

B. Reactions of the professional teachers in group interview

Opinions and attitudes of the teachers varied considerably, but taken as a whole were favorable to the program. A few maintained that there was a period during which the children needed to get adjusted. The children in the schools had had no kindergarten experience and the teachers believed that, for that reason, the children may have been afraid the aides would not give them the same love as do the teachers. On the other hand, some teachers said their children had accepted the aides readily. In one case the aide was older than the teacher, had children of her own, and appeared to fit right in. In another case an aide who was a father quickly adapted to the classroom context, with positive results.

Good things were said by a number of the teachers concerning the work of the aides: "They give individual attention to the children"; "Things seem to dovetail better; less time is spent in getting materials"; "As the aide goes around he children understand the instructions given out by the teacher better"; and, importantly, "One child who was thought to be deaf was found by the aide to be withdrawn".

Limitations, due primarily to the restrictive state law, were voiced by a few. Two said they could allow aides to do nothing related to instruction. One stated that an aide can relate, not teach. "When one of them takes charge of a group, that is teaching." A flat footed statement came from one, "Aides should be professional." Looking to the future, however, one teacher voiced the hope that the approach could be made uniform all over town. One half the teachers did not have trainees; from among them came the eager request: "When will we have aides?"

*C. Restrictions expressed in T-groups * (sensitivity groups)*

The T-groups served the purpose of "letting off steam" according to one family aide. They dealt with human relations rather than job-related discussion; they were essential in a project introducing new workers into an established institution because they opened up for common consideration the dynamics of role development. The session observed by the study team was attended by six members of the Neighborhood Youth Corps, six of the Title I group, four teachers, one principal, four parents, one social worker, process observers, researchers, and the discussion leader. The planners of the project had assigned to this group the function of eliciting the truth about matters which disturbed the participants, even if it proved difficult to express their criticism and even if it might be hard to take when directed against an individual. The leader remarked at the session observed that his role was to interpret to the group why they were attacking each other or the program. Attack, analysis, and understanding seemed to be the sequence the communications took.

For example: conflict between the Neighborhood Youth Corps and the Title I group of trainees relating to the labeling of the groups in the routine of payments was brought out. The next day a human relations expert spoke to the two groups, and was followed on the succeeding day by honest communications between the group members. The more mature Title I aides and the professional participants were defensive of the school system when its routines were brought into question. Another problem the group was called upon to discuss was the feeling of job insecurity on the part of an aide, his concern over the continuity of his job, and the likelihood of political implications in the arrangements for the job. One discussion dealt with the fear of certain teachers of another adult in the classroom. Another concern of the T-groups was the charge by an aide that the teacher "is teaching Johnny wrong".

The majority of Title I aides maintained in the Group Interview that they enjoyed the T-group sessions. One lady said, "I don't like them, but they may turn out O.K. for me". There seemed to be a growing realization that the T-group was a method of solving problems that was not in the behavior pattern of the participants. A complaint was raised that there was an in-group and an out-group in the meetings. One aide remarked that in her T-group four or five had not spoken.

D. Reactions of superintendent of schools

"I am convinced that eventually the teacher's responsibility will be changed. The teacher's job will be to direct the process. In Illinois we are constantly

*In the T-Group the visitation team were observers, not leaders. The groups were led by staff on a regular schedule after school.