name of group member is _____

II. How do you feel about him (or her)?

1. How sensitive do you feel he (or she) is to your unexpressed feelings?

quite sensitive	somewhat sensitive	somewhat insensitive	quite insensitive

2. How accepting do you feel he (or she) would be of any deviant behavior you may exhibit?

quite accepting	somewhat accepting	somewhat unaccepting	quite unaccepting

3. How able do you feel he (or she) would be to gain your confidence?

quite able	somewhat able	somewhat unable	quite unable

4. How able do you feel he (or she) would be to help you talk freely about a personal problem?

quite able	somewhat able	somewhat unable	quite unable

5. How able do you feel he (or she) would be to listen with understanding to your problem?

quite able	somewhat able	somewhat unable	quite unable

6. How willing do you feel he (or she) would be to go along with you in what you wanted to do?

quite willing	somewhat willing	somewhat unwilling	quite unwilling

Social Work Questionnaire

Name of group member is _____

III. What do you think he (or she) will say about himself (or herself)?

1. How sensitive will he (or she) say he (or she) feels he (or she) is to your unexpressed feelings?

quite sensitive	somewhat sensitive	somewhat insensitive	quite insensitive
--------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	----------------------

2. How accepting will he (or she) say he (or she) feels he (or she) would be of any deviant behavior you may exhibit?

quite accepting	somewhat accepting	somewhat unaccepting	quite unaccepting
--------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	----------------------

3. How able will he (or she) say he (or she) feels he (or she) would be to gain your confidence?

quite able	somewhat able	somewhat unable	quite unable
---------------	------------------	--------------------	-----------------

4. How able will he (or she) say he (or she) feels he (or she) would be to help you talk freely about a personal problem?

quite able	somewhat able	somewhat unable	quite unable
---------------	------------------	--------------------	-----------------

5. How able will he (or she) say he (or she) feels he (or she) would be to listen to your problem with understanding?

quite able	somewhat able	somewhat unable	quite unable
---------------	------------------	--------------------	-----------------

6. How willing will he (or she) say he (or she) feels he (or she) would be to go along with what you wanted to do?

quite willing	somewhat willing	somewhat unwilling	quite unwilling
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Social Work Questionnaire

Name of group member is _____

IV. What do you think he (or she) will say about you?

1. How sensitive will he or she say he (or she) feels you are to his (or her) unexpressed feelings?

quite sensitive	somewhat sensitive	somewhat insensitive	quite insensitive

2. How accepting will he (or she) say he (or she) feels you would be of any deviant behavior he (or she) may exhibit?

quite accepting	somewhat accepting	somewhat unaccepting	quite unaccepting

3. How able will he (or she) say he (or she) feels you would be to gain his (or her) confidence?

quite able	somewhat able	somewhat unable	quite unable

4. How able will he (or she) say he (or she) feels you would be to help him (or her) talk freely to you about a personal problem?

quite able	somewhat able	somewhat unable	quite unable

5. How able would he (or she) say he (or she) feels you would be to listen with understanding to his (or her) problem?

quite able	somewhat able	somewhat unable	quite unable

6. How willing would he (or she) say he (or she) feels you would be to go along with what he (or she) wanted to do?

quite willing	somewhat willing	somewhat unwilling	quite unwilling

APPENDIX B

MAJOR CONCEPT - Empathic ability as a factor in successful interpersonal relationships.

MAJOR GENERALIZATION - The quality of interpersonal relationships in dating and in relationships with peers is greatly influenced by the degree to which the empathic process is involved (30).

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE - Becomes aware of the need for empathy.

GENERALIZATIONS - An awareness of the need for empathy may foster interest in its development.

Lack of understanding between individuals shows a need for empathy.

Conflict situations may indicate lack of empathy.

A feeling of estrangement may indicate inability to empathize.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES - Class introduction to concept empathy and overview of study.

As a part of our unit on Family Relationships we are going to be looking at some factors which help in our relationships with others. As students in this homemaking class you are being asked to participate in learning experiences which have been developed to increase your ability to empathize with other members of the class. You are not expected to understand the meaning of the concept of empathy at this point. Please consider each learning experience as a part of the regularly scheduled classwork. In order to determine the effectiveness of these learning experiences you will be given a pre-test and a post-test. Both of these are for measurement purposes only.

Consider the following quotes made by adolescents when asked the question . . .

"Do you think most people know the kind of person you really are, or do you feel that most people do not know what really goes on underneath?"

"I've never said anything outright that would give anybody my real feelings. . ."

"I guess most people know part of my feelings - I mean surface feelings, but I don't discuss things I consider big."

"Well, I just don't have any friends or anything so I just stay by myself."

"You could say I'm antisocial, but I don't really put too much stock in (friends). . . I do prefer to be alone, I don't

know, because I like to think. . . I don't feel really comfortable with people."

"Being as I'm not usually happy, I'm deceiving people in that point." (51)

Discussion: These students were asked in the preceding question about their feelings.

Have you ever felt this way?

What seems to be the need of the individuals who made the preceding comments?

Have you known individuals who would have responded to the question in the ways given above?

After Discussion: Students write responses to the question given above.

On the bottom of page write general statements which express how you would answer this question.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE - This is a case study about a high school girl confronted with problems in her relationships with others.

Discussion will follow. Read carefully noting the ability of some to understand and the inability of others.

Case Study - Sue was a spoiled darling. An adorable baby, an appealing child, and a charming adolescent, she was always able to get whatever she wished from her completely subjugated parents. She is a bright girl and can master almost anything in which she is interested. However, her early popularity has completely turned her head. By the time she reached the age of sixteen she had become so domineering and self satisfied that she was considered a nuisance by everyone except her parents.

She was very much interested in social activities and was a member of many young people's groups, in both school and community. As soon as she entered a group she would attempt to dominate its activities. Her ideas were usually good, but because of her superior attitude, they were rarely accepted. This developed in both Sue and her parents an attitude of resentment toward her young associates.

The final blow to Sue's pride was the fact that she was not elected to the honor society of her high school, in spite of her high scholastic record. Her mother went to the school and berated her adviser because of the "unfair" treatment that she had received, and then begged the adviser to demand that the group invite Sue to membership. Nothing could be

done with the mother, but the adviser called Sue into conference and told her frankly the reasons for her rejection by her school mates. To her credit it must be said that she took it well. Apparently, it was the first time in her life that she was made to realize that the fault might lie in her rather than in others.

For a time she withdrew from all the social activities of the school. Fortunately, an older girl, who was a very likeable person and a recognized leader, became interested in Sue. Realizing that Sue could be a definite addition to a group if her attitude were better, she took it upon herself to give her certain responsibilities that would not bring her too much into conflict with other students.

Sue is now learning to interact with the other members of her peer group by giving in to their ideas, interests and feelings; she thus finds them responding to her more warmly (16).

Discussion: A basis for conflict and impaired interpersonal relationships is evident in this case.

Why was Sue unable to interact with her schoolmates?

Why was she unable to get along with them?

If you were to carry on a conversation with Sue what would it be like?

How was the older girl able to relate to Sue?

Did the need for understanding exist? If so, was it on Sue's part? On Sue's mother's part? Why do you feel it was?

What does responding to someone warmly mean?

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE - Gains an understanding of the meaning of concept empathy.

GENERALIZATIONS - Empathy is the process of role taking. It involves the ability to place oneself in another person's position and perceive accurately how he feels.

Empathy is a form of knowing which promotes understanding between people.

Empathy as a process operates in interactions among people.

The empathic process involves knowledge of the other person and the ability to react to that person in a way that enhances his sense of well being.

To empathize with another, one must be able to perceive how that person feels (30).

LEARNING EXPERIENCES - Read following quotations to class:

"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view - until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." (36)

"If you must sell John Smith what John Smith buys, you must see John Smith through John Smith's eyes." (28)

"Empathy means to put oneself in another person's shoes." (28)

Discussion: How does Empathy differ from Sympathy?

Let's define Sympathy - Sameness of feeling, affinity between persons or of one person for another. The entering into or ability to enter into another person's mental state, feelings, emotions, etc., especially pity or compassion for another's troubles or suffering (63).

What do the above statements mean in your own words? How does one put oneself in another person's shoes?

Indicate by written responses your understanding of what Empathy is. Write three general statements which tell me what the term Empathy means.

Analysis of Case Study - Each student given a copy of study. Read carefully, thinking in terms of what you know about empathy.

Debbie, age 17, could hardly wait until four o'clock came. - It seemed as though the bell would never ring. When at last it did she moved quickly and quietly to her locker. Other students hardly noticed her or at least if they did they failed to recognize her in any way. Debbie was hoping in a way that they would, yet she was hesitant to explain to anyone why she was almost to burst into tears. Even Betty, who always walked home with her was caught up on some planning session about the float building project and didn't notice how upset she was. It was a long walk home and these thoughts were continually going over in her mind. Here it was the night before homecoming and she didn't have a date. Marcia even made it worse this morning by asking, "What are you going to wear to the game? Who are you going with?" As a senior in high school, attractive, fairly active and likeable, why didn't she have a date to the last homecoming game in her high school career?

Upon reaching home the tears began and it was so good to

just close the door and shut out the whole world. When at last she was able to control herself she came downstairs. Mother came from the kitchen and in a rather perturbed tone said, "Well, what's wrong now?" Barely commenting, Debbie replied, "Nothing," and went to the dining room to start setting the table for dinner. Little conversation was carried on until Dad came home.

After his usual cheery greeting he settled behind the evening paper until dinner time. Conversation as usual centered around Dad's activities at the plant and little brother's feats on the basketball court. No one seemed to notice that Debbie had little to say. After doing dishes Debbie returned to her room to study. She would have liked to go to work on the float, but she decided she should study history. Besides, she didn't feel much like being around everyone asking her about her plans for the next night.

Debbie had just started studying when the door bell rang and Fran came up. She noticed Debbie crying and right off she was upset. "What's the matter, Deb? Are you feeling all right?"

"Oh, I feel all right, Fran. It's just that I'm so disappointed I could die right now."

"Something go wrong at school today?" Fran asked.

"Well, in a way, yes. I don't have a date for the game tomorrow night. Boy, I just can't understand why no one wants to ask me. I've tried to be friendly to everyone. I talk to a lot of the guys all the time."

"Do all of your other girl friends have dates?"

"No, not all of them, but Betty and Marcia do."

"Well, I can understand how you feel. It's awful to feel left out when everyone else is doing something you would like to do," Fran replied. "Don't worry too much about yourself. You're attractive enough and don't let this disappointment spoil the whole year. There will be other opportunities to have dates. I didn't have a date to the last homecoming game when I was in high school, but I have had a lot of opportunities to date since I've been in college."

Discussion: What comments and actions of Fran indicate evidence of empathic ability? What incidents show lack of empathy? What indicated that family members did not know Debbie's feelings? Write responses to these questions on back of page.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE - Understands how empathy may be developed.

GENERALIZATIONS - Experiences with a variety of different people and things helps one gain empathy.

Similar cultural experiences may facilitate communication and the empathic process in interpersonal relationships.

Empathy is developed through confiding in another person and discussing issues freely.

Communication provides the basis for empathic understanding.

An understanding of others' attitudes and motives develops through communication.

Learning about the backgrounds of others and viewing their behavior from the standpoint of the experiences they have had is good practice for developing empathy.

Assuming the role of another requires adaptability.

Adaptability involves understanding and knowledge of the other person and the ability to deliberately identify with another.

To empathize one must be open to new experiences and value them as assets in personal development and in relationships with others.

A person with capacity to empathize envisions change and is challenged by it (30).

LEARNING EXPERIENCES - Class to listen to a tape recorded conversation between the school counselor and a foreign student enrolled in school. Interview to include problems he is encountering in the new school situation.

Students listen to tape once for introduction.

Instructions for listening to tape the second time: Listen carefully and answer questions on duplicated sheet. You are listening for ways in which the counselor is empathizing.

Questions on Taped Interview Between School Counselor and Foreign Student

What did the student say that indicated he was needing someone to empathize?

What did the counselor say which made the student want to talk to her?

Was there something about the counselor's way of speaking that encouraged the student to tell her his problems?

What did the counselor say that showed she was intently listening to the student's problem?

How could you tell that the counselor "put herself in the student's shoes"?

What was the counselor's main way of empathizing in this situation?

What characteristics did the counselor possess in order for her to be able to empathize?

LEARNING EXPERIENCE - To students: We are attempting today to get a greater understanding of how one may empathize with another. You have listened to the school counselor empathizing with a student. You have written some generalizations about how one empathizes. For this experience you are being asked to practice empathizing with another.

Procedure: (This experience was repeated a number of times so that each student had an opportunity to empathize with each subject.)

You will work in groups of two. Please turn to the subject on your right.

In this situation you will be playing two parts. First you are to empathize with the person next to you. Secondly, she will empathize with you.

To Subject 1 - You are to talk to Subject 2, giving her some information about a concern or problem you have. It may be hypothetical or a real problem. You are wanting someone to empathize with you.

To Subject 2 - You are to empathize with Subject 1. Make every attempt to put yourself in her place.

You will be given approximately 15 minutes and then change positions, allowing Subject 1 to empathize with Subject 2.

Conclusion: Did you feel the person to whom you were talking was able to empathize with you?

If you were the person who was to empathize, did you make a real attempt to understand her problem?

LEARNING EXPERIENCES - Students participate in skit.

WON'T YOU JOIN US?

By DeAnn Pence* (49)
(Used by Permission.)

OBJECTIVE: To help the students recognize an appreciative attitude toward warmth and social sensitivity so necessary for healthy relationships with others.

CAST: Sue, the teen that has poise and social "know how."
Gwen, the follower of the group.
Debbie, the negative member of the group.
Joyce, the new girl in town.

PROPS: School books, nickel, purse, comb.

SETTING: Drugstore table.

SCENE I: Sue, Gwen, and Debbie have just finished their day at school and are stopping at the drugstore for a few minutes before going on home.

Debbie: Let's sit here at the table so we can all see who comes in. (All girls follow her to the table.)

Sue: Anyone heard the new spaghetti song?

Gwen: Just the very beginning. Mother was in a hurry and wouldn't let me finish it before I got out at school this morning.

Debbie: I haven't heard it yet. Is it on the juke box yet? This place is always the last.

Sue: I don't know, but I'll go check while you get the cokes. Here's my nickel. (Sue goes over to play the song.)

(Debbie and Gwen order cokes at counter and on their way back to table say:)

Debbie: Sue always hears the latest first; I wonder how she does it?

Gwen: She is very alert I guess.

(All girls sit at table.)

Sue: Thanks for ordering the coke. It should be playing now.

(All listen to song.)

Debbie: I really like this. I'll bet it makes the top twenty this week.

Sue: Say, Debbie, what did you think of that "pop" we had in Hudson's class? Guess I should have expected it though.

Debbie: I thought it wasn't fair at all. He knew we were all at the tournament last night. Bet he had to stay up half the night because he was there too.

Gwen: Daddy always had his tests made out way in advance. Bet that's what Mr. Hudson does too.

Sue: You can usually tell he's going to give a quiz the next day if he says, "Better take note of this," or "Be sure to remember this." I thought about studying my notes when I got home, but after I washed and rolled my hair I was dead. Guess I'll have to cut this mess and get a permanent.

Gwen: I wonder what that new girl thought of the quiz? I'll bet she wishes she had moved here earlier.

Debbie: It's her own fault! Her dad has been here since Christmas.

(Joyce enters and walks to corner table. Sits down alone.)

Sue: Here she comes now. Let's ask her over.

Debbie: Wait 'til we see more of her; we might not want to run around with her.

Gwen: What could asking her over hurt? She probably doesn't feel very welcome all by herself.

Sue: Come on, let's ask her to sit with us.

(Gwen and Sue go to corner table where Joyce is.)

(Debbie takes comb out of purse and fixes her hair.)

Sue: My name is Sue Jacobs and this is Gwen Thomas.

Joyce: Hi, my name is Joyce Stanfill.

Sue: Why don't you come sit with us?

Gwen: There's an extra chair and we can help you move your things.

Joyce: O. K.

(All pick up books and take them to table.)

Sue: Joyce, this is Debbie Snapp; she's in our class, too. Debbie, this is Joyce Stanfill.

Joyce: Hi.

Debbie: Where did you go to school before you moved here?

Joyce: I went to school in Midwest City.

Gwen: I read in the paper shortly before Christmas that your dad was transferred here and that he had a daughter, a freshman. When you didn't come at the beginning of the semester I thought maybe you wouldn't come 'til after school was out.

Joyce: We thought Mother and I would get moved in time for the second semester but my grandmother was very ill and mother had to spend most all of her time with grandmother and couldn't see about selling our house.

Sue: How is your grandmother now?

Joyce: She is still in the hospital but much better now. The doctor said maybe she could go home in another week.

Debbie: After one day in our school, how do you think you will like it? We are quite proud of our basketball team, you know.

Joyce: Oh, I'll like it just fine after I meet more kids. I will miss my friends in Midwest City but I made up my mind I would like it here just fine.

Gwen: Where are you living here?

Joyce: In the green two-story house on the corner of Manuel and Cherry.

Debbie: That's only a block from where I live.

Sue: Yikes! Look at the time. I've got to run.

Gwen: So do I.

Both: It was real nice meeting you, Joyce.

Joyce: I'm glad you asked me over.

Debbie: See you both at the game tonight about seven?

Sue: I'll have to check with Mom first. I've been gone too much lately. It might be later before I can make it.

Gwen: I have to do some algebra before I come.

Both: (To Joyce) See you in English in the morning if we don't make it tonight.

Joyce: Fine.

(Both leave.)

Debbie: How did you like the greeting Hudson gave you with his "pop test" this morning?

Joyce: We have just finished the study on gerunds last week, but I hadn't had the infinitives yet.

Debbie: You won't have too much to do to catch up then, will you? You probably know more about the gerunds than we do. Would you like to go to the basketball game tonight? Our boys are in the semi-finals of the county tournament and will play at 9. We could leave about 8:30 and get there in plenty of time for the game. Daddy will take us if you can go.

Joyce: I'll have to ask my folks but they probably won't mind since it's such an important game. Could I call you about six?

Debbie: Sure. Here's my number. Are you walking home?

Joyce: Yes, are you?

Debbie: Mother works at the courthouse but doesn't get off 'til 5:30. I usually wait on her but I could get home earlier and study some before she gets there. Will you go with me to tell her I'm walking.

Joyce: Yes, then we can walk together.

Announcer: Scene II: The girls all attended the ball game and had a very enjoyable time. Sue and Debbie have gone to the drugstore after school and are waiting on Gwen and Joyce to come back from the dime store.

(Sue and Debbie are seated at the table.)

Sue: I sure was glad Hudson gave us a few minutes' study period today. Guess he knew we all needed it.

Debbie: I didn't need it as bad today as I did yesterday. By not going to the game 'til later, I had time to do most all of my studying.

Sue: I was glad to see you with Joyce when we came in last night.

Debbie: Thanks for making me see how to be friendly to strangers. She's a nice girl. I've always been afraid to speak up to strangers because they make me so nervous. I never know what to say, but you make everything seem so easy.

Sue: All you have to do is pretend you're in the other person's place and you know what you should do because you know what you would want them to do to you.

Debbie: I'll remember that. Look, here come Gwen and Joyce now.

Concluding Generalization: Adolescents need to practice a feeling of empathy to readily show genuine respect and real affection to their peer group as well as in other relationships (49).

Class Discussion: Looking at the situations in the preceding skit, which girl empathized and in what ways. What comments showed lack of empathy. What one statement in the skit most nearly defines empathy?

LEARNING EXPERIENCE - Students read the following excerpt on communication.

There is a comparatively simple technique which can make your communications more successful. This is based on an awareness of the other person and his interests. The technique is rather easy to learn. If you are not now using it, I suggest you try it.

In one sense, it is as easy as learning your ABC's. You need only remember the successful human side techniques and use them. This may not be easy if you have to replace old habits of self-centered thinking with new and active interest in everyone you meet. But this can be one of your most rewarding experiences.

Here, in essence, is the human side of communications in

simple ABC form:

- A. Study the other person, learn to sense his needs and his reactions.
- B. Communicate with him in terms of his own interest.
- C. Show your interest in him or her.

If we don't try to understand the person with whom we wish to communicate, we can't very well sense his needs or probable reactions to what we intend to say. So we may not even try to talk in terms of his own interest. Often we merely "express" ourselves and discuss our own interests. Consequently, our words may never register in the illusive mind we try to reach. Furthermore we can make some serious mistakes that alienate other people and cause them to lose interest in anything we have to say (44).

Brief Discussion: What is real communication? Which statement, A, B, or C, most nearly defines empathy?

After reading the above excerpt: Write a paragraph giving reaction to the following statement.

"With an increase in the ability to communicate comes an increase in the ability to empathize and vice versa" (30).

LEARNING EXPERIENCES - Students read following profiles of teenage girls.

Profile 1. Bernice is a girl who finds it hard to face difficulties. She sometimes feels humiliated because she makes mistakes in school; she is, from time to time, frightened into feelings of inadequacy at her social blunders; she occasionally feels that her mother punishes her unjustly; then she feels unwanted at home. Instead of looking at situations honestly, she makes excuses. She rages; she blames her mother or her teacher for being unjust. Once in a while she becomes "high-hat," acts superior to everyone, in her effort to hide her lack of self-confidence, her fear that she is not as good as she wishes she were. Bernice needs to be helped to realize that if she confronts her mistakes and limitations, if she does something to build up her confidence, to develop her assets, then those fears might even vanish; or she might even discover that she had been making herself unhappy over fears which were, in part, imaginary (23).

Group 1. - As a group, read and discuss the above profile, bring reactions back to total class.

Upon several attempts you have tried to be friendly with Bernice. Each time she puts you down with a rather catty remark, or simply ignores your attempt to relate to her.

In an attempt to empathize with Bernice what understandings

about her background and problems would be of help?

In an attempt to empathize with Bernice what would your reactions be?

Profile 2. Caroline is a girl who refuses to move. She will not face up to life. She has built a wall between herself and the outside world. She may have been taught that she was better than other people, that she did not need to learn to get along with them, that they must learn to appreciate her. She may have been deeply hurt. She may have a physical handicap, because of which she has allowed a feeling of inadequacy to get the better of her. She has not learned, either, how to enjoy or how to talk to people. She is shy, afraid of people, living in a world of her own, day-dreaming, brooding, reading, writing, generally by herself. Girls, boys, or adults concerned about her sometimes try to tempt her out of herself, but she does not respond; she slinks off. Sometimes she peers cautiously at people. But come out and face them, run the risk of being hurt - she will not! Life's problems are solved for her by others. Of life's real experiences she knows nothing. She is a poorly integrated and a very lonely girl (23).

Group 2. As a group, read and discuss the above profile and bring reactions back to total class.

Caroline has been a member of your class since the freshman year. As an officer in a school organization you think she could be helped by your organization. In what ways could you empathize with her?

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES - Understands how empathic ability can be applied in everyday situations.

GENERALIZATIONS - Empathy with another makes it easier to work out differences.

Interaction within a group may be more successful if members empathize with each other.

When empathy operates to a high degree one may sense the needs of another without words.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES - Role play the following situations.

Instructions before role play. We are attempting to get your spontaneous response in this situation. You are to concern yourself only with the situation. Forget the class. In some roles you are to empathize with another person, in some the other person will empathize with you.

Situation A. Two girls are talking at a class break. Jane

is popular, well dressed and fairly self-confident yet well liked because of her sincerity and interest in others. Sally is quite self-conscious, somewhat ashamed of the clothes she wears, and is anxious to talk to anyone who will listen. Sally has just found out that she failed the three weeks' history test and is telling Jane about it.

Discussion following role play:

To Sally: Did you feel that Jane understood your feelings? Why or why not?

To Jane: What were some of the processes through which you were able to empathize with Sally? Listening, asking questions about feelings, etc.

To Class: Did you find yourself identifying with either Jane or Sally? How else could the situation have been handled to show empathy?

Situation B. Phyllis is a senior in high school, almost 17 years of age. She has been dating Frank frequently for about three months. Just recently they decided they would like their relationship to be a steady one. Phyllis's parents are very much opposed to her dating anyone with whom she might become serious. They want her to complete four years of college before considering any serious relationship. As the role playing begins Phyllis explains her plans to her parents.

What evidences were there that Phyllis did understand the feelings of her parents?

What evidences were there that her parents understood her feelings?

To the mother: Do you feel that Phyllis was empathizing with you?

To Jane: Do you feel that your mother really understood how you felt?

Situation C. John and Mary have gone swimming at the beach. John has to get the car back for his family to use by four o'clock. Mary wants to stay longer and feels that he wants to go home because he isn't having a good time or because he doesn't enjoy her company. She feels he is inconsiderate to leave so soon (30).

Discussion following role play.

Situation D. Nancy is a handicap to most of the groups she works with. She can be depended upon to criticize and find

fault with solutions to problems, statements or problems, proposed procedures, and so forth. Most groups start by patiently hearing her out, but after a while, when the need for action becomes urgent, they find they must proceed in spite of her point of disagreement. In less mature groups, Nancy is usually successful in blocking or disorganizing anything which promises to be a constructive program. Nancy is sincere about her criticism, and it is probably true that she is, as she says, just as hard on herself as she is on others. Some criticism is, of course, highly desirable if plans or programs are to be workable, but most of the groups which include Nancy as a member make progress in spite of her rather than because of her (23).

Role play a committee meeting with three members, one of whom is Nancy. The topic for decision is the theme for the float to be entered in the homecoming parade.

To Nancy: Do you feel that the members of the group were making an attempt to understand your feelings?

To Group Chairman: In what ways did you attempt to understand Nancy's feeling?

To Class: Why was it so hard for members of the group to empathize with Nancy?

Situation E. Earlene and Sarah are roommates in the dorm at the University. They have roomed together for two years now and are in the final semester of their sophomore year. Both Earlene and Sarah get along well with one another, respecting each other's rights for privacy, and individual interests. They also enjoy doing things together and discussing personal problems. Earlene is dating Herb steadily and has been having some disappointments because he seems to be taking her for granted lately, and failed to call as periodically as he used to. After being out for a coke date one evening Earlene returns to the room quite upset. Sarah and a couple of girls are in the room playing cards. Role play the situation as Earlene enters crying.

To Earlene: Did Sarah sense your feelings without your saying anything? How could you tell that she did?

To Sarah: Why were you able to empathize with Earlene? Did you understand her feelings?

Conclusion: As a result of these role playing incidents what generalizations can you make about how empathy can be applied in our everyday encounters with others?

Write three general statements which tell how or why empathy is important in everyday situations.

APPENDIX C

COPY OF CORRESPONDENCE WITH
CLARA LOUISE MYERS

April 5, 1969
120 Cimarron Drive
Fairview, Oklahoma

Dear Dr. Myers:

As a graduate student in the area of Home Economics Education at Oklahoma State University, I am writing in regard to your dissertation on Empathy Development of Social Work Students.

I am working to complete my Master's degree, and have chosen as my thesis problem Empathy Development of Home Economics Students Exposed to Specific Learning Experiences in the Area of Family Relationships. It is my purpose to measure the empathic ability of secondary homemaking students enrolled in my homemaking classes before and after learning experiences are carried out. Learning experiences are being developed to include a variety of teaching methods to develop empathy in interpersonal relationships. Behavioral objectives and learning experiences will be directed toward basic concepts and generalizations related to empathy development.

Upon reviewing the literature I also have found Dymond's research in the measurement of empathy. After studying the Social Work Questionnaire which you used to measure the empathic ability of your social work students it appears to be an instrument that I could use. With the counsel of my thesis adviser, Dr. Elaine Jorgenson, I am writing to ask if you will give me permission to use the Social Work Questionnaire as a pre-test and post-test for measuring empathic ability. If permitted to use your questionnaire, full credit would be given.

Since little information has been available in this area I would appreciate any suggestions you might give in relation to empathy and its measurement. Thank you for the help given by the reading of your dissertation on Empathy Development.

Yours truly,

S/ Janice Rudy

Janice Rudy
Vocational Home Economics Instructor
Fairview High School
Fairview, Oklahoma

Dr. Myers' reply was written on the back of the original letter. It is presented below.

You have my permission to use any of my dissertation that you may find useful. I have no suggestions other than the problems of measurement raised by Gage et al. Good luck.

S/ Clara Louise Myers, D.S.W.
(Mrs. Wm. B.)

VITA

Janice Marie Rudy

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELECTED LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN THE AREA
OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS TO INCREASE EMPATHIC ABILITY OF
HOMEMAKING STUDENTS

Major Field: Home Economics Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Alva, Oklahoma, October 28, 1942, the
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