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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HUMAN RELATIONS
COMPONENT FOR THE TRAINING OF ENGLISH TEACHERS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Laura Wilson Tobias, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1977

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Beginning in 1972 the Ohio State Department of Education sponsored a state-wide series of meetings to establish educational priorities for public education in Ohio. One of the results of this "Search for Consensus" was a mandate for better teacher preparation. In response to this mandate, a State Advisory Committee on the Redesign of Teacher Education was appointed. This group sponsored regional discussions among teacher education faculties and students, public education personnel, and the lay public to evaluate major issues in teacher education and to recommend resolutions. The State Advisory Committee then synthesized the information of the regional groups and proposed standards for teacher education. On December 9, 1974, the State Board of Education adopted new standards. Under the new standards teacher training institutions are to prepare teachers in five areas: "the teaching of reading, human relations, managing behavior problems, clinical use of diagnostic instruments, and urban and suburban or rural schools."¹ This dissertation will address itself to the area of human relations in teacher preparation.

¹
Teachers are aware of their need for improved human relations. Seminars with student teachers reveal the need for help in dealing with interpersonal problems with students, cooperating teachers, and administrators. Beginning teachers also express frustration in dealing with classroom interactions. Such statements as reported by Ann G. Ruben are commonplace:

"The universities didn't prepare teachers to deal with the problems in the classroom. I came out a model teacher with all this theory, and I was lousy in practice."  

A survey of teachers' views of their own preparation shows that the skill of "controlling and disciplining students" ranked ninth in the skills they had been trained for.  

Even experienced teachers express frustration. The conversation in teachers' lounges frequently revolves around problems in dealing with people. One experienced teacher, having been transferred to a school with a racially mixed population, commented: "I ended the year hating the kids and they hated me."

My particular interest in developing some kind of human relations component for a prospective teacher came about as a result of my own teaching experience. In my early teaching years during the fifties, I managed to have few interpersonal interactions with students because I kept students at arm's length. When a student commented to me that he enjoyed my class, but found me cold and aloof
outside the classroom, I felt as if I had achieved the proper distance. As I became more confident, maintaining the invisible wall between the students and me became less important. By the early sixties I was conducting Sunday evening seminars in my home. These informal gatherings gave me a different picture of students. After we had discussed the literature assigned, the young people would begin talking about their vital concerns: their frustrations with school, their problems with parents and peers, and their plans for the future. I began to recognize that much of what I taught in school was remote from their lives. But the influence of Sputnik still exerted itself. I felt committed to providing the rigorous intellectual discipline that was necessary for these students to succeed in college.

In 1969 I returned to the school where I had previously taught and found much to change my attitudes. High school students were restless in the late sixties. Their efforts had forced the school to change the dress code the year before I returned. One of my classes that year undertook the project of trying to persuade the administration to permit them to leave the building for lunch. A student in my junior English class was publishing an underground newspaper. Students had become activists.

Changes in the sixties had affected not only students but also the English curriculum. The Dartmouth Seminar in
1966 provided a forum for the articulation of these changes. The skills model, the analytical model, the cultural heritage model were challenged. Benjamin De Mott described what English was not:

"English" is not centrally about the difference between good books and bad. It is not centrally about poetics, metrics, mysteries of versification, or the study of balance and antithesis in the Ciceronian sentence. It is not centrally about the history of literature, not centrally about the changes in moral and philosophical systems as these can be deduced from abstracts of selected Great Works. Still more negatives: the English classroom is not primarily the place where students learn of the majesty of Shakespeare and alas for Beaumont and Fletcher. It is not primarily the place where students learn to talk about the structure of a poem or about the logic of the octave and sestet, or about the relation between the narrator and author and speaker and mock-speaker and reader and mock-reader of the poem. It is not primarily the place where students learn to mind their proper manners at the spelling table or to expand their vocabulary or to write Correct like nice folks. It is not a finishing school, not a laff riot with a "swinging prof," not an archeological site.  

De Mott defined with equal vigor what English is:

It is the place--there is no other in most schools--the place wherein the chief matters of concern are particulars of humanness--individual human feeling, human response, and human time, as these can be known through the written expression...of men living and dead, and as they can be discovered by student writers seeking through words to name and compose and grasp their own experience. English in sum is about my distinctness and the distinctness of other human beings. Its function, like that of some books called great, is to provide an arena in which the separate man, the single ego, can strive at once to know the world through art, to know what if anything he uniquely is, and what some brothers uniquely are.
The Dartmouth Seminar reinforced my own inclinations as a teacher of English. I had a clear mandate for a curriculum that centered on student experience in relation to reading, writing, and language and students who were eager to share themselves if given the opportunity to do so. But there was a dimension of this new focus for my teaching that I had not anticipated. As students in class discussion and personal writings revealed more of themselves, they began to see me as a person they might talk to about personal matters. It was an easy transference from teacher to counselor. In class I was recognizing students as individuals, I was attending to what they were saying about their own lives, and I was accepting, rather than judging, each person as he offered himself to me and the class. These qualities, I came to understand, were central to the development of a helping relationship. Further, other teachers who were attempting to restructure their classes with the emphasis on the learner were experiencing the same kind of change in their relationships to students.

This was a rather frightening role for me. I saw among my colleagues some who used their new closer relations with students as an opportunity to manipulate the student. One teacher went so far as to take upon himself the task of converting a student who had confided her atheistic beliefs to him. I recognized the need for realizing my own
limitations in a counseling capacity. I needed guidelines. Nothing in my training as a teacher had given me these.

My initial drawing back from the role of counselor was counteracted by my awareness of the need. Very few days went by when someone didn't ask if I had any time to talk. Sometimes only a few minutes were needed: Tom, complaining that his father had made him get his hair cut; Sue, expressing her concern about her strong competitive drive. Often times I found myself more deeply involved. Having known Doug personally for two years, sharing with him some of his triumphs and failures, it seemed quite logical that I should be a person he would turn to when his father evicted him from the house at eleven o'clock on a Saturday night during a snow-storm. I was seeing the abstract descriptions of contemporary society fleshed out in the lives of many of my students.

My awareness of the need young people have to air their feelings, concerns, problems reached its climax in a very dramatic way. The local city council had appointed a task force to study the needs of youth in our community. I had been asked to come to a meeting to share my concerns as a teacher. We waited a few minutes for a junior high principal, who was a member of the task force, but began the meeting without him. When he arrived, he shared his distress with us. That afternoon one of the students in his school had been found dead in a teacher's car in the
school parking lot, having overdosed and suffocated in the September heat in the unventillated car. This incident prompted a terrible urgency in the deliberations of the task force. What can we do, rather than a perfunctory discussion, became a desperate cry. Increase the guidance staff was one suggestion. My experience led me to believe that the guidance department could never be large enough. Only those assertive students who made an appointment could benefit from their counseling skills. It seemed much more sensible to train teachers with enough counseling insight to provide at least a minimum of helpfulness. The teachers had the access to students. They needed time and training to make use of this access.

Besides counseling individual students, there was another benefit that resulted from developing better interpersonal relationships. I began to notice that I was having fewer and fewer discipline problems. When students realized I was hearing their concerns, a new atmosphere was created in the classroom. The respect I had given them, they returned. I saw evidence that they were respecting one another as well. The classroom became a community. In this atmosphere, learning seemed to be facilitated.

It was, then, with a great deal of enthusiasm that I read the new standards for teacher training. Human relations would perhaps get the attention it deserved. It had been neglected. John Kirker, chairperson of the
Department of Education, Capital University, was assigned the task of reading reports of the curriculum offerings in teacher training institutions in Ohio. He noted that human relations is generally a thread woven in the program in a nonexplicit way. Although some educational psychology courses deal with theories pertaining to human relations, there is little practical application of the theory. One is reminded of the complaint of the beginning teacher quoted earlier in this chapter: "I came out a model teacher with all this theory, and I'm lousy in practice." Argyris and Schon advocate the need for practical applications:

Learning a theory of action so as to become competent in professional practice does not consist of learning to recite the theory; the theory of action has not been learned in the most important sense unless it can be put into practice.⁶

In view of its importance, practical skill in human relations deserves more attention than it is currently receiving in teacher training institutions. In Teachers for the Real World B. Othaniel Smith articulates the need for a better program to improve pre-service teachers' ability to deal with people more effectively:

The prospective teacher's attitudes and feelings are too important to leave the shaping of them to the accidents of human association or to the interest of individual instructors. A definite plan for identifying personality problems and attitudes should be developed in every program of teacher education...There is a great deal of talk about the importance of personality and attitudes in teaching, but there is a complete lack of instructional materials for doing anything about
the development of proper attitudes and wholesome self-assessment and control.7

This investigation will explore a curriculum that might serve as a model for a human relations component in teacher training. Chapter II, "Survey of the Literature," provides the psychological foundation for such a course, presents evidence that personality characteristics facilitating human relations skills can be enhanced, and examines empirical studies that have investigated several methods for achieving this objective.

Chapter III presents a case study of a workshop conducted by the author with a group of English teacher trainees. This workshop focuses on the processes and outcomes when people learn to listen to one another. The major sources of data for Project Listening #1 are a journal by the investigator describing each session of the workshop, a reaction paper written by the students expressing their feelings about the first listening experience, reaction papers written by the participants and high school students to whom they listened, and tape recordings made by the participants during their listening sessions.

Chapter IV evaluates Project Listening #1 by presenting scores of the workshop group and a control group on a multiple choice listening test and a free response listening test. It also refers to evaluation papers and
questionnaires which participants in the workshop wrote after their experience.

Chapter V describes a workshop using much of the same material with an intergenerational group, adults and adolescents. Project Listening #2 seeks answers to the question what happens when adults listen to young people. Data for this workshop includes observations by the co-leaders, evaluations by the participants, and tape recordings made in intergenerational dyads.

Chapter VI presents the conclusions and implications of the study. It provides guidelines for effective listening practices when teachers listen to students. It offers some ideas for revision of the Project Listening materials. It presents the implications of the study for teacher training.


5. Ibid., p. 36.


CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to.

Thus Charles Dickens introduces in _Hard Times_ one of the most memorable teachers in literature. The chapter continues, Gradgrind interrogating a frightened girl about her father's occupation:

"Very well then. He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier, and horsebreaker. Give me your definition of a horse."

(Sissy Jupe thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand.)

"Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!" said Mr. Gradgrind, for the general behoof of all the little pitchers. "Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest of animals! Some boy's definition of a horse. Bitzer, yours."

The square finger, moving here and there, lighted suddenly on Bitzer, perhaps because he chanced to sit in the same ray of sunlight which, darting in one of the bare windows of the intensely whitewashed room, irradiated Sissy. For the boys and girls sat on the face of the inclined plane in two compact bodies, divided up the centre by a narrow interval; and Sissy, being at the corner of a row on the other side, a few rows in advance, caught the end......

12
"Bitzer," said Thomas Gradgrind. "Your definition of a horse."

"Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marsh countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth." Thus (and much more) Bitzer.

"Now girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind. "You know what a horse is."

There was something safe in the classroom Dickens satirized. Bitzer knows exactly what is expected of him and Sissy will learn some survival skills. Thomas Gradgrind has no role conflicts. His superior, Mr. McChoakumchild, has trained him well. That classroom was a closed, static system. In the 1950's the film Blackboard Jungle presented an unsettling picture. Who can forget the scene? Glen Ford, the teacher, brings in his priceless collection of Glen Miller records. Horrified, the audience watches as one of the class bullies breaks the records one by one. Popular culture has focused attention on one of the most dynamic arenas for studying human nature: the school classroom. Mr. Novak, Sir, and Cotter have become to their audiences folk heroes.

In addition to imaginative portrayals of life in classrooms, many popular commentaries on the state of education in America have focused public attention on schooling. Charles Silberman's Crisis in the Classroom urged reform. Ivan Illich in Deschooling Society advocated
abolition of the institution of public education itself. While the debate has raged over the open classroom versus the closed, the application of technology to the learning process versus the promotion of affective education, and, currently, the "back to basics" movement versus the supporters of a highly relevant curriculum, every September thousands of teachers face millions of youngsters. In that warm September meeting, the din of controversy is muted as each person in the room silently asks the question "What is going to happen here?" Furthermore, "what happens here" is in great measure dependent on the relationship that is established among this assortment of human beings. All of us are aware of that. Parents question their second-grader: "How do you think you're going to like Miss Jones?" Seniors ask each other: "Who did you get for English?" One of the chief orders of business in the teachers' lounge is the comparing of class lists on that first day of school: "You got both Chuck Marvin and Tim Arnold. You have my sympathy." Instinctively and empirically, teachers and students realize that "who you got" will influence the progress of the year.

The relationship between student and teacher can be very hostile. One principal cautioned before the opening day: "They'll look you over. They'll work you over." How destructive the relationship can be is vividly illustrated by Robert Samples. He was observing some
non-reading students in a drug-store. He noted that they were able to read the jokes in *Playboy* (always laughing in the right places.) He asked them if they could read *Playboy* why they were in the remedial reading clinic at school. A girl replied:

"Hey, you know what teachers want most? Well, they want you to do what they want. They put you down and yell and make you feel like shit if you don't do it. And the thing that puts them on top of you the most is if you don't read. Well, the worst of them is that damned reading teacher. She don't even think we're people. So when we git her--an' she makes sure we gotta come--we won't read for her. An' man, if you want to get the Man, then you don't do somethin' he wants you to do. We go in there an' won't read, and it drives that mother up a wall."¹

Admittedly, Samples' anecdote is extreme (though nose cutting for face spiting is so common an attribute of human nature a cliché has been coined to express the trait), but it illustrates the kind of problems that can arise when human relationships are not attended to.

When Philip Jackson asked the successful teachers he observed for an analysis of their success, he found their answers rather vague.² What makes a teacher effective is a very complicated matter. This study assumes that one of the ingredients essential to effectiveness in the classroom is the ability to interact productively with students. Stanford and Roark would go even farther:

...education is essentially a social process. That is, it is not something one acquires; it is something that occurs continually as a result of interaction with other human beings.
When education is viewed from this standpoint, it becomes apparent that what happens between teacher and student is more important than how much material is covered.3

Teacher education has been more concerned with preparing students with subject matter, methodology, and the historical, sociological, philosophic, and psychological foundations rather than how to be more effective in dealing with people.

The times are changing, however. What has been in the past slighted is now coming into prominence.

Fortunately, the behavioral sciences are ready. Arthur Combs describes the development of a branch of psychology that has great application for education:

Psychologists involved in this movement are called by many names. In the group may be found personalists, humanists, self psychologists, phenomenologists, perceptual psychologists, transactionalists, existentialists, and a number of others. All have in common a deep concern with questions of man's being and becoming. They take a view of behavior that is highly consistent with the experience of superior teachers: it is a point of view that sees people as growing, dynamic organisms. It regards human beings not as things to be made or molded but as unique events in the process of becoming. The impact of this new psychology is being felt everywhere in those professions having to do with the growth, development, and welfare of people. It has tremendous importance for education.4

Carl Rogers also is convinced of the applicability of the new humanistic psychology:

If I can make clear to a significant number of people the unused resource knowledge already available in the realm of interpersonal relationships, I will feel greatly rewarded.5
Rogers' own perceptual phenomenological theory provides a foundation for understanding the interpersonal aspects of the new psychology. He conceives man within the frame of the democratic idea: each individual has dignity and worth. The world, in Rogers' view, is as man perceives it to be. The primary motivating force for the individual is self-actualization: he wants to become all he can become. He is basically trustworthy and good. Man tends to be wiser in his emotional responses than he is in intellectual responses.

There are three ingredients in Rogers' personality theory: the individual; the phenomenal field, defined in terms of the individual's experience; and the individual's self-concept. The self-concept determines the extent to which the individual can achieve self-actualization. To achieve self-actualization, the individual has two needs: he needs the positive regard of others and he needs positive self-regard. From these two needs he develops conditions of worth: ways of behaving so that he can like himself and see that others like him as well. When his inner feelings are consistent with his behavior, he is referred to as "congruent." The "congruent" person has a feeling of satisfaction and contentment. He appears genuine and sincere. He is in a position to be empathetic and loving.
These views of man lay a foundation for Rogers' theories of interpersonal relationship, which will be explored in the next chapter where they are intrinsic to the discussion. This chapter now turns to the literature that explores the effect of the new psychology on the field of education.

Arthur Combs, a perceptual psychologist as well as an education theorist, conducted a study to determine what perceptions effective teachers have concerning other people. The following are the conclusions of this study:

Internal-External Frame of Reference. The good teacher's general frame of reference can be described as internal rather than external; that is to say, he seems sensitive to and concerned with how things seem to others with whom he interacts and uses this as a basis for his own behavior.

People-Things Orientation. Central to the thinking of the good teacher is a concern with people and their reactions rather than with things and events.

Meanings-Facts Orientation. The good teacher is more concerned with the perceptual experience of people than with the objective events. He is sensitive to how things seem to people rather than being exclusively concerned with concrete events.

Immediate-Historical Causation. The good teacher seeks the causes of people's behavior in their current thinking, feeling, beliefs, and understandings rather than in objective descriptions of the forces exerted upon them now or in the past.

Able-Unable. The good teacher perceives others as having the capacities to deal with their problems. He believes that they can find adequate solutions to events, as opposed to
doubting the capacity of people to handle themselves and their lives.

Friendly-Unfriendly. The good teacher sees others as being friendly and enhancing. He does not regard them as threatening to himself but rather sees them as essentially well-intentioned rather than evil-intentioned.

Worthy-Unworthy. The good teacher tends to see other people as being of worth rather than unworthy. He sees them as possessing a dignity and integrity which must be respected and maintained rather than seeing them as unimportant, as people whose integrity may be violated or treated as of little account.

Internally-Externally Motivated. The good teacher sees people and their behavior as essentially developing from within rather than as a product of external events to be molded, directed; sees people as creative, dynamic rather than passive or inert.

Dependable-Undependable. The good teacher sees people as essentially trustworthy and dependable in the sense of behaving in a lawful way. He regards their behavior as understandable rather than capricious, unpredictable, or negative.

Helpful-Hindering. The good teacher sees people as being potentially fulfilling and enhancing to self rather than impeding or threatening. He regards people as important sources of satisfaction rather than sources of frustration and suspicion.

The importance of attitudes toward people to the effectiveness of the teacher is further reinforced by other research. Carl Rogers has collected considerable data to support his theory that good interpersonal relationships facilitate learning. He notes, for example, that in a study by Bills (1961) eight teachers were divided into two groups labeled effective and ineffective by their superiors. The students of these teachers responded to the
Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory, giving their perceptions of the teacher's relationship to them. Those teachers ranked effective by their superiors were also ranked higher by students in three areas: they had a higher level of regard for students; they were more empathetic; they were less judgmental.  

Another study, conducted at Allegheny College in 1966-68, verified these findings. The results of this research showed that successful student teachers rated higher in self concept; were less confused, uncertain, and conflicting in their self perception; and showed greater similarity to well-integrated groups than less successful student teachers. A third study, conducted at the University of Massachusetts, showed the same results. Two groups of student teachers, one judged effective and one judged ineffective by their university supervisors, were evaluated on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. The effective group ranked significantly higher on the self-concept scale. In this same study the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory determined that effective teachers have a more positive attitude in dealing with other people.  

This evidence supports the thesis that two conditions are significant to teacher effectiveness: skill in human relations and a healthy self-concept.

This information dealing with the nature of effective teachers has proved valuable in the selection of teachers,
both as candidates to enter the teaching profession and in the hiring process as well. Fortunately, however, it is not necessary to screen out all those lacking these qualities because it has been demonstrated that these personality and attitudinal traits characteristic of effective teachers can be developed. Arthur Combs observes:

The characteristics of adequate personalities and the perceptual characteristics of effective professional workers are not inherent qualities. They are learned and what is learned can be taught. Research on the nature of adequacy has pointed the way. It remains for teacher educators to set about the business of achieving such ways of seeing self in our students with greater efficiency if we are to meet our responsibilities to the next generation.11

Personal growth courses are becoming a somewhat more frequent part of the teacher training curriculum. One form these courses take is sensitivity training. This kind of group is one "composed of about a dozen people who meet for the purpose of giving feedback on how each person's behavior affects the other people in the group."12 Cooper and Sadker found in the teacher training institutions they surveyed that 45% had no sensitivity training courses; 24% reported a small amount; 11% a good deal; and 3% extensive amounts.13 In an experiment conducted at Montclair State College, sensitivity training increased participant empathic understanding, level of regard, unconditionality of regard, and congruence. In addition, the research
revealed that people who tended to be aloof and distant with others benefited from the training as much as people who tended to be open and friendly.\textsuperscript{14}

In a study reported by Edwin McClain, a different kind of treatment was used. The course, composed of seniors and first year graduate students, included a reading list upon which students were tested, the administration of personality tests with discussions of the meanings of the results, a self-study in which the student analyzed and synthesized the test data "in terms of personality dynamics, coping patterns, and an assessment of personal adequacy."\textsuperscript{15} After the self-study, the same personality instruments were administered and a final paper was written in which the students analyzed changes in the test scores. Results of this experiment showed that students moved significantly toward self-actualization.

Through an experimental course in self-discovery, Michael Bennett of The Ohio State University was able to achieve similar results. By pre- and post-testing of two experimental and two control groups using the Personal Orientation Inventory and the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Scales, Bennett reached the following conclusions:

The results clearly demonstrate that students experiencing the experimental self-development course became more socially comfortable and expressive. We have seen how the literature has described the process of humanistic education as social, seeing the helping relationship as central
to the process. These results suggest that the students experiencing the experimental course have become more able to fully enter into the social interaction demanded of the humanistic educator. 16

Thus far this survey has addressed itself to the personal characteristics of teachers that facilitate learning and the means by which these characteristics can be developed or enhanced. These same characteristics are those identifiable in the therapist as well as the teacher. It could be concluded, therefore, that the effective teacher could become an effective counselor. Robert Carkhuff reports experiments with training lay people, such as teachers, in basic counseling skills and has arrived at some particularly interesting observations:

Extensive evidence indicates that lay persons can be trained to function at minimally facilitative levels of conditions related to constructive client change over relatively short periods of time. Both carefully screened college graduates interested in school guidance activities and unselected volunteers from the school, hospital, and community at large demonstrate change in the direction of more facilitative functioning on dimensions related to constructive client change or gain in training periods ranging from twenty hours to one year.

While there are few directly comparable studies, in general, following training, on both identical and converted indexes lay trainees function at levels essentially as high or higher (never significantly lower) and engage clients in counseling process movement at levels as high or higher than professional trainees. 17

The second observation, that lay persons effect client change as well as or better than professionally trained counselors calls into question both the selection process
and the training of professional counselors. For the purposes of this study, however, the point that even as little as twenty hours of training can equip lay persons to deal with others in a beneficial therapeutic setting is encouraging.

Carkhuff has developed a training program for helpers. This program divides the helping function into four phases: attending, responding, initiating, and communicating. Carkhuff's skills model for developing effective lay counselors goes a few steps farther than the course described in this study. In Teacher as Person Shirley McCune in the Preface articulates what Carkhuff is trying to do:

Effective teaching begins with the teacher's ability to enter the student's frame of reference--to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of each student's experience and to use this experience to affirm a student's learning potential. Accomplishment of this task requires developing the skills of truly "hearing" what students are saying, acknowledging our understanding by providing meaningful responses, and developing educational activities based on the individual needs of the student. These interpersonal skills are the first building blocks for increasing one's effectiveness in the classroom.

It is to the hearing of and responding to the student that the skill development in Project Listening addresses itself.

The research surveyed thus far suggests that to help prospective teachers become more effective facilitators of
learning, their education needs to attend to their personal growth and the development of interpersonal skills.

Both these dimensions need attention not only in the preparation period, but also after the teacher has become involved with interpersonal relationships in the classroom. In *Teaching as Learning*, Clark Moustakas chronicles the growth of teachers who met to explore their interactions with students, parents, and other teachers. This work provides considerable indication that processing of interactions can be a valuable experience leading to the personal growth of the teacher.

Another study describes a similar group experience for in-service growth. Ann Ruben conducted consultation groups for experienced and beginning teachers. Her methods might well be used in student teaching seminars. One of the most interesting parts of this case study is her explanation of the dynamics of teachers' expressed views. From tapes of the session, she directly quotes the teachers in the consulting group. In the margin, she writes what she believes the teacher is really saying. Often frustration with student behavior is a defense against admitting one's own sense of inadequacy. As a result of these consultation groups, teachers reported that they were less frustrated with their teaching situation. Ruben reports the results:

Consultation groups have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to help beginning as well as experienced elementary and secondary teachers,
school psychologists, social workers, counselors and principals to significantly improve their Minnesota Teachers' Attitude Inventory score. (Ruben, 1971, '74.) Moreover with few exceptions, those who have attended these groups have reported that what they gained in terms of insight and concrete alternatives for coping with students have made teaching immeasurably more satisfying.22

Some research has sought to determine what kind of format creates the best results in improving interpersonal communication. Archer and Kagan, teaching interpersonal skills to non-counseling students, divided 1200 students into three groups: One group utilized a non-structured, sensitivity-type training; the second group was presented with a structured curriculum; the third group received no treatment.23

The structured training consisted of four learning tasks. First, the group saw filmed segments of actors portraying various emotions. The participant was asked to describe what the actor seemed to be communicating. The second task was listening to tapes to discern whether or not the speaker was taking responsibility for his feelings, "owning his feelings." The trainees then explored their own feelings. The purpose of the third part of the training was to develop empathy. First, the group listened to a taped statement, followed by a taped response. Each response was rated on an empathy scale. These ratings were discussed. The second phase of the empathy training required the trainees to make an empathic response to a taped segment.
The final step in the structured program was "interpersonal process recall." Three trainees rotated between roles of speaker, listener, inquirer. The listener was instructed to be as empathic as possible in his responses during the taped sessions with the speaker. The inquirer listened to the tape and then helped the listener recall his feelings during the taping period. After this practice the trainees worked as listener or inquirer with a speaker from outside the triad.

To evaluate the learning that took place in this experiment, Archer and Kagan used the following instruments: the Affective Sensitivity Scale, the Personal Orientation Inventory, the Wisconsin Relationship Orientation Survey, and the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory. Results showed the structured curriculum was more effective than the non-structured, sensitivity groups. This research has considerable implication for teacher training since the program was designed to be used with non-counseling students.

Another study investigated the effectiveness of modeling as part of a training program to develop empathy in a group of clergymen. In this study, modeling combined with didactic instruction produced higher empathic responses than the didactic instruction alone. This study suggests that the trainer's behavior should exemplify the behavior he verbally describes.
A final study provides some valuable data. The task was to teach empathy to parents of early adolescents. The research question was would there be a greater transfer of training if there was a greater similarity between training and real life. Would the parents whose children were included in training display a higher empathy level on a behavioral test than would parents whose children participated in a separate group or not at all. The results of this research revealed that there was no significant difference in the three experimental groups. This study suggests that teachers could learn to empathize in a laboratory setting as well as in direct interaction with students. It might be noted, however, that other objectives might be met if students and teachers experienced the same kind of training in the same group.

From this survey of research several conclusions seem warranted:

1. The quality of the interpersonal relationship between student and teacher affects the learning process.

2. It is possible for teachers to develop personality traits and attitudes as well as interpersonal skills that characterize effective teachers.

3. Skill development seems to be enhanced by structured activities more than unstructured meetings.

The next chapter of this investigation will describe a course conducted by the author which emphasized the
development of listening skills and also provided opportunities for personal development.
FOOTNOTES -- CHAPTER II


CHAPTER III

PROJECT LISTENING IN TEACHER TRAINING

Project Listening came into existence as a result of the experience of Herbert Adams, minister of the Follen Community Church in Lexington, Massachusetts. In 1970 he became aware of the critical need for improving communication after witnessing student riots at Harvard University. He movingly describes the riot:

By 1 a.m. on April 16, 1970, most of the hard rioting was over. The screaming, trashing thousands of adolescents that had moved up Massachusetts Avenue from Central to Harvard Square about 10:30 had pretty much been scattered by the grim, disciplined ranks of adults. All that remained of the student mob were a few scattered bands, intent upon keeping up the hassling and harassment of uniformed and helmeted police. There were a half-dozen or so canisters of tear gas yet to be fired, but essentially the streets were clear.

The truncheon-wielding police were still there, standing properly in platoons; and the haze and smell of smoke lingered, too. Rapid barks from nervous dogs had become a common part of the night's milieu. I heard one jangling alarm bell that seemed to go on and on, from some violated shop on Church Street.

I remember very well the hollow sadness of that moment, as I stood on our front steps on Farewell Place. It seemed to me that the confrontation had been a monstrous exaggeration, and absolutely devoid of value. It had been a slice of war, a special madness, like a family turned against itself.1
He continues, indicating the genesis of what was to be **Project Listening**:

As a clergyman, I felt some responsibility for what had happened. It was obvious to me that neither side thought about religion during the frenzy of the battle. It was also obvious to me that neither "army" appreciated what the hands and feet and faces on the other side were about. People lost their personhood. The hatred was heavy in the air and mixed well with the acrid smoke. What good education? What good religion? In the heat of the riot, it seemed to me that any sense of personal morality was incongruous—splintered with the first plate glass store front.

That was the beginning, I think, of my attempt to find some way to help prevent such a pointless and hurtful experience from recurring. ...I wanted to do something to bring about better communication among at least some of the people I saw in agony that night. They needed to be taught to care for others.

Adams focused on the development of listening skills to help people improve their interpersonal communication. He devised a curriculum, which included lectures, demonstrations of listening techniques, and practice listening sessions, and tested it with a group of adults and adolescents from his congregation. This experience he described in his doctoral dissertation. Later, he refined the course for publication by Beacon Press, making the curriculum available for Unitarian-Universalist Church schools. It was published under the title **Project Listening**.

In his dissertation he describes the growth of the participants in the course. His chief documentation is by
reference to the taped records of the first and third practice listening experiences. He also incorporates testimonial letters from some of the participants. Although his conclusions are general, he and a representative from Beacon Press, who observed the workshop, believed the results of the experiment warranted the publication of the materials in a curriculum kit. Before publishing the materials, Adams made some additions and changes. He developed a listening test to be administered at the beginning of the course. In place of the guest lecturer, William Rogers, who at the time of the Follen Church workshop was under joint appointment to the Divinity School and the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University, Adams presented the academic content on cassette tapes.

In his dissertation is the following statement of purpose of Project Listening:

The central focus of this project and this course could accurately be described, I think, as the enabling of its participants to respond to fellow humans in ways which "do nurture and enhance the human spirit." 3

Though he used no rigorous evaluation instrument, the letters from participants indicate that most felt that they had experienced considerable personal growth, and his analysis of the taped listening practices indicate some improvement in participants' listening skills.

Project Listening struck a responsive chord in me because I was searching for some means to help prospective
teachers improve their abilities in dealing with people. I knew of the desperation student teachers experienced when they attempted to deal with student hostility. I saw them become disillusioned. Though many of them had entered their first teaching assignment with excellent materials to present, they found their chief problem solving human relations dilemmas. They were not prepared to deal with rudeness or inattentiveness or apathy. Their cooperating teachers, who were also frustrated by these behaviors, warned them not to get friendly if they did not want to lose their power. Frightened by such warnings, the student teachers often made feeble attempts at imitating the teacher, only to find that authoritarian methods if they succeeded in keeping order barred them from feeling satisfied. "I hate being a policeman," was a frequent cry.

I could empathize with them, not only because of my own extensive secondary teaching experience but because of a very recent conflict I had encountered in my first college teaching assignment, an English methods class. Excited about the materials I had prepared for one class session, I handed out a poem, asking one student who had indicated an interest in oral interpretation to read it aloud. She looked at the poem, wadded it into a ball, and threw it on the floor. My reaction was immediate and defensive: "Well, I'm sure someone else would like to read the poem." I called on another person. The rest of the
class period was tense. The offensive student withdrew. After class I commented to a colleague, "I played teacher today." Then it occurred to me that this interaction might provide a good lesson if the class processed it. The next class period I reviewed what had happened and my feelings of the moment: how threatened I had felt; how angry I was; how the behavior had unsettled my confidence to teach the class; how I interpreted the behavior as a personal affront and had been embarrassed in front of the rest of the class. Then I told the class that I realized that these immediate reactions were interpretive. I had assumed the cause of the student's behavior. At this point I looked at the student. She had a slight smile on her face and was shaking her head. "You read the wrong things into my behavior," she said. "I'm sorry. What actually was going on with me had nothing to do with you. I looked at the poem and remembered the many days in my senior honors English class when we had been expected to analyze poems. I never was very good at that. I dreaded those classes because I couldn't see all the symbolism that the rest of the class saw." After class, several members stayed to tell me how the dialogue between the student and me had been the first experience they'd had in school where there had been discussion of a real interaction between people. The following day I checked this observation out with the
rest of the class. They agreed that this kind of processing would be most helpful.

**Project Listening** seemed to provide a substantive basis for analyzing real interpersonal communication. The practice listening sessions were to be taped and the processing of these tapes would be a practical experience that could have direct application to the teaching situation.

It promised to fulfill another need as well. Student teachers often reported their frustrations in helping individual students with personal problems. They sometimes found themselves emotionally involved. They were unsure of how much advice they should give. They needed some perspective on the counseling role they found themselves in. Since it was based on the counseling philosophy of Carl Rogers, **Project Listening** could provide a set of ground rules that would provide the student with a safe psychological foundation. It would not make students amateur psychoanalysts; it would provide them with insights into what basic conditions were needed for a helping relationship.

There was a third reason for using **Project Listening**. It was designed to be used by laymen. It did not require the leadership of a trained psychologist; nor did it rely heavily on the charismatic quality of leadership that make some encounter groups successful. It seemed that whatever
good results could arise with using the materials might easily be replicated by others in teacher education. A course in personal growth and self-awareness, recently developed and tested at The Ohio State University, had produced results that were highly impressive. But the researcher who directed the course was trained in counseling, had a charismatic personality, and made himself available for counseling students in the course on a one-to-one basis. These factors raised the question of how replicable the results would be with leadership from a general teacher training faculty. If Project Listening could be utilized in any teacher training setting with the leadership that might be available, its usefulness would be increased.

A DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT LISTENING #1

To recruit students from the English methods course, I explained how important I felt listening was to the total teaching process, especially to the English teacher. I briefly described the objectives of Project Listening and my desire to test these materials in a teacher education setting. I outlined the activities of the course.

Although I stressed the point that the ten sessions would not be group therapy, I emphasized that the nature of the format would require that each student be willing to talk on a one-to-one basis to another student and that these
conversations would be recorded and played to the group as a whole. One student responded: "Well, we ought to be willing to do that. We're not a bunch of 'sickies.'" Fourteen students expressed interest. I told them that I would have to cut off enrollment at twelve and that I expected a commitment from those who participated. The next day ten women arrived for the first session. Nine completed the project. During the ten weeks there was minimal absenteeism.

Session I

To initiate the first session the class shared their reasons for volunteering for Project Listening. In addition to their desires to improve their listening skills for teaching, several of them expressed certain communication problems they were experiencing with peers (usually roommates or boyfriends) and their families. They appreciated the importance of listening in human relationships and seemed eager to improve. Then they listed the qualities they wanted in a listener. Among their dislikes were people who, not paying attention to what they were hearing, seemed rather to be waiting to get to their own agenda and people who judged them and did not give them a

* Adams recommends fourteen participants with two leaders.
feeling of acceptance. At this point, I displayed the poster from the kit. The poster shows three speakers and three listeners and is titled "Recognizing, Attending, Accepting." The class agreed that these concepts were fundamental if the listening process was to be helpful.

The session concluded with the playing of a tape from the kit, "Introduction to Listening in Interpersonal Communication." The tape describes the kind of listening that Project Listening is attempting to develop:

It is a type of listening which goes beneath the surface of simply what is said and attends more carefully, with appreciation and acceptance, to the feelings and intended meanings being expressed by the other person. It is when one is engaged in this type of listening that one can be said to be listening "deeply." It is the purpose of this program to explore ways in which our capabilities to listen "deeply" can be strengthened, not only for the sake of greater efficiency and understanding in our communication with one another, but also in the conviction that wherever there is an increased capacity for listening deeply there will be a reduction of misunderstanding and an increase in harmony, support, and affection for one another.

The specific goals for Project Listening are also outlined on the tape:

1. To develop a small group climate of trust and acceptance in which we can mutually explore our own growth as good listeners;
2. To learn to discriminate a number of styles of listening responses;
3. To learn modes of effectively communicating to other persons, our understanding of their meanings and feelings;
4. To discover and correct some of the problems that stand in the way of our own communication;
5. To give and receive feedback on areas where we listen either accurately or inaccurately;
6. To discover the depth of personal self-revelation and growth which is possible when real experiences are shared and genuinely heard;
7. To strengthen within the entire group as we engage jointly in empathetically understanding the sometimes trivial and the sometimes very important experiences of one another.

We discussed these goals briefly and adjourned.

Session II

The first activity of the second session was the administration of a listening test, "Styles of Listening, Exercise I" (hereafter referred to as Listening Test #1). This test consists of quotations from a speaker of specified age and sex and a choice of five responses that a listener might make:

VIII - Statement by a 25 Year Old Male

I feel like I want to do something really important about social change—like maybe going to live in the inner city and work with kids in the schools there. But the environment seems so stifling. I want to get outdoors, to live in a community of people I love—close to nature...

What would be your response?

1. I worry about that too—and often end up feeling like I'm doing nothing.
2. Do you know a commune you could join?
3. Maybe you would find people in the inner city have a kind of community of concern for each other—and for you, so you could resolve it that way.
4. Where are you living now?

5. That's a real bind isn't it--feeling responsible to people in tough situations and needing things for yourself as well that seem to conflict.

Each test item has at least one facilitative response. (The one for the statement above is #5.) Since the same instrument was to be used as a post-test, the pre-test was not analyzed. In a latter workshop when the test was analyzed immediately following the administering of it, participants found the results helpful. A more complete analysis of the test and the data collected in this session will be reported and interpreted in Chapter IV, "Evaluation of Project Listening #1."

The second activity of the second session was listening to a tape from the kit titled "Demonstration of Three General Styles of Listening." In this tape a passive listener, a manipulative listener, and a facilitative listener all respond to the same speaker dealing with the same problem. The discussion that followed showed a certain degree of hostility to the idea that one way was better. "I didn't like any of them," Mary said. "My cat died, too, and I don't think any of the listeners showed enough compassion to the man whose cat had died." I was sorry I didn't ask Mary to demonstrate for the class how she would have responded.
Mary's reaction was interesting for another reason. The entire focus of the conversation had been not on the death of the cat but on the reaction of the man's daughter to the experience. Mary's remark illustrates the point that listeners often identify with a minor thread and fail to hear the major idea. We were to see this occur at other times during the workshop, but during the second session neither I nor any of the participants were aware of Mary's failure to "hear" what the man was saying. Instead I found myself becoming very defensive in support of the third style. After the class, I realized that as the leader I was going to have to model good listening practices.*

The third activity was listening to the tape called "Anne," which demonstrates how good listening can move a person to greater insight into his or her feelings. The speaker in "Anne" begins in a very positive way. She is delighted with a project she has just completed. During the tape, however, she begins to realize that her life is filled with such a variety of activity that she has not excelled in any one thing. This tape brought several negative responses. Jean was particularly upset: "He brought her from a good place to a bad place. I think a listener should make you feel better." This comment was to

* Modeling as a technique for training has been shown effective. See the discussion of the Perry research, p. 27.
be picked up later when we were evaluating tapes made in class.

The first listening practice was scheduled for the next meeting. I had arranged for special rooms. Private rooms, or at least enough space so that conversations in the background do not distract, are an important requirement for the success of Project Listening. These tapes become the content for class evaluation and need to be as audible as possible. Several people volunteered to bring in cassette recorders.

Session III

There was an air of excitement as students arrived for their first taping session. Those who had promised brought tape recorders. I supplied the tapes, explaining that I would keep them to use later in my report on the project unless they particularly objected. Before dispersing to taping rooms, we read a transcript of the "Anne" tape that had been played in the previous meeting. Jean changed her mind about the criticism, seeing that the somewhat depressed mood Anne was in by the end of the tape was implicit in what she had said early in the interview and was not the result of an interpretation by the listener.

I commented on my defensiveness at the session before. Mary smiled. Somehow it seemed we were becoming closer as a group. There was a different attitude in the class than
I had sensed before. People were openly expressing their anxieties about the taping: "What will I talk about for a half hour?" I pointed out that they need not use the whole half hour. We discussed the possibilities of making a report on our workshop to the rest of the English methods class. Students also indicated an interest in arranging a meeting with high school students. They agreed to write a paper about their reactions to the first practice listening experience for the next class session.

At the half way point in our two-hour class, the students left for their rooms. I paired them. By the end of the second hour, I had five tapes returned. As each group came in, I noticed a good deal of exhilaration. Several commented positively on the experience.

Session IV

By this session, I had listened to all the tapes. One of my first observations was that the quality of the listening depended on the significance of the speaking. We were striving for empathetic and focusing responses. The listener was to be in an attitude of "Recognizing, Attending, Accepting." These responses and these attitudes could more easily be revealed if the speaker was dealing with a significant issue. For that reason the tape made by Judy and Lisa was more interesting to replay and discuss than some of the others. The fact that these two participants
had both been in counseling may have accounted for the ease
with which they were able to deal with stressful situations
with a person who was a stranger. It may also have
accounted for their abilities to avoid some of the pitfalls
of listening. (This tape will be discussed in detail in
the next section of this chapter.) Judy reported that the
listening session had really been valuable for her,
motivating her to take some action to solve her problem.
In her written evaluation, she said:

I felt really good after talking to Lisa, better
than I had for quite a while and good enough to
start taking some action on my problem. I guess
that's ample testimony to Lisa's listening.

She also had some interesting comments about her own
listening:

I think Lisa and I both pretty well overcame our
initial discomfort with the tape recorder. Lisa
is really easy to listen to because she's a
fluent talker; also, I feel drawn to her and was
really interested. I think one thing my self-
consciousness did was make me repress some
comments or questions I might ordinarily have
blurted out because I identified with things that
Lisa was saying, and I think that it's good I
started to sort out these responses.

The class also listened to portions of a tape made by
Jean and Carol. Jean had been a dominant figure in the
class up to this point. She seemed a little older than
most of the other women and, in general, projected a kind
of maternal attitude. In Listening Test #1 four of her
responses had been advising. She projected this tendency
in her first tape. Carol began talking about her desire to
get to know students when she becomes a teacher. She explained that teachers in the high school she had attended were very distant and aloof or very friendly and understanding. She pointed out that the friendly teachers, the ones she learned the most from, had been dismissed:

Carol: The second set of teachers saw us as we were—people, individuals, with individual needs, and who wanted to get to know us not inside the classroom but outside as well. I feel like I'd like to be that kind of teacher...But, those were the teachers who were dismissed and I'm just afraid if it's that way in most schools where the administrators...disapprove...of the teachers who want to get to know their students, not totally personally, but individually, I'm just afraid that I'm going to have problems there too.

Jean: It seems like, just what you're saying, there are people who are very distant or like machines towards their students, spouting out information, or on a very close friendship basis. There seems to be no middle ground. These teachers you were talking about were dismissed because they were friends with the students?

Carol: Yes, that is the only reason.

Jean: Do you think there could be a balance somewhere in between, where you could maintain yourself as a professional yet still care? Without totally involving your life with theirs? Or does that annoy you, that idea?

Carol: No. (pause) No, it doesn't annoy me I just don't see how (pause) Yes, I think maybe I could balance it, without deterring positive learning and without losing my job. I would have to learn how to do it and that comes with experience. Maybe I could. Gee, I never thought of that...I think maybe I could.

Jean: The basic elements of compassion and concern—those are the most important things, but what
good would it do your students if you are dismissed?

Jean: If you weren't teaching (Carol: That's right) it wouldn't do them any good. And it seems if you could strike some sort of balance in between. You must consider the community, the school officials and a lot of parents object to their children becoming very close to their instructors. I personally don't, but that's a reality you have to contend with.

The conversation continues with Jean continuing to be dominant. Carol wrote about this experience:

I found her (Jean) to be sincere and really attentive while I revealed my fears and hopes. Her comments and physical gestures, and facial expressions helped me to talk comfortably and encouraged my ambitions as a future English teacher.

Undoubtedly Jean was trying to be helpful in giving some kind of solution to the problem Carol had raised, but her response did not give Carol a chance to sufficiently ventilate her feelings nor did it help Carol to achieve a solution by herself. That Carol accepts almost eagerly Jean's proposal suggests that answers are what she wants, but in a speaker-listener encounter the responsibility for solving the problem should remain with the listener.

Jean apparently was not particularly well pleased with her listening on the first tape. She wrote:

I sort of felt like Dick Cavett. I seemed to be probing Carol in order to keep things moving.

Jean did, in fact, take a great deal of responsibility both for keeping the listener talking by asking questions and giving solutions to the speaker.
The session ended by playing short excerpts from each of the rest of the tapes, discussing technical problems, and reminding students to come prepared to tape again in Session V.

Session V

The discussion opened by analyzing where the class saw their listening skills improving. There was considerable agreement that whether or not they were improving, they were raising their awareness of the listening process. I read them the following excerpt from Shay's paper:

I think that we (Shay and Jenny) both really tried to be good listeners. I know that I was very conscious of the way I should react to her words. However, Saturday a friend came over to talk and before he had even expressed his whole problem, I jumped into the conversation and offered advice, comments, etc. It was only later that I realized what I had done.

And, indeed, I was learning a good bit about my own listening practices. I identified with Jean. Most surely I would have given Carol the same "sensible" advice. I saw ways in which, had I been listening to Judy, I would have been much more maternal and protective than Lisa. Lisa had abstained from the kind of reassurance many people find so easy to give, a kind of "there, there, everything will be all right" response. Although this response may be comforting, it questions the authenticity of the feelings expressed.
The next activity was listening to another of the kit tapes, "Listening and Personal Development." We discussed the Sullivan taxonomy presented in the tape: "Protaxic," parataxic," and "syntaxic" communication. I shared an incident from my teaching experience in which a student whom I had reprimanded blurted out: "If I sucked around your desk after class, the way some people do, you wouldn't have been down on me today." After some consultation with the student's counselor, I learned that this girl was really asking for attention and notice. She felt overshadowed at home by her high-achieving sister. Her lashing out at me was a cry to be noticed.

Another point of discussion was the idea that the fact of being listened to does contribute to an individual's personal development:

Being listened to...is one of the most interpersonal ways through which a person can begin to feel a greater sense of freedom and a greater sense of the realities of one's own feelings and experience. If we can find someone who listens to us at considerable depth and with caring, accuracy, and understanding, then our own need to protect our masklike self image may begin to diminish. When we feel understood there is less need to pretend. And when we pretend less, we can reveal more of our real experience, "own" more of our experience, and to that extent be more whole.

After our discussion, I suggested some topics that might generate tapes on more significant issues than the first tapes had produced:
What are some of the good things you feel about yourself?  
What would you like written in your obituary?  
When did your communication not reveal how you really felt?

The students were paired with new partners and were off for their taping sessions.

After they left, I pondered the tape "Listening and Personal Development" which we had heard and realized that there were indications that people were growing. The class seemed quieter. All of them had heard themselves on tape. They had listened to Judy and Lisa with particular attention. I was curious to hear what the second taping would reveal and began to wonder whether the fact of being listened to wasn't going to become as valuable part of Project Listening as learning the listening techniques.

Session VI

I came to this session excited about what I had heard on the tapes. There was an ease and fluency in most of them, less of the chit-chat quality. Shay, before discussing a particularly troubling happening over the week-end, said on the tape: "I wished this class could have been Monday so that I could have talked with someone about this." Jane's tape was one we focused on because in it she expressed so much frustration at a communication failure. Shay's listening to her was empathetic and
focusing. (This tape will be discussed in the next section.)

We watched a film showing Carl Rogers with a client, "Three Approaches to Psychotherapy, Part I." Rogers explains at the beginning of the film what he is attempting to do as a counselor. He says he attempts to be "transparent," showing outside, what he is feeling inside. He hopes to prize and care about his client, giving her non-possessive love. Finally, he hopes he will be able to understand her inner world, knowing what it feels like to be her. If these conditions are met, then he thinks she will be able to explore more deeply into herself and become more aware and accepting of what she is feeling; move from a sense of remoteness to immediacy as she discusses her situation; and move from an outside locus of control for her behavior to an inner locus. Rogers is able to achieve these objectives in the filmed interview. The climate, the conditions, and the relationship that Rogers creates facilitate her movement from a confused and disoriented position to a positive and serene one. The class shared Gloria's frustration when Rogers avoided answering her direct questions. The fact that she finally answered her own questions was evidence of the effectiveness of his techniques.

We discussed the application of Rogerian therapy to the whole of education; the powerful position the teacher
is in—giving advice, making judgments, steering the ship—and how rewarding it can be to see the student navigating for himself. Good listening, we decided, was one way for teachers to help facilitate that process.

Session VII

At the beginning of this session we discussed the possibility of going to a local high school to talk with students. This trip was arranged. The results are discussed on pages 59, 60, and 61.

Lisa told about a communication problem she had had with her husband and his friend. Jean commented that she was experiencing a good bit of personal change: "I'm not giving so many sermonettes. No so much one-upsmanship. I really think I'm interacting." Rexann mentioned how frustrating some conversations were becoming to her: "They are just monologues with each person having his turn."

Shay mentioned that she had been a third person when two friends were arguing and described how they had tried to involve her in the argument. We talked about the second taping. Lisa objected to Mary's questioning style. Rexann felt as if Jenny's "really's" were more distracting than helpful. We decided it was hard to listen when the listener himself was feeling depressed. It was apparent that the class was becoming critically aware of the listening process. We briefly discussed the five chapters
in *On Becoming a Person* that are recommended reading for *Project Listening*. The session ended with plans for the visit to the English methods class.

**SESSION VIII**

The visit to the English methods class proved interesting. A debate developed between two men in the class and the project participants concerning whether women are naturally more empathetic than men. This seems a valid question, especially in view of the fact that the volunteers were all female. Culturally, of course, the role of the female as nurturing parent is well established in Western culture. Kenneth Clark in *Civilisation* interprets the cult of the Virgin Mary, arising in the twelfth century, which put the mother in prominence, as an attempt to balance "the male virtues of courage and physical strength" with the female virtues of "gentleness and compassion." That this designation of attributes is cultural rather than genetic seems hardly in need of defense in 1977. If evidence is warranted, one might point to the anthropological studies of Radcliffe-Brown who, in *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, devotes a chapter on the position of the mother's brother, who becomes a kind of male mother to the child in some primitive societies. One would also hope that the distinction be understood between nurture and
permissiveness. The empathetic listener hopes to see the speaker become a mature and responsible individual, not a spoiled child. As Samples points out, acceptance does not imply approval. Finally, the idea that men may be culturally conditioned to avoid developing empathizing skills underscores the need for this kind of training for men entering the teaching profession.

Another comment that the men in the class made was that since women are not responsible for the financial welfare of the family, they have more time to pursue personal growth activities. The women were quick to label this remark sexist. They also challenged one man's reference to them as "girls" and to the males in the class as "men." In processing what had happened in the class, the women realized that they had not used their listening skills. Processing this class interaction was a valuable experience and revealed the need for other kinds of experiences in interpersonal communication, like assertiveness training, confrontation, and conflict resolution.

The next activity was listening to the last tape from the kit, "Diverting Responses in Listening." This tape provided a review of the points that had been made during the course of the work-shop. The students seemed to find the labels given on the tape helpful. Some tactics for the listener to avoid, according to the tape, are:
1. "Me-too-ism":

This kind of response has the effect of changing channels on the person who is sharing his experience with us. It prevents him from expressing his personal and unique innermost feelings or deep sensitivities about his own experience, and asks him to pay attention to our feelings—our agenda. Of course, we don't do this out of any intent to deny the importance of the other person's experience. Rather our feeling may be that we can express our understanding best if we can say, "Me-too," if we can say that we "share" a similar experience and know, therefore, what the talker is going through. We often do that in an honest attempt to be helpful. The effect, however, is almost always to prevent genuine sharing and to replace it with a mild rejection. The talker is not encouraged to explore his own feelings when we do that and certainly we are not identifying with his, or even hearing them, if we are telling him about our own.

2. "District Attorney":

We ask questions all the time of the talker, perhaps because we want to show him that we really care about what he is saying...It's the kind of question which focuses the conversation on our acquiring information and data which we may think is important and from which we can perhaps suggest solutions for the solving of the problem. But what is the point of our gathering data? What is the reason for our acquiring information? We are not going to offer solutions. Providing...a solution is not what we are about when we are involved in good listening.

3. "Used to be":

This is a diversionary response in which we actually encourage someone to talk about how he felt about something in the past, rather than focusing him or her on how he or she feels about it now. Sometimes a talker avoids his present feelings by describing how he felt...When in a serious conversation, someone begins to talk with you about the past, you can be most helpful as a good listener, by encouraging the talker to focus on his present feelings.
4. "Third party":

Conjecturing about what another person's feelings may be, what his motivations are, or the why of his behavior, may result in hours of fascinating conversation, really interesting, but what is finally most important, as far as any response by the talker to that person is concerned, is his own feelings about him. It is the responsibility of the deep listener to help the talker focus on the talker's feelings, for they are the ground out of which any authentic response to the third person might arise.

5. "Hollow, shallow, fragment response":

The talker experiences the listener as he experiences the wall in a handball game. In a handball game he serves the ball up, it hits the wall and bounces back. But the wall never received the ball. So it is with a listener who engages in "hollow" responses. The talker serves up his feelings and they bounce back...He has not been recognized as a unique, unrepeatable person.12

After playing this tape, several of the students commented that they would have liked to have heard it before the two taping sessions.

Plans were made final for our trip to Westerville North High School where high school students would be listened to by the Project Listening participants. Then we adjourned.

Session IX

Prior to the last taping session, we reviewed and discussed the happenings when listeners tried out their skills on high school students. After the listening sessions, both the women from Ohio State and the high
school students wrote reaction papers. It was interesting that some of the students confided rather personal matters to their listeners. The girl whom Mary talked to got into the subject of death and related two incidents from her own recent experience. Mary seemed happy with her own responsiveness:

I actually found myself saying, "How do you feel about that?" "that really bothered you, didn't it?" Each time she either elaborated on the point or said, "Yes, it does because---."...All in all, it went much better than I had expected. I thought in such a contrived, artificial setting, discussion would be minimal and irrelevant. I was quite surprised...

Judy talked to a girl who was worried about the fact that other students were calling her and her best friend lesbians.

The speaker wrote about Judy:

The person I was with was really nice. She said she understood how I felt and that she felt exactly the same way. She listened and brought up good questions pertaining to the subject. She was really nice and I'd like very much to talk to her again. I thought this was going to be boring, but it was fantastic.

Rhonda found the experience frustrating:

Jody and I began to talk about her girlfriend who wanted to date her old boyfriend. I think that she thought I was a beginning therapist because she wanted advice, not to talk about it. We just talked about it--her attitudes, what she and her friend had talked about...I think she decided to sit down with her friend and try to exchange all their thoughts about the situation...It was hard for me not to say that the same thing had happened to me and tell her what I did.

Rhonda expresses a common problem of the listener, the desire to share one's own experience. In Project Listening,
she learned that this practice is not very helpful to the speaker and was able to restrain herself. Jody, the speaker, seemed to appreciate Rhonda's listening style:

I felt very comfortable around her and I think it went very well. I've been trying to think of someone to talk to about this problem I had so it helped me solve it through talking with her and I feel a lot better about it now.

Several students expressed positive feelings about being listened to. Walt wrote, "I really think this experience was quite interesting. I think it should be done more often." Lynette's note hints that she may not find a good listener very frequently:

I thought that Jane really listened to everything I said very well. Although I felt awkward at first, I was very at ease at the end. She smiled as though she knew just exactly how I felt...She made it seem like everything I said was of some importance. Which surprised me.

Rob expressed a similar lack of good listening in his life:

I thought that the conversation was pretty neat. She listened pretty good and I thought she was really interested in what I had to say and I liked that. It isn't often you can just sit down and really talk to someone.

In reporting her experience, Lisa commented on the value of active listening:

The conversation stayed on a rather superficial level, but we did discuss some of his stronger feelings about school and his relationships with the other kids in his neighborhood. I had little chance to jump in with astute comments because he was such an active and animated speaker. When I did make comments on some of the emotions coming through, he agreed, said a few more words about it and went on. I think that rather than a poor job of responding on my part, he was hesitant to
delve any deeper with a stranger... The active listening turned out to be a valuable tool even in a "non-problem" situation because he could sense that I was paying close attention to what he was saying.

Generally, the students agreed that though the experience was valuable, it was frustrating because they were never going to see these students again. They seemed to come away from the conversations with students more convinced of the value of Project Listening and further strengthened in their desire to get into a school situation where they would have more opportunity to talk with teenagers.

The class dispersed for their taping session. I asked them to write an evaluation for the last class. A few minutes before the second hour was over, Lisa and Jean came dashing in the room with their tape. Jean was excited: "I really felt listened to. I feel like a different person. Listen to our tape first." I, too, found myself anxious to hear theirs and the other last tapes.

**Session X**

The last session of Project Listening was frustrating because we couldn't get into the last group of tapes. Listening Test #1 was administered. In addition I had created a second test which was to determine whether or not the concepts of Project Listening could be applied. I
collected letters of evaluation and questionnaires mainly dealing with the content and structure of the course. These will be discussed in another chapter. Those of us who could had lunch together and I realized how closely knit the group had become. I was not sure what the tests would show about the improvements in the students listening. The last tape did not reveal outstanding improvement. But as I walked away from the last session of Project Listening, I felt that these women were much better equipped to interact with others. They showed by the end of the workshop more confidence in themselves, and there had been many occasions when the central focus that Adams hoped for had been achieved:

The central focus of this project and this course could accurately be described...as the enabling of the participants to respond to fellow humans in ways which "do nurture and enhance the human spirit."13

AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED TAPES

Of the fifteen tapes made by participants in Project Listening #1 I have selected three tapes to present in detailed analysis. Several of the tapes were inaudible. These technical difficulties are probably unavoidable. Although the recorders are checked and workshop participants are given a chance to test the equipment, things go wrong. On several tapes there was a buzzing noise that may have been caused by interference from the fluorescent lighting.
Whatever the cause, having led three Project Listening workshops myself and having talked to Herb Adams about his experiences in several others, I believe this to be a built-in problem.

Two of the tapes were rejected because the interview format turned into a conversation. Some speakers find it easy to throw the ball to the listener. If the listener is not careful, he will find the center of attention resting on him. The tendency to listen to someone with a "me-too" response is very great. When it is invited, it becomes almost irresistible. Other tapes deal with no significant problem or with problems already solved. They are story-telling. These are not fruitful to analyze. Of the remaining eight tapes two seemed to lend themselves to placement elsewhere in the study. (See pages 48, 49, 125, 126.) The three I chose for this analysis provided a spectrum of responses. In one, the subject matter was particularly appropriate. There is no attempt made here to show development of listening ability. It is the purpose of this analysis to gain insight into the listening process.

Lisa Listening to Judy

One of the objectives that Adams and Rogers lists for Project Listening is "To strengthen the mutual understanding and supportiveness within the entire group as we engage jointly in empathetically understanding the sometimes
trivial, and the sometimes very important, experiences of another. This goal was realized on the very first day when tapes were replayed. While no one in the group ever revealed as traumatic a situation as Judy, the fact that Judy shared her problem with the class seemed to encourage the rest of the participants to reveal more of themselves during the remainder of the tapings. The following is a transcript of the tape:

Judy: I think I'll talk about my father because he's bothering me a lot. My mother died when I was fourteen and my father's alcoholic. We'd been living together until about two years ago when I moved down here and he's been under the guardianship of a lawyer who turned out to be a real crook. He's been wasting Dad's money (Lisa: uh huh) and there's not a whole lot of it in the first place so I finally got the guardianship this year and I'm really doing a lousy job of it. Like I just have to kick myself to do it...I sort of came to grips about two days ago with the fact that it's because I feel trapped, that as long as Dad is under my care like I can't leave the state. (Lisa: Oh) can't even leave. He has to stay in the town, you know, because of all the legal redtape and everything and I really feel like I wanted to move to Florida and I would take Dad with me because we get along really well and he's easy to live with, (Lisa: uh, huh) but I can't even do that...He's my own father and I would take good care of him but I can't do it without the judge saying okay, and I would have to transfer everything down to Florida or wherever. (Lisa: oh.) So I just keep putting everything off, (Lisa: uh huh) like letters that I have to write and paying the bills even. Like writing out a check is a real trauma. It's really absurd. I mean most of it should be a routine thing.

Lisa: Does it bother you to have to take the time to do it? Or is it—
Judy: It's not even the time. It just becomes--I just get a mental block about it because I don't even want to think about it. And I just have to force myself--or Tony, the guy I live with, will sit there and say, "Now look," you know 'cause I tell him to yell at me about it because I know if he doesn't--and then I get mad at him for doing it and he says, "You've got to do that stuff," and he'll let me go as long as he thinks I can and then I'll start crying or something and he'll say "It's your dad, isn't it?" And "Hadn't you better do that stuff," and then I get really hostile and it's really strange.

Lisa: And you just feel a pull within yourself that you don't want to but it's just one of those things that's an absolute obligation you'd rather not have.

Judy: Yeah, I mean, I don't mind the personal obligation 'cause I really love my dad a lot. I hated him a lot for a while, but we get along really well since I've gotten older and now, if I could just take him and go, I'd feel really great about it. But I think it's just the responsibility of all the paper work and everything I've never really had. Everybody in my town, I come from a town of about a thousand people and everybody knows everybody's business, are always saying "Brave little Judy Herr" and they all thought I had all this responsibility and stuff to do and I didn't because there was a guardian. He wrote all the checks and took care of everything. I probably had less responsibility than any other kid in the school 'cause my dad didn't put any on me or anything. (Lisa: uh huh) So I'm not used to it and living on campus is easy. Pay your rent and go to school and that's it. And I've always had scholarships and I don't have to work.

By this point in the tape, Lisa has had a great deal to listen to and sort out. Judy has discussed not only a specific problem she is currently encountering, but considerable information has been added: something of her relationship with her boyfriend, her shift in feelings
toward her father, the attitude of the town, and her own rather self-deprecating attitude that she hasn't deserved the sympathy that has been given her. Lisa, by her well-timed brief responses, allows Judy to go on with her story. But now, Lisa pulls Judy back to the present by returning to the guardianship question. It would be very easy for a listener to try to get more detail about any of those other issues. Lisa does not get entrapped. She responds with a well-focused question:

Lisa: Would it solve things if you could move, just go away and do what you want with your father? That would make things a lot easier?

Judy: Yeah, if I had that knowledge, but it's unrealistic because I'll never have that knowledge. It's just a matter of once you've been made guardian, that's it. There's no way I can get around that problem.

Lisa: That's what's strange. There seems to be a pull on you. You've got to make yourself responsible for someone besides yourself. It doesn't seem like you resent it at all, though.

Judy: I don't resent him. I resent bureaucracy, I guess.

Lisa: Well, is it the judge that you'd rather just say: "Forget it. I'll do this all by myself." If you didn't have the pressure to do it would it be easier?

Judy: Yeah.

Lisa: Is it a responsibility you'd like to take if somebody didn't tell you you had to?

Judy: Yeah, then there'd be no problem, and it's just absurd because it's just a technicality.
(Pause) It's not just a technicality because it does change everything---the legality.

Lisa comments that there seems to be a role-reversal in Judy's relationship to her father. This role shift becomes an important issue later in the tape, but Judy ignores the comment at this point and strays away from the subject. In a minute Lisa brings her back to the issue at hand by asking a question:

Lisa: Would it be easier to have your dad with you? Would that make it an easier type of thing, to take good care of him?

Judy reveals some more detail to explain the bind she is in:

Judy: Yeah. That's the really weird thing right now that he's in a rest home. When this lawyer put him in there, he promised me he'd be out by two or three weeks until they made sure he was on his feet. When he went to the hospital he was dehydrated and everything. I hadn't been home for a couple of weeks and he'd quit eating. So the lawyer stuck him in this rest home and now I've had the guardianship for months and he's been in there for months while I went through the redtape of getting the guardianship. My dad's been in there for over a year and I haven't been able to get him out yet. And he's just 62 and he's in this place with all these people that are senile and it's really getting him down. Every week he tries not to ask me because he knows I'm trying, off and on (she laughs). And it's really awful for him to be that young and in that situation. (Lisa: Yeah) And he's got a house. It's just sitting there waiting for him to come home and it would be a lot better for the house if he were there because it's just locked up. (Lisa: uh huh) And I have to get a doctor to say that he's healthy enough to leave the place even though it would probably be healthier at home for him than it would be there. The food's awful and it's a typical institution.
It would be very easy for a listener at this point to comment on the frightening picture that Judy describes. There is a Kafkaesque dimension. Lisa avoids over-dramatizing by a very realistic question:

Lisa: Is it hard to find a doctor who would do that?

Judy: Yeah. I asked my doctor who has always been so neat to me. He's a country doctor who makes house calls. And he would not examine my father. I guess he didn't want to mess with the court. He didn't want to sign his name and say "Are you sure he's healthy enough--" (Lisa: Oh, boy.) I feel like I'm going to have to pressure any doctor into doing it.

Lisa: Do you feel bad about putting pressure on them?

Judy: I don't feel bad if they'll do it. I'm just afraid nobody will do it. Tony works at a convalescent center and he's trying to get a doctor. (Lisa: uh huh) And you have to be sneaky just to get the right thing done. To me it's the right thing. (Lisa: uh huh) And people from the veteran's administration, this man from the veteran's administration came into my apartment, and I'm sure he thought I was insane. At the time the living room light wasn't working, and he had to go through this labyrinth of our apartment to get to the kitchen so he could sit down and talk. I have a Great Dane and two cats and he kept looking at the animals. I'm sure he thinks I'm an unfit guardian--the way I live--and he kept saying: "You can't look at this man as your father. You are an officer of the court and you have to be objective about this. Don't let your emotions carry you away." And I said, "Look, the fact that he's my father is behind the whole thing." And he had written down on this piece of paper, "There is evidence that Judy is acquiescent to her father's demands." And I said, "If I was acquiescent to my father's demands, he wouldn't be in this place right now. I would have taken him away. Just kidnapped him."
Lisa: Bureaucracy is really pushing you around. Running your life so it seems.

Judy: I know government is necessary, but it just comes into your life with all these little things. It's necessary for some people to take care of things, but when you are a good person anyway, it just makes you resentful.

Lisa: Boy, that's a very difficult situation because you are stuck. You can't get around the bureaucracy in this kind of situation. I don't know anybody who could get around what's going on except just be pushy.

At this point Lisa is empathetic, showing that she understands. It is interesting to see what Judy does with Lisa's point about being "pushy." The conversation seems to be moving toward the central dilemma which is immobilizing Judy.

Judy: I guess that's my problem because I'm not pushy. I'm not aggressive. I'm easily intimidated. My lawyer intimidates me and he's the most unintimidating man I've ever seen. He giggles all the time—and it really kind of disturbs me. After I hired him I said, "I've got this giggler working for me." But he just sort of manages to say, "Well, you have to do this and this and call me when you get it done."

Lisa: Sounds like he's giving you a lot of responsibility too.

Judy: I guess I'm just not ready for it. If I was a responsible person, this wouldn't be such a problem. I guess that's what it boils down to.

Lisa: You don't feel responsible?

Judy: I feel responsible. I just feel like I can't handle it.

Lisa: It sounds like you really want to and it sounds like you are pulled about that.
Judy goes on to tell how she shirked responsibility in another situation.

Lisa: It's hard to face stuff you don't want to look at. You have to do it. That happens a lot. Makes you feel impotent though, when something bigger than you that you can't put your hands on...

This generalizing comment by Lisa triggers Judy to do her own generalizing.

Judy: Yeah, that's what it's all about: "growing up," that nebulous thing. Being able to handle all that kind of stuff. I suspect I'm going to be an adolescent for many, many years.

Lisa: It's a kind of pleasant place to be in a way.

Judy: Yeah. Everybody always said that adolescence is a bad thing, but I always liked it.

Lisa shows remarkable perceptivity in pointing out that Judy's projection of herself as a carefree adolescent does not square with the facts:

Lisa: But it sounds like you've taken all the steps you need to about your father: the lawyer giving you advice and you're getting a doctor and stuff.

Judy: Except I've been dragging my feet about it.

Lisa: Well, would there be any way you could get yourself to do something quicker? That would make yourself take positive action?

Judy: I don't know. I've been trying to think of that. I've tried all sorts of things like telling Tony to get on me. Then I just get mad at him. I'll say to him, "I'll do it when I'm damned good and ready." I'm sorry. Like big important things, I have this big thing with the State Department going that's all screwed up. Checks are supposed to come to Dad and they are not coming and I keep putting off writing letters about it. Sometimes I'll get in the
mood and I'll sit down and do everything I have to do. And in one day I'll do everything. Then for weeks I just put off...

Lisa: Does it feel good when you get it done?

Judy: Yeah, I must be a masochist. It feels so awful when I'm not doing it. It feels so good--I guess it's...

Lisa: It sounds like a real ambivalence. You want to take the responsibility. Yet in a way you wish you didn't. At least as much as you've got. That's a big load that you've got hanging on you. You haven't had it for long. Maybe you have to feel your way around it.

Judy: Sometimes I suspect there are deeper things. Like I say I don't resent my dad. I know that I have, because of having no parents. I often get off on psychology. I hate it. You start examining yourself too closely. But I suspect that may be a part of it.

Lisa: Not doing things then becomes an expression of resentment in a way?

Judy: It seems a way of justifying not doing it. "Why do I have to do this because he's my father. I'm not his mother."

Lisa: But you've come to grips with that in your self. You know why. You know what you need to be doing.

Judy: I intellectualize the whole thing.

Lisa: Sometimes that can be disabling. You have all the reasons but there is an action behind it. It would be easy to say go out and do it but that isn't the answer I don't think. You've got to come to terms with yourself, I guess.

Judy: Well, that is all there is left to do. I've grappled with all the facts. With all the inner workings. My resentment.

Lisa: You've got it out on the table. Now what are you going to do with it? Go home and write checks, right?
By this point in the conversation, Judy seems to have come full circle. From denying that she has resentment toward her father, she now is at a place where she is admitting resentment to this role reversal. Now that the resentment has been ventilated, the conversation then becomes rather playful:

Judy: Yes, at 3:00 today I will go home after my cinema class and write checks. I say that every Monday and Wednesday. On Tuesday and Thursday, I say after education class I will go home at 12:00. I'll just make up my mind to do that today and tomorrow when you come to class say, "Did you do that" and I'll say...(Both are laughing)

After a few more nonsensical suggestions, Judy continues:

Judy: It's funny when you think about it. When you have to pay the rent, then you pay rent. It's no big thing to hand over the check. It makes me mad at myself. I'm intelligent enough to see all these things I'm doing. Then not to do anything about them makes you wish you were a dummy. At least you wouldn't have any excuses.

Lisa at this point gives Judy some advice. She refers to an article she had read on procrastination and suggests a gimmick that might get Judy moving:

Lisa: They were saying that anything you were going to procrastinate doing take five minutes and start it. Like if you were going to clean a closet. Say okay. You can quit after five minutes. Then you find yourself involved. That might be your answer. Start a letter for five minutes. You can probably get it done by then. That's an insignificant amount of time really, but it gets things done. It works. You've played a psychological trick on yourself, but it makes you feel better.
Judy: (responds by going into how she works better under pressure but then her tone of voice quiets and she says rather deliberately:) I'll take your suggestion. I'll go home and do that today.

That Judy did go home and write checks is, as Judy wrote, "ample testimony to Lisa's listening," (See page 47) But the real significance of the tape is that in Lisa, Judy found someone who could understand her problem, without judgment. There was no "Poor little Judy Herr" in Lisa's listening. Neither was there any suggestion that Judy's resentment of her father was not acceptable. Further, Lisa pointed out some objective data that Judy had given her that showed Judy to be taking some initiative in the solution of her problem, making Judy's self-deprecation a harder defense to maintain. Later Judy said that she felt alienated from the group as she became increasingly absorbed in the problems she described. It was gratifying to me that she had had meaningful contact with one person in the group on this day when she spoke and was heard. I was struck by the realization that many Judys sit in classrooms and are walled off in their own troubles. If the teacher can provide a climate where a student can open that private space for a little while, it can be warming to the student and enrichening to the teacher.
Shay Listening to Jane

From the second listening practice, one tape illustrated excellent facilitative listening. But it was valuable for another reason as well. Adams recommends concentration on the listener rather than the speaker, and this tape was especially interesting because in it the speaker, Jane, points out some bad listening habits in her friends, which teachers sometimes manifest when dealing with students.

Jane reported that she and her housemates were giving a party. She wasn't in the mood and her friends' attempts to cheer her made her even more depressed.

Jane: I felt guilty for some reason because I was ruining the party for everyone.

Shay: But you didn't feel like you should feel guilty. Reading this response of Shay's may suggest that she was leading Jane. Hearing Jane's tone of voice on the tape, however, made Shay's response sound accurate, as Jane's subsequent reply suggests:

Jane: Right. One person going to ruin the party for all these millions of people.

Jane continues with her resentment.

Jane: After every party we always discuss the party and everything and everybody said, "Oh, wow, wasn't that just great? Wasn't that the greatest party ever? Oh, wow, that was so much fun. I talked to people who came and they all had so much fun." Then they turned to me and said: "Didn't you have a good time?" I really
can't tell them I had a really bad time. It's like everybody else had a great time, why didn't you have a great time? If they'd only left me alone, if they hadn't kept...

Shay: Driving at you?

Jane: Driving at me. I'm sitting there. I was in an all right mood, just not excited, and if they hadn't kept pestering me. And then one broad coming up to me and saying: "You're ruining the party for everyone." I started out mad, and I kept getting madder and madder because it was like you don't have a right not to be in a good mood. Everyone else's in a good mood if your in a bad mood. I HAVE A PERFECT RIGHT TO BE IN A BAD MOOD IF I DON'T WANT TO BE IN A GOOD MOOD. And it's like--so strange...

Shay: You felt like they didn't care about you because they were ignoring your feelings.

Jane: Well, I knew they cared about me, because you know, they wanted me to have a good time. But they weren't really listening. Their idea of making sure I would have a good time was telling me to have a good time and nobody asked me what I was feeling. "You're not in a good mood; get in a good mood."

One of the most important contributions of active listening to good mental health is that the listener permits the speaker to feel whatever he is feeling. Herbert Kohl points out that often teachers do not permit students to have negative feelings. In On Teaching, he describes the rules he finds in public schools for being a "good" student:

The good student will feel trapped into conforming to the demands of adults and will after a while accept conformity as part of the nature of existence. However, there will be some residual resentment and so the good student will be allowed not to look happy all the time. Generally, even the good student will be allowed a few angry or bored facial expressions a day in class, though I know some
very nervous teachers who insist that their students look happy and harass them into pretending to smile.

Jane's friends seem to be cut from the same cloth as the teachers Kohl describes.

Jane continues in the tape discussing her relationship with her housemates. Shay's responses during this portion are rather passive. One of the problems encountered in Project Listening is that the tapes do not reveal the body language of the listener. Many of the participants felt that though a listener might not make verbal responses, she could and did communicate interest by facial expressions, eye contact, and general posture during the taping. But though a certain empathy may be contributed by this kind of non-verbal response, it is the focusing response that seems to be the most helpful in a tangled kind of situation. Shay was adept at the focused response, as indicated by the responses already quoted and these later in the tape. Jane has been discussing the fact that she resents her role as the "Ann Landers" for her housemates, but doesn't find people willing to listen to her. Yet she feels her problems are mundane in contrast to the problems brought to her:

Jane: Whenever I start talking about my problems, I always start feeling very self-conscious. If I start talking about my problems, I'm really whining. I hate whiners, and so I start talking about my problems and I think, "Oh, God, I'm just asking for sympathy so I'll say, 'Hasn't that ever happened to you,'" and they'll start spilling their guts and I can hide.
Shay: You're afraid other people are going to think you're silly?

Jane: Yeah, really. People will say, "Oh, don't worry about it. It's not that bad so I shut up about it, and when I talk to other people it does seem as if they have deeper, more traumatic problems.

Shay: They don't. (Jane laughs.) I know.

In the last part of the tape, Jane expresses what she wants in a listener:

Jane: There are times when I want to talk out my problems and have someone say, "Yeah, oh you poor thing," and I want sympathy. I want someone to say, "Oh, how can you bear all those problems!" And then there are other times when I know I'm being silly. I know deep down in my heart that I'm being stupid. I need for someone to say "Jane, look at yourself. What are you doing?" Just to clarify that. It's so confusing. Sometimes I'm not sure what I want. What kind of sympathy I want. So then I find someone who does want to listen to me and they try sympathy and I just turn them off. Or else they try to show me how silly I'm being and I act insulted. So I really make it tough for someone to listen to me. It really doesn't induce them to want to listen to me again. If I just sit and think to myself these things will straighten out without putting someone else through an emotional wringer. It will work out eventually.

Shay replies with a rather passive response. Perhaps a response that would have been more helpful would be something like the following:

I hear you saying that you are not finding either kind of listening very helpful. You don't want to be "babied," nor is it good to have your feelings labeled stupid or silly.
This kind of response might have revealed to Jane that she is experiencing only two methods of listening, and neither of them the kind that Project Listening recommends. Recognizing the inadequacy of both kinds of responses, she might have avoided the kind of glum resignation where she ends on the tape. She indicates that she tries to listen to her friends. When they fail to reciprocate, she becomes resentful. Yet she is not asserting herself, merely bottling up the resentment. She owns her feelings, but she seems to have a problem expressing them to the people she is in intimate contact with. From the tape one gets a picture of a person isolated and lonely. In her evaluation letter at the end of the workshop, Jane wrote the following:

I now get mad when I talk and my friends don't listen. One girl when I tried to tell her about my rotten day would hardly let me get a word in edgewise. She was too busy telling me about her great day. I finally asked her to stop talking long enough to hear me. She got horribly hurt and insulted. She was listening to me and I was just being bitchy, in her opinion. I've found that is the way with most people. They're so wrapped up in their own little world they can't listen. And they get insulted when their listening skills are questioned. I'm not sure what I'm going to do about the things I found out about myself. I'll probably function better if I just bury it all again. I don't handle neurosis very well.

Certainly Jane has revealed some communication problems and some problems related to her own healthy self-image. One of the hidden values of the Project Listening experience is
that self-doubts and perhaps irrational attempts to please people can be aired. Straight, honest communication with awareness of one's own need is the kind of congruence that make people more effective in the classroom. Jane provides an example of the need for some attention to be paid in this area.

**Rexann Listening to Jane**

Because Jane was willing to express troubling experiences, the tapes she made are more interesting than some of the others. In the Shay-Jane tape just quoted, Shay, though perhaps a little passive, seems to be "hearing" Jane. Rexann listens to Jane. But instead of "hearing" Jane's honest self-doubts, Rexann attempts to bolster Jane's ego. That Rexann admires Jane is obvious. Rexann undoubtedly feels that she is accepting Jane, but the fact is that she is not accepting Jane's self doubts. These she almost ignores. Jane repeatedly expresses her concern that perhaps she does need to make changes in her behavior. Rexann continues to ignore this process Jane is undergoing.

Jane: Last night...we got into this two-o'clock-in-the-morning, deep, soul-bearing, gut-level heart-to-heart. And she (Jane's housemate) started out saying, "Jane, I'm going to say this for your own good."

Rexann: Yuck.

Jane: Yuck. But it didn't get any better. She told me how much she really liked me, but I embarrass her because I am so dramatic.
Rexann: I think that's neat.

Jane: She made a joke of it. "I can't take you anywhere without embarrassing me." I got kind of upset. That's one of the things I told her. She said, "Talking to you is like talking to an actress. I don't know whether you really feel what you mean." It went on and on like this. I know I do get carried away and overdramatic.

At this point an active listener might say something like this: "You were upset at the criticism, yet you seem to feel that it was somewhat justified." Instead, Rexann rescues Jane from her negative feelings about herself:

Rexann: That's one of the things I always liked about you and why I wanted to talk to you because you really meant what you were saying, because you were really involved. (Jane laughs.) You were moving your arms and you could tell it in your voice, and I always thought you were neat. I like people who are like that rather than sitting there...(Rexann imitates a mumbler.)

This comment may make Jane feel a little better. Rexann is giving Jane some different data, but the self-doubts persist, as the next quotation indicates:

Jane: I always thought...you listen to someone like that. Now I feel like sitting on my hands. She really made me paranoid. Sometimes, like in class, I'll say something and like that one time I was talking about an article and I said, "He made it sound like it's all pancakes and sausage." That's a normal expression for me, but everybody just went "Ha, ha, ha." At that time I wondered, were they hearing what I was saying or were they just hearing "pancakes and sausage." Sometimes I wonder if people are hearing what I'm saying or are they hearing what I'm doing and not actually hearing what I'm saying.
Jane may be, indeed, asking Rexann for honest feedback. Rexann gives it enthusiastically and also questions the opinion of the housemate, directing the conversation rather than following it:

Rexann: Yeah, I can see your point. I guess it's a different kind of people. That always made me listen to you more. These people who sit there and say, "Well, I think it's this way..." I don't listen to them, but you say it in such a way that it's really...I like it. She must be a person--I think I've known people like that. She's probably not like that at all herself. She's probably quiet.

Jane: Well, she is, when she's in a quiet area. With people she knows, she'll get a little bit rowdier. She never gets quite as exuberant as--That's what she told me--that I was so horribly exuberant.

Rexann: The thing that gets me is the fact that you embarrass her. She must worry a lot about her peers, whether people accept her or not. I think it's her problem. Not yours.

The third person may in fact have a problem, but this conversation is about Jane. Rexann seems to dismiss Jane's concern, but Jane brings it back:

Jane: I don't want to embarrass her.

Rexann: Yeah, I can see your point.

Jane: Friends don't embarrass each other.

Rexann: Yeah.

Jane: It's the only way I can express myself. Sometimes I have problems with the words and it's just easier to show how he said it instead of saying he said it in a nasty way...I really don't mean to embarrass her, and if it were sometimes like in the class I'll go into my little schtick of being something and I'll look around and I think it
does embarrass people. Maybe they're more reserved, more quiet, more normal. Because I came out and was so wildly obnoxious, it embarrasses them and in embarrassing them, I'm turning them off.

Rexann: You're worried about embarrassing them, or does it bother you?

Jane: Turning them off. Sometimes I embarrass myself, too. I just start going on. I just start getting wilder and wilder, and I finish in this big crescendo and finally I think, "Oh, my God, what did I do?" and I sink back into my seat and it's just total silence.

Rexann: The lack of response.

Jane: Yeah, everybody staring at me and saying, "She did it again. I don't believe she did it again."

Rexann: Maybe you're reading that into people. Unless I'm strange, I always sit there and think, "Gee, that's really neat." Maybe some people do read it that way. I don't know. It's hard for me to say because I don't do it. It's strange that your girlfriend became embarrassed by it though.

This return to the original subject of the conversation points out an interesting facet of what has already happened. Jane seems to have several problems on her mind. She is feeling angry about the criticism of her friend, yet she doesn't want to embarrass her. The discussion of how Jane is appearing to her classmates is another issue. Are they taking her seriously? This seems to be a question that is also bothering her. Undoubtedly the return to the first part of the conversation allows Rexann to offer considerable empathy:
Jane: Well, we were talking about it—this was one really disgusting conversation. It was one of those ones where you decide to tell each other what you think of each other. Those conversations are so rotten. They really are. There's no point to them. It's always comes out: this is what I don't like about you so why don't you change. Instead of: this is what I honestly think about you, but I like you anyway.

Rexann: It's not accepting; it's criticizing.

Jane: It amounts to criticism.

Rexann: Yes, I've had a few of those, once in a while.

Jane: What it could have been was two o'clock in the morning, baring your soul, telling each other what you seriously think. Maybe she was just--maybe once I embarrassed her. I like to do things in crowded places. Singing, or--once after a movie "That's Entertainment" I tap-danced up the aisle.

Rexann: I do things like that.

Jane: It just seemed natural at the time. I do things like that in crowded places, where maybe I would embarrass her. Maybe I don't do it all the time--embarrass her, that is. But because we were in that soul searching mood...

Rexann: Does it bother you, really bother you that she thinks you're embarrassing her? I know if somebody would say that to me, I would say, "Tough. I feel like doing it. You accept me the way I am!"

What started out as empathy on Rexann's part, has shifted to a kind of judgment. She reinforces Jane's idea that the middle of the night soul-searching may be an excuse to criticize; but in her reaction to Jane's disturbance at her friend's label Rexann suggests that Jane ought to ignore the criticism. For Rexann to tell what she
would do in the situation is a negative judgment of how
Jane is feeling. Jane now is in a position where she has
to retreat from the conversation or justify her own
feelings. Fortunately, she is not intimidated by Rexann's
comment:

Jane: Well, you know it does bother me because you
know I don't want to embarrass her. I don't
want to embarrass anybody. I don't want to
embarrass myself. Because usually, you know,
if I'm embarrassing someone else, I'm doing
something that, when I stop and think about
it, I'm going to be embarrassed about. I
tap-danced up the aisle and someone in the
back said, "Younger people!" "Wow," I said
later, "they must have thought I was drunk or
on drugs or something." And the people I was
with said, "Well, you were acting like you
were drunk or on drugs." And I thought about
it and thought, "Yeah, I probably was," and I
got all depressed about it then and I brought
myself out of it.

Rexann: That's really too bad. I have a lot of fun
doing things like that.

Jane: At the time I'm having a blast, but it's
afterwards.

Rexann: Nobody's ever said anything like that to me
before. I don't know how I'd take it.

It is interesting that after hearing the whole story,
Rexann retreats a little from her cavalier attitude.
Rather than listening to Jane, she seems to be applying
Jane's insights to herself. This tendency may be much more
frequent when the interaction is between peers. One wonders
how the conversation might have progressed had Rexann been
the teacher and Jane the student. Now Jane continues with
some new information, but the subject, Jane's sense of acceptance by others, remains constant:

Jane: I have all these well-meaning friends and relatives who tell me things for my own good. Sometimes I wish they'd leave my own good alone.

Rexann: After a while, you tend to ignore them though?

Jane: No, after so long—you expect it and you respect their opinion because usually these are people I really dearly love. They are very close to me so that when someone I respect and admire says, "You really made an ass of yourself," I believe them.

Rexann: Oh, don't do that. I don't want you to do that!

Jane: I hate it in myself because I think "Oh, what a wishy-washy person," but because I respect them, I think that just because I like to do something, I'm blinding myself to the fact that it's the wrong thing to do.

Obviously, this remark of Jane's has struck a very sensitive chord in Rexann:

Rexann: I really don't think it's wrong. I want you to keep doing it. There are not enough crazy people in the world. That's the reason the world is so awful.

Jane: I keep telling people. They go "Yeah, yeah, that's right, but it's..."

Rexann: "You're not allowed to do it. Other people are allowed to be crazy, but not my friend."

Jane: Right, right. "Let those other people make asses of themselves. You're not like..."

Rexann: Then we can laugh at them.

Jane: Yeah, I sometimes just want to say, "I like to do it; just leave me alone." But then I think they're only telling me this for my own good. They're not trying to hurt me.
Rexann: I don't think they are telling you for your own good, though. When I think about it, they are telling you about it for their own good. They don't want to be embarrassed by you. They are thinking about their own feelings, whether people are going to laugh at them.

It is really amazing the aggressiveness with which Rexann insists on placing blame. That Rexann feels a strong identification with Jane is obvious, but the conversation progresses as a kind of debate on how one should behave.

In dealing with the criticism that Jane has received from her friends, Rexann totally blocks out the message that Jane, herself, is displeased with her own behavior. Although Jane comes into the conversation angry at her friend, her anger is almost dissipated and she proceeds to participate in the debate by referring to her sister.

Jane: I know that probably deep down inside they do (worry more about their own good than hers) but deep down inside me I've got this idealized view of friendship that you just don't do that to people. You think of other people and my sister, whom I love deeply, she's very much concerned about how I present myself to other people and it's not as bad as it sounds. Honestly it's not. She honestly loves me. We can't say to each other, "I love you, Sue," or "I love you, Jane." It doesn't work that way. We do it by--Sue will say something like, "Just calm down a little bit, okay?" Like she's crazy to begin with too and like we'll be crazy together, but she'll say, "Let's cool it a little bit."

Rexann responds with a question that is very subjective. Instead of asking Jane, "Do you feel better when you calm down or do you feel worse?" She says: "Do you feel better
when you calm down, or do you feel stifled?" Jane responds by reflecting that she does in fact "get out of bounds."
The conversation then turns back to Jane's fear that her behavior is keeping her from being effective in an argument in a class setting. She refers to the day when the Project Listening students argued with the man in the methods class. This shared experience makes it especially difficult for Rexann to maintain a listener role:

*Jane:* In class I usually try to calm myself down. There may be one or two people back applauding me, but usually I'm laying a big egg in public. I usually keep getting wilder and wilder and wilder and more and more offensive and someone has to come along and say, "Hey, cool it." Sometimes I feel as if I'm putting on a show more than I am getting my ideas out. I admire people who can without any show of dramatics say what they mean and people sit there and say, "Hey, right."

*Rexann:* You did that when you were talking to Pete, though. You were really cool.

*Jane:* I was afraid if I did get wild I'd hit him.

*Rexann:* Well, if you'd been more dramatic he'd had said, "Well, there's a woman for you."

*Jane:* Pete's the type, though, that by just sitting there, offensive as he is to me—Everytime he opens his mouth I put my foot down it. He can just by sitting there and talking, he will get his ideas across. I may not agree with him. I may, in fact, hate his guts. I'm sorry I shouldn't have said that.

*Rexann:* I hate his guts too.

*Jane:* That has no bearing on the case. But he can sit there and just say what he means without having to be dramatic about it. He gets his ideas across. He doesn't feel any need to be wild or extravagant about it.
Rexann: Yeah, but to him that would be foolish. He'd be one of those people who would tell you you were embarrassing him. I like people who do things like you. I really do. I don't want to be patronizing. I really, really do. It's like you're real. I listen to you. You never embarrass me. I say to myself, "Hey, isn't that neat. She can do it." Some people can't do it. They are embarrassed to show their feelings. You must have a pretty good self image not to worry about what people think of you. Too worried. It bothers you if you embarrass people. I don't want to embarrass people either.

Jane: When I embarrass people, I embarrass myself. I think I should have known better.

Rexann: The whole shame thing. My mother used to use it. You shamed me by your actions. People use that to keep you in line. You've got to watch whether people are doing it for your good or for their own good.

Jane: That's true, but I'm still hung up on the idea that I can't see my sister doing it for herself. She's doing it for me. At least she's meaning to do it for me.

Rexann: Yeah, she's gentler. She just says, "Okay, Jane, quiet down now," Whereas this other broad says, "You embarrass me."

Jane: I should know better than to take seriously a two o'clock in the morning gut level talk. That's my only major problem.

Rexann: I don't think you should worry about it. I like you the way you are. I think you're really neat. I really do.

Rexann demonstrates by this tape that she has not learned to listen. Her responses are grounded in some false assumptions. They are assumptions, unfortunately, held by many teachers. Thomas Gordon ennumerates twelve roadblocks to communication. Rexann demonstrates two of them. Both
are commonly used by teachers who feel they are giving students the kind of support they need. The first is giving positive judgments:

While teachers easily understand the terrible hurting power of negative evaluation, they are often shocked to learn that, contrary to commonly held belief, praise is not always beneficial to students and often has very negative effects.15 He goes on to say that a positive evaluation may conflict with a student's self image: "I am not a good student." It may seem to be a way for the teacher to manipulate the student: "What's this teacher after?" It puts the teacher in a superior position: "If this teacher can praise me, when am I going to get the negative criticism."

It is ironic that Rexann substitutes her positive evaluation of Jane for the roommate's negative evaluation. Both of these responses to Jane disregard her own self evaluation. But it is so tempting for the teacher to want to rescue the student from harsh criticism. We want to protect. Jumping into this protective role before active listening seems to deny the speaker the full exploration of her/his feelings.

Another roadblock which Gordon defines is evident in the tape: "Reassuring, Sympathizing, Consoling, Supporting":

On the surface, these messages seem to be helpful to students struggling with problems. In fact, they are not as helpful as they appear. To reassure a student when he is feeling disturbed about something may simply convince him that you don't understand him.
Teachers reassure and console because they are not comfortable with strong negative feelings students may have (and express) when they are troubled. Reassuring and supportive messages, at these times, tell students that the teacher wants them to stop feeling the way they do. ("Don't feel bad, things will turn out all right, You'll feel better tomorrow.")

Rexann's reassurances do not stop Jane from looking at her dissatisfaction. She asserts herself. But Jane and Rexann are peers. It is easy to imagine that Jane would have withdrawn had Rexann been in a teacher's position.

There is another reason for avoiding excessive use of reassurance and praise. The student may become dependent upon it. Rogers points out that a truly helpful relationship ought to move the locus of control from outside to inside. Reassurance and praise tend to keep it with the teacher.

**SUMMARY**

What the analysis of the three tapes attempted to show was not how effective the workshop had been in producing facilitative listening. It was, instead, an attempt to gain some insights into the listening process. The didactic materials of the course provide a frame of reference, but the group listening to the tapes and my own observations put flesh on the theoretical skeleton. The poster stressed three main concepts: "Recognizing, Attending, Accepting." The tapes give meaning to the concepts.
"Recognizing"

To stand back and recognize the unique person looking at you, to encounter him/her, not to generalize but to truly hear seemed to be what Shay and Lisa were doing very effectively. Shay did not interfere in Jane's anger and hurt. Lisa did not interfere in Judy's frustration and depression. By their responses, they said, "I hear what you are saying." Rexann, on the other hand, seemed not to encounter Jane at the place where Jane was. Rexann seemed to say "You and I are a lot alike. I like me, and therefore I like you." That is hardly recognizing the individuality of the person speaking, and, as Rexann pointed out, it was a conclusion that Rexann had come to before the listening session. She had observed Jane before. On the day of the taping, she seemed to be relying on old impressions of what Jane was like.

Teachers get caught in the same trap. A student shows a new facet or changes in some way and the teacher is stuck with a past perception. Recognizing is somehow communicating, "I see you in this moment."

"Attending"

Shay and Lisa gave particularly close attention. There was little in their comments to distract or to move the speaker away from the center of her problem. Rexann
was not so successful in attending. Her interpretive comments about the third person, the housemate, were especially distracting. Attentive listening requires concentration and a self-monitoring of the tendency in all of us to take control. It is a little frightening to listen. Some people reveal more about themselves than we really want to know. Perhaps that is why we tend to direct speakers away from these dark places. We certainly try to avoid pushing them there; but, if we can accept their separateness from us, if we can hear them as another, not as an echo of ourselves, our presence during their dark moments communicates the message "You are not alone."

Rogers in the film "Some Personal Learnings about Interpersonal Relations" uses the following analogy: We are prisoners in a stone cell. From the inside we tap out our message "help." We keep tapping, and only hear the echo. Finally, a tap comes back to us from outside. We are finally heard and there is, in this moment of being heard, a relief. It says, "I am not alone." And the paradox is that the person tapping back gets the same message so that he is as enriched as the lonely prisoner.

"Accepting"

The point was made during the discussion of the "Rexann Listening to Jane" tape that Rexann did not accept the feelings that Jane was expressing. In trying to bolster
Jane's self-image, she was inadvertently denying a very large segment of Jane's feelings: her self doubts. Lisa and Shay, on the other hand, accept what they hear without judgment. Yet it should be noted that Rexann's task of accepting another's self-doubts is a much greater test of her ability to accept than Lisa accepting Judy's resentment of her alcoholic father or Shay's acceptance of Jane's anger. How a listener reacts to a speaker says a great deal about where a listener is coming from. People can be taught to monitor the intrusion of their own egos, but to deny their existence is unwise. One Project Listening participant said, "To be a good listener, one has to put his ego in his pocket." That is well stated. One cannot throw it away. If for a while he can suspend it, his listening will be greatly improved. The important point is for the listener to be aware that his ego is intruding. To say "I really cannot listen to you very effectively because I have some strong feelings myself on this issue" is a much healthier state than trying to manipulate the speaker. Even Carl Rogers in "Three Approaches to Psychotherapy" says that there are times when he cannot give unconditional acceptance. A good listener accepts his own listening limitations.

Having selected the tapes and listened to them several times during the transcription process, I am struck with how valuable the experience of interacting and the processing of
that interaction would be for prospective teachers. One student, I recall, after reading Herbert Kohl's *Thirty-Six Children* said: "I admire Kohl, but I could never be so involved with students."

Kids are scary. As the principal quoted earlier said, "They'll look you over." They do, indeed. And on the first day of class one never knows whether those looks spring from idle curiosity, resignation, anticipation, or hostility. But then the teacher looks over the class as well, and the students don't know on that first day whether the look is coming from curiosity, resignation, anticipation or hostility.

One evening not long ago I was helping a seventh-grader with her English homework. It was an exercise picking out adverbs. As her head was bowed over her book and paper, I wondered if her English teacher knew that as soon as school was out, Kathleen visited her mother in the hospital, was expected to help prepare supper, and then had to bunk in a sleeping bag on the floor of her sister's room since she was now living with her father. "Does Mrs. Dodson know about your mother?" I asked. "None of my teachers do," was Kathleen's reply. And they probably won't, for Kathleen is a reserved person who will continue to do her homework and be obedient. Further, I met Mrs. Dodson while I was substituting at Kathleen's school. She was frazzled, noting that in the first four hours of the school day, she
didn't have a break. And about her seventh graders, she said, "They have no respect." One day she came up to me, teary-eyed. "I have decided what I must do," she said with a wane smile. "I'm going to turn my problems over to Jesus. That's the only way I'll survive the year."

I believe that if Kathleen and Mrs. Dodson could come into contact with one another it would help them both to survive the year. The only way that could happen, it seems to me, is by each learning to listen to the other.

I used to read "The Sleepers" by Walt Whitman to my junior English classes. When I came to the line: "The scholar kisses the teacher and the teacher kisses the scholar, the wrong'd is made right," both the students and I would laugh, but the thought does offer a solution to the problem of Kathleen and the problem of Mrs. Dodson. And it might be the way Jesus would solve the problem, if he were here.
FOOTNOTES -- CHAPTER III


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 122.


6. Ibid., p. 54.


17. Ibid., p. 85.
CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION OF PROJECT LISTENING #1

Adams and Rogers outline the specific objectives of Project Listening in the tape "Introduction to Listening in Interpersonal Communication":

1. To develop a small group climate of trust and acceptance in which we can mutually explore our growth as good listeners;
2. To learn to discriminate a number of styles of listening responses;
3. To learn modes of effectively communicating to other persons, our understanding of their meanings and feelings;
4. To discover and correct some of the problems that stand in the way of our own communication;
5. To give and receive feedback on areas where we listen accurately or inaccurately;
6. To discover the depth of personal self-revelation and growth which is possible when real experiences are shared and genuinely heard;
7. To strengthen the mutual understanding and supportiveness within the entire group as we engage jointly in empathetically understanding the sometimes trivial, and sometimes very important experience of one another.

This section will evaluate the effectiveness of Project Listening #1, the teacher training workshop, in reference to these objectives. In addition to my journal, presented in Chapter III, several other instruments were used to provide
data: Listening Test #1, given as a pre- and post-test to the workshop participants as well as a control group; Listening Test #2, a free response test using quotations similar to those in Listening Test #1, also used with the control group; three student evaluations: one relating to the first taping session, one relating to the listening experience with the students in high school, and a final evaluation of the entire experience; and a questionnaire handed in at the end of the last session. These documents will be referred to in this evaluation.

1. To Develop a Small Group Climate of Trust and Acceptance in Which We Can Mutually Explore Our Growth As Good Listeners

As indicated in my journal in Chapter III, I became increasingly aware of the development of a community spirit among the participants. I refer in several sessions to students who raise issues about their interpersonal communication outside of class.* Some of the letters of evaluation also refer to the climate of trust and acceptance that was established:

Shay: (Project Listening) has helped us in our personal lives. Lisa, for example, told of an experience she had where she was able to listen effectively to a friend.

Jennie: Throughout the course, we gradually got to know each other by discovering different

* See pages 54, 56.
person's attitudes and feelings about things. I think we felt good about being in the group because we could communicate with each other with no hang-ups. The group cared about each other and were willing to listen to everyone.

Rexann: It is hard for me to judge whether this project has been helpful to the other nine. I'm sure it hasn't hurt anyone. I think it is a positive sign that the group has shown so much interest and has had good regular attendance. I think everyone must feel better about themselves to a degree and they are all more aware of others, their feelings and thoughts.

Jean: In these ten weeks, I have seen barriers break down among the people of the group. Nothing that I would suppose that those who consider us amateur therapists would consider important; it's been little things, like saying a hello and a sincere "how are you?" as you pass someone else from the group on campus, or an understanding acceptance when you truthfully respond "This is a terrible day." In the classroom outside of the listening day, I've noticed that members of the group tend to interact on each others' comments. I feel that there are two possible reasons for this: (1) We feel comfortable with each other and not threatened by each other's honest comments and (2) We actually hear what each other has to say.

Two participants responded somewhat negatively to this question of climate in which to explore their listening awareness:

Mary: I have bad feelings about my session with Lisa. I do not feel her comments (in class when the tape was played for the group) were a true reflection of what actually took place during our taping session. (Lisa had said that she felt Mary made excessive use of a quizzing style.) Prior to the taping, Lisa said over and over, "Ask me something. I have nothing to say and I don't want to be here." I did not feel our session was an interrogation, but rather an attempt to get something about which to talk.
Judy commented on her sense of alienation from the group, although she attributes this to her preoccupation with her own problems rather than to a lack of sensitivity on the part of the group:

Judy: There was one day when my alienation from the group really hit me, but I had no reason to expect anything else, being so submerged in my own problems.

In the questionnaires students also make reference to the growing feelings of trust in the group.

Rexann: I have valued these friendships made.

Mary, who was one of the least enthusiastic participants, wrote the following in answer to the question "Do you feel there were any benefits in the course other than learning to use some listening techniques?:

Camaraderie was established, as was trust between members of the group.

Shay's answer to this question was similar:

Yes, I feel that I have become better acquainted with the people in the class and I can understand them much better.

The evaluations and questionnaires, as well as many oral comments offered as the workshop progressed, indicate that there was a feeling of acceptance and trust among members of the group.
2. To Learn to Discriminate a Number of Styles of Listening Responses

Listening Test #1 was the instrument provided in the kit to catalogue the kind of responses that were selected. A sample question from this test appears on page 42. The test includes five responses each for twenty items. For each item there is one understanding/empathetic or focusing response. (One item has both of these kinds, providing, therefore, only three distractors.) The distractors are classified in the scoring sheet as Interpretive, Quizzing, Advising, Challenging, Generalizing, Judgmental, Passive, Shallow, Deflective, Outside, Understanding/Empathetic, and Focusing. Following is a summary of Adams and Rogers' description and interpretation of these categories, along with the initial which identifies them in the scoring sheet and which will subsequently be used in presenting tables of the data collected:

I—Interpretive: Interpretive responses tend to deemphasize the importance of the speaker's experience in favor of the interesting psychological category within which the listener places it.

Q—Quizzing: Quizzing a speaker suggests that if the listener has more information, he will be better able to advise the speaker.

A—Advising: Giving advice puts the listener in a subordinate position. Even though it may be wise and thoughtful, it tends to make the listener passive in the solution of his own problems.

C—Challenging: Challenging also puts the speaker in a passive role and may make him defensive and resentful, causing him to withdraw from the conversation or redirect it to safer territory.
**G—Generalizing:** Like the interpretive response, generalizing tends to deny the uniqueness of the speaker's experience.

**J—Judgmental:** Judgmental responses put the listener in the position of evaluator, implying a moral or intellectual superiority.

**P—Passive:** A passive response indicates very little energy in the listener. A long series of passive responses suggests that the listener is disinterested.

**S—Shallow:** A shallow response is partial. Much of what the speaker is saying seems to be lost to the listener.

**D—Deflective:** A deflective response misses the central feeling that is being expressed. Instead, a minor element is picked up.

**O—Outside:** The outside response focuses on some third person or some situation rather than on the speaker's feelings.

**U—Understanding/Empathetic:** An understanding or empathetic response lets the speaker know that his feelings have been heard and accepted. It motivates him to continue sharing.

**F—Focusing:** A focusing response helps the speaker sort out what he has said. It is helpful when the speaker is ambiguous about his feelings or when two feelings are in conflict.

The scoring sheet indicates that Interpretive was used as a distractor for ten items; Quizzing, for nine items; Advising, for eleven items; Challenging, for three items; Generalizing, for seven items; Judgmental, for seven items; Passive, for six items; Shallow, for nine items; Deflective, for eleven items; and Outside, for six items.

The test, therefore, only discriminates between facilitative (Understanding/Empathetic and Focusing) and non-facilitative (Interpretive, Quizzing, Advising, Challenging, Generalizing,
Judgmental, Passive, Shallow, Deflective, and Outside) responses. A heavy concentration of answers in any one category suggests a listener's tendency to respond that way; but since every item does not have a response that represents each category, it is impossible to label in a definitive way the kind of response a person typically makes. The test does indicate, however, to what extent the listener responds facilitatively or non-facilitatively.

The test was administered to the Project Listening #1 participants during Session II and within a week to all the members of another section of English methods. The post-test was administered to the workshop group during Session X. It was given to the control group along with their take-home final with instructions about returning the test to me. Nine control group individuals returned the test. For the most part, these nine had scored higher on the pre-test than some of their classmates. The point is that, like the experimental group, the control group data represents people taking the initiative to return the post-test. It functions somewhat like a volunteer group. Table 1 presents the individual scores for the experimental group on both tests. Table 2 presents the individual scores for the control group.

Three t tests were calculated for this data. For the pre-test of the experimental group and the pre-test of the control group t=1.8667. At the 5% level of confidence with
Table 1

Listening Test #1

Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Experimental Group.

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<th>C</th>
<th>G</th>
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Pre-test means: 0.89 1.22 0.11 0.33 0.78 0.44 0.89 0.33 0.55 7.67 4.55

Post-test means: 0.89 0.78 0.67 0.0 0.44 0.44 0.56 0 0.11 10.22 5.89

Difference: 0.44 1.44 0.11 0.33 0.34 0 0.33 0.33 0.44 2.55 1.33
Table 2
Listening Test #1
Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Control Group

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Pre-test means: 1.11, 1.33, 2.67, .11, .67, 2.22, .33, .78, .67, .89, 5.89, 2.89
Post-test means: 1.44, 1.00, 2.44, .11, .67, 1.67, .22, 1.33, .56, 1.00, 6.33, 3.33
Difference: +, +, +, +, +, +, +, +, +, +, +, +, +
eight degrees of freedom, this t score is less than the table value of 2.31. Therefore, the pre-test scores show that the groups were comparable. At the 10% confidence level, however, there was a significant difference. For this reason and because the sample was small, a comparison of the two groups' post-test scores does not seem warranted.

In an analysis of the experimental group, pre-test vs. post-test scores, t=2.9346. At the 5% confidence level with eight degrees of freedom, the post-test score is significantly higher than the table value of 2.31, thus showing a statistically valid improvement in the performance of the experimental group.

In the analysis of the control group, pre-test vs. post-test scores, t=.3700. At the 5% confidence level with eight degrees of freedom, this t score is less than the table value of 2.31, showing that the control group did not statistically improve.

Analyzing individual scores in Tables 1 and 2 shows a consistency for the experimental group and an inconsistency for the control group. All the women except one in the experimental group raised their facilitative response scores:

Carol increased by 1.
Shay............... 6.
Mary............... 1.
Rexann.............. 6.
Jennie............... 1.
Jean............... 8.
Jane............... 9.
Judy increased by 9.
Lisa decreased by 1.

The average increase in facilitative responses for the nine participants in the experimental group was 3.99.

The control group was inconsistent in their comparative scores for the Understanding/Empathetic and Focusing responses:

Betty increased by 6.
Lorie.............. 2.
Barb................. 4.
Lee................ 1.
Karen remained the same.
Donna remained the same.
Janice decreased by 1.
Darlene............. 2.
Phil................. 1.

The average increase in facilitative responses for the nine participants in the control group was 1.

There is a similar discrepancy in the pre-test and post-test results for the two groups in non-facilitative responses. Carol dropped one Shallow response in favor of a Focusing response. She also substituted a Focusing response for an Empathetic one. That change, of course, would not affect her number of facilitative responses. Lisa was the only participant in the experimental group to score lower on the post test. This decline was a result of increasing her responses in the Passive and Shallow categories. Throughout the workshop the Passive and Shallow responses had been preferred to the other non-facilitative responses. This fact might explain the decrease in her post-test facilitative responses. Shay
changed her pre-test responses in the Interpretive, Quizzing, Passive, and Shallow categories to all Understanding/Empathetic and Focusing responses, giving her a perfect score on the post-test. Mary responded almost the same way on the pre- and post-tests, adding one additional Understanding/Empathetic response and shifting one Advising response to an Interpretive response. This shift could not be considered an improvement; both the Advising and the Interpretive responses are a means for the listener to exert control over the speaker. Rexann removed all but two of her non-facilitative responses. She retained the two Quizzing responses from her pre-test scores. Like Mary, Jennie's change from pre-test to post-test was negligible, dropping a Deflective, an Outside, and a Generalizing response, but adding a Passive and a Judgmental. She, Jean, and Mary were the only participants who had a Judgmental response in the post-test. Jean's post-test showed marked improvement. Among the changes she made was the elimination of all four of the Advising responses from her pre-test. On several occasions, Jean commented on her tendency to give advice. Although the class was not told of the results of the pre-test, Jean's evaluation of her listening pattern at the outset of the workshop was accurate. Jane also showed improvement in the area of advice-giving, eliminating three Advising responses. Judy, whose original score was the lowest of the nine participants, showed the greatest
improvement, eliminating two Quizzing responses, four Advising, one Generalizing, one Judgmental, and one Outside response. She selected nine more facilitative responses on the post-test.

In a case-study the effects of the course on individual development is instructive. I included the interpretation of individual scores above. It does not seem fruitful to analyze in that detail the data on Listening Test #1 for the control group. Study of Table 2 reveals that as the facilitative responses on pre-test and post-test showed no reliable pattern, the same was true of the shifts in non-facilitative responses. Table 3 generalizes these discrepancies in the control group and contrasts them with the scores of the experimental group.

Table 3 indicates that the movement away from non-facilitative responses for the experimental group was consistent. No consistency can be detected in the same scores for the control group. Awareness of a more facilitative listening response is a first step in improving one's ability to respond in such a manner. The data suggests that Project Listening does increase awareness.

Besides this data, other evidence—personal comments and written responses of students—shows that students in the workshop were becoming concerned about their listening
Table 3

Listening Test #1

Comparison of Pre- and Post-Test Responses for Experimental and Control Groups

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<th>Control</th>
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<td>post-test</td>
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<td>12</td>
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behavior and that their consciousness in regard to listening was increasing.

3. To Develop Modes of Effectively Communicating to Other Persons Our Understandings of Their Meanings and Feelings

Listening Test #1 showed only whether or not participants could identify helpful responses. Whether or not they could actually respond in an empathetic or focusing mode was the purpose for designing a second instrument. This test, Listening Test #2, presented statements for which the participant was asked to write a response. These answers indicate to what extent participants developed the ability to apply what had been discussed in the didactic materials and practiced in the taping sessions. Most of the items in the test came from tapes that had been made during another Project Listening workshop. Table 4 catalogues eight of the ten items according to the twelve categories used to evaluate responses in Listening Test #1. The experimental group scored considerably higher in the number of facilitative responses than the control group for Listening Test #2. There were seventy-two possibilities for each group to respond with an Understanding/Empathetic or a Focusing reply. The experimental group responded facilitatively thirty times, or 42%. The control group responded facilitatively thirteen times, or 18%. 
### Table 4
Responses to Listening Test #2

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* Interpretive, Quizzing, Advising, Challenging, Generalizing, Judgmental, Passive, Shallow, Deflective, Outside, Understanding/Empathetic, Focusing.

** Ranked from the highest number of facilitative answers on the post-test of Listening Test #1.
To catalogue the free responses is difficult because often a response is complex enough to fit into several categories. It is more instructive to look at actual responses. The following is one of the eight items catalogued in Listening Test #2:

Woman, age 60

I've got to go home this week-end and tell Mother that she'll have to stay in the rest home. My sisters, who are both older than I am, can't seem to get it across to her. Daddy took care of her until it killed him. Now she expects the same from us. She'd be miserable with me, 500 miles away from all her friends. It's a nice rest home; besides, with her broken hip she needs nursing care.

The responses of Project Listening #1 are listed in the order of the highest number of facilitative responses on the post-test of Listening Test #1.

Shay: You're worried about your mother's reaction to staying in a nursing home, yet you don't see any other solution.

Carol: You seem to feel guilty about telling your mother, but yet feel that a nursing home would be best for her.

Rexann: This is really a tough situation. It will probably be hard to talk to her; she'll need reassurance that people won't forget her, especially with you 500 miles away.

Jean: It sounds as if you feel torn between a responsibility for her physical well being and a personal desire to have her feel loved and not neglected.

Judy: How do you feel about having to tell her this?

Lisa: That's a very painful thing to tell your mother. (Wait for response.) Then maybe ask: How do you feel about being the one to tell her?
Jane: You seem to think that this is best for her, but you dread saying it to her.

Mary: Are you feeling guilty that your mother will be in a nursing home?

Jennie: Are you able to talk to your mother so that she could understand the situation? Do you feel guilty about being truthful with her?

These responses make an interesting comparison to those of the students who did not participate in the workshop, listed again in the order of their responses to Listening Test #1 (post-test):

Betty: You are saying you must tell your mother this week-end and that for certain reasons you three girls think she should stay in a nice rest home near her friends.

Janice: Do you feel guilty about putting her in a home?

Lorie: Is it bothering you to have to break the news to her about the rest home?

Karen: From what you say, it seems like all the burden of decision is being placed on you and you don't want to feel guilty for having to decide.

Donna: It must be difficult worrying about your mom and not being sure of how to care for her.

Barb: Sounds like you're resentful that your dad spent so much time caring for her and you're blaming her for his death.

Darlene: Do you really think a rest home can take the place of a family? Couldn't someone come in to help you or your sisters in caring for her? Why do you really want her in a rest home?

Lee: Oh...

Phil: I'd hate to put my mom in a rest home.
Analyzing these responses shows what a complicated task deep listening is. The speaker comes to the conversation full of emotion. There is dread: "I've got to go home," a sense of obligation in the "got to." There is a kind of self-pity: "I'm the youngest yet this task falls to me." There is resentment from the past: "Daddy took care of her until it killed him." There is finally a mixture of concern and rationalization: She'd be miserable with me, 500 miles away from all her friends; what a nice place the home is; and how she needs special care. It is important for the listener to be able to pick out the dominant thread, to appreciate what is going on in the speaker at the moment.

Carl Rogers describes two conditions which are conducive to the establishment of a helping relationship. These conditions provide a point of reference for the evaluation of the eighteen responses for this item in Listening Test #2.

When the therapist is experiencing a warm, positive and acceptant attitude toward what is in the client, this facilitates change. It involves the therapist's genuine willingness for the client to be whatever feeling is going on in him at that moment—fear, confusion, pain, pride, anger, hatred, love, courage, or awe. It means that he prizes the client in a total rather than a conditional way. By this I mean that he does not simply accept the client when he is behaving in certain ways, and disapprove of him when he behaves in other ways. It means an outgoing positive feeling without reservations, without evaluations. The term we have come to use for this is unconditional positive regard.
Several of the listeners responded in a way that implied the speaker was feeling a good deal of concern and care for her mother. Jean, from the workshop group, attributes to the speaker "a personal desire to have her feel loved and not neglected." This seems a misrepresentation of what the speaker truly feels. It is, perhaps, what Jean believes the speaker ought to desire. From the second group, Donna's response is interesting in the same way: "It must be difficult worrying about your mom and not being sure how to care for her." The fact is that the speaker is not worrying about her mother (except in the way she'll take the news.), and she knows how best to take care of her: put her in a nice nursing home close to her friends. It is as if Donna isn't really listening. Unconditional positive regard can be avoided by not hearing the message.

It can also be denied to the speaker when the listener makes a judgment, either explicitly or implicitly. Darlene's comment "Do you really think a rest home can take the place of a family?...Why do you really want her in a rest home?" not only implies criticism for the plan itself, but also challenges the speaker's motives. Phil's response, "I'd hate to put my mom in a rest home," offers a judgment and implies that Phil is superior. Not only would she hate to, she probably wouldn't do it--this is the sub-vocal text the speaker is likely to pick up. Several of the listeners bring up the guilt issue. There is some degree of
rationalization in the speaker's comments. That may be the way she is handling the feelings of guilt. To regard her positively and unconditionally, this issue might very well be avoided.

The second condition that Rogers identifies is empathetic understanding. About this he says:

When the therapist is sensing the feelings and personal meanings which the client is experiencing at the moment, when he can perceive these from "inside" as they seem to the client, and when he can successfully communicate something of that understanding to his client, then this third condition is fulfilled.²

He goes on to explain how rare a quality empathetic understanding is. He contends that most often the understanding a person receives is through the listener's tendency to analyze and judge. From the examples presented earlier, the responses that seem empathetic are Shay's—"You're worried about your mother's reaction to staying in a nursing home, yet you don't see any other solution."—and Jane's—"You seem to think that this is best for her, but you dread saying it to her."

Rexann begins well: "This is really a tough situation." But her response degenerates into advice giving. Lisa also begins empathetically: "That's a very painful thing to tell your mother," but the shift to "How do you feel about being the one to tell her?" establishes Lisa's agenda rather than following the speaker's. The problem with responding by means of a question is that it
tends to suggest that if the listener has more information he/she can help solve the problem, or it tends to lead the speaker rather than to follow him/her. Rogers refers to his technique as "reflection of feelings." A question does not truly reflect.

Barb's response: "Sounds like you're a little resentful that your dad spent so much time caring for her and you're blaming her for his death" picks up a thread of the speaker's emotional tone. It is, however, a minor thread. The effective active listener concentrates on the main feeling that is in operation in the present tense.

Lee's passive response, "Oh...," does very little to indicate that the listener is paying attention. Betty's, on the other hand, shows close attention to content. But Betty avoids reference to the speaker's feelings. Shay much more effectively reflects these: "You're worried about your mother's reaction to staying in a nursing home, yet you don't see any other solution." Of the eighteen, Shay's and Jane's seem to be the most helpful responses.

The results of Listening Test #2 reveal the need for more opportunity to practice making facilitative responses. Exercises like those provided in Listening Test #2 might be a worthwhile addition to the workshop.

There were two other items in Listening Test #2. These were two statements taken from my experience in interacting with a student and a parent on classroom
matters. The responses to one of these statements will be presented in the last chapter of this study.

4. To Discover and Correct Some of the Problems That Stand in the Way of Our Own Communication

Students from Project Listening commented on their communication skill development in both the questionnaire and in their final evaluations. One of the questions asked the participants was "Do you believe that your listening skills have improved? Can you cite any evidence, either within the class or without?" These questions elicited some very positive responses:

Rexann: Yes, I am more aware of how I respond to people. I think my tapes definitely improved. I notice more how people listen to me. I feel more sure of how to respond to people. I am trying not to talk so much when I should listen. In the past I often just said things to fill the silence. Often I'm sure I stifled something someone would have said.

Mary: Yes, I've definitely stopped "Me-too-ing" when listening to other people. I've also cut down on giving advice. Just listening to my friend Sandy when she was upset one night, I cut out advice altogether—a major accomplishment.

Shay: Yes, at least I watch what I say more. I feel I am talking to my roommates better.

Carol: Yes, I've noticed that I concentrate more on what people say to me, not only those with problems but also in light conversation. I've noticed that more girls consult me about their personal problems. Also, my relationship with my fiance has really improved. We've become closer in communication.
In answer to the question "Do you believe that the talking was as beneficial, more, or less beneficial than learning the listening techniques?" all respondents, except Mary, thought that the talking was important. Shay was particularly convinced:

Personally, the talking was very beneficial. I always left feeling better than I felt when I came.

The letters of evaluation refer to the question of general improvement in communication skills. Jennie commented on her improved ability to listen, but added that she felt better able to express herself:

I am also more aware of how I express my feelings and who to express them to. I am more at ease with talking about my problems or feelings, and I actually feel more of a need to release some of my tensions and feelings by simply talking about them. I can see now that most people need someone to talk to and someone to listen to them, that people don't want advice or guidance, but someone who will actually listen, who cares about what the person is saying.

Jean also expressed positive feelings about being heard:

I never realized just how important it can be to get those everyday life hassles "off your chest"; it really helps one to feel so much better, especially if the person who is doing the listening is actively listening. The non-judgmental approach a' la Carl Rogers turned me off at first, for I misinterpreted this approach as just being a mirror. I now can see where I was really out in left field, for such an approach can help another express what's bothering him, help that person see exactly what is bothering him, without making that person feel as if he's a borderline psychotic. In myself, I have been able to discern the difference between playing "Ann Landers," which is usually unwanted advice, and the value of helpful suggestions when solicited. Although I feel there is loads of room for listening improvement in
myself, I do feel that I have become more aware of what others are saying, and I do feel that my skills as a listener have really improved.

Jane expressed an interesting effect of Project Listening in regard to her communication with other people. Her statement was quoted on page 78. The break-down in communication evident in Jane's life was the subject of several of the tapes. Undoubtedly the increased sensitivity of the participants showed them that listening with acceptance and caring was often missing in their personal lives. One of the participants was eager to enroll her husband in a listening workshop as a result of her increased awareness of the inadequacy of his listening. Hopefully, the project participants will not only maintain their awareness, but will pass along their insights to those with whom they are in close relation.

5. To Give and Receive Feedback on Areas Where We Listen Either Accurately or Inaccurately

Project Listening provided many opportunities for feedback. As early as Session III, I was processing my communication with the class in an attempt to model the critical awareness I hoped the students would develop. The participants shared evaluations of the first taping session. The students from the high school where project participants conducted a listening session also wrote reactions of their experience. The journal describing the ten sessions refers
to many occasions when feedback was sought after a listening session as well as discussion after a real life experience with the communication process. That students valued the feedback is evident by the fact that they became so much more aware of their own listening behaviors.

I don't believe there were enough opportunities for feedback, however. Carol mentioned in her letter of evaluation that she would think the workshop could meet two days a week, one for taping and one for a more thorough critiquing of the tapes. This suggestion would improve the program, but I believe that there are other measures that would not increase the time allotted to the workshop.

Cutting the time for the taping sessions to forty-five minutes and then returning to give immediate feedback to one's partner might be a solution.

Another problem involves the time it takes to replay all the tapes. I reviewed each tape prior to the critiquing session. This permitted tapes to be cued with a minimum waste of class time. In another workshop, I reviewed none of the tapes ahead of time. The critiques for these sessions were not so effective. Tapes seemed to go on endlessly. Everyone in this adult group wanted their tapes played out to the end! One of the solutions might be for students to take their tapes home for reviewing and returning them with their own critiques or with their own selection of segments for the class at large to listen to.
This procedure would decrease the amount of familiarity each participant had with each other. A combination of these methods might solve the problem.

6. To Discover the Depth of Personal Self-Revelation and Growth Which is Possible When Real Experiences are Shared and Genuinely Heard

Several of the participants in their letters of evaluation commented on the fact that they felt listening to themselves had given them greater insight into their own personalities. Jennie, for example, wrote:

This course has helped me explore myself more. I think more about others and how they feel, plus I try to come to grips with my own feelings. Talking to others helps one explore his/her own feelings as well as other person's feelings.

Probably the student who showed the most personal development was Jean. She was a very active participant from the outset. During the course of the workshop she seemed to be undergoing some self-analysis, commenting frequently on her tendency to give advice. She explored this problem with Lisa during the last taping session. The tape they made is a testimonial to the kind of personal insight an individual can achieve when he/she is truly heard.

She has told Lisa about all the problems her friends have brought to her. She feels frustrated because she can't solve these problems:
Jean: I was listening to these people. I wanted to
give advice. If there was something I could
say, like this will solve your problem, but I
couldn't do it and I was really feeling bad.

Lisa: You couldn't do it because it wasn't an advice-
giving situation or you knew you shouldn't.

Jean: Well, there was no advice I really could give,
and they really weren't asking for it. I just
wish I could eliminate the situation more than
anything.

Lisa: You sound very frustrated.

Jean: I am because I don't feel I'm in control. I
want to have control. I don't want any problems.
I want things to run smoothly.

Lisa: You want to fix it for other people.

Jean: I like everybody to have a nice easy time. My
illusions of what it all should be and the
realities are so different.

Lisa: That can be very frustrating because there is a
disparity. It sounds like it incapacitated you
almost.

Jean: I know. I never felt so bad. Here I've been
listening to these people but I couldn't do
something. I wanted to act, but I couldn't.

Lisa: Sounds like you have acted. You helped one
friend find an apartment. You did what you
could.

Jean: You see I wish her family wasn't that way. Then
there'd be no problem. That's really
unrealistic.

Lisa: You're in a real limbo. You care a lot. Would
it have made you feel better if you'd had more
control over these people's lives.

Jean: I wish the situation had never been there. I
hate to see them hurt, but at the same time
they have to live their own lives...I don't want
to interfere. I feel so bad.

Lisa: Were they turning to you for advice?
Jean: Sometimes yes, sometimes no.

Lisa: But the other is almost an obligation for you to say this is what I see and this is what I think. That's a difficult situation to contend with. Sounds like you are coming to terms, trying not to take advantage and run somebody's life. Did that come from this listening thing?

Jean: I realize this tendency in me to give advice: "Now you can do this and this and this—now mind you it's my own opinion but...") I realize that.

Jean then goes on to explain how she, in the early part of her college career, had been in science and had come to view life as a chemical reaction. She now has become aware that formulas do not always fit reality.

Jean: I know I can't make Sue's father non-alcoholic. I can't give Jane's mother a new kidney. What I can do is let them know I care.

Lisa: And it sounds like you are doing that. You've been doing all you say you can. You've given them your time and a lot of emotional support. You've been doing a lot more positive things than you realize.

Jean: But I just don't think I've done enough. (long pause) I guess you've got to give them enough respect as people. It's hard to let go. I know I don't like someone hanging on to me, and there but for the grace of God goes Jeanie. I want to help, but to suffocate them is denying them the fact I know that they have common sense and good judgment and they can handle their own lives.

Lisa: I don't think you can care too much. But what you successfully avoid is running their lives. It seems you've come to grips with that. I think you're saying caring is the most important thing you can ever do, and you're doing that.

Jean: That's what I needed to hear. I feel better.
Jean's final evaluation has been quoted several times in this section. One sentence seems to relate very closely to the taping session with Lisa:

I never realized just how important it can be to get those everyday life hassles "off your chest"; it really helps one to feel so much better, especially if the person who is doing the listening is actively listening.

There were other instances during the course of the workshop of speaker's gaining insight into themselves as a result of being listened to, but none seems quite so persuasive a testimony to the good effects that can come from "Recognizing, Attending, Accepting" as this example.

7. To Strengthen the Mutual Understanding and Supportiveness Within the Entire Group as we Engage Jointly in Empathetically Understanding the Sometimes Trivial, and the Sometimes Very Important, Experience of One Another

During the course of Project Listening life was going on for the participants outside. Lisa was married. Mary's grandmother died. Rexann found that she was going to have to spend her vacation savings to have her car fixed. Shay met a new male friend. Jennie became aware that her relationship with her boyfriend was causing her a good bit of unhappiness. Shay expressed her reactions to this sharing of personal experience:

The main thing I liked about this course was getting to know the people as well as I did. I'm so used to going to college level classes where you never really get to know anyone. Even if you learn your classmates' names, you usually only
see them in one dimension—that of a student. In this class, we learned a lot about each others' personal lives and problems. I feel that this has helped me understand them better.

The workshop became a caring community. Jennie came to class one day and asked if Rexann could listen to her. They made an additional tape on their lunch hour. During one class discussion Lisa handed me the following note:

I hear a lot of tension and teariness in Mary's voice. She's responded negatively to everything anyone has said. Something's wrong. I can't miss class at 12:00 to talk to her, but I think she needs someone. Just thought I'd tell you.

Mary slipped out of class that day without anyone helping, but Lisa's concern for her indicated the extent of caring among the members of the class.

It was gratifying to see this kind of intimacy develop. At one time or another all participants commented on it. What was depressing was the fact that this community feeling was so rare in their college experience. I was struck with their sense of alienation and separateness within the larger university community. And, looking at my own experience, I realized they were reacting to a phenomenon that was quite the standard in society as a whole. I thought again about the riots in Harvard Square that Herb Adams had described. I recollected my own feelings of sadness at the alienation of high school students. I certainly realize that workshops like Project Listening are not going to remedy the social ills of
American society, but the fact that these women had achieved a sense of identity within a community made me appreciate how such experiences could help. I believe that Project Listening #1 did, in fact, achieve the central focus that Adams defined:

...the enabling of its participants to respond to fellow humans in ways which "do nurture and enhance the human spirit."
FOOTNOTES -- CHAPTER IV


2. Ibid., p. 62.

CHAPTER V

PROJECT LISTENING #2: AN INTERGENERATIONAL WORKSHOP

Project Listening was originally created for the use of intergenerational groups. To investigate the curriculum in that setting was the purpose of Project Listening #2. Some changes had to be made. The twenty hour, ten session program was revised to a twelve hour, four session format. Of the programmed materials, we retained the tapes "Demonstration of Three General Styles of Listening" and "Diverting Responses in Listening," as well as the Carl Rogers' film, "Three Approaches to Psychotherapy, Part I."

Another change in the program was the addition of a co-leader. Dave Adams had participated in a Project Listening workshop led by Herb Adams, the author. He had also attended a workshop in intergenerational understanding. Besides these experiences, he is a facilitator for a singles discussion group and the father of two teen-age daughters. I found having a co-leader helpful. Dave and I listened to the tapes together and checked out our reactions to what was happening as the workshop progressed.

The adults in the group were much more experienced in interpersonal communication techniques than were the methods students. Several had studied Parent Effectiveness
Training; one had taught it; two had been facilitators for discussion groups; three had been employed in the mental health field. The results of Listening Test #1 predicted that the adults would be skillful in listening to their young partners. (See Table 5, p. 133.)

The five young women who participated in the workshop were brought there by their mothers. Two of the girls seemed enthusiastic about being in the workshop. The other three seemed apathetic. One, in particular, expressed some hostility during the taping sessions by choosing to speak about the listening process. In one tape she said, "I listen to myself and sort out my own problems." In another she told why she thought active listening was not very effective. (These tapes will be presented in part later in the chapter.)

The first tape was made during the first session. Dave and I listened to these and arrived at some generalizations, which we presented to the group at the beginning of the second session:

1. The young people were polite, listening sympathetically but passively to the adults deliver their speeches.

2. The adults surpassed the adolescents in picking up the feelings the speaker expressed. This was due partly to the fact that the young people were more open.

3. Several of the adults made a real attempt to get into the world of the speaker.
Table 5

Responses on Listening Test #1 in an Intergenerational Group

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* Interpretive, Quizzing, Advising, Challenging, Generalizing, Judgmental, Passive, Shallow, Deflective, Outside, Understanding/Empathetic, Focusing.
4. Some of the tapes showed very good use of active listening techniques, giving good feedback on both the factual and emotional content.

5. Some tapes revealed considerable empathy, communicated both by understanding comments and tone of voice.

6. There was some data collecting and quizzing, without relation to emotional significance.

7. There was some passivity, "uh huh" answering to the point where the listener sounded bored or self-conscious.

8. There was some advice-giving and a little preaching and moralizing. This came from the young people as well as the adults.

9. There was a tendency to bring a pre-packaged problem or solution, a story, in reality, that did not invite active listening.

Because the participants in this workshop seemed to have special needs concerning intergenerational communication in their own lives, Dave and I devised an activity that would permit some airing of concerns before the whole group. We asked the young people to sit in a circle in the center of the room. Outside their circle was the larger circle of adults. We asked each group to discuss among itself in the presence of the other group the statements:

I have difficulty talking to my parents because...

I have difficulty talking to my kids because...

After fifteen minutes talking within one's generational group, the two groups conducted a discussion with each other. We came to the realization that active listening
has limitations in a conflict situation. It can, however, serve to make sure participants understand each other's viewpoint. We also concluded that intergenerational conflict is augmented by an unequal division of power. The group agreed that when the adult is in the more powerful position, the young person feels impotent or uses the power he does have in destructive ways. This discussion underlined the need for more intergenerational problem-sharing, but we felt committed to continue with the Project Listening curriculum.

For the purposes of this study, the tapes in which an adult listens to a child are the most relevant. Five of the tapes shed additional light on intergenerational interaction and will be presented next in this chapter.

MARY LOU LISTENING TO ELLEN

Mary Lou presents an interesting example of the kind of listening adults sometimes practice. She had had Parent Effectiveness Training, but she felt that poor communication habits demanded on her job—repression of feelings and personal opinions—had caused her to slip into bad habits outside the job setting. "Attempts to communicate," she wrote, "which might prolong discussion are ridiculed. After a while it becomes hard to react any other way than expressing only facts." Mary Lou showed her acquaintance with theory by her responses to Listening Test #1. Out of the
twenty items, she responded with an empathetic or a focused response eighteen times. Her responses for the other two items were categorized as "shallow" or "passive." On the occasion when she was paired with a young person, her responses were often judgmental.

Ellen, her twelve year old partner, was explaining a problem at school. Because Ellen was enrolled in music, she had not been permitted to take the interesting mini-courses in crafts and other non-academic subjects which her school was offering to the rest of the student body.

Ellen: The principal called half the people (in the music program) and gave excuses...My teacher said we were spoiled brats because we wanted to do them (the mini-courses).

Mary Lou: My, that was pretty strong language.

Ellen: I know.

Mary Lou: That's a real insult.

Ellen: It isn't really fair.

Mary Lou: Not only does it sound unfair but it-you'd feel pretty low down if you are just expressing something you feel and someone insults you on top of that.

Ellen goes on to explain that another excuse that she was given for not being able to take the mini-courses was that there were too many people enrolled in the mini-courses:

Ellen: Only eighteen band members and tons of courses.

Mary Lou: Doesn't sound like too many people to me.

Ellen: But what the reason is they don't want us in there...If they did they would try.
Mary Lou: It makes me wonder why they'd act like that. That's the only conclusion you could draw, that they just don't want you because there doesn't seem to be a reason. That's very frustrating. It's as if it doesn't pay to be in too many things.

Ellen: I think if they are going to do them, everybody should do them.

Mary Lou then goes on to explain that it would be easier to understand if the teacher explained that there was not enough money for all to participate. Ellen pointed out that money was no problem.

Mary Lou: That's really the hardest kind of decision to accept, one that you just can't understand.

Ellen: I could understand it if they said it nicely. If they said we don't have enough room, but we could try to figure out something.

Mary Lou: It seems as if you are being punished for taking music.

Certainly Mary Lou is showing acceptance of Ellen's interpretation. At some points, however, Mary Lou generalizes: "That's the hardest kind of a decision to accept..." This kind of response seems to take the focus away from Ellen's individual feelings. Mary Lou also overlooks at the end of the conversation Ellen's statement that she could understand if the people she dealt with about the problem had been nicer. Earlier in the tape Mary Lou had recognized the school's hostility. At some points she almost seemed to be nudging Ellen on: "My, that was pretty strong language," and "That's a real insult." One would
hope that listening would move the person from the place where he is condemning the outside agent over whom he has no control, to a place where he is getting in touch with his feelings and deciding if there is anything he can do to remedy the situation.

This tape from the intergenerational workshop raises a question. Was Mary Lou projecting her own feelings of powerlessness in her job into Ellen's situation? At the outset of the workshop, Mary Lou had written about her work:

Communications at my place of employment are counter helpful rather than encouraging. The atmosphere is extremely repressive—feelings are almost not tolerated and opinions of the staff almost not allowed if they run counter to administration.

Mary Lou's frustration with authority seemed to be reflected in her listening to Ellen. One of the points emphasized in Project Listening material is the need for the listener to suspend his own agenda. Mary Lou does not involve Ellen in the problems she faces at work, but it does seem as if the attitudes Mary Lou has about work are communicated to Ellen.

Much has been written in the past several years about the hidden curriculum in public education. It seems advisable for teachers to become aware of what attitudes they might bring to the classroom to avoid the projection of these attitudes to the student they are trying to listen to.
The two tapes made by Kathy in which she expressed her hostility to the goals of the workshop are worth comparing because of the differences in the way each listener reacted to her. Although Becky attempted to "hear" what Kathy said about not needing to be listened to, she did not repress her parenting behavior. She tried to corner Kathy into admitting that there might be situations critical enough for Kathy to seek help from another person. When Kathy mentioned she might go to a person for information, Becky was quick to jump on this remark as a sign that Kathy was not as self-reliant as she had presented herself to be.

Becky's "debate" with Kathy presented a familiar classroom problem. The teacher not only knows she is right, but also worries about the consequences of the student acting from an erroneous point of view. The result of such interaction is often a stand-off. Once again the student can say: "You see, they don't understand." The following is an excerpt from that tape:

Kathy: I always work out my own problems. Anything you could do I've already done. It wouldn't be helping me at all.

Becky: You feel you already have the answers.

Kathy: Well, maybe not the answers. There isn't always an answer. I've worked it out as far as you could. I've worked it out as far as I can and I don't think you could help me work it out any farther.
Becky: Do you feel pretty certain about the answers that you've come to in all the problems you have now?

Kathy: Lots of times I don't come to an answer. I think, "Well, you could do this or you could do that," and maybe I do and then maybe I don't, but I feel if I talk over the problems with you you'll come to the same conclusions I did. Lots of times what I need more than active listening is to know if you agree with me.

Becky: A response rather than a solution.

Kathy: Yeah, rather than helping me think it out because I've already done that.

Kathy seems to have experienced active listening only in its problem-solving aspects. The Focusing response does help a person think through the problem. Becky, by her next comment, seems to think that active listening is a process of communicating the speaker's insights into a problem. This pushes active listening beyond the boundaries described in Project Listening.

Becky: Is it possible that perhaps I as a different person could possibly have a different idea, different input into your conclusion. Is that something you feel like testing?

Kathy: Yeah, but if it's something I would like I've probably thought of it, and if I don't like it, I wouldn't consider it anyway. If it's not a solution that would go with me then I won't really consider it. If it is, then, I've probably already thought of it.

Kathy has slammed the door in Becky's face. Her self-assurance in the use of the rather air-tight dilemma continues to frustrate Becky. Kathy continues, saying she has no problems at the moment.
Becky: So--what you are saying is you can't think of anything at the moment that is really a problem. I would like to feel that if you did have something in mind that was bothering you you would take a chance of talking to someone and see if by chance they did have a different point of view. It might give you a little insight.

Kathy: Usually I don't talk to many people about my own problems. One thing, I don't have that many people to talk to. Like you were saying with Laurel (Becky's daughter) you really can't get good listening from your mother because she is too concerned. She adds more. She thinks about it more than you do. It may be a temporary problem. She thinks it's a problem engulfing your whole life.

This is a particularly interesting comment about parent-child communication. It applies also to the teacher who assumes the parenting role. In *Project Listening #1* I became aware of the temptation to overdramatize. It was noted that Lisa had avoided doing that in hearing about Judy's unusual and frustrating problem. Mary Lou seemed to be over-dramatizing Ellen's disgust with her school.

Haim Ginott describes adolescence as a time of madness;

The purpose of adolescence is to loosen personality. [The teenager] is undergoing the required changes: From organization (childhood) through disorganization (adolescence) to reorganization (adulthood). Adolescence is a time of curative madness, in which every teenager has to remake his personality. He has to free himself from childhood ties with parents, establish new identification with peers, and find his own identity.²

Kathy seems to be saying that she wishes her mother would be a little more detached when she brings problems to her.

Kathy's insistence that she can solve her own problems
continues throughout the tape. Becky is equally determined to convince Kathy she needs help.

Becky: I guess I'd like to say I'd like to feel that you would grow to trust other people enough so that you could talk to them and you wouldn't try to handle it all by yourself.

Kathy: I think I do a pretty good job of handling it by myself. My problems work out.

Becky has inserted the idea that Kathy does not trust other people. That seems an unwarranted assumption. Part of Becky's reaction to Kathy is undoubtedly motivated by her mothering instinct to protect. But later in the tape she reveals to Kathy the fact that she has recently found she needed people to help her solve her problems. Becky, who had been in group therapy for some time, undoubtedly found Kathy's assurance and self-reliance intimidating. Had Becky been aware of that and communicated it to Kathy, Kathy might have been willing to come a little closer. But the fact that Becky spars with Kathy in trying to convince Kathy of her point of view has the effect of moving Kathy farther away, entrenching her in her own viewpoint. One might imagine how different this listening session would have been if Jack had been the listener. In the tape made by Jack and Kathy, she is discussing her negative feelings about active listening. Jack uses very effective active listening technique to empathize with her. She seems to respond positively to what Jack is saying, although he is doing what her words say she does not like:
Kathy: The active listening, it kind of bothers me. People are repeating back to you what you said and not giving any help or solutions or anything. What particularly bothers me is that you say something and they give you a statement back about what you just said. It seems what they're trying to do is to make sure they are getting you right, but the way they say it back it's as if they are saying "Oh, I see you are doing this," instead of "Are you doing this?" Instead of saying "Is this the way you feel?" They are saying, "This is the way you feel." It bothers me.

Jack: They don't say it with any feeling. Like it is some mechanical thing.

Kathy: Uh huh, as if they are saying what they see and not trying to find out if that's really what you do think.

Jack: It seems like they are worried about technique more than they are you, Kathy.

Kathy: How can they really be feeling and understanding when they are just using this technique? They've been taught to do that and they are concentrating on the technique and not on me.

Jack: Yeah, they don't seem to get to your gut-level feelings. I guess you feel that's what they do for thousands of people.

Kathy: Yeah, they're busy with the technique and trying to get that right and not really worrying about your problem. They are not really concerned. They are practicing their technique to make you feel better.

Jack: It's just one of those psychological tricks.

The tape continues in this vein. Never once does Jack offer any opposition to her point of view. And Kathy has a point. Active listening can become very mechanical. The Parent Effectiveness Training courses offered throughout the United States in the last few years have made many
mothers and some fathers masterful at the art of accurate feedback. Jack, himself, had been an instructor in PET. In listening to the tape, his feedback does not sound contrived or mechanical. He has obviously practiced the technique sufficiently to use it without pat phrases. His responses are slow. He is hearing the meaning underneath the words. He thinks about what she is saying to him. The attitudes stressed in Project Listening are "Recognizing, Attending, Accepting." These attitudes are apparent in Jack's listening.

JOAN LISTENING TO ELLEN

Joan said she enrolled in the workshop to practice the techniques she had learned in Parent Effectiveness Training. From her first tape, it appeared she needed very little practice. In listening to Ellen, Joan gives feedback that shows extremely careful listening:

Ellen: We were riding together. Jean was on her skateboard and I was on my bike. She told me before that she smoked. She'd just started. Then this other girl rode up and whispered to Jean, "I need a cig," and Jean said, "Let's ask Ellen." I came over to them and said, "What are you guys talking about?" Jean said, "We want to smoke," and I said, "I don't care." We were back in their fort. At first I didn't really want to do it. It was kind of like group pressure. So I took half of one (they cut them in half) and I finished that one and it was kind of like I was hooked so I had another one and another one and this Anne had about ten. And altogether I had three wholes and two halves. And I came out smelling like cigarettes.
Joan: Sounds to me like I hear a lot of different things, cause you talked quite a while. I heard you saying you felt like you weren't sure you wanted to do that. (Ellen: Yeah.) You didn't feel a lot like you didn't want to and you didn't feel a lot like you did, but you did feel they wanted you to. And to be friends with them you wanted to do what they were doing. Then I heard you telling about the actual smoking of the cigarettes, which is kind of interesting when you do something new. Especially if it might be kind of scary. (Ellen: Yeah.) to know how it feels and if you liked it or you didn't. I heard you telling that you noticed when you came out you smelled like cigarettes and that was something you noticed. Maybe you'd smelled that on other people. It seemed kind of strange to smell it on yourself. I guess I heard you saying that it was kind of interesting. You were really thinking about it, it was something kind of new for you.

Such an elaborate response seems to overshadow the speaker. Had Joan been able to sort out without such elaboration, Ellen would have probably received as much benefit from being listened to without the danger of tuning Ellen out. Fortunately Ellen stays with the discussion:

Ellen: For the rest of the week I kind of felt sick. I was always coughing. Jean said she wanted to quit, but I don't think she can because she has the feeling. And once you have the feeling, I think it's really hard. She's only in sixth grade. It's stupid.

Joan: So you didn't feel so good physically after that and you think it was because of the cigarettes?

Ellen: Uh huh, I think I inhaled. I puffed in and nothing came out.

Joan: Maybe that gave you a sore throat or a cough. You sound like you think maybe smoking isn't so good for you.
Ellen: I know so.

Joan: I guess I hear you wondering whether you really want to do it.

Ellen: I don't.

Joan: Oh, then you know you don't.

Ellen: Yeah, but then I really didn't know.

Joan: Oh, I see. You've made the decision since then. So you were telling me before how you felt when it happened and now you're a few days away from that and you've decided that's something you don't want to do.

Ellen: Yeah.

One of the problems Dave and I had observed in listening to the first tapes is illustrated in this one. Ellen brings finished business to the discussion. She is reporting rather than searching for a solution. This story-telling does not require active listening. A few empathetic remarks would have served. Joan does not know, in the beginning, that Ellen has resolved the problem.

At this point in the tape, Joan moves from a listener role to the teacher role. First she interprets for Ellen the meaning of Ellen's experience:

Joan: I think that's a pretty interesting thing to tell me about. Something like to me those kinds of things are what growing up is all about. I wonder if you've thought of that. I mean smoking's a kind of grown-up thing to do, but also like making decisions for yourself after you've tried something. That's really a big part of what growing up is about. How do you feel about the whole experience. Do you have any feelings altogether when you think about it now?
Ellen: I feel kind of happy.

Joan: Yeah, you have a happy face.

Ellen: I did it.

Joan: You sound like you feel good about the way it turned out. It was kind of scary, but it turned out pretty good.

Then Joan gives Ellen an explanation of the function of a listener:

Joan: When somebody is really listening to you, it's like talking to yourself except that you hear something back. I don't know sometimes I feel that way when I'm talking to someone who isn't trying to give me a message. Like maybe I could get into a mothering role and I wouldn't be listening to you. I'd be telling you I didn't want you to smoke. But I'm not your mother and I don't have any stake in it. It doesn't make any difference to me if you smoke or if you don't. And so I can listen to you without having to give any message to you. So in that way it's kind of good that when you have something you want to talk about it's something like talking about it with yourself or someone who just listens. That might be something you'd want to think about.

This tape is particularly instructive to those entering teaching. The teacher's role has traditionally been active. Articulating one's ideas to a captive audience can be a stimulating experience. The teacher as performer is a model observable throughout the educational process. Active, or deep, listening is active in the sense that the listener involves his whole person. The active listener must concentrate on what is being said to him, sort out the varied messages, and reply with a statement that lets the speaker know he has been heard. In the speaker-listener
encounter, the focus should remain with the speaker.

Students have been rewarded in public education for their passivity—the teacher leading, the student following. The role expectations have been firmly set. Project Listening can help turn these roles around. A teacher who has learned how to listen can modify these role stereotypes.

NANCY LISTENING TO KRIS

Carl Rogers contends that the listener who helps the most is the one who is able to enter the world of the speaker. One tape provides a fine example of an adult seeing a situation from the child-speaker's viewpoint. It is also instructive because the listener manages to move the speaker from a generalized problem to a very specific one:

Kris: (who has been telling Nancy about her communication problem with her mother) If I tell her what I did, she tells me what I should have done, and then if I have another problem like that the next time, she says I told you before you shouldn't have done that.

Nancy: So when you talk to her what you get are solutions and sometimes those solutions are things you can't use any more because it's past.

Kris: Then maybe it relates to the same thing, but sometimes she says I see how you are feeling and she doesn't say anything else.

Nancy: You don't feel that's helpful when she says I see how you are feeling?

Kris: It doesn't help me. She says maybe what I could try.
Nancy: Then either she's giving you advice that's too late for you to use, or she's saying, "Yeah, I understand."

Kris: She doesn't give it to me—the advice—until after.

Nancy: Does that make you feel kind of not listened to or not helped?

Kris: Yeah, cause she tells me afterward.

Nancy: What kinds of ways could she respond that would be useful to you?

Kris: Maybe she could give me some ideas, and I could figure out the rest of it.

Nancy: Do you feel sometimes that with the kind of thing we're doing here that you'd like her to hear more of your feelings rather than give you solutions. Like "I understand you are awful upset about that, Kris?" or "You must feel pretty put-down by that."

Kris: She says that but it doesn't really help.

Nancy: It doesn't feel as if you are getting what you are needing at the time. (long pause) She obviously doesn't know what you want. I presume that if she knew what you wanted she would say it.

Kris: I guess.

Nancy: Is there any way you can let her know what it is that you want? (long pause) It may be hard when you are not thinking of a specific problem. It may be hard to generalize.

The last comment by Nancy directs Kris to talk about a specific problem. When Kris begins to explore this problem, it becomes clear that active listening is not what Kris wants from her mother.

Kris: Sometimes Mother understands me, but not very often. Cause like after school I have to come home and watch my sister and when I tell her I
want to go some place. She gives me two days off a week. And I tell her I want to go some place, she says I don't need to because I've already gone two days.

Nancy: Uh huh, and that doesn't seem to speak to your problem because you're feeling a need at the time.

Kris: And she says I've had my two days.

Nancy: It seems she is meaning to say, "I can't let you go again, Kris. You may need to, but I need you here."

Kris: Sometimes she says two days off is enough and I don't need any more.

Nancy: Uh huh. That's kind of hard because of the word "need." You may not need any more, but you certainly are feeling at the moment that you want more, which is the problem. (long pause) That thing about the two days off a week: do you sometimes negotiate with her to have more or is this a rule she's pretty cut and dried on?

Kris: I sometimes do, but not very often. I don't think it's fair that my sister, I have to stay there and then my sister...

Nancy: How old is she, Kris?

Kris: She's in the third grade. Then I have to wait for her to get home. She can go any place. I have to wait and see what her plans are. If she's going to go some place, then I can go some place too, but if she's not then I have to stay home. It all depends on what she does.

Nancy: So she has it pretty nice because she never has to stay home to see what you want to do.

Kris: Uh huh.

Nancy: That's the unfairness of being the older kid and the baby gets away with things. Would you say that sometimes there's something you want to do and there's a real reason for wanting a day off. Do you think that part of your
feeling is you're expected to show responsibility and it isn't demanded of her?

Kris: Uh huh, 'cause she always gets to do what she wants to do.

Nancy: And when you explain this to your mom...

Kris: She says, "She's younger."

Nancy: Yes, I've heard that line too someplace. And I guess also she has her needs too. She can't ask the little one to babysit you. She could hire someone else, but that's not a good solution for other reasons. She has her needs.

Kris: So when I get mad about that she says, "You're older so you have more responsibility," and there's nothing more I can say.

Nancy: So there are two things: work and the restraints and there's the way you feel about it. Does she ever say you can get angry but you still have to stay?

Kris: Uh huh.

Nancy: She does recognize you have a point in getting angry.

Kris: But I still have to stay there. All my other friends are the youngest. They can do anything.

Nancy: So that's an extra burden too, that they can decide to do something on any one day and you may not be able to.

Kris: Uh huh.

Nancy does not suspend completely her parenting, teaching role. She reminds Kris that her mother has a problem too. But Nancy's sensing that Kris is feeling more than just disappointment at not being able to play with her friends gives Kris a chance to ventilate her hostility to her sister. Nancy accepts this hostility. Never does she
suggest that Kris is unreasonable or showing a lack of sensitivity to her mother's problem.

The listening encounter does not solve Kris' problem. Nancy might have suggested that Kris explore solutions, but Nancy does the most valuable job of the listener: she gives Kris a chance to express her frustrations and provides empathy when Kris does so. At a meeting of secondary teachers of psychology, the need for students to air their problems to an empathetic listener was mentioned several times. One teacher said:

When adults are able to suspend their own agenda, when they are able to sense the meanings under the words, the sense of acceptance communicated to the young person can help establish a trusting and therapeutic relationship.1

The four sessions of Project Listening proved not to be enough time to establish the kind of community that the longer period had provided. Also, the participants were there for different reasons. The single adults with no parenting problems, adults with very pressing needs concerning communication with their children, the young people with varying degrees of receptivity to our program---this diversity kept the group from a strong sense of purpose that the other workshop had had.

Yet, in spite of these difficulties, most of the participants gave positive feedback at the end of the workshop. When asked "Did you get what you came for?" the following positive responses were submitted:
Sue: Yes, I did and more. I learned when I can't use active listening, when it didn't work in confrontation, and was reminded of the things I do to block good listening. Also, I discovered that I am beginning to active listen myself.

Jack: My eyes have opened up more. I am still working on improving my listening skills.

Becky: Laurel and I have become much more open to each other. The workshop has helped this greatly and I am grateful. I thought the day we asked the children to respond in the circle was really informative and could perhaps be an encouraging vehicle for their relaxation and a more free atmosphere.

Those comments, from three of the eight adults, were more detailed than those from the young people. The following are the statements of the adolescents in Project Listening #2:

Karen: I guess so, because I haven't gotten all frustrated lately.

Kathy: I don't know. I don't know if this will help or not between Mom and me. It might apply more to other people rather than in a mother-daughter kind of relationship. I don't really feel this workshop was structured for family inter-generational communication. It was more just for people in general.

Kris: I got part of what I came for, but I still get in a few fights with my mom. It is hard to active listen in an argument.

Laurel: Yes

Ellen: I guess so.

Herb Adams devised Project Listening to improve communication between members of different generations. He tested it with volunteers, none of whom were from the same
family. Dave and I felt that because family communication is so complex more whole group problem sharing and some time devoted to conflict resolution would improve the curriculum. We felt this would be particularly desirable when some of the participants were members of the same family.

One evaluation by an adult in Project Listening #2 so well articulates the kind of attitude an effective listener should have it can provide a very fitting conclusion to this chapter:

Joan: I have gained more awareness of my own listening and increased the frequency. I have become reinspired to see and accept others as full human beings full of power and creativity who can take responsibility for themselves. I'm aware that I must have a delicately tuned ear to hear and understand.

Project Listening has yet to be tested with a group of students and teachers. The results of such an undertaking would shed additional light on its value in teacher preparation. This and other conclusions will be presented in the last chapter, "Conclusions and Implications."
FOOTNOTES -- CHAPTER V


CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

WHAT WAS ATTEMPTED

The research conducted for this investigation was exploratory. Project Listening #1, the use of the materials in Adams' and Rogers' Project Listening curriculum in a teacher preparation setting, was the attempt of one English teacher to find some ways to better equip prospective teachers to deal with the interpersonal relationships in the English classroom. The development of listening skills to effect this purpose seemed a logical beginning. Without skills in listening, an English teacher can hardly respond to a response-oriented curriculum in literature or a personal growth emphasis in composition. Since these are two major trends in English education, the development of listening skills appears a vital component in the teacher's repertoire. The very act of curriculum building implies the necessity for knowing where a student is, both in his academic interests and his personal life. A curriculum can hardly be student-centered if the student is not used as an important source of information for the teacher.
Another necessary function of the teacher training curriculum is to provide some guidelines for use by the teacher in dealing with problems that individual students might bring to a trusted adult. That role is often filled by the English teacher, given the humane nature of the English curriculum. From the experience of Project Listening #1 certain guidelines concerning the effective counseling of individuals can be elicited both from the didactic materials of the prepared course and from the analysis of tapes made by students during the workshop. These guidelines will be presented later in this chapter.

The workshop with teacher trainees did not constitute a rigorously controlled experiment. The participants were volunteers who already expressed a recognition of their need to improve their listening skills. Using the same material with a group differently oriented might not have resulted in such successful outcomes. It is interesting that no men volunteered to participate. Carkhuff refers to the feminine and masculine components in counseling, the former being a listening and absorbing aspect and the latter being an initiating aspect. One would hope that as consciousness levels in both sexes are raised, this gender designation would disappear.

Another area where Project Listening #1 could not be considered a rigidly controlled experiment was in the test, Listening Test #1, used as a pre- and post-test. This test,
designed to reveal the ability to discriminate listening styles, had been subjected to no reliability or validity testing. Further, the free response test, Listening Test #2, seemed a necessary measure if ability to apply skills was to be ascertained. The investigator catalogued the responses of participants according to the taxonomy used by Adams and Rogers. It was undoubtedly a less reliable measure of determining the achievement of empathetic and focusing skills than some of the standardized tests in this field. Further experimental research might find the tests described by Charles Truax and Robert Carkhuff in *Toward Effective Counseling and Psychotherapy* a rich source of information. Since the statistical results of this test were only suggestive and not empirically designed, the chapter evaluating the project includes student responses. My analyses of these responses is, of course, subjective.

One of the objectives of *Project Listening* is the personal growth of the participants. The extent to which personal growth was achieved is based in this study on a subjective judgment of the participants and the leader. A more rigorous experimental design might test personal growth by such measures as the *Personal Orientation Inventory*. What *Project Listening* #1 does provide, however, is insight into the listening process and a case study by an observer-participant concerning what happens when nine
people attempt to learn to listen in depth to one another. It chronicles the growth of individuals and describes the growth of community within the group as a whole. It provides evidence of the rising awareness when people process their communications inside and outside the group. And it provides a base from which courses to improve interpersonal relationships can be developed. Some suggested changes in the course will be offered later in this chapter.

_Project Listening #2_, the intergenerational workshop using the _Project Listening_ materials, though shorter and less didactic, gave the participant-observer tentative answers to the questions: What kinds of things happen when adults listen to young people. It also provided an opportunity to see how the listening process might be handled if a participant were hostile.

**WHAT WAS LEARNED**

Both _Project Listening_ workshops provided insights into the listening process. These insights provide guidelines for the prospective teacher listening to students:

1. There is a therapeutic benefit in being heard. Airing one's problems makes people feel better if the listener is accepting and empathetic. If, in addition, the listener can help the speaker sort out his problems, by catching the central conflicts, the listening process can aid in the resolution of the conflict.
2. Listening requires a sublimation of self. The listener concentrates and tries to understand and accept the speaker. In doing so he momentarily suppresses his own problems. If he has pressing problems, himself, he is probably not in a good position to be an effective listener.

3. Good listening requires conviction that the speaker is a responsible and self-sufficient person. It is not desirable for the listener to interpret or judge or in any way suggest that he, rather than the speaker, has answers. There may be times when his advice is sought. Because he may have information valuable to the speaker, he might say: "In my experience, this has worked." He should avoid saying: "You should do..." At the point where he gives advice, however, he should realize that the listening process has been suspended.

4. The listener should be aware of the limits of his role. He should be familiar with community agencies which could offer broader kinds of help to the speaker. Once he has exhausted the value of listening, if the situation calls for further consultation, he should express his reluctance to go further. Teachers need to guard their own mental health. When a student becomes excessively demanding of the teacher's time and resources, the teacher should not hesitate to refer the student to additional sources of help. Good listening, which avoids interpretation, judgment, and advice giving, keeps the locus of control with the student. The teacher should understand that the student owns the problem and avoid usurping the problem from him. This is often very difficult. It is quite easy for the empathetic teacher to become emotionally involved in the problem. It is tempting for some assertive types of teachers to meddle. Not only can meddling create new problems, but it can also create a dependency relationship which is healthful to neither the teacher nor the student. It is necessary for the teacher to attend to his own mental health needs by seeking listeners. Teacher support groups, where good listening is practiced, seem to be as urgent a need as students' needs for finding listeners.
5. The concept of acceptance in listening refers to acceptance of the person here and now. It does not mean that the teacher approves of the behavior of the student. Reassurances to a student who is facing self-doubt or self-censure have the effect of making the student feel he is not truly being heard. Furthermore, sometimes students do need to change. If the listener reassures and makes a judgment, however well-intentioned and positive that might be, he is denying the student his perceptions. There are times, however, when the listener is provided data that seems to be ignored by the student. Pointing out the data does not constitute a judgment. What it does do is put the student in closer touch with reality.

6. Deep listening is a valuable tool in conflict resolution. If the listener can suspend his own defensiveness so that he can truly hear the complaint, he may learn the true agenda of the speaker and he may also de-escalate the hostility by the very act of listening. Then both speaker and listener can join in an effort to resolve the conflict.

7. The listener should avoid over-dramatizing the problem. A teacher in a public school setting, particularly a teacher who has come from a sheltered background himself, may become aware of conditions in a student's life that are horrendous. Empathy is not sympathy. The good listener is not judging the severity of the situation from his own background. He is trying to see the situation from the eyes of the speaker. He listens and observes, reflecting the feelings of the speaker, not responding as if he himself were in this situation. This also suggests that he must not underplay the severity of the feelings brought to him. What he as an adult might consider trivial is perhaps viewed by the adolescent in far more traumatic terms. Telling the student either that his problems are greater or lesser than the student feels they are is not helpful.

8. The listener should avoid encouraging the speaker to dwell in the past. Psychoanalysis was a means of seeking the cause of present
pain by the examination of the past. The teacher should not attempt to psychoanalyze. Not only does psychoanalysis require years of training, but present views of therapy are founded on the principle that, however beneficial it may be to share a past experience with another person, solutions to problems are to be found in the here and now. Almost everyone has some scar tissue. Fully-functioning people need encouragement in living in the present tense.

9. The listener should avoid generalizing. When a child runs to his mother for comfort for a skinned knee, it is very little help for him to be told that children across the land share his problem. It is equally unsatisfactory to be told that one is going through a phase. In pain, it is hard to get an historical prospective on what we are experiencing, and perhaps not even wise to do so.

10. Finally, if the teacher feels equipped and eager to function as a listener, he would be wise, rather than offering his services: "Feel free to come to me with your problems," to show his own courage to take risks with students. Students are reassured in sharing with teachers who have indicated they are willing to open themselves on a feeling level to a class.

Another issue which was raised in the two workshops was the question of how much transfer there would be in listening to a peer and listening to a student. In order to make an evaluation of this transfer, I included on the open-ended, free response listening test (Listening Test #2) two statements gleaned from my own teaching experience. Throughout Project Listening #1 there had been little opportunity to see the classroom application of the principles studied. I shared some of my former experiences
and one participant who had already completed her student teaching shared hers, but those reports seemed inadequate to the specific purpose of the workshop: to help teachers listen more effectively to students. Certainly the visit to the high school was beneficial, but this did not give very much concrete application in the school setting. In the interaction between project participants and students in the methods class, the realization was strong in processing that experience that the listeners had not utilized their listening skills. The test, therefore, was an attempt to discern whether application of active listening skills would be transferred to a teaching situation. The two statements I added to Listening Test #2 were captioned "to the teacher." No other change was made. The general test directions were: "After each quotation, write a response that you might make if you were listening to the person." How Project Listening #1 participants responded follow, listed in the order of success on Listening Test #1, post-test:

Female: age 16 (to the teacher)

The guidance counselor told me to see you about this. I said it wouldn't do any good. I know you don't like me. Everytime you call on me it's for the hardest question. Then when I can't answer, you never say anything to the people in the room who are snickering. I know that some of them are the most popular kids in the school but it sure makes me sick to see the teacher playing favorites. If I don't pass this course, I'll have to go to summer school and I won't be able to work and earn money for beauty school after I graduate. But nobody in this school worries about kids who are not going to college. What do I need history for, anyhow?
Shay: You think that I'm being unfair and playing favorites and you are worried about your grade in this course. You're afraid if you don't pass, it will screw your summer plans for earning money.

Shay responded to the student's statement by effective use of active listening. She sorted out well, emphasizing the practical elements in the student's remarks and ignoring the rather generalized condemnation of the school. By this sorting out, she opens the door to dealing with the realities of the situation. Such a response lets the student know she has been heard. It would be interesting to see where the conversation might go after this good start, but, of course, that would be outside the active listening domain.

Carol: You sound really uptight. I think part of the difficulty may be caused by a misunderstanding between you and me. I didn't realize that you felt disliked by my behavior in class and certainly didn't intend to show favoritism. I'd like to be, not only your teacher, but your friend also. History, although it is a required subject can be fun to learn. I'd like to help you with it if you want me to. Truce?

Carol begins by recognizing the student's feeling, although not as specifically as Shay. The general "up tight" labeling of the student's feelings is not so effective as a more specific description of the emotions the student expressed. She points out that there is a difference in the way the two people, the student and she, perceive the interaction between them. It would seem logical to pursue
this difference a bit farther. The suggestion that Carol makes that she would like to be friends with the student will likely reinforce the student's hostility. The student doesn't feel friendly. She has come into the meeting with considerable hostility. I believe there is a real danger in her feeling the offer of friendship to be a condescending way to avoid solving the problem. Furthermore, the student is in no mood to hear that history can be fun, and this attitude would tend either to increase her hostility to Carol or to cause her to withdraw. Carol, she would assume, has little understanding of what a bore history is to her. The offer of help may somewhat retrieve the situation. It is a genuine behavior that bespeaks friendliness. Ending the response with "Truce" seems to suggest a closure. One might assume that because of the length and breadth of the girl's hostility it has been building for quite some time. The girl has admittedly come to the teacher upon the advice of a third party, suggesting that the issue might never have been opened without that kind of push. For Carol now to close the discussion would leave the girl in the frustrated place where she began.

Rexann: Gee, I didn't realize I was doing that to you. If I don't call on you for a while, will you volunteer when you have something to say. I really like to hear your comments.

Rexann's opening sentence implies an acceptance of the feelings of the student. But it goes beyond this: it also
accepts the student's interpretation of events. This may be a mistake. Rexann immediately accepts the student's perception as true. They may or may not be. Rexann needs to ask for data before conceding the point. The second sentence, suggesting a solution, seems benign, but again there is little interchange to air the problem in greater detail. Finally the statement that Rexann enjoys hearing the comments of the girl might cause the student to doubt Rexann's sincerity. Students tend to view such compliments, particularly when they are failing courses, as bribes on the part of the teacher in an attempt to smooth over the unpleasant situation.

Jean: I'm sorry. It's not that I dislike you. It's honestly that I wasn't aware that I was embarrassing you in the classroom. What would you suggest I do?

Like Rexann, Jean is quick to accept the student's perception of what is happening even if she denies her own intentions for causing this situation to occur. It is certainly not wrong for a teacher to admit making a mistake. It does seem dangerous for the teacher to accept the conclusions of the student before the data has been presented. Asking for the student to suggest a remedy to a problem is a viable move, after the problem has been sufficiently aired. To do so this early in the conversation creates a role reversal that the student is not prepared for. Mutually working out a compromise would be a wiser
course, leaving both teacher and student in a stronger position.

Judy: You feel as if I really haven't attended to you as an individual.

Judy's response seems to get at the heart of the student's anger. She has pointed out that the whole school has ignored her individually as well as others like her who are not among the academically talented students in the school. Judy's response, though brief, is a very good door opener for the student to ventilate further her feelings of hostility. Again, the success of the interview would depend on what follows. Judy's brief comment, however, provides the opportunity for continued discussion.

Lisa: You must be feeling bad about me--like I'm picking on you. I'm glad you let me know, and I'm sorry. It's awful to be laughed at. I hear you saying a lot of things that we need to talk about. You think I don't like you because I seem to ask you the hardest questions. You see me playing favorites, and you're worried you won't pass the course because of it. Let's talk about these things one at a time. You are justified in being upset with me. So let's clear it up.

Lisa's response is empathetic, yet she suggests that there is more to talk about. In a true listening situation, Lisa should not set the agenda. When she does so, she moves away from listening into conflict resolution. Her statement "you are justified in being upset with me" is a weakness in her response. In the first place, it puts her in the position of judge: she knows what is justifiable and what
is not. Secondly, she has already said that they need to talk further. That suggests that the perceptions may not be totally accurate, making the justifiable statement sound like a kind of condescending statement designed to relieve the hostility.

Mary: Does the idea of not going to college bother you?

This response is an interesting one, and one, I fear, a great many teachers resort to. It refocuses the problem away from Mary, suggesting that the student has another problem. Mary is side-stepping the issue that the student brings to her.

Jane: We'll talk about that in a minute. (referring apparently to the student's statement about history) Right now I'm really concerned that you feel I ask you hard questions and play favorites. You seem to feel that people you call the popular kids get favors you don't.

Jane's response is fairly empathetic. It perhaps would have been wise simply to reflect the feelings without reference to Jane's concern. Beginning with that statement of concern might suggest to the student that her feelings were not acceptable. Again there is a subtle refutation of the student's view when Jane says "people you call the popular kids." The speaker might anticipate some debate on that question. A better policy would be for Jane to acknowledge the student's perception and then to acknowledge her own, if they be different. This procedure would tend to keep the issues clarified.
Jennie: I try to treat all of my students equally. Perhaps you feel inferior to those students who aren't having as much difficulty as you in understanding history. You should understand that not all students learn at the same pace and there's no reason you should give up because you can't answer all the questions. If you'd like some help, I'd be glad to go over some things with you that you don't quite understand. But please don't give up. I know you are trying and care about learning so don't worry you won't flunk the course, I can't flunk you for trying, can I?

First off Jennie makes a mistake in defending herself. Further, this particular defense denies many students' experiences in school. If teachers are honest, they normally don't treat all students equally. Robots might, but human teachers don't. Further, if teachers are to become aware of individual differences it may not be desirable for them to treat each student equally. Jennie's second statement could be interpreted by a student in the frame of mind of the one speaking as a put-down. She may, in fact, feel inferior, but her remarks do not indicate that she does. If her hostility is a defense system for covering her deep-seated feelings of inferiority, it is not for the teacher to break that defense system down. Once again, the teacher is not a psychoanalyst. The comment that she may be slower than the rest is rather like saying that she is indeed inferior. Then the reassurance becomes very condescending. The student obviously hasn't given up or she wouldn't have come to see the teacher. Overall Jennie's response seems to ignore what the student was
saying to her. It is as if Jennie were not really listening. Not listening is a very easy habit for teachers to form. They see students through their own perceptions. When the student speaks, it is very easy to ignore the words and respond with the pre-conceived notions the teacher has about the student.

These responses raise the transfer issue. Undoubtedly it is a weakness in the Project Listening curriculum as it stands. The next section of this chapter will deal with some means for improving the course.

**WHAT CHANGES WOULD IMPROVE PROJECT LISTENING FOR TEACHERS**

There are three major changes that would make Project Listening better adapted to a teacher training program.

One problem encountered in Project Listening #1 was the superficiality of several of the opening tapes. An hour was spent making these tapes and two hours were used for critiquing them. These three hours could have been better spent if there had been some warm-up exercises by the group as a whole to suggest areas where conversations on tape might have concerned problem areas. Undoubtedly the significant subject matter of the Judy-Lisa tape made during the first session made students feel more comfortable in discussing personal situations on the
subsequent tapes. Also such warm-ups might serve to move students away from discussions of finished business. There is a tendency to story-tell. Listening to finished business does not demonstrate the powerful benefits of being actively listened to.

A second improvement would be to do some exercises in role-playing, such as the one described from Listening Test #2. One of Carkhuff's counselor training methods is to have each student respond to the same statement orally and then submit those responses to the group for processing. This seems to be a very valuable kind of activity. Considerable time was spent in the workshop relating communication experiences that had happened to students outside of class. Part of this discussion time might be used for such role-playing.

Finally, I believe Project Listening should be used early in the students' preparation period. It would, however, be a great advantage if, after the formal workshop, the students would stay together and become a support group for the duration of their undergraduate education. It would be especially helpful if these groups could remain intact during student teaching.

These three changes would, I believe, improve the program. My experience with the workshop, however, convinced me of the urgent need for prospective teachers to have some kind of interpersonal small group experience. I
was distressed at the loneliness and alienation the women in Project Listening #1 were expressing. Large institutions, whether they be lower schools or the university, are lonely places. The individual is apt to be swallowed up by the institution. If a strong self-image is in fact a part of a successful teacher's qualities, as all the research I have uncovered suggests it is, attention should be paid to this aspect of the education program, whether in structured courses like Project Listening or in unstructured sensitivity groups. It is a need that ought to be attended to.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR ADAPTATION TO THE ENGLISH EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

It is obvious that English teachers need to listen. I believe that the Project Listening materials could be adapted to a high school English curriculum with good results. The format might need to be changed. Taping could be replaced by dividing students into triads, each student rotating as speaker, listener, and observer. Some of the didactic materials would need adaptation as well. But when one conceives a class where student and teacher manifest the attitudes of "Recognizing," "Attending," and "Accepting" one another, it would increase the bond of community and the subsequent climate would be conducive both to academic and personal growth.
It would also be valuable to see how the techniques of Project Listening might better prepare a student to facilitate class discussions pertaining to literature and personal writing. Many methods courses involve mock lessons presented by students. Seeing how active listening would facilitate discussion would be a worthy undertaking.

Teaching has historically been a speaking profession. Awareness of the importance of listening and the development of skill in listening seem to be a timely emphasis for the education of teachers, particularly in English.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It has already been noted that Project Listening materials could be subjected to a more rigorous experimental design. As important as this might be, equally valuable would be follow-up studies of the people exposed to the curriculum. It would be interesting to see also whether this course of study would be beneficial for teachers who have difficulty relating to students. That would be a hostile audience, perhaps, but if it could be shown effective with this group, its value would be further enhanced. Another environment for Project Listening would be with a group of students and teachers. Although one study reported that parents when in a workshop with their own children did not significantly raise their empathy
level, there might be values less tangible relating to intergenerational communication.

Finally, this case study presents evidence that students participating in Project Listening feel better equipped to handle interpersonal communication. This conclusion suggests that its inclusion in teacher education is justified.

I have written a redesign for teacher education which attempts to move the pieces around a bit (See Appendix D). In a curriculum redesign for a humanities component at the high school level I had moved them around in much the same manner. Both the high school curriculum design and this teacher education design put people in a family, where they stay throughout their time in the program, leaving the family for gaining new experience, but coming back to it for a time to reflect with a few close associates on the meaning of the experience and to chart a new course for the future.

Monday Kathleen's mother died. Tuesday she was back in school. None of her teachers will probably know. She is a reticent child. But someday when the full impact of the experience hits her, I hope she finds a person able to listen to her with understanding and caring. The mental health agency in the town where I live has started junior and senior high support groups. Some schools have peer counseling facilities. I talked to one high school student from Michigan last summer who told me how successful peer
counseling was in her school. One superintendent told me that what had made the biggest impact on the school system in Iowa where he had come from was a week-end retreat that included students, faculty, administration, and parents.

I've been noticing the frequent occurrence of a proverb lately: "To understand a man, walk a mile in his moccasins." Project Listening attempts to help people do that.

We are frantically involved in trivia in the university and in public education. Project Listening can provide a time for us to slow down and listen to one another. And perhaps in learning to listen to one another, we will learn to listen to ourselves, hearing, as Carl Sandburg says, our "own deepest motives." "Once there was a way to get back home," the Beatles sing. Robert Frost writes: "Home is the place that when you go there they have to take you in." Project Listening showed me that there are homes all around us. Listening and being listened to open the doors.


APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROJECT LISTENING #1

I will appreciate your filling out this questionnaire. If you have already referred to a question in your final evaluation handed in today, refer me to that. Otherwise, please answer as specifically as possible.

1. What part of Project Listening did you think most beneficial. Put these in rank order.
   - taping
   - critiques of taping
   - general discussion
   - tapes from kit played
   - film
   - listening at Westerville North
   - other

2. Do you believe that your listening skill has improved?

3. Can you cite any evidence, either within the class or without?

4. Of the people in this class, who would you choose to listen to you if you needed to talk?

5. Do you believe that the talking was as beneficial, more, or less beneficial than learning the listening techniques?

6. How would you change this course if it were to be offered again?

7. Do you feel there were any benefits in the course other than learning to use some listening techniques?
APPENDIX B

PROJECT LISTENING TEST #2, FREE RESPONSE

After each quotation, write a response that you might make if you were listening to the person.

I. Girl, age 13

My mother gives me two days off a week, but on the other three days I have to come straight home from school and mind my little sister. None of my friends have so much responsibility. Besides, sometimes my sister goes to play with her friends after she checks in with me, but it's too late for me to join my friends.

II. Man, age 45

I'd like to take a year off and travel. My boss says I could take a leave of absence. I've got the money to go, but I guess I'm just too chintzy to spend it.

III. Woman, age 60

I've got to go home this weekend and tell Mother that she'll have to stay in the rest home. My sisters, who are both older than I am, can't seem to get it across to her. Daddy took care of her until it killed him. Now she expects the same from us. She'd be miserable with me 500 miles away from all her friends. It's a nice rest home; besides with her broken hip she needs nursing care.

IV. Woman, age 40

Now, understand, I'm glad Joannie talks with her father. I could never talk to mine. But it really upsets me that she never brings me any of her problems. I feel shut out of her world. I think I could really help when something is troubling her, but she won't give me a chance.
V. Male, age 24

I've been looking for a job for three months. Four times I've been among the final applicants under consideration, but each time I lose out. I get the feeling I'm good, but not good enough.

VI. Woman, age 46

Sometimes I get this awful sense of isolation. I remember how alone I was when Daddy died. Then I look at Jim and think: "You'll leave me too someday." It's then that I fear I'll do something stupid and he'll abandon me, like Daddy did. The irony is that when I need love the most, I am the least lovable. Clinging and desperate.

VII. Boy, age 10

Miss Browning is really unfair. She is making me do five pages of math and Steve only has to do two.

VIII. Female, age 35

Communication is very good in my family. I remember one time when Jim and I had a disagreement. But I kept quiet and the whole thing finally blew over.

IX. Male, age 40 (to teacher)

It is really quite clear to me that you are letting your political bias influence the grading of Sue's paper. I took the paper she wrote in support of Reagan to four excellent English teachers, including one college teacher. They all marked it quite differently from you. Each said that the paper was outstanding for a junior in high school. Now what do you have to say for yourself?

X. The guidance counselor told me to see you about this. I said it wouldn't do any good. I know you don't like me. Every time you call on me it's for the hardest questions. Then when I can't answer, you never say anything to the people in the room who are snickering. I know that some of them are the most popular kids in the school, but it sure makes me sick to see the teacher playing favorites. If I don't pass this course, I'll have to go to summer school and I won't be able to work and earn money for beauty school after I graduate. But nobody in this school worries about kids who are not going to college. What do I need history for, anyhow?
APPENDIX C
A BIBLIOGRAPHY IN HUMAN RELATIONS FOR TEACHERS


Blake tried to apply Rogerian principles in his relationships with students. This article provides a testimonial to the conclusions of this study.


Some practical applications of humanistic teaching in the classroom are described. One chapter discussing the way literature was treated in this kind of setting would be particularly valuable for the English teacher.


A simplified handbook describing ways to function in a helping relationship. This book was designed for volunteers in the mental health field.


Somewhat following the same format as The Art of Helping, this book is particularly designed for classroom teachers. It contains many examples of interactions with students.

A perspective on problems of adolescents and suggested ways of dealing with them. Dr. Ginott presents many examples of ineffective and effective communication with teenagers.


Glasser describes how to conduct a class meeting where students can ventilate their feelings—and suggests that contracts with students be agreed upon for greater cooperation.


A very valuable resource for dealing with classroom problems. Gordon stresses the importance of problem ownership and explains ways of handling both student-owned problems and teacher-owned problems. He includes a method for conflict resolution.


Jackson observed elementary classrooms and discovered a "hidden curriculum." A very enlightening book about what teachers' actions tell students.


Kohl teaches to a large extent through personal interaction with students. In this book he tells how this kind of teaching works.

Lyon presents a theoretic base for affective education and then considerable practical examples of affective education in the classroom.


Transcriptions of the group discussions among teachers as they attempted to solve their classroom problems. This book gives a valuable insight into the real world of teaching.


Rogers describes classrooms where his conclusions about interpersonal relationships are being put into practice.

Rogers, Carl. The Interpersonal Relationship in the Facilitation of Learning. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1968.

A pamphlet describing and documenting the effectiveness of Rogerian principles.


The text for Project Listening. Rogers describes the necessary conditions for a helping relationship.


Roberts provides some suggestions about how to overcome the alienation between students and teachers and teachers and administration.
Rubens conducted consultation groups for teachers. In this report, she includes the transcript of the sessions and her interpretation of what the teachers were really saying and feeling.


Based on the theory that learning how to interact with others is the most important function of the curriculum, this book describes ways of helping students interact more effectively. A very valuable resource for ideas: simulation games, role playing, etc.
APPENDIX D
A PROPOSAL FOR THE REDESIGN OF
TEACHER EDUCATION

The "Search for Consensus" from which Standards for Colleges and Universities Preparing Teachers were derived was a massive undertaking to promote change. Not only do the new standards specify five areas in which teachers are to be prepared ("the teaching of reading, human relations, managing behavior problems, clinical use of diagnostic instruments, and urban and suburban or rural schools") but they also call for increased clinical experience and closer cooperation with schools, particularly the development of "chartered" schools.

Because of the decrease in demand for the preparation of new teachers, the time seems ripe for the development of a program that will provide new teachers who have undergone a more rigorous selection process and who have been trained much more efficiently than in the past. The cost of educating a single teacher will rise if we are to adhere to the requirements, but the new teachers entering the profession will be extremely able and well-prepared. Furthermore, with the addition of better conceived clinical programs, it seems mandatory for the many excellent teachers
already within the public education establishment to be brought into the training capacity.

I believe that Project Listening is in tune with these developments and I can see its use in a variety of ways. The following then is a proposal which utilizes present staff of colleges of education and which also utilizes practitioners who have something to offer in the field.

The first step in this process logically rests on the recommitment of education staffs—both senior faculty and teaching assistants—to the education of undergraduate teacher trainees. As the students feel fragmented in their education at a large university, so the staff becomes fragmented as well. During the school year there seems to be no way to avoid all the demands placed on this staff. Participation by the entire staff once a year in a renewal retreat would help this group arrive at common purposes and fuller understandings of differences. There is no reason why an educational staff cannot maintain its pluralism while seeking to define some common objectives. Each staff person brings a set of competencies to his/her position. A spirit of community fostered by a retreat could martial those various resources so that a student in the program could benefit by both a sense of direction through the understanding of the common purposes and the richness of a staff that brings individual differences and expertise to the process of his/her education. This reality
seems to imply a format for such a retreat: What are our common purposes in educating undergraduates? How do each of us see ourselves contributing to these purposes?

The second step in the redesign involves the identification of chartered schools, as well as effective teachers, who could serve as clinicians in the program. Senior staff and experienced teaching assistants may already have insight into what schools and what teachers might be suitable for this role. The entire staff needs to visit the promising schools for the purpose of selection or reassessment of clinicians. These clinicians could for a pilot program be commensated by released time and university credit for participation. If the program was a success, some funding would have to be found for this third source of personnel. Not only could the addition of this source at least double the number of practioners of education that a student would come into contact with, but it would base the program in the realities of public schooling in the present. There would also be a reverse affect. The clinician could impart to his/her school a sense of the direction in which the university was going. This closer association between the theoretical classroom and the practical laboratory would contribute a much greater spirit of cooperation within the two arenas.

To facilitate further this awareness of what life in schools is like, the staff member should arrange for the
video-taping of real classrooms in the schools for use in the preliminary aspects of the university program. Videotapes are an expeditious way of observing. Besides this, they also make processing of observations more feasible. One can visualize the showing of these tapes early in the program with discussion by the students and the staff—including the clinical teachers—as a means of gaining insight into the process of education.

The third recommendation for teacher redesign is the assignment of the student to a family. The family would consist of students and a senior and junior staff member. A clinician should be assigned as well, although his/her participation would necessarily be somewhat limited. The clinician should early in the program, however, establish a relationship with this group so that the students would become quite comfortable in using him/her as a resource.

At the point in the program where the family was organized, each family should be involved with Project Listening as a means for development of listening skills for use within the family and for the kind of cohesiveness that such an experience provides. Project Listening provides a safe, non-threatening series of structured experiences. The only recommendation for training of leaders is the exposure to the curriculum as a participant. This could be a preliminary task of the junior staff,
although participation by the entire staff would be highly desirable.

This continuing family would fulfill a variety of functions. It would be a group within which each individual could assess his own needs as a prospective teacher. It would be the place where personal objectives were decided upon and evaluated. It would provide the student with a forum for processing the experiences he was having in the university at large as well as other experiences outside the university where his individualized program might take him. Finally it would serve as a testing ground where the student could gain honest feedback on his own teaching competencies as his exposure to laboratory teaching increased. One might imagine his/her bringing in videotapes of his/her own experience within a classroom for processing by his family.

Finally the student should have ample opportunity to participate in life in the schools at several different levels of involvement. Visits to the clinician's school for planned observation, participation in individualized or small group teaching experiences, and finally serving as intern teacher in a school for an extended period—all these experiences could be made more significant by having a place for processing—the student's family group.

This program does not address itself to content issues. I am convinced that content issues are not nearly so
important as process issues. Students I have associated with are in desperate need of a group to belong to and experiences which will enable them to evaluate and develop their own competencies. Closer association with the place where they will practice their profession and with people who can support their efforts in preparing to do that would fill a gap that seems evident in the current program.

The plan I have outlined has the following benefits:

1. It involves each student with three advisors who know him very well.

2. It involves each student with a group of fellow students who become a support group, having known each other for six quarters.

3. It gives the student an opportunity to discuss his experiences in a friendly, congenial atmosphere.

4. It gives the student opportunity to receive stimulation from outside the group.

5. It makes the student responsible for self-assessment and follow-through in the development and actualization of his own program, based on realities within the public school institution.

6. It utilizes all available staff at the level of their greatest competence.

7. It gives the student opportunity for considerably more feedback through the use of videotaping than he normally has.

8. It gives the student exposure to life in schools early, and gives him an opportunity to practice teach before actually assuming full responsibility for a class.

9. It creates greater understanding between the classroom and the clinic so that theory must take into account reality and innovation is not considered subversive.
10. It provides an opportunity for interaction among the various levels of professional staff, avoiding the isolation that can occur.

My experience as a teacher of high school English, as a supervisor of student teachers, and as an observer-participant of Project Listening have all contributed to my questioning the adequacy of teacher preparation programs. Project Listening particularly pointed to the need for processing of communication, attention to personal growth, and the value of feeling that one is a member of a community. If interactional skills is a prerequisite of effective teaching, as all evidence I have encountered shows that it is, then the need for the program to be redesigned to provide opportunities for interaction and personal growth is a logical outcome.
Long before I was a parent, I was a teacher. As a teacher I was interested in communicating my knowledge to students. When they accepted it enthusiastically, I was gratified. When they didn't, I was frustrated. This process lasted for eleven years. It was a roller-coaster existence. My sense of accomplishment was based on student acceptance of the truth and wisdom of what I imparted to them.

Then I became a parent. I found myself changing. I was more reactive than initiative. My son's cry summoned me. I recognized his need for me, yet I saw that in no way was I in control of his growth processes. When Andy was four months old, one of my friends--also a teacher--tried to teach him to crawl. Her efforts were frustrated. I laughed at her foolishness.

Now Andy is eleven and in the past six months has become quite eager to have his own means of transportation. He checked out with his friends--peers and adults--what kind of bike he should look for. I found a book in the library for him. He read it eagerly. He decided on a ten-speed and began phoning for prices. By doing comparison
shopping, he decided on a bike. That gave him a sum of money necessary to save. It took him nearly six months to save $80.

The week he was to buy the bike he saw an ad for a used ten-speed. He asked me if I would take him to look at it. I suggested he take a more competent advisor than me along. In lieu of that he called someone I suggested to obtain a list of criteria upon which to judge the bike. Because the bike did not meet his criteria, he decided not to buy it. I took him to the store which had the best prices, after checking out the guarantee, he made the purchase.

A couple of weeks passed and the gears jammed. He and a friend disassembled his old bike and a couple of other discards in the friend's garage and assembled a new bike. Learning of his interest in bike-making, an older boy offered to sell him cheaply an old bike that he had. Andy bought it, disassembled the first bike he had made for some strategic parts, and went to the bike store for a new chain, the only thing the new bike needed. The store chains didn't fit so he bought one too large and went to the nearest filling station to put it on. The attendant opened the tool drawer for him and in two and a half hours he had accomplished his task. One night later he rented the second bike he made which had cost him $7.43 to a neighbor, charging $1 for 24 hours.
There is something very instructive for me observing this process. It would be hard to calculate the time these transactions took—time for thinking and planning, reading and conversation. (Some of this probably took place in school.) Time was required for looking at the used bike, buying the new one, building the first bike, getting proper parts and building the second. In all I would calculate about 14 1/2 hours, the equivalent of three school days. Yet think of the significant learning that took place: an increased understanding of American commerce, awareness of the need for expert opinion, the understanding of delayed gratification, the realization that adaptation may be required if an object is to serve its desired function, an awareness of one's ability to initiate and complete two different kinds of projects, and awareness that people are helpful.

What Andy brought to these enterprises were a strong need and desire for the product, a source of revenue, and a confidence in his mechanical ability, his problem-solving ability, and interactional skills in dealing with both peers and adults.

My only role was facilitative. I made a few suggestions. I provided him with means—in the form of books, money, transportation. Most importantly I gave him the freedom to pursue his own goals.
Is there a message in this for education? Some of his confidence comes from his elementary schooling. He had been in an open classroom in grades three, four, and five where he was required to assume responsibility for completing his work and where he was encouraged to own his own problems.

There is a great delight in this observation for me. Now my sense of accomplishment comes from seeing his self-development. By refusing to determine his goals, I allowed him to grow.

As a teacher I am handed a curriculum to "teach." What I ought to be "teaching" is within the student. I need to observe, suggest, provide resources, for reinforce self-confidence, be non-evaluative: let the inevitable process of growth take place. To the extent that public education can achieve these conditions, its success will be measured by the number of fully functioning competent individuals.


