

New teachers reported having difficulty in thinking up ways to use aides but teachers with experience in teaching disadvantaged children saw possible uses for other adults in the classroom more quickly. Children now seem to be learning as they had not learned before, these teachers reported.

One teacher declared, "I am now much more aware of the language style of these children; I no longer feel the children's style of speaking is hostile."

"Parents are changing their own sense of worth. Their own skills are developing; through effective utilization of these skills their self-image changes."

"After working with aides, I have been more alerted to how children feel, what their concerns are. A child came to the first day of school this year in a brand new, heavy sweater, which was clearly too warm to wear all day in school. The child obviously did not wish to remove the sweater. I decided that rather than enforcing the school rule about hanging all outer clothing in the coat room, I would ask the child if she would like to fold the sweater and keep it in her desk, so that 'nothing would happen to it.' She was willing to comply with this request, and spent the day working profitably at her school work, taking only occasional peeks at her new sweater in the desk, instead of worrying about what was happening to it in the coat room."

"The aides have been extremely revealing. The aides said they wanted their children's language corrected. We have had to interpret to them that teaching does not always imply correction. That there can be constructive feedback and reinforcement of proper language patterns which do not involve overt correction."

"The aides have progressed in thinking about discipline, from 'We want certain things done to our children' to, three weeks later, 'How do you handle this?'"

More negative statements from teachers were:

"Teachers and aides tend to sit separately in the lunchroom, and during coffee breaks. Teachers don't want to thrust themselves at the aides who may be feeling their way in a social situation."

"The aides in the upper grades have certain inadequacies. They can't read a simple story. Can't handle fourth grade social studies lesson."

"My teacher-aide is seeking intuitively to have the experiences that teachers have about really fundamental things. I think she needs some basic preparation."

"There are two aides in my classroom—one is willing and one is more dependent."

"We need a 'removed' person as an evaluator. This person could take care of the aide coming in late. I didn't say anything when my aide was coming in five minutes late, but now it's getting to be ten or fifteen minutes."

"What worries me is the kids; what they're getting out of this experiment."

"There are so many experimental programs. How do you know which one works?"

"Aides need more training in how you teach math or reading."

"Personality conflicts are a problem. There is more friction between two aides in the classroom than between teacher and aides."

The teacher-aides' reaction to the experience

The aides in group interviews reported that they like teaching, working with two or three children, listening to the children. They say that the children are not afraid to respond in a small group; the children enjoy talking about themselves; that parents often don't really listen to their children; and working with one child stimulates him. They listen to the fantasies of the children and try to find ways to motivate them to learn.

In their own homes they say their work at school helps them to be more patient with children; they say they feel more tolerant with their own children, and understand better the value of the time spent with them.

When the aides were asked how they knew what to do with the children in school, they answered: "I would watch each child in the room and go to the one having difficulty." "Children start talking to you." "School has one way of teaching but all children do not learn that way." I had one child who was having difficulty distinguishing between letters. I had him trace a letter on a large sheet of paper, running his finger over it to get the feel of the letter. Another thing you can do is trace the letter on the child's back to help him feel it." "As a mother you feel the needs of these children." All the aides agreed on the need of children to read. They said they wanted to help them learn.

The aides spoke clearly and without hesitation of changes they would like made in the program: teachers and teacher-aides should have a week of orienta-