Family Life Educators and Affective Competencies: Shall Ever the Twain Meet in Academe?

NELWYN B. MOORE

A few years ago a newspaper column reported an interview with a corner grocer in a large American city who disclosed that he had known both Charles Manson, mastermind of the bizarre Manson murders, and Squeaky Fromme, a would-be presidential assassin. He recalled that they, as young children, frequently purchased penny candy from him while growing up in somewhat the same neighborhood. Child development students who study the effects of early experiences on later development and the interface of societal factors might speculate what, if anything, this corner grocer could have done to influence these two lives in ways which would have been life changing.

Noted educator Frances Fuller (1971) succinctly stated the issue of teacher influence:

Almost everyone who will every occupy a bed in a mental hospital was once in some teacher's classroom--and so was every physicist and poet, every healer, murderer, pusher and priest. Through the hands and minds and feelings of teachers pass all of our children (1971:1).

In the face of such awesome opportunity what are the teacher's tasks? What competencies of hands, mind and feelings are needed to fulfill these tasks? In responding to these questions, family life educators are in an enviable position. As practitioners, they are teachers in classrooms, clinics, or agency settings. But because of the value-laden nature of the information and attitudes with which the discipline is concerned, family life educators are not only teachers. They are teachers--plus, teachers with added opportunity to affect the lives of their students in myriad ways. But, as always, interfaced with such privilege is responsibility. In order to fulfill such obligations future family life educators must avoid answering tomorrow's professional questions with yesterday's answers. To that end, it is imperative that the profession continually reassess the mission and methods of family life education in light of changing needs and evolving research.

It has been almost two decades since 52 state and national leaders in family life education, using the Delphi method, attempted to view the future of the family life education field (Kerckhoff, Hancock, & The Family Coordinator Family Life Education Panel, 1971). In this futures model, the family life educator was envisioned as a person able to relate and communicate more as a person rather than an authority, one who

* Nelwyn B. Moore is a professor of Family and Child Studies in the department of Home Economics, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, TX 78666.
would need both intellectual and social-affective skills. It was predicted that professional preparation would be of increasing breadth and depth with added emphasis on attitudes, values, and ethics. Group counseling and training in interpersonal or human relationship skills were anticipated to be standard fare in teacher preparation. Encounter groups, sensitivity training, group dynamics, and practicums or internships were identified as essentials for family life educators of the future. In the almost 20 years which have followed this national study, the family field has experienced many positive changes. It is now the discipline of Family Science, programs and courses have proliferated, certification of family life educators is in place, and a code of ethics has been proposed for family professionals (Leigh, Loewen, & Lester, 1986). However, a large gap appears between what is and ought to be. In this otherwise impressive progress, there is a critical lack of training in the skills needed for affective and relationship competencies.

The focus of this paper is the affective domain—that area of learning concerned with emotional, attitudinal, or psychological issues (DeVito, 1986). The three domains of human learning are differentiated as Cognitive—mental or intellectual abilities; Psychomotor—neuromuscular coordination, muscular or motor skill, and/or manipulation of materials and objects; and Affective—values, attitudes, feelings, and emotional sets (Green, 1975). While the cognitive and psychomotor domains of learning are organized by increasing complexity, the affective one is organized by increasing internalization. The goal of all learning is to integrate these domains in a process that David Mace has described as "the long, long trail from information-giving to behavioral change" (1981:599). Further clarifying the concepts, Olson and Moss (1980) suggest that teaching about family life is within the cognitive domain while teaching for family living concerns the affective domain. Specifically, this paper will address the need for affective competencies in the training of family life educators. It will identify needed personal relationship competencies, the extent of their inclusion in professional preparation, as well as suggested program strategies. Finally, it will consider assessment as a tool to effect a better match of affectively competent individuals and the field of family life education.

Family Life Educators and Affective Competencies

Arcus (1987) notes the recent renewal of efforts to strengthen the field of family life education by clarifying its definition and articulating its basic content, assumptions, and propositions. However, a search of the literature indicates little evidence has been added since the early seventies concerning the common or uniquely critical factors associated with successful practice as a professional family life educator. The information which we do possess comes largely from models of leadership training and/or teacher education. A perusal of such models reveals an emphasis on cognitive and psychomotor competencies emphasizing knowledge and performance with little attention being given to affective competencies related to feelings. Since the body of knowledge in the family science field is constantly evolving as a result of continuing research, changing family structures and changing social trends, most professionals would argue that family life educators who offer intervention to individuals and families must be both competently educated and continuously trained in all domains of learning. Guidelines for these competencies were established by the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) with the initiation of their certification program in 1985 (Corey, Corey, & Callanan, 1984; NCFR, 1987). In order to be certified, the family life educator must complete course work in a wide variety of content areas and educational methods.

The 1987 NCFR document which describes the certification standards and criteria indicates ethical behavior and respect for others to be basic personal characteristics expected of the family life educator. In addition to documenting academic and work experience, certification requires that the candidate:

1. They have been employed in the family life educator role.
2. They have had specific training in education.
3. The school of education with which the candidate is associated.

Although success in teaching requires an understanding of attitudes and skills, they are not enough (Arcus, 1982). New or untested situations may have illustrated this.

A teacher must be able to diagnose and solve problems, prevent and resolve conflict, and deal with diversity in the classroom. These are primarily cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. Teachers need to be teachable.

If teachers are not teachable, they may acquire new information, but they will not change. The family life education field has been limited by this since it is an ongoing process. Since growth and learning are needed by all, the need for a better match of affectively competent individuals and the field of family life education is shown.

In Search of Effective Family Life Educators

The term effective is not defined. Although there is evidence that techniques such as sensitivity training demonstrate effectiveness, there is no single model or technique which has been unequivocally demonstrated to be effective. ANID (1972) indicated that effective techniques were those that provided an adequate level of change, and that personal psychology rather than program models of effectiveness were important. Furthermore, there were no common characteristics.

1. They operated on students or trainees.
2. They were teachers of children in the classroom.
3. The students were family life educators.

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experience, the certification candidate is expected to present letters of recommendation which substantiate capabilities in the following areas, all of which appear to be related to affective dimensions:

... intellectual and social skills, self-confidence, emotional stability, flexibility, maturity, empathy, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, awareness of one's own personal and cultural attitudes and values--especially regarding sexism, racism, ageism, religion, and work (NCFR, 1987:1).

Although attitudes held by family life educators are viewed as an important key to success in the profession, few empirical studies exist which delineate those specific attitudes as well as knowledge and teaching practices needed by family life educators (Arcus, 1986). However, basic assumptions underlying affective dimensions are neither new or unproven. The central thesis of a now classic book, The Teacher as a Person illustrates a long standing concern with facilitation of growth in teachers:

A teacher's meeting program standards does not guarantee his effectiveness in the classroom--What makes teacher-student interaction undefinable and prevents the unqualified success of teacher preparation programs is that a teacher is a person--When a teacher interacts with students, he interacts primarily as a person and only secondarily in his role as a teacher--In a teacher's coming to understand himself, in his becoming a person, he comes to be a more effective teacher (Natalicio & Hereford, 1971:IX).

If teachers are to be facilitators of learning rather than merely disseminators of information, they must start where the student is. They must tap into the energy source--the student's psychological feeling level (Gazda, 1977). A basic premise in family life education is that students deserve to have their total development facilitated. But, since it is impossible to teach that which one does not know, teachers themselves must grow and live fully if they are to optimally assist students. Fuller (1971) documented this need for attention to personal growth in professional preparation almost two decades ago when she discovered that beginning teachers have far more concerns related to adequacy of self than adequacy of subject matter.

In Search of Affective Competencies

The successful interaction of a family life educator and student is not yet fully defined. Accomplished teachers possess cognitive or knowing competencies which are evidenced by respectable command of knowledge in their subject area. They also demonstrate psychomotor or performance competencies by their command of certain techniques of pedagogy (Fuller, 1971). However, possession of information and technique alone fails to guarantee effectiveness as a teacher. Earlier studies by Dahms (1972) indicated that success in teacher-student interactions is not determined by method, technique, or even the acquiring of vast amounts of knowledge beyond minimal levels of competency. Instead, teaching effectiveness was correlated with the teacher's personal perception concerning human relationships. Dahms isolated four characteristics of effective teachers:

1. They perceived people as top priorities, as being more important than things;
2. They believed others were able to meet the demands in their own lives, that they were trustworthy and dependable;
3. The self was perceived as an attractive being, adequate to meet the demands of life, with feelings of belonging in the world; and

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4. Professional tasks were perceived as freeing people rather than controlling, and encouraging openness rather than pushing toward predefined goals (1972:124-125).

Among those professional competencies often identified as essential, several are affectively related ones: ability to communicate warmly and effectively with a variety of people, empathy and respect for students, trust and openness, ability to create supportive classroom environments, and ability to understand individual strengths and weaknesses (Eble, 1985; Yarber & McCabe, 1981).

Sex education is one facet of family life education. One study, which measured the characteristics of health science teachers who teach sex education, found a positive attitude toward one's own sexuality correlated with effectiveness as a sex educator (Yarber & McCabe, 1981). Another investigation of the sexuality attitudes of secondary teachers was based on the premise that the teacher is the most important factor in the effectiveness of any school-based sexuality education program (Schultz & Boyd, 1984). Teachers felt more competent to teach human sexuality when they had more positive attitudes toward their own sexuality. Such findings indicate a need to provide sex education teachers with opportunities to explore personal feelings about their sexuality.

Although eventually we may be able to determine from research many specific affective competencies of attitudes and feelings which are significant variables in training successful family life educators, they currently are not identified. However, there are two basic affective areas of study which unquestionably should be addressed in the professional preparation of family life educators--those concerning self and self in relation to others.

Self

The path of successful teaching of family life education is neither simple nor direct. But as in all other developmental paths, it is most discernible if one begins at the beginning--with self. Teaching behavior is often shaped by "unfinished business" with oneself. A significant variable in successful teaching of family life education is the teacher's own needs and concerns which must be recognized and addressed before student needs can be sensed. Otherwise, illegitimate or neurotic needs may surface in teacher behaviors. Fuller reported six sequential underlying concerns which student teachers often express through the following questions:

1. Where do I stand?--concerns for security in total school situation;
2. How adequate am I?--concerns of subject matter adequacy and class control;
3. Why do they do that?--concerns of individual student behavior;
4. How do you think I'm doing?--concerns of evaluation of supervisor;
5. How are they doing?--concerns of evaluation of pupil learning; and

The stages of teacher concerns are believed to be a rough index of readiness to learn to teach (Fuller, 1971). It is in this process of coming to understand and accept self that a person becomes a more effective teacher. Such self concern, far from the ego centeredness of the two-year-old or adolescent, is a prerequisite to personal adequacy. Only as persons satisfy their own concerns of safety, security, and feelings of belonging are they psychologically free to selflessly concern themselves with the welfare of others. When comfortable with "Self," the teacher is more likely to interact optimally in relationships with others and to communicate at levels which permit as well as promote personal and professional growth.
Self in Relation to Others

Carl Rogers (1971) offers a general hypothesis with exciting possibilities concerning growth of self in relation to others. He believes that certain factors are appropriate in any relationship whose goal is the development of a creative, adaptive, autonomous person. Rogers' belief is that if the teacher provides a certain type of relationship, the student will discover within himself the capacity to use that relationship for growth and change. And, thus, personality development will occur. In order for this circumstance to occur, teachers should possess the following qualities:

- a genuineness and transparency, in which they are their real feelings;
- a warm acceptance of and prizing of the other person as a separate individual;
- a sensitive ability to see the world of the other person;

Then the student is likely to:

- understand and explain previously repressed aspects of self;
- find self becoming better integrated, more able to function effectively;
- become more similar to the person that he would like to be;
- be more self-directing and self-confident;
- become more of a person, more unique and more self-expressive;
- be more understanding, more accepting of others;
- be able to cope with the problems of life more adequately and more comfortably (Rogers, 1971:51-58).

In Search of Interpersonal Competencies

Affective phenomena which deal with emotions or feelings are the foundation for all interaction between people. Affect is expressed through interpersonal skills such as communicating, relating, initiating, and responding. The research literature from the 1960s and 1970s reflects the attention of behavioral science to research in interpersonal skills (Johnson, 1972). In fact, the identification of basic skills which determine a person's interpersonal effectiveness has long been on the agenda of social psychological research as it relates to therapeutic relationships. Also, the relationship between interpersonal effectiveness and successful teaching is less than a new concept. Although the words of psychologist William James (1983) in his "Talks to Teachers at Cambridge" almost a century ago may sound quaint to space-age ears, his message is clear.

To know psychology, therefore, is absolutely no guarantee that we shall be good teachers. To advance to that result we must have an additional endowment altogether, a happy tact and ingenuity to tell us what definite things to say and do when the pupil is before us. That ingenuity in meeting and pursuing the pupil, that tact for the concrete situation, though they are the alpha and omega of the teacher's art, are things to which psychology cannot help us in the least. ... Psychology is a science, and teaching is an art; and sciences never generate arts directly out of themselves. An intermediary inventive mind must make the application by using its originality (James, 1983:15-16).

While the critical factors of James' "additional endowment" needed by successful teachers were identified as a "happy tact and ingenuity," today we call them by such names as "interpersonal skills," "human relationship skills," "interactive skills," or the new buzz word, "people skills." By whatever name, the issue is the same.
Prevention, adaptation, and skill development have long been important concepts to family life educators (Harriman, 1986). While there is general agreement that such skills are needed, there is less than consensus concerning where in professional preparation they will be learned. Benz (1984) speculated that expecting certain skills, attitudes, and competencies of first-year teachers may be unreasonable in view of their college preparation. He found that when first-year teachers ranked their training levels in seventeen skills, five were significantly below "importance on the job." The skills in which there were reported deficits included people or human relation skills both of which, although important to teacher success, are admittedly difficult to measure.

In summary, although there is a dearth of information identifying the needed affective and relationship competencies, it is clear that affective competencies like those of hands and minds, must evolve from educational methods whose basic assumptions rest on proven theories. Extrapolated from basic educational research as well as from developmental and Rogerian counseling theories, the following basic premises are offered for the consideration of those charged with the professional preparation of family life educators:

1. The role of family life educators is to maximize significant experiential learning which makes a difference in individual student behavior;
2. In interaction with students, family life educators provide more than intellectual content. They furnish modeling from which students learn characteristic attitudes and ways of responding.
3. Changing what family life education does, involves more than changing what family life educators do. Since changes need to occur in how teachers think, feel, and respond, as well as in what they know, professional preparation of family life educators should maximize their experiential learning;
4. Assessment techniques can be useful in promoting self-understanding among family life educators; and
5. Personal growth may be facilitated by meaningful problem solving and a climate of listening, discovering concerns, perceptions, and empathizing (Fuller, 1971:3-4).

Professional Preparation for Affective Competencies

The path for professional preparation of family life educators is not yet clearly delineated. It is, however, so important to our profession that it merits immediate attention from both those who generate knowledge through research and those who apply the knowledge. Becoming aware of and agreeing on the need for affective competencies in the teaching of family life education is only the first step. Researchers must identify affective behaviors and interpersonal skills needed and practitioners must provide opportunity for practice and proficiency before these competencies can be integrated into professional behavior.

Professional Programs

All students can attest to the significance of the "teacher as a person" in their own education process. It is easy to recall those personal qualities which differentiated the outstanding teachers from the mediocre ones. However, what the future family life educator probably has trouble remembering is where in their education process these same affective qualities were identified, much less stressed as variables of success in teaching. Such omission is puzzling. For at least two decades, the modification of college curricula has been urged by professionals who have explored ways to help potential teachers to grow and develop psychologically and thus to actualize self more fully (Dandes, 1966). The development of human relations laboratories and the
expansion of individual counseling services were believed to be measures that would produce individuals who were more self-actualized and, therefore, more effective as teachers. It was assumed that such teachers could better enable student growth toward more effective, responsible society members. However, at the beginning of the 80s, Gaylin (1981) was still questioning the efforts of curriculum developers:

How can we train teachers in family education (in one three credit course no less) when the vast majority of our curriculum developers have so little understanding of what it is? Even more appalling, how can we send these . . . teachers-volunteers out with a substantive crash course and a minimum understanding regarding interpersonal relations and group dynamics, place a lesson plan in their hands and trust them to deal effectively with the most sensitive and important issues with which our children are trying to cope—all in a classroom of eighty students (1981:515)?

If, in our professional preparation programs, cognitive and psychomotor areas have received a disproportionate amount of time and effort, hopefully it is not because they are more valued, but because they are more self-evident and easily measurable. Future family life educators would agree that it is easy to measure what they know concerning the body of knowledge or cognitive competencies, and it is even fairly easy to evaluate their ability to demonstrate certain techniques of pedagogy. But, it is not so easy to evaluate their affective competencies in such areas as perception, empathy, or feelings of adequacy. The need for the development of such assessment techniques is a critical professional issue.

Although considerable evidence documents the need for developing appropriate affective behaviors as interpersonal competencies, a perusal of professional preparation most often reveals a glaring lack of such opportunities. In its place is a widespread belief that if cognitive information is learned there will be a corresponding development of affective behaviors (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). However, "the evidence suggests that affective behaviors develop when appropriate learning experiences are provided students, much the same as cognitive behaviors develop from appropriate learning experience" (Krathwohl et al., 1964:20). Even though this knowledge has been available more than two decades, few educators and legislators have responded to this need for affective education by requiring human relations training for teacher certification.

In-Service Education

There is some belief that continuing education through in-service may more effectively address affective competencies needed by family life educators than professional preparation programs. If it is true that a person learns better after he himself becomes a professional, continuing education becomes a more viable vehicle of self-growth for family life educators than pre-service education. In fact, there is some evidence that time and experience may be an influential variable in the attainment of affective competencies. In an examination of factors that contribute to changes in teachers over time, it was found that students themselves have a humanizing effect on teachers (Blase, 1986). Another study has indicated the advantages of in-service over pre-service training. Since in-service education is more developmental in nature, it may provide better opportunities for teachers to personally identify needed areas of growth (Schultz & Boyd, 1984).

An investigation of the preparation and practices of secondary family life education teachers in California found in-service training and pre-service coursework rated equally

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as methods of teacher preparation. Interestingly, independent study such as personal reading and library research were rated as the most popular. Although basic counseling and referral skills are considered essential for family life educators less than one-third of the California family life education teachers surveyed reported pre-service training in counseling and guidance (Koblinsky, Weeks, & Cook, 1985). Furthermore, the findings of Bakalars and Petrich (1984), who studied family life education in elementary grades, underscore the need for in-service education. For such reasons, the NCFR Certification Committee (1987) recommended that at least some professional preparation be in the form of either in-service or other non-academic educational experiences.

Affective Strategies

Many professionals in teacher training have begun to emphasize the behavioral aspects of the learning process. Skills training has been recommended as a strategy to help future family life educators apply insight and knowledge (Guernsey & Guernsey, 1981). Psychologists and educators have been urged to work together to prepare materials and training opportunities for teacher education. Thus, not only family scientists but also teacher trainers in many disciplines are recognizing the need to prepare teachers with more than knowledge of their discipline and communication techniques. For example, Dolle and Willems (1984) indicate that teachers of foreign language need pre-service and in-service training in self-presentation as well as three interactive skills: willingness to learn from one's students, empathy, and the ability to react to students' remarks in an accepting manner.

A variety of approaches have been used to develop interactive skills. The incident method which involves discussing and resolving specific interaction incidents is suggested as a way to enlarge the teacher's capacity for observation and sensitivity to the group process (Eble, 1985). Poetry, drama, and fiction as well as extensive writing and performing arts experience are indicated as methods of educating for this different kind of competence. In addition, other innovators introduced family paper sculpture as a tool to be used by family life educators in accomplishing affective goals with their students (Wedemeyer & Grotevant, 1982). But obviously, such learning experiences must first be offered in pre-service or in-service training programs in order to provide family of origin insight for family professional themselves. Practice and feedback also have been identified as important elements in the process of learning interpersonal skills (Eisler & Frederickson, 1980).

The inevitable questions concerning the efficacy of such skills training emphasize the pressing need for assessment techniques. Unfortunately, there is a paucity of such assessment reflected in the literature. However, one study presented empirical support for training designed to assess behavioral changes in the levels of communication following a university course in interpersonal skills. Comparing methods of providing students with feedback on the level of skills, increases in empathy, self-disclosure, and nonverbal listening skills were found to occur with the use of videotape feedback. Both dyad and group feedback were equally effective in increasing skill level (Sollie & Scott, 1983).

Human Relations Training as a Delivery Vehicle

Regardless of the format or strategies, human relations training is most often mentioned in the literature as the vehicle of choice for the delivery of affective skills. In fact, earlier research literature documents significant improvement of interpersonal communication skills as a result of several human relations training programs of undergraduates, graduates, and in-service teachers (Taylor & Barnes, 1970).
As early as the 1970s, human relations training was a part of the Home Economics education program at Pennsylvania State University. Program goals sought to improve self-insight and awareness, sensitivity to the behavior of others, awareness of group process, skill in day-to-day functioning as a person and in groups, and skill in learning how to learn (Shear, 1971). More recently, investigators have substantiated the influence of other unique teacher education programs on affective teacher growth. For example, courses in the Home Economics curriculum designed to foster growth in the affective domain emphasized the teacher's role, teacher-student interpersonal relationships, and the role of the school in developing values. Shostrom's Personal Orientation Inventory, a validated index of Maslow's concept of self-actualization, and Rokeach's Dogmatism Scale were used to measure the effects of this curriculum on the achievement of affective objectives and whether those affective results were related to conventional cognitive predictors of teaching success. Significant desired changes in self-actualization and dogmatism did occur as a result of the affectively-oriented curriculum (Stiffler, 1977). The conclusion was that teacher education programs can develop more self-actualizing and open persons through special attention to the affective needs of potential teachers. Although these earlier studies did serve to improve empathic understanding and establish more effective communication skills, they also demonstrated that significant gains in responding skills cannot be expected with less than twelve clock hours of training (Taylor & Banes, 1970).

A later study found increased awareness of interpersonal skills as a result of a human relations training seminar for Home Economics degree candidates and university supervising professors (Moore, 1980a). The seminar was based on two assumptions:

1. Student teaching as a field-based practicum is generally the single most important learning experience in the process of professional education for teachers; and

2. There are predictable patterns of student teaching concerns emerging from these experiences, the majority of which are found to be related to problems of human relationships.

The three-day seminar following the final week of student teaching afforded opportunities for both a sharing of professional concerns and a program of human relations training for teacher education candidates and their supervisors. The experience, which was optimally timed to capitalize on the subjects' recently acquired insight and awareness concerning needs of self and others, provided a safe climate for participants to receive feedback from a team of psychologists as well as their peers and teacher educators. The ultimate goal was that participants would be able to make better and more fully examined choices, personally and professionally. Evaluations indicated increased understanding in accepting self, accepting others, and the underlying behavior dynamics of the group process and its worth as a classroom technique. Modeling by the facilitators was specifically cited as most helpful in learning group process techniques (Moore, 1980a).

In a three-year follow-up study of participants who subsequently taught family life education, 88% indicated that the human relations training seminar was still viewed as a most valuable pre-professional experience (Moore, 1980b). In order to adequately prepare family life educators, we must isolate enough significant implications for teaching strategies from studies such as these to form hypotheses for future research.

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Extrapolating from the small amount of available data that we do have concerning successful teaching of family life education, we could safely assume that the path of family life education is not for everyone. The questions of who should teach and who is most likely to succeed are not easily answered. In the business profession, the way a person sees the world, analyzes it and makes decisions based on that analysis is believed to be more helpful to a career than his/her I.Q (Sullivan, 1985). While the simple thinker climbs a pyramid of steps to reach a goal, the successful person uses a much more complex strategy, thinks far ahead, and is always open to new possibilities. Because of the nature of the discipline, the professional path of a successful family life educator may also be that "road less traveled by," the one which leads away from simple steps and tunnel vision to more creative problem solving. In screening family life educators, perhaps, we should remember the Peter Principle, which contends that all useful work is done by those who have not yet reached their level of incompetence. If so, we would exclude the single-minded, task-oriented professional who may function exceptionally well as a professor of a discipline or a researcher but lacks the needed interpersonal skills of a successful family life educator.

The validity and reliability of program admission criteria and applicant screening procedures are a current research issue. One investigation has found that a personal interview with applicants appears to provide information about interpersonal skills and character which is most helpful in predicting which students will succeed in family therapy training (Brock, Barnard, & Stockinger, 1988). In determining who should be admitted to family life education programs, surely the profession should direct some attention to entrance exams which measure affective qualities and creativity in addition to verbal and mathematical abilities. Perhaps, we should also be concerned with measuring the psychological health of the would-be professional at the point of entry into the profession. We could follow the lead of the field of psychoanalysis which certifies no one to practice who has not himself undergone analysis and subsequently functioned effectively in supervised practice. Currently, the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Therapists requires a Sexual Attitude Reassessment Seminar for certification as a sex educator (AASECT, 1973). Should our profession be less concerned about the psychological health of the family life professional, who through use of the preventive educational model has the potential to influence many more of our nation's young than the medical model analyst who patches up adults? Focusing on mental health criteria could enhance the credibility of the only profession whose primary focus is a preventive approach to family well-being. More care in determining who should be admitted to our family life education programs will yield needed dividends to our profession.

Summary

If, as the research has found, there is a significant correlation between potential for success in family life education programs and readiness to treat families unilaterally, we must be concerned with the training of family life educators. By rigidly following the model of the medical model analyst who patches up adults, we may be excluding from the field of family life education the very professionals who have the potential to influence our nation's young the most. Hopefully, this concern will also be addressed by those who have the responsibility to train the field of family life educators.

By reducing the stresses and environmental factors which are called for by the medical model analyst, we can create an environment which is a much more conducive to healthy psychological functioning and can enhance the credibility of the only profession whose primary focus is a preventive approach to family well-being. More care in determining who should be admitted to our family life education programs will yield needed dividends to our profession.

Self Selection

Finally, greater attention to assessment when counseling students in our family life education programs could assure a better match of student abilities and program goals. The use of the self-selection process is often overlooked. Assessment procedures to help individuals understand themselves, not only in terms of their abilities but also in terms of their own interests, values, and personality characteristics has long been advocated in career counseling (Herr & Cramer, 1984). Tests serve a vital function in career counseling by providing a focus to career exploration as well as stimulating the exploration of self in relation to a career (Prediger, 1974). It is generally accepted that self-understanding is positively related to not only more realistic career choices but the it also leads to more satisfaction in both education and career. While self-understanding alone does not guarantee good career decisions, without a realistic picture of one's self it is doubtful that the most positive decisions will be made.
Assessment procedures can serve several functions in career guidance. They can predict, discriminate, monitor, and evaluate (Herr & Cramer, 1984). Through such assessment one may identify personal characteristics on which self-understanding is based. For example, information related to career choices, gained through the use of predictive tests, can forecast success in educational and career behaviors. Tests of discrimination allow individuals to discover which occupational or educational groups they are most like. The monitoring function of tests deals primarily with the process or readiness for choice and the evaluation function with the degree to which goals are being achieved.

Herr and Cramer (1984) have compiled a sample of illustrative instruments which include aptitude, interest, career, maturity, work value inventories and job satisfaction measures. However, a note of caution follows this impressive list. The effective use of any instrument depends upon the unique characteristics of the intended population. Therefore, flexibility and imagination are urged in the developing of creative measures for individual uses. The Affective Quotient (AQ) Scale (Appendix A), while invalidated for general usage, is an example of such an instrument. It has been used in educational settings as a tool to promote self-awareness of affective competencies suggested in the literature as essential for family life educators. Through the use of such a self-rating scale, the young professional in training can gain insight into his own personal abilities and needs related to attainment of professional goals.

Summary

If, as indicated in the literature, effectiveness in teaching family life education is correlated positively with competencies in human relations and if these competencies can be acquired through appropriate experiences, the implications are clear. Affective education must become an integral part of professional programs which prepare family life educators. However, any educator who has wrestled with curriculum decisions is aware of the many areas of needing for the time allotted to professional programs. With rigid certification standards, the inclusion of affective-related experiences is not a simple addition process. Instead, it calls for a reordering of our professional priorities. Hopefully, the basis for these curriculum decisions will not be entirely theoretical, but also will be practical and, as such, a reflection of the demonstrated needs of persons in the field of family life education.

By responding to these needs, we may be taking a small but significant step toward a much needed theory of family life education similar to the theory of instruction as called for by Brunner (1966) and Piaget (1970). Simply by combining that information which is already known about the mission of family life education with theories of communication, development, learning, and behavior, we may be closer to a comprehensive theory of family life education. Such a theory would offer a strong base from which to define personal, affective competencies needed by tomorrow's family life educator.

The role of the family life educator is significant to our society. Family life educators are influential in determining not only how, but what, the next generation of families will communicate as they function. Both competence and commitment are requisites for individuals who will safeguard the well-being of future generations in any society. Family Life educators who possess affective as well as cognitive competencies are in a unique position to facilitate competence in future family living. Equally as important, they can transmit a commitment to families, a quality more "caught" than "taught." Our problems may be legion but so are our abilities. When problems are
reframed as challenges, and when we accept those challenges, we grow individually as professionals and collectively as a profession.

REFERENCES


Appendix A: Affective Quotient (AQ) Test

Success as a family life educator is positively correlated with competencies in cognitive ability (knowing), psychomotor skills (doing), and affective attitudes (feelings), while most professional preparation focuses only on cognitive and psychomotor domains. To measure your affective abilities, rate yourself on the following "affective quotient" scale whereby 10 represents the most and 1 the least affective response. To assess your score on each scale ask, "To what degree do I evidence..."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive self-concept</th>
<th>Negative self-concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of self-worth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate assertiveness</td>
<td>Avoidance or aggressiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced personal/social goals</td>
<td>Imbalance in personal/social goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-congruency</td>
<td>Self-incongruency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity in communications</td>
<td>Superficiality in communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance of others</td>
<td>Judgment of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational awareness</td>
<td>Unawareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>Insensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Rigidity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength under stress</td>
<td>Weakness under stress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AQ SCORE - To determine AQ, add total points.

100-80  Go to Head of the Class!
80-50   Probably a lower score than others would give you!
50-30   You either need to work on Number 1 or...
30-10   Go directly to another profession. Do not pass "Go." Do not collect for even one day as a family life educator.

Source: Nelwyn B. Moore, Ph.D., Department of Home Economics, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, TX 78666.