

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: REQUISITE FAMILY LIVING COMPETENCIES FOR HIGH
SCHOOL GRADUATES OF OREGON, AS PERCEIVED BY
PARTICIPANTS OF PUBLIC HEALTH PRENATAL CLASSES

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The main objective of this study was to identify family life competencies needed by high school graduates, as perceived by a majority of respondents. In addition, the null hypothesis tested was: that age, sex, and educational level are each independent of response on each individual competency statement. Testing was done at the 5% level of significance.

The questionnaire was developed through a synthesis of goals stated in twelve family life curriculum guides published since 1965. A working draft of the questionnaire was developmentally tested with three high school seniors and three mothers of teenagers. The survey instrument included provisions for indicating personal data, and offered four categories of "Essential", "Necessary", "Permissible", and "Unimportant", for participants to respond to nine family life topics and seventy competency statements.

The population included those couples and individuals voluntarily attending county public health prenatal classes in western Oregon. Data were collected from all five counties with an on-going program. One hundred forty-seven usable questionnaires were obtained. Four instruments were disregarded because of incomplete personal data.

Participants in the study ranged from 16 to 45 years of age with a mean age of 25, and with 46.94 percent of the people in the 25 to 29 age group. Males numbered 56 (38.10 percent) in the participating group, with 91 (61.90 percent) females. Grouped educational levels revealed 27.21 percent having more than 16 years of education and the groups with 12 years and with 13-15 years of education each being 26.53 percent of the total sample.

Frequency counts and percentages of the total sample indicating favorable responses, were computed and presented for each of the 9 family life topics and 70 competency statements. All 9 family life topics and 64 of the 70 competency statements received a majority (over 50 percent) of favorable responses.

Chi-square tests were computed on each item of the questionnaire to test the null hypothesis that age, sex, and educational level are each independent of response. The null hypothesis was rejected for age, in seven instances. Most cases showed younger people responding favorably more often than expected and older people

responding less favorably more often than expected.

The null hypothesis was rejected for sex in four instances, with males responding less favorably more often and females more favorably more often than expected. The null hypothesis for educational level was rejected in nine instances. More educated people tended to respond less favorably more often and less educated people tended to respond more favorably more often than expected.

Implications of the study for the family living curriculum in Oregon secondary schools, as indicated in the opinions of the respondents, are as follows:

1. Family life topics of communicating, understanding yourself, relating to others, understanding sex, being a family member, parenthood, selecting a mate, marriage, and the family relating to the community would be valuable in the family life curriculum.

2. It seems necessary that family life education topics stress making decisions, solving problems, resolving conflicts, and coping with situations.

3. It seems reasonable that sixty-four of the family life competencies identified in this study be incorporated in programs designed to prepare students for their life role as a family member.

The sample of expectant parents was a biased group. On speculation it seems that the sample could be quite concerned about the topic and competencies of parenthood. In view of this, the

following recommendations for future studies are made:

1. High school students, young married couples not expecting children, and middle aged couples need to be surveyed to identify family life competencies.

2. Learning experiences need to be developed for family life competencies.

Requisite Family Living Competencies for High School
Graduates of Oregon, as Perceived by Participants
of Public Health Prenatal Classes

by

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REQUISITE FAMILY LIVING COMPETENCIES FOR HIGH
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PRENATAL CLASSES

I. INTRODUCTION

Change in today's society has precipitated a searching look at existing, past, and future phenomena, encompassing the institution of the family. The family has been the defender of tradition, fundamental values, and parental authority; but societal change invariably affects the family's conventional position. These felt changes threaten the nature and functions of the family and the coping ability of family members.

The existence of experimentation with different family forms or life styles, including communal living and informal living arrangements, tends to indicate that the "traditional" family is indeed in trouble. McConnell (1972) noted that, "Because many people do not find the family of today meeting their needs, they are experimenting with different types of families" (p. F-23).

Today, individuals and families are exposed to many diverse values and value systems regarding interpersonal relationships and the institution of the family. Consequently, today's youth face many alternatives as they make decisions about interpersonal relationships and the establishment of new family units. The basis of this study

is the identification of what competencies young people need in order to make these personally satisfying decisions.

Need for the Study

In these changing times the family is not the only institution that has undergone questioning of purpose and/or adequacy of function. The public school system has also received a critical assessment. Silberman (1971) pointed out that "education should prepare people not just to earn a living but to live a life--a creative, humane, and sensitive life. This means that the schools must provide a liberal, humanizing education" (p. 114).

Alfred North Whitehead (1929), a philosopher of education, said, "there is only one subject-matter for education, and that is life in all its manifestations" (p. 5). Oregon's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dale Parnell (1972), concurred with this philosophical point-of-view when he expressed the need for schools to focus on the real life roles or careers of individuals and the consequent competencies needed to fill these life roles. He explains:

A role is usually described as something which an individual performs throughout the course of his life and defined by the expectations which an individual and others have for it as well as by certain ideal norms which society in general attaches to it. The roles or "life careers" with which all of us are simultaneously involved include the roles of being an individual (being myself, being an 'I'), a family member, producer, consumer, and citizen (p. 5).

Students need to obtain skills and knowledge enabling them to cope and function as family members. But the problem is to determine what these necessary competencies are.

As Pauline Goodwin (1972), Home Economics Specialist for the Oregon Board of Education observed, "yes, there is a need for identifying high school student competencies. . . the area of family life, what makes one a contributing, worthwhile, happy family member, is an area that needs to be pursued".

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to identify family life competencies needed by high school graduates, as perceived by individuals and couples anticipating parenthood.

Objectives:

1. To formulate for the family life area of curriculum, a listing of competency statements which are in the form of performance-based instructional goals.
2. To determine which of the family life competencies are identified as important or desirable by those people anticipating parenthood.

In addition, the null hypothesis tested was: that age, sex, and educational level are each independent of response on each individual competency statement.

Method of Procedure

A questionnaire was devised, consisting of competency statements obtained from a synthesis of goals found in family life curriculum guides. The questionnaire was then administered to young couples and individuals who were anticipating parenthood and were attending county public health prenatal classes.

Data from the questionnaires were compiled and analyzed, resulting in a listing of competency statements deemed "essential" or "necessary" by the majority of participants in the study. In addition, to establish if a significant difference in participant's responses existed, the variables of age, sex, and educational level were statistically tested.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to a listing of competency statements in the area of family life, derived from curriculum guides. General topics cited appeared frequently in the family life curriculum guides, as did the substance of the competency statements.

This study was restricted to those young couples and individuals who attended county public health prenatal classes held in the winter months of 1973 in five western Oregon counties.

Definition of Terms

1. Family life education defined by Lee (1963), through a synthesis of opinions of experts, is "any and all school experiences deliberately and consciously used by teachers in helping to develop the personalities of students to their fullest capacities which equip the individual to solve most constructively the problems unique to his family role" (p. 105).

2. Competency-based education, as stated by Howsam (1972), essentially means that "all learning is individual--that the individual, whether teacher or learner, is goal oriented" (p. 35).

3. Competency statements are objectives written in behavioral terms, with possible indicators of performance and modes of assessment inherent in the expressed goal.

4. A competency is a possessed knowledge, skill, or ability that can be demonstrated or performed.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature for this study focused on three major categories. First was an overview of the factors that have influenced the traditional structure and function of the family. The second category of family life education, reviewed parental and youth opinions on family life curriculum content. The final section dealt with competency based education, encompassing current status and possible new directions.

Family Life Today

The family of today has not escaped the influence of rapid change in contemporary society. Historically, the family was the prime example of a self-sustained unit. Increased population density, population mobility, technological innovations, and mass communication, have altered the self-sustaining character of separate family units that existed in the past.

Societal, economic, and scientific changes present factors which have influenced the family. Winch (1970) posed the question, "What do we know about permanence and change in the American family? We can be reasonably sure of only two things. One of these pertains to its structure; the other to its function" (p. 6). People living longer, having fewer people in a household, and marrying at

a younger age, have all altered the structure of the family. Several functions of the family, have been transferred to outside agencies; as economic, protective, recreational, educational, and religious functions.

Phenomenon Affecting the Family

Roles of family members are fluctuating widely. The feminist movement has created vast changes in women's roles. These role changes affect the entire family, its members and its functions.

Chilman (Bernard and Chilman, 1970) indicated that:

The liberated and not so liberated women point out that marriage cannot be expected to endure when women are asked to carry the main brunt of child care and house-work. As more and more women become highly educated and earn their living outside their homes, they are becoming, in fact, de-trained for daily domesticity. Moreover, motherhood is no longer rewarded as a noble, socially useful calling. With the population threat, mothers are being made to feel apologetic for having added to the population boom. They feel positively ignoble. Yes, there is enormous logic to the restlessness of today's women within their roles of marriage and motherhood (p. 577).

Increased employment of women outside the home, asserted rights of women, and the ecological concern of overpopulation, have all influenced the traditional family and its child-bearing and child-rearing trends.

Continued expansive entry into the labor force and asserted freedom have altered women's expectations of men and men's role.

As Cortese (1971) indicated:

Many men appear to be struggling to hold their own on the status ladder. They are confused--not capable of simply determining what it means to be a "real man." The criteria seem to be changing. Both modern man's family and society put considerable pressure on him to succeed. He, additionally, is required to do more participating in his home today--in recreation, decision making, child care, and in many housekeeping chores (pp. 477-478).

Individuals and families do not live in a vacuum, particularly with mass media and increased population mobility, so they are exposed to many diverse values and value systems. Richardson (1969) contended that ". . . this exposure results in constant reassessment in family living and often with an accompanying deviation from previously held beliefs about sex" (p. 538).

There have been changes in the moral code, with sex functioning as an expression of individuality, not a restricted function of procreation. Giele (1971) indicated that sexual mores have changed because sexuality today is regarded as the means of individual self-expression and gratification if it occurs within the context of a continuing relationship. He further asserted that, ". . . simultaneous with the evolution of a new sexual ethic. . . there has been a gradual and at times painful effort to formulate government policy toward the family" (p. 762).

Through various agency pursuits and through legislation, some national and state government bodies have become involved in certain

issues that were once family matters exclusively. National legislation has supported a family planning thrust. Public Health and Public Welfare are two agencies which have been involved in counseling families on pertinent contraceptive methods according to individual needs. In addition, some states, including Oregon, have passed legislation to simplify divorce procedures.

The U. S. Supreme Court determined national policy on abortion, when ruling that a woman with her doctor's consent, may choose a voluntary abortion during the first three months of pregnancy (January 22, 1973 in case No. 70-18 Roe v. Wade). This ruling nullified state prohibition on the matter, residency requirements, and screening procedures. (Previous to this, however, some states, including Oregon, had sanctioned abortion through passed legislation.)

Nationally, some statistics provided evidence of societal problems and/or outcomes of the attempts of youth to relate to one another (Knight and Keropian, 1968). One-third to one-half of all teenage marriages are prefaced by pregnancy. One out of every six teenagers becomes pregnant out of wedlock. Since 1940, the number of unwed mothers under eighteen has doubled. Of all women marrying today, forty percent are between fifteen and eighteen. One in every two teenage marriages ends in divorce within five years.

Levine (1967) disclosed that a marked increase in the national divorce rate has occurred. In 1935, there was one divorce for every

six marriages, but in 1964 there was one divorce for every four marriages. In addition, one fourth of all high school girls have had sexual relations, and illegitimacy rates and venereal disease cases are increasing in magnitude.

The Oregon Public Health Statistics report (1972) indicated that the marriage rate in Oregon was 6.0 in 1960 and 8.4 in 1971, while divorce rates were 3.2 in 1960 and 5.0 in 1971 (p. 105). (The previously given rates are figured on the number/1,000 population.) This indicates that the divorce rate has increased 56% and the marriage rate increased 40% between 1960 and 1971.

Other Oregon Public Health figures indicate that illegitimate birth rates and incidences of venereal disease are increasing (pp. 47 and 130). In 1960, there were 1,250 illegitimate births (32.6 per 1000 live births) and in 1971 there were 2,608 (78.1 per 1000 live births). Illegitimate births more than doubled in this eleven year span. In 1960, there were 1,331 reported cases of gonorrhea in Oregon, but in 1971 reported cases numbered 9,043; while the total state population did not quite double during this time. Oregon legalized abortion in August, 1969. From that date until December, 1971, total reported abortions numbered 15,600 throughout the state. Perhaps, these statistics point to a questioning of "traditional" social relationships and behavior.

The Oregon State Mental Health Board (1972) have reported that 4,114 people sought their services in 1962-63 and 22,662 people in 1970-71, which provides evidence that family members are seeking more family and personal counseling therapy to help solve problems. This government agency had to increase its staff to deal with personal requests for help in relating to others and in coping with today's world.

Family Life Education

Family life education in the public schools is not a new educational trend. In 1960, the sixth White House Conference on Children and Youth, reiterated previous recommendations for including family life education in schools. Two such recommendations were:

...that the school curriculum include education for family life, including sex education (p. 333).

...that family life courses, including preparation for marriage and parenthood, be instituted as an integral and major part of public education from elementary school through high school and that this formal education emphasize the primary importance of family life... (p. 326).

The 1970 White House Conference on Children and Youth repeated these recommendations, reemphasizing the need for family life education, beginning in the early grades (p. 68).

The precise role of the school in family life education seems to be undefined at this time. However, Force (1964) indicated

that:

...the responsibility of the school in educating for family life is no longer a matter of debate. The tasks of the school in supplementing and complementing those of the home and of the social structure in which children and youth are growing and developing their attitudes, character, and capacities for relating themselves to other people are now recognized as inescapable in total, balanced education (p. 99).

Parents as Family Life Educators

Is the family able to prepare youth for functioning in this world of change and resultant problems? The family, perhaps, must forfeit its potency or seek help in its socialization--education role, because of the apparent inadequacy of parents themselves to adjust and cope with shifting events. Looft (1971) indicated that:

It does seem to be the case that the family is becoming increasingly inadequate as a transmitter of knowledge to successive generations of offspring. Young boys and girls no longer seem to be looking to their parents for basic information, for sources of knowledge. Their fundamental expectation, though perhaps not a conscious one, is that they will learn about the world and how to get along in it from persons and places other than parents and the home (p. 433).

Dreikers (1969) reinforces this point-of-view, but stresses that the school must exert a stronger influence on the next generation.

There has been public support and opposition to family life education in the schools. The value laden concepts of family life

education and sex education have generated strong, emotional and outspoken protest by parents in some communities.

McIntire and Eaton (1969) conducted a survey involving parents of 3rd, 6th, and 8th grade pupils in a Connecticut community of 40,000 persons. Forty percent of the 2,832 questionnaires were returned. Results indicated that a large majority (88%) of the parents surveyed supported the idea that family life and sex education should be taught in the schools. Only a few (6%) were opposed to the idea.

The above study concurs with the conclusion of Harter and Parrish (1968), who sampled 144 of the 2,360 women of Lincoln Parish Louisiana who had at least one birth (live or still) from January 1, 1960 to January 1, 1965. Of the 60 white and 84 non-white mothers, 90% felt that parents should teach children about human reproduction, but 90% also indicated that schools can and should take some responsibility in providing sex education. Of course, sex education is but one facet of family life education.

"Though youth do receive some understanding of marriage and family living from the home, this is too often inadequate preparation. Many young persons express the need for family life education outside the home," reported Walters and Stinnet (1968, p. 643) and ". . . the achievement of marital competence requires preparation beyond that which is obtained in many families" (p. 691). "The school is merely reinforcing and supporting the family," contended Knight and

Keropian (1968), and not encouraging parents to relinquish their responsibility to educate youth in family life.

Requests of Youth

A study conducted by the Connecticut State Department of Education (Byler, Lewis, Totman, 1969) on the health concerns of 5,000 school children ranging from kindergarten to the twelfth grades, attempted to determine the health needs, interests, concerns and problems of youth. Senior high students emphasized programs for younger youth, not to sensationalize or inhibit, ". . . but rather to raise the level of competence in making personal decisions which children must make today and which in many instances they make at a relatively early age" (p. 166).

Youth surveyed in the above study recommended the following topics which have implications for family life education: personality development, understanding self and others, coping with individual problems, developing mental stability, communication, human relations, social behavior, home life, family life problems, girl-boy relations, morals and manners, preparation for marriage, reproduction, pregnancy and birth control, sex roles, sex-related diseases, sex-education, and child care. One student pleaded, "Don't teach us what you want to teach; teach us what we want to know" (p. 160).

The Texas Cooperative Youth Study (Moore and Holtzman, 1965) involving 11, 168 white students ranging from ninth to twelfth grades, and 672 high school teachers from various subject areas, expressed a desire for ". . . specialized educational opportunities toward competence and effectiveness in personal and family living" (p. 231). Students believed both boys and girls should spend time in high school for home and family life education, with over half suggesting coeducational classes. Topics of interest reported, included the following: relating to others, expressing one's self (communication), understanding self and others, dating behavior, personality problems, accurate sex information, morals and manners, dealing with family problems, learning democracy and citizenship through home and family living, mate selection, planning for marriage, pregnancy and child birth, child care, mental health, and family finance. In addition, eleventh and twelfth graders were concerned about divorce, family problems, and community services available to families. Students expressed more interest than teachers. Students ". . . have expressed a definite desire for opportunity to study in school toward improved parenthood, happier marriages, and better homes" (p. 233).

The Department of Psychiatry at Temple University Medical Center (English et al., 1959) asked high school (median age of 18) and college (median age of 21) students, to complete a questionnaire on parenthood. Results of the 972 Pennsylvania students' reactions,

indicated that 70% wanted courses in school on parenthood and family living. However, content areas were not identified.

In Oregon, Calderwood (1965) studied a family life class in a local high school community. As a follow-up to the study, eighteen high school seniors outlined course content recommendations for a family life/sex education program. The youths suggested a tenth grade course in sex education, encompassing menstruation; the physiological, psychological, sociological, and emotional aspects of intercourse; venereal disease; and guidelines for setting standards and making personal decisions. Other results are as follows:

Eleventh Grade Course:

Boy-Girl Relationships content: Dating problems, going steady, necking and petting, love, engagement, courtship, and marriage. Personal responsibility, setting standards, and decision making.

Twelfth Grade Course:

Family Living content: Masculine and feminine roles in our society, emotional maturity, marriage in other cultures, marriage preparation, the family as an institution, child-rearing, and marriage problems (p. 295).

It seems that if students are asked, recommendations and requests regarding family life education are obtained. Topics indicated by youth, suggest breadth and depth in a family life education program.

Curriculum Content

Youth are not alone in the concern for curriculum content in family life education. Parents, educators, and family life specialists, have voiced concern.

Byrd (1970) emphasized the following educational needs for youth in today's and tomorrow's complex world, stressing family competency, rather than family adjustment:

- . . . Emphasis on the optimum development of families, capitalizing on strengths, interactions, and relationships.
- . . . The development of high quality interpersonal relationships and partnerships between men and women in the family as a means of preserving family stability.
- . . . The development of new norms for a new kind of parenthood, since working wives and mothers are a permanent part of our technological society.
- . . . A broadening of understandings and competencies in assuming the varied functional roles of family members (p. 5 and 6).

A family life curriculum suggested by Lane (1973), included sex education, family counseling, birth control education, criteria for selecting a marriage partner, criteria for the best chance of a marriage enduring, love and respect of self, and ". . . everything available for intelligent decision making" (p. 27).

Broderick (1964) stressed that family life education curricula should include the realities of real life.

It is as though there were a conspiracy between student and teacher to avoid the specific, the germane, the personal, the complex, and the difficult realities of

life. . . Real life is unsettling, contradictory, and controversial. Its problems are not readily resolvable; they are not even readily categorized into the neat chapter headings and subheadings of the text (p. 103).

In addition, Broderick stressed the importance of information based on research and student involvement in decision making, rather than merely giving advice from textbooks or teachers.

In an attempt to bring real life situations into the family life classroom, Baker (1972) developed fifteen case studies by interviewing 30 engaged or married individuals. Thirty-nine home economics educators evaluated the case studies, using a given criterion instrument. Eight of the case studies were revised and all were used with 55 students in senior homemaking classes. Students evaluated the case studies higher than any other instructional method used. Concepts, sub-concepts, generalizations and objectives for each case study, were presented. Topics included were mate selection, communication, parenthood, marriage problems and adjustments, engagement, male and female roles, family decisions, relating to others, family crises, and management of family resources.

A sample of 510 secondary schools in the United States offering a family life course, were studied by Allen and King (1970). One purpose of the study was to determine subject content taught. Results of an analysis revealed:

Topics dealing with dating problems, maturation processes of adolescents, understanding of roles in family and society, choosing a marriage partner, problems of marriage, children in the home, and consumer problems of the family . . . (p. 22).

The authors of this study concluded that course content needs to include real life situations, and these real life situations need to be determined by further research.

Concepts or topics covered in family life education appeared to vary greatly. A descriptive study of family life education in the Georgia public schools (Cross, 1968), revealed that for high school juniors and seniors, the concept given the most emphasis was the individual in the family. Children in the family and self understanding followed as receiving slightly less emphasis. Marriage and management of family resources were of almost equal importance, and appeared fourth and fifth respectively, in frequency of being taught. The study was limited to home economics teachers in the state of Georgia, during the 1966-67 school year and of the 522 schools receiving the questionnaires, only 199 responded.

McIntire (1967) attempted to determine the status of health and family life education in the Connecticut public schools, by sending questionnaires to all secondary principals, some elementary principals, and all state technical schools listed in the 1967 Educational Directory of Connecticut. Secondary schools were considered

grades 7 through 12, by definition. Of the 252 questionnaires sent to secondary school principals, 210 were returned. Secondary school results disclosed that over 25% but less than 50% of the schools exposed students to the topics of human reproduction, personality development and world population growth. In addition

. . . about 20-25% of the schools have exposed none of their students to: their future responsibilities and roles as parents, human reproduction, financial aspects of family life, mental health and adjustment, and problems of teenage marriage. . . . 30-40% of the schools have exposed none of their students to: theories of dating and mate selection, divorce as a social problem, working wives as a new social trend, marriage and family patterns in other cultures, and dynamics of interpersonal relationships (p. 20-21).

Walters and Stinnett (1968) stressed the need for communication skill and specific knowledge, as family life education content ". . . which can contribute to individual and marital competence" (p. 642).

Knowledge which contributes to a satisfying and productive life includes such factors as: (a) self-understanding, (b) skills in communication and interpersonal relationships, (c) understanding of the opposite sex, (d) the realization that self-discipline and persistence are necessary for achieving a successful marital and family life . . . , and (e) awareness of those conditions which provide optimum opportunity for healthy personality development of each family member (p. 642).

In 1969, Ryan developed a questionnaire to determine what should be included in instruction for family life at the junior high level. The sample included 73 boys and girls selected randomly at one school (Olympic View Junior High School) in Snohomish County,

Washington, during the 1968-69 school year. Eighty randomly selected parents of the students and one hundred seventy-one professionals practicing in the community were also surveyed. Students considered preparation for parenthood and reproduction as the most important topics, with venereal disease important, also. The topic of preparation for parenthood received a low rating from parents, as they indicated concern for boy-girl relations and dating as important at the junior high student level. Professionals considered boy-girl relations, dating, and heredity as most important. Ryan recommended further research to determine family life content at both the elementary and secondary levels.

Elinger (1971) likewise surveyed youth to help determine needed content in family life education. One hundred twenty-two senior boys and girls were surveyed to determine if there was a difference in perception of the division of responsibilities in marriage, by comparing opinions of both sexes. Authority patterns and housekeeping task responsibilities were viewed about the same by boys and girls. However, role expectations differed for child care. Elinger recommended that family life education be made mandatory for all seniors at the secondary level, and classes be coeducational and include the area of role expectations and resolving role conflicts. The study further concluded that family life education should also involve practice in the

arts of communicating, discussing, role playing and simulation of decision making.

Implications for Iowa secondary school programs in family living, were suggested by Jones (1969). Names of young married couples were obtained from Iowa Extension personnel, and questionnaires on specific difficulties with developmental tasks for the beginning family were mailed to each husband and wife. The study was based on 210 usable questionnaires. Of the couples, half (52%) had graduated from high school, most (38%) were in the age group of 21-22 years, and the largest number (37%) had been married less than one year. Results indicated that both husbands and wives, found relating to parents and in-laws and communicating with spouse, to be major or moderate sources of difficulty for the beginning family. Women reported greater difficulties than men with all items. For subjects to be included in a secondary level marriage course, the highest response was in the roles and responsibilities area, followed by communication, planning for children and sexual relationships.

The various research studies cited here have suggested the possible relevance of the topic of interpersonal relationships. In addition, specific knowledges about oneself, communicating, selecting a mate, marriage, and parenthood, apparently have some significance for inclusion in family life education.

Competency Based Education

Competency based education is a term used interchangeably with performance based education (Howsam, 1972). Both terms indicate ". . . that the recipient (the prospective learner) must be able to demonstrate mastery or attainment of specified criteria" (Palardy and Eisele, 1972, p. 545). These criteria can be stated to include the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, and can encompass all levels of education, from kindergarten to the university graduate school.

Background

Elam (1971) reported that competency based education received impetus following the Russian Sputnik, when federal funds became available for exploratory and experimental educational programs. Competency based education predates accountability concerns, but ". . . its concepts are distinctly congruent with accountability principles and gain strength therefrom" (p. 2).

Competency Based Teacher Education

California, Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Texas, Utah, and Washington, all have moved towards a performed based curriculum

for teacher education (Performance-Based Certification of School Personnel, 1971). Each state varies in degree of commitment and degree of implementation of a performance based program, but all states mentioned have sanctioned the basic beliefs of performance or competency education. In the adopting states, vocational or career educators have originated most study and direction on competency based education.

New Directions

Evaluation of education has been a continuous effort. However, competency based education proposes to assess education in terms of quality, enhancing the evaluation process. As Davies (1969) stated:

American education needs to move from a system that emphasizes meeting requirements, passing courses, and accumulating credentials to one which values performance. The final test should not be something you write for two hours in a room, but how you behave, think, feel, and perform (p. 9).

Competency based education for all at the secondary level was advocated by Allen (1970). "The importance of competence is demonstrated in its relationship to all aspects of life and the problems of raising the quality of life for all" (p. 11). Emphasis is given to academic, as well as vocational education. There is a

. . . renewed awareness of the universality of the basic human and social need for competence that is generating not only increased emphasis today on career education

but a whole new concept of its place in the total educational enterprise (p. 12).

While explaining Oregon's new high school graduation requirements, State Superintendent Dale Parnell (Pipeline, Oregon State Department of Education, 1972) stated:

With few exceptions, public high schools have always stated educational requirements in terms of units of time, which were eventually standardized and called "Carnegie" units--one hour per day, five days per week, for the entire school year. . . . modern developments require more individual competencies than were required 50 years ago. Schooling must help each student develop these competencies and the confidence that he or she can cope successfully with real-life situations (p. 3).

The new high school graduation requirements "will be directed in the areas of personal development, social responsibilities, and career development. This program has as its first priority insuring that all students have at least minimum competencies to cope with life" (p. 4).

Competency based education for the secondary school is currently receiving impetus from the Oregon State Board of Education.

Summary

Statistics provided evidence of increasing marriage difficulties and relationship problems, both nationally and in Oregon. These factors tend to threaten the stability of the family.

Family life education in the public schools is not a new phenomenon, but existing programs vary in course content and depth. High school students indicated a desire for family life education, with an emphasis on the skill and knowledge needed for problem solving, decision making, relating to others, and coping with today's world.

Not only students, but also parents, educators, and family life specialists are concerned with family life education curricula. Studies indicated a need for "real life" family life education stressing individual competence in knowledge of oneself, relating to others, communicating, selecting a mate, marriage, parenthood, family roles, and family life problems.

Competency based education offers an opportunity to base education on demonstrated ability and performance. The current trend is for competency based education at the secondary school level, encompassing competency in family life education.

III. METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The purpose of this study was to identify family life competencies needed by high school graduates, as perceived by individuals and couples anticipating parenthood. Men and women attending prenatal classes, offered by county public health departments, indicated opinions according to the categories presented. Categories for each competency statement included: Essential, Necessary, Permissible, and Unimportant. In addition, the same four categories were used for participants to indicate opinions on the nine general family life topics appearing in the study.

Preparation of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire of family life competency statements was devised, through a synthesis of goals stated in twelve family life curriculum guides published since 1965, and found at Oregon State University's Kerr Library and at the Home Economics Education resource center at the same institution. The scope of the listing of competency statements included major topics appearing in the latest Homemaking Education in Oregon Secondary Schools Handbook (curriculum guide), 1965. The nine general family life topics cited reappeared frequently in the curriculum guides, as did the substance of the competency statements.

A working draft of the questionnaire was developmentally tested, with three high school seniors and three mothers of teenagers. Revisions were made accordingly, until the students and mothers found the questionnaire comprehensible. Rewording two competency statements and explaining the study in detail, as an introduction, were necessary. A final questionnaire (Appendix A) resulted.

The survey instrument concluded with a section on personal information, with provisions for indicating age, sex, educational level, and employment status.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to identify which competency statements were categorized as "Essential" or "Necessary" by the majority of the participants of prenatal classes.

In addition, the null hypothesis tested was: that age, sex, and educational level are each independent of response on each individual competency statement.

The Sample

Young married couples seemed like a feasible population for this questionnaire, assuming recent experience with establishing a family unit, involving decisions, adjustments, and possible problems.

However, this was a difficult population to define and/or locate. Therefore, it seemed that those individuals and couples anticipating parenthood would have quite recently experienced establishing a family unit, and further deciding to be parents.

Some county public health departments offer classes for expectant parents, free of charge with attendance being voluntary. Regarding the seventeen counties in western Oregon, ten did not offer prenatal classes in 1972-73, two offered classes only in the late spring and summer months if there would be sufficient interest, and five counties had an on-going prenatal class program. The five counties were Benton, Clatsop, Lane, Lincoln, and Multnomah. Thus, data was collected from all of the named counties with on-going programs.

The Collection of Data

The five county public health departments in western Oregon that offered prenatal classes for the public, were approached. Supervisory nurses in each county were contacted to obtain permission for the writer to attend a meeting of the county prenatal class and to administer the survey instrument. Affirmative answers were unanimous.

The writer attended prenatal classes in all five counties, giving an oral introduction and explanation of the study, supplemented

with overhead transparencies. Following the presentation, the prenatal class participants completed the questionnaires, using approximately one-half hour of time. Of the 151 questionnaires filled out, four had to be disregarded because of incomplete information. Therefore, the study encompassed 147 survey questionnaires.

Procedure for Analysis of Data

A numerical count of the magnitude of responses in the "Essential" and "Necessary" categories, was tallied for each of the 70 competency statements and each of the 9 general family life topics. Statements were listed in order of the largest magnitude to smallest (Tables 6 and 5, respectively).

A chi square contingency table was developed to test the independence of age, sex, and educational level criteria and the responses of the participants for each item on the questionnaire. The independent variables were tested to the 5% significance level.

The formula used for computing the chi square statistic was:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

where O = observed number of cases in the cell of the table

E = expected number of cases in the cell, computed by determining the cross products of rows and columns over all cases.

$$E = \frac{R \cdot C}{\sum R \text{ or } C}$$

An analysis of data was compiled, utilizing the facilities and resources of Oregon State University Computer Center.

Employment of men and women in the study was not considered, due to the fact that pregnant women have probably terminated employment or plan to in the near future. In addition, all but one city where prenatal classes were held, had a university or junior college, so student status was a possibility.

IV. FINDINGS

This chapter is divided into three major sections, with the first being background data on the participants in the study. A listing of each of the nine family life topics and each of the seventy competency statements is presented in the second section, according to the numerical magnitude of "Essential" and "Necessary" responses for each item, beginning with the largest count and decreasing in numerical value. The final section reports the responses to the items which indicate a significant dependence on one or more of the variables of age, sex and/or educational level.

Background of the Participants

The age distribution (Table 1) disclosed that the greatest percentage (46.94 percent) of the participants in the study were in the age group of 25 to 29 years. The range of ages was 16 to 45 years, with a mean age of 25 years.

Table 1. Age Distribution of Participants

Years of age	Total Participants	
	No.	Percent
19 or less	11	7.48
20-24	49	33.33
25-29	69	46.94
30 or more	18	12.25

More females than males attended the prenatal classes in the study, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Sex of Participants

Sex	Total Participants	
	No.	Percent
Male	56	38.10
Female	91	61.90

The educational level (Table 3) of county public health prenatal class participants in the study, indicated that there were three educational levels appearing most frequently. The grouped educational levels were, more than 16 years of education, 12 years, and 13 to 15 years, with each appearing at about the same rate. Relatively few (5.44 percent) of the people had completed less than 12 years of education.

Table 3. Educational Level of Participants

Completed years of education	Total Participants	
	No.	Percent
Less than 12	8	5.44
12	39	26.53
13-15	39	26.53
16	21	14.29
More than 16	40	27.21

Employment data (Table 4) revealed that the highest percentage of participants were employed full time.

Table 4. Employment Status of Participants

Employment status	Total Participants	
	No.	Percent
Unemployed	43	29.24
Employed part time (20 hours/week)	16	10.88
Employed full time	73	49.59
Student	15	10.20

Opinions of Prenatal Class Participants
Concerning Family Life Competencies

The numerical count of "Essential" and "Necessary" responses on each questionnaire item were added together. The general family life topics and the competency statements are listed in Table 5 and Table 6, respectively. The listings begin with the topic or competency statement receiving the largest numerical response in the "Essential" and "Necessary" categories and continues in decreasing numerical responses.

Table 5. Responses to Family Life Topics

Family Life Topics	Total "Essential" and "Necessary responses of Participants	
	No.	Percent
Communicating	146	99.31
Understanding yourself	144	97.95
Relating to others	143	97.27
Understanding sex	139	94.55
Being a family member	127	86.98
Parenthood	111	75.51
Selecting a mate	108	73.46
Marriage	108	73.46
Family relating to the community	89	60.96

Table 6. Responses to Family Life Competency Statements

Competency statement	Total "Essential" and "Necessary" responses of participants	
	number	percent*
47. State what new responsibilities you would have if you became a mother or a father.	136	92.51
55. Name the two most common contagious venereal diseases. Tell how they are transmitted from one person to another. Tell how they are detected.	133	90.47
57. List the reasons for and against birth control or family planning.	132	90.42
46. Describe the emotional effects on a marriage, of having children that are not wanted or planned.	131	89.11
29. Differentiate between love and infatuation.	129	88.36
59. Explain what the family is expected to do for each family member. (As, it provides food, shelter, security, love, etc.)	128	87.07
51. Discuss how the arrival of a child puts stress on the marriage relationship.	127	86.99
17. Explain the difference between hearing and listening to what a person says.	127	86.39
50. Summarize the physical needs of a baby	127	86.39
32. Determine the advantages of a broken engagement, rather than a divorce later on.	126	85.71
56. List 5 contraceptive methods (means of preventing pregnancy) and state advantages and disadvantages of each.	126	85.71
3. Define self-concept. (A self-concept is what a person thinks of himself, which influences how he behaves.)	125	85.03

*Most items had 147 people responding. However, only 146 people responded to sixteen items and in two cases 145 people responded. Thus, percentages were calculated according to total responses in each case.

Table 6. (continued)

Competency statement	Total "Essential" and "Necessary" responses of participants	
	number	percent
44. State the advantages and disadvantages of a couple planning when they will have children and how many they will have.	124	84.93
39. Explain some of the conflicts or problems that a newly married couple could face.	123	84.25
40. Elaborate on how the following behaviors can become obstacles to solving problems in marriage: -jumping to conclusions -failing to consider another person's point of view -sarcasm -assuming things -attacking the character of a mate.	122	84.13
49. Estimate the financial cost of having a baby.	121	82.31
62. Summarize some of the causes of teen-parent problems and ways of promoting "good", positive teen-parent relationships.	120	81.63
28. Explain how dating many members of the opposite sex helps in the development of friendship and final selection of a marriage partner.	119	80.95
48. Describe possible emotional changes in a pregnant woman and mate.	119	80.95
54. List the possible problems of premarital intercourse.	118	80.82
1. Summarize the basic physical, social, and emotional needs of people of all age groups. (As, food, shelter, clothing; love, understanding, confidence; acceptance, companionship, etc.)	118	80.27
23. Explain how better communication makes for better understanding between people and means fewer problems.	118	80.27
37. State qualifications for a "good" marriage partner. (As, understanding, honest, open, etc.)	118	80.27

Table 6. (continued)

Competency statement	Total "Essential" and "Necessary" responses of participants	
	number	percent
38. Predict the decisions a newly married couple must make. (As, how to spend money, responsibilities at home, choosing mutual friends, etc.)	118	80.27
61. Explain why parents place limitations on some teenage activities.	118	80.27
15. Discuss the results of solving problems with other people in the following ways: -throwing objects -yelling and screaming -always blaming others -avoiding a person -withdrawing -defining the problem and finding a solution -expressing your feelings -always blaming yourself.	116	78.91
53. Explain the emotional conditions that must exist for sex to be meaningful	116	78.91
58. Explain the possible emotional and social problems of using another person sexually and being used sexually.	116	78.91
13. Describe what friendship is. (Friendship is communication, and the sharing of happiness, sadness, disappointments, ideas, and interests, as well as mutual understanding.)	115	78.23
36. Speculate about some personality traits that may make a marriage stormy.	114	77.55
2. Describe what happens if needs are not met.	112	76.19
31. Develop guidelines that will determine if a couple has established a philosophy of life as a couple and has made some decisions about their life together, during the engagement period.	111	76.03
6. Explore the differences between how you see yourself and how others probably see you.	110	75.34

Table 6. (continued)

Competency statement	Total "Essential" and "Necessary" responses of participants	
	number	percent
16. Explain this comment: "If people do not have the same meanings for words, then their communication can get all 'mixed-up'."	108	73.46
45. List at least 5 reasons for wanting children and evaluate each according to whether the reason is sound or not.	106	72.60
22. Describe ways of showing and telling a friend that you care about him or her.	105	71.42
35. Assess the advantages and disadvantages of a legal marriage and of living together on a trial basis.	105	71.42
7. Define behavior. (Behavior is actions and words a person uses in an effort to fulfill his needs with satisfaction, in response to some stimulation.)	104	70.74
69. Identify sources of stress in society that affect families. (As, unemployment, war, inflation, etc.)	104	70.74
64. The Family Life Cycle is divided into the following eight stages: 1) establishment of a marriage 2) child bearing years 3) preschool children (oldest child 2 1/2-6 yrs.) 4) school children (oldest child 6-13 yrs.) 5) teenagers (oldest child 13-20 yrs.) 6) launching (children leave home) 7) middle years (no children at home) 8) aging (retirement) Speculate on the possible problems and new responsibilities that could show up at each of the above stages.	103	70.55
4. Compare the typical behavior of a person with a positive self-concept and one with a negative self-concept.	102	69.38
63. List different family crisis situations that could happen and explain the nature of each. (As, death, divorce, desertion, aging, poverty, etc.)	102	69.38
5. Predict how a person's self-concept probably influences his behavior.	101	69.18

Table 6. (continued)

Competency statement	Total "Essential" and "Necessary" responses of participants	
	number	percent
12. Describe the roles a teenager fulfills. (As, student, family member, employee, etc.)	101	68.70
34. List at least five reasons for getting married. Evaluate each one according to whether the reason will probably bring future marital happiness or not.	98	66.66
14. List characteristics that are important in a friend.	97	65.98
67. State the purposes of marriage counseling.	95	64.62
33. Explain under what circumstances an engagement should be broken.	93	63.26
66. List the community agencies that help families restore harmony by offering family counseling and marriage counseling.	93	63.26
21. Illustrate with examples, how to deal with feelings or emotions in at least three ways and tell the results of each way. (As, anger could be expressed, ignored, or covered up. If ignored or covered up, the problem usually gets worse later on. If expressed, the anger usually goes away.)	92	62.58
30. Analyze case studies of problem situations on dates. Suggest preventive measures and possible solutions.	92	62.58
27. State the purposes of dating.	89	60.54
70. Explain how the process of democracy, when learned and practiced in the home, can be applied to the world outside the home.	89	60.54
24. Construct a plan for reducing the number of quarrels and misunderstandings between people.	88	59.86
10. Account for differences in opinion on acceptable behavior.	87	59.18
65. Explain what the family does for the community it lives in and what the community does for the family.	85	57.82

Table 6. (continued)

Competency statement	Total "Essential" and "Necessary" responses of participants	
	number	percent
42. Interpret this statement: "Research says that the younger a person marries, the greater the chances the marriage will end in divorce."	82	55.78
60. Select one family responsibility you have at home (like, washing dishes, vacuuming on Sat., cleaning your room, etc.) and explain what you learn from doing this and how it affects your relationships with other family members.	82	55.78
8. State and assess typical behavior patterns of adolescence.	81	55.48
20. Give an example of how you could express anger, without telling the other person what an awful person he or she is.	81	55.10
25. Analyze the statement: "Nobody understands me."	80	54.79
52. Describe the four phases of the menstrual cycle.	80	54.42
11. Define and interpret the stages of personality development. (As, trust, autonomy, initiative, accomplishment, identity, etc.)	78	53.06
19. Distinguish between verbal (using words) and non-verbal (using actions and facial expressions) communication.	78	53.06
The following items had more responses in the "Permissible" and "Unimportant" categories, than in "Essential" and "Necessary":		
68. Identify some social agencies which have assumed some traditional family responsibilities.	72	48.97
41. Compile a list of the reasons for a divorce.	67	45.89
26. Define going steady, double dating and single dating. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of each.	66	44.89
9. Analyze the reasons for human behavior in given case studies.	64	43.84

Table 6. (continued)

Competency statement	Total "Essential" and "Necessary" responses of participants	
	number	percent
43. Write a paragraph on the traditional roles of men and women. (Men work outside the home and women work in the home, etc.) Tell how these roles are changing.	59	40.13
18. Given 10 pictures of people, state the feelings or moods they express to you, just by facial expressions and body posture.	52	35.37

A total of 64 competency statements were indicated as "Essential" or "Necessary" by a statistical majority (over 50 percent) of the respondents.

Analysis of Independence

The chi-square test was used to test the null hypothesis of the independence of age, sex, and/or educational level for the responses to each competency statement and each family life topic. (For items where the null hypothesis of independence was rejected, chi-square contingency tables appear in Appendix B.

Age as Criterion

The null hypothesis that age is independent of response on each individual competency statement was tested using the chi-square statistical test. At the 5% level of significance, seven competency statements were rejected. (Critical chi-square value at the 5% level with 9 degrees of freedom is 16.919.) The null hypothesis was sustained in 63 out of 70 competencies.

Competency statement #1, which was, "Summarize the basic physical, social, and emotional needs of people of all age groups," revealed a difference in response, according to age (chi-square

value = 24.2129 at 9 degrees of freedom.). More people 24 years old or younger answered "Essential" or "Necessary" than expected. For the people 25 or older, more answered "Permissible" or "Unimportant" than expected.

Item #11 was: Define and interpret the stages of personality development. Participants 24 years and younger marked #11, "Essential" or "Necessary" more often than expected, while people 25 years and older marked "Permissible" or "Unimportant" more frequently than expected. (chi-square value = 19.5422 at 9 degrees of freedom.)

More people aged 20 to 24 responded in the "Essential" or "Necessary" columns than expected on statement #13, which was: Describe what friendship is (chi-square value = 18.1680 at 9 degrees of freedom). In the 25 to 29 age group, more people responded in the "Permissible" and "Unimportant" columns than expected.

"Analyze the statement: 'Nobody understands me'" was #25 (chi-square value = 21.6465 at 9 degrees of freedom). More people in the 20-24 age group and in the 30 years and older group, answered "Essential" or "Necessary" than expected. People 25-29 years old answered "Permissible" or "Unimportant", more frequently than expected.

Statement #36: "Speculate about some personality traits that may make a marriage stormy," indicated a difference in response by

age group (chi-square value = 17.6447 at 9 degrees of freedom). More participants in the 20-24 age group said "Essential" or "Necessary" than expected, while more people in the 25-29 age group said "Permissible" or "Unimportant" than expected.

Number 40 appears below:

Elaborate on how the following behaviors can become

obstacles to solving problems in marriage:

- jumping to conclusions
- failing to consider another person's point of view
- sarcasm
- assuming things
- attacking the character of a mate.

Age of participants disclosed a difference in response (chi-square value = 19.7731 at 9 degrees of freedom). People aged 20-24 and 30 years and older, indicated "Essential" and "Necessary" more often than expected. Participants 19 years or less and those 25-29 years of age indicated "Essential" and "Necessary" less frequently than expected.

Age again made a difference on responses to competency statement #56 (chi-square value = 20.4743 at 9 degrees of freedom). Statement #56 reads: List 5 contraceptive methods and state advantages and disadvantages of each. People younger than 24 years checked columns "Essential" and "Necessary" more frequently than expected.

People 25 years or older checked columns "Permissible" and "Unimportant" more frequently than expected.

Sex as Criterion

The chi-square test was used to test the null hypothesis that sex is independent of response on each individual competency statement. In four instances the chi-square value was greater than the critical value of 7.815 with three degrees of freedom, at the 5% level of significance.

Statement #3 reads: Define self-concept. Male and female responses revealed a significant difference at the 5% level (chi-square value = 12.1843 at 3 degrees of freedom). Males marked "Essential" and "Necessary" columns less frequently than expected, while females marked "Essential" and "Necessary" columns more frequently than expected.

"Define and interpret the stages of personality development," was statement #11, which gave evidence of sex making a difference in response (chi-square value = 9.4917 at 3 degrees of freedom). Males and females responded proportionally the same as expected in the "Essential" and "Necessary" columns. However, males checked the "Unimportant" column more often than expected and females checked the "Permissible" column more often than expected.

Competency statement #31 revealed a difference in male and female responses (chi-square value = 10.6728 at 3 degrees of freedom). Statement #31 reads: Develop guidelines that will determine if a couple has established a philosophy of life as a couple and has made some decisions about their life together, during the engagement period. Males had fewer responses in the "Essential" and "Necessary" columns than expected. Females had more responses in the "Essential" and "Necessary" columns than expected.

A difference between male and female responses was found on statement #45 (chi-square value = 8.3986 at 3 degrees of freedom). Competency statement #45 reads: List at least 5 reasons for wanting children and evaluate each according to whether the reason is sound or not. Males had fewer responses in the "Essential" category and more in the "Permissible" and "Unimportant" categories than expected. Females had more responses in the "Essential" category and fewer in "Permissible" and "Unimportant" categories than expected.

Education as Criterion

The null hypothesis that educational level is independent of response on each individual competency statement, was tested using chi-square computations. Except for nine competencies, no significant difference at the 5% level existed among educational levels.

The critical value was 21.026 at 12 degrees of freedom.

Educational level was not independent of response on competency statement number 1 (chi-square value = 28.7224 at 12 degrees of freedom). Statement 1 reads: Summarize the basic physical, social, and emotional needs of people of all age groups. Respondents with less than 15 years of education marked "Essential" more frequently than expected. People with 16 and more years of education marked "Essential" less frequently than expected.

On statement #11 (Define and interpret the stages of personality development) educational level revealed a difference in response (chi-square value = 27.1451 at 12 degrees of freedom). Participants with 16 years of education or less, responded more frequently in the "Essential" and "Necessary" categories than expected, but with 16 or more years of education "Permissible" and "Unimportant" categories appeared more frequently than expected.

Item #24 reads: Construct a plan for reducing the number of quarrels and misunderstandings between people. A difference in educational level and response was discovered (chi-square value = 22.1869 at 12 degrees of freedom). For 12 years of education or less, more "Essential" and "Necessary" responses were given than expected. With 13 to 16 years of education, more "Unimportant" responses than expected were given.

The following competency statements revealed a difference in response and educational level:

- #28. Explain how dating many members of the opposite sex helps in the development of friendship and final selection of a marriage partner (chi-square value = 29.3459 at 12 degrees of freedom).
- #29. Differentiate between love and infatuation (chi-square value = 21.0377 at 12 degrees of freedom).
- #48. Describe possible emotional changes in a pregnant woman and mate (chi-square value = 26.6129 at 12 degrees of freedom).
- #59. Explain what the family is expected to do for each family member (chi-square value = 26.5349 at 12 degrees of freedom).

The above four competency statements indicated that participants with 15 years of education or less responded in "Essential" and "Necessary" categories more frequently than expected. With 16 or more years of education, participants responded in "Permissible" and "Unimportant" categories more frequently than expected.

Competency statement #40 reads:

Elaborate on how the following behaviors can become obstacles to solving problems in marriage:

--jumping to conclusions

- failing to consider another person's point of view
- sarcasm
- assuming things
- attacking the character of a mate.

Educational level tended to indicate a difference in response (chi-square value = 22.2649 at 12 degrees of freedom). With 15 years of education or less, more people than expected marked the "Essential" category. With 16 or more years of education, less people than expected marked the "Essential" category and more than expected marked the "Permissible" and "Unimportant" categories.

On item #60, a difference in educational level and response was determined (chi-square value = 27.5086 at 12 degrees of freedom). Item 60 reads: Select one family responsibility at home and explain what you learn from doing this and how it affects your relationships with other family members. Participants with 12 years of education or less, indicated "Essential" and "Necessary" more frequently than expected. Participants with 13 and more years of education indicated "Permissible" and "Unimportant" more frequently than expected.

Differences on Family Life Topics

Testing the independence of age, sex, and educational level on the responses to family life topics, only two significant (at the 5%

level) differences were discovered, using chi-square computations. On the topic of marriage, more men said marriage was "Permissible" or "Unimportant" than expected, while more women said marriage was "Essential" or "Necessary" than expected. The response on marriage did show a difference according to sex (chi-square value = 7.9520 at 3 degrees of freedom).

The topic of parenthood revealed a difference in response according to educational level (chi-square value = 25.5336 at 12 degrees of freedom). At the 12 years of educational level, more said parenthood was "Essential" or "Necessary" than expected. With 13 to 15 years of education, less people said parenthood was "Essential" or "Necessary" than expected. People with 16 or more years of education said parenthood was "Permissible" or "Unimportant" more often than expected.

Summary of Findings

Communicating, understanding yourself, relating to others and understanding sex were the family life topics that received over 90 percent of the participant's responses in the "Essential" and "Necessary" categories. However, all nine family life topics received a majority (over 50 percent) of the responses in the "Essential" and "Necessary" categories. The family relating to the community,

received the fewest favorable responses (60.96 percent) of all the topics.

Of the 70 competency statements, 64 statements received a majority of over 50 percent of the responses in the "Essential" and "Necessary" categories. Of these identified 64 competencies, most dealt with making decisions solving problems, resolving conflicts, and coping with situations. Results of the test of the null hypothesis (that age, sex and/or educational level are independent of response) showed very few differences. Out of 210 possible instances of rejecting the hypothesis, it was rejected only 20 times on the responses to competency statements.

The criterion of educational level had more competency statements (nine) indicating a difference in response, than age or sex, with sex having the smallest number of items (four) reflecting a difference in response. In the cases where educational level had an apparent effect on response, the most repeated occurrence was people with 15 or less years of education responding to "Essential" and "Necessary" categories more frequently than expected and people with 16 or more years of education responding to "Permissible" and "Unimportant" categories more frequently than expected.

For the criterion of age, where a difference in response was ascertained, the 20-24 age group showed more "Essential" and "Necessary" responses than expected. The 25-29 age group showed

more "Permissible" and "Unimportant" responses than expected. The 20-24 age group and 25-29 age group responded as stated above more consistently than any of the other age groups.

When sex was used as criterion and a difference in response was found, females tended to mark "Essential" and "Necessary" responses more than expected, and males tended to mark "Permissible" and "Unimportant" responses more than expected.

On the topic of marriage, men indicated the categories of "Permissible" and "Unimportant", more often than expected, while females indicated "Essential" and "Necessary" more often than expected. Parenthood received more "Essential" and "Necessary" responses at the 12 years of education level than expected and people with 16 or more years of education said parenthood was "Permissible" or "Unimportant" more often than expected.

V. SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of this study was to identify family life competencies needed by high school graduates, as perceived by a majority of respondents. In addition, the null hypothesis tested was: that age, sex, and educational level are each independent of response on each individual competency statement. Testing was done at the 5% level of significance.

The questionnaire was developed through a synthesis of goals stated in twelve family life curriculum guides published since 1965. A working draft of the questionnaire was developmentally tested with three high school seniors and three mothers of teenagers. The survey instrument included provisions for indicating personal data, and offered four categories of "Essential", "Necessary", "Permissible", and "Unimportant", for participants to respond to nine family life topics and seventy competency statements.

The population included those couples and individuals voluntarily attending county public health prenatal classes in western Oregon. Data were collected from all five counties with an on-going program. One hundred forty-seven usable questionnaires were obtained. Four instruments were disregarded because of incomplete personal data.

Participants in the study ranged from 16 to 45 years of age with a mean age of 25, and with 46.94 percent of the people in the 25

to 29 age group. Males numbered 56 (38.10 percent) in the participating group, with 91 (61.90 percent) females. Grouped educational levels revealed 27.21 percent having more than 16 years of education and the groups with 12 years and with 13-15 years of education each being 26.53 percent of the total sample.

Frequency counts and percentages of the total sample indicating favorable responses, were computed and presented for each of the 9 family life topics and 70 competency statements. All 9 family life topics and 64 of the 70 competency statements received a majority (over 50 percent) of favorable responses.

Chi-square tests were computed on each item of the questionnaire to test the null hypothesis that age, sex, and educational level are each independent of response. The null hypothesis was rejected for age, in seven instances. Most cases showed younger people responding favorably more often than expected and older people responding less favorably more often than expected.

The null hypothesis was rejected for sex in four instances, with males responding less favorably more often and females more favorably more often than expected. The null hypothesis for educational level was rejected in nine instances. More educated people tended to respond less favorably more often and less educated people tended to respond more favorably more often than expected.

Implications of the study for the family living curriculum in Oregon secondary schools, as indicated in the opinions of the

respondents, are as follows:

1. Family life topics of communicating, understanding yourself, relating to others, understanding sex, being a family member, parenthood, selecting a mate, marriage, and the family relating to the community would be valuable in the family life curriculum.

2. It seems necessary that family life education topics stress making decisions, solving problems, resolving conflicts, and coping with situations.

3. It seems reasonable that sixty-four of the family life competencies identified in this study be incorporated in programs designed to prepare students for their life role as a family member.

The sample of expectant parents was a biased group. On speculation it seems that the sample could be quite concerned about the topic and competencies of parenthood. In view of this, the following recommendations for future studies are made:

1. High school students, young married couples not expecting children, and middle aged couples need to be surveyed to identify family life competencies.

2. Learning experiences need to be developed for family life competencies.

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire
on
COMPETENCIES HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS
NEED IN THE AREA OF FAMILY LIFE

by
Carolyn Taylor

INSTRUCTIONS

On the following pages are statements of competencies, dealing with the topic of family life. Competency based education means that learning is goal oriented. The competencies are expressed in statements that indicate student performance.

Carefully read each family life statement and check (✓) in one of the appropriate columns whether you feel it is essential necessary, permissible, or unimportant that a high school senior be able to perform the task stated.

Essential: It is absolutely vital that all high school seniors be able to perform this task.

Necessary: There is a pressing need for high school seniors to be able to perform this task. It is very significant, but not absolutely essential.

Permissible: It is acceptable and allowable for high school seniors to be able to perform this, if there is time available or if the student elects to learn this.

Unimportant: There is not much significance or value in high school seniors performing this task or knowing this at all.

Example: FOR STUDENTS TO BE ABLE TO <u>COMMUNICATE</u> , THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO:	Essential	Necessary	Permissible	Unimportant
Explain why better communication makes for better understanding between people and means fewer problems.				

How do you feel about the importance of the general family life concepts?

	Essential	Necessary	Permissible	Unimportant
1. Understanding yourself				
2. Relating to others				
3. Communicating				
4. Selecting a mate				
5. Marriage				
6. Parenthood				
7. Understanding sex				
8. Being a family member				
9. Family relating to the community				

FOR STUDENTS TO BE ABLE TO <u>UNDERSTAND THEMSELVES</u> , THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO:	Essential	Necessary	Permissible	Unimportant
1. Summarize the basic physical, social, and emotional needs of people of all age groups. (As, food, shelter, clothing; love, understanding, confidence; acceptance, companionship, etc.)				
2. Describe what happens if needs are not met.				
3. Define self-concept. (A self-concept is what a person thinks of himself, which influences how he behaves.)				
4. Compare the typical behavior of a person with a positive self-concept and one with a negative self-concept.				
5. Predict how a person's self-concept probably influences his behavior.				
6. Explore the differences between how you see yourself and how others probably see you.				
7. Define behavior. (Behavior is actions and words a person uses in an effort to fulfill his needs with satisfaction, in response to some stimulation.)				
8. State and assess typical behavior patterns of adolescents.				
9. Analyze the reasons for human behavior in given case studies.				
10. Account for differences in opinion on acceptable behavior.				
11. Define and interpret the stages of personality development. (As, trust, autonomy, initiative, accomplishment, identity, etc.)				
12. Describe the roles a teenager fulfills. (As, student, family member, employee, etc.)				
FOR STUDENTS TO BE ABLE TO <u>RELATE TO OTHERS</u> , THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO:				
13. Describe what friendship is. (Friendship is communication, and the sharing of happiness, sadness, disappointments, ideas, and interests, as well as mutual understanding.)				
14. List characteristics that are important in a friend.				

	Essential	Necessary	Permissible	Unimportant
FOR STUDENTS TO BE ABLE TO <u>SELECT A MATE</u> , THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO:				
26. Define going steady, double dating and single dating. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of each.				
27. State the purposes of dating.				
28. Explain how dating many members of the opposite sex helps in the development of friendship and final selection of a marriage partner.				
29. Differentiate between love and infatuation.				
30. Analyze case studies of problem situations on dates. Suggest preventive measures and possible solutions.				
FOR STUDENTS TO BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND <u>MARRIAGE</u> , THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO:				
31. Develop guidelines that will determine if a couple has established a philosophy of life as a couple and has made some decisions about their life together, during the engagement period.				
32. Determine the advantages of a broken engagement, rather than a divorce later on.				
33. Explain under what circumstances an engagement should be broken.				
34. List at least five reasons for getting married. Evaluate each one according to whether the reason will probably bring future marital happiness or not.				
35. Assess the advantages and disadvantages of a legal marriage and of living together on a trial basis.				
36. Speculate about some personality traits that may make a marriage stormy.				
37. State qualifications for a "good" marriage partner. (As, understanding, honest, open, etc.)				
38. Predict the decisions a newly married couple must make. (As, how to spend money, responsibilities at home, choosing mutual friends, etc.)				
39. Explain some of the conflicts or problems that a newly married couple could face.				

	Essential	Necessary	Permissible	Unimportant
40. Elaborate on how the following behaviors can become obstacles to solving problems in marriage: -jumping to conclusions -failing to consider another person's point of view -sarcasm -assuming things -attacking the character of a mate.				
41. Compile a list of the reasons for a divorce.				
42. Interpret this statement: "Research says that the younger a person marries, the greater the chances the marriage will end in divorce."				
43. Write a paragraph on the traditional roles of men and women. (Men work outside the home and women work in the home, etc.) Tell how these roles are changing.				
FOR STUDENTS TO BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND <u>PARENTHOOD</u> , THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO:				
44. State the advantages and disadvantages of a couple planning when they will have children and how many they will have.				
45. List at least 5 reasons for wanting children and evaluate each according to whether the reason is sound or not.				
46. Describe the emotional effects on a marriage, of having children that are not wanted or planned.				
47. State what new responsibilities you would have if you became a mother or a father.				
48. Describe possible emotional changes in a pregnant woman and mate.				
49. Estimate the financial cost of having a baby.				
50. Summarize the physical needs of a baby.				
51. Discuss how the arrival of a child puts stress on the marriage relationship.				

	Essential	Necessary	Permissible	Unimportant
FOR STUDENTS TO BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND <u>SEX</u> , THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO:				
52. Describe the four phases of the menstrual cycle.				
53. Explain the emotional conditions that must exist for sex to be meaningful.				
54. List the possible problems of premarital intercourse.				
55. Name the two most common contagious venereal diseases. Tell how they are transmitted from one person to another. Tell how they are detected.				
56. List 5 contraceptive methods (means of preventing pregnancy) and state advantages and disadvantages of each.				
57. List the reasons for and against birth control or family planning.				
58. Explain the possible emotional and social problems of using another person sexually and being used sexually.				
FOR STUDENTS TO BE "GOOD" <u>FAMILY MEMBERS</u> , THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO:				
59. Explain what the family is expected to do for each family member. (As, it provides food, shelter, security, love, etc.)				
60. Select one family responsibility you have at home (like, washing dishes, vacuuming on Sat., cleaning your room, etc.) and explain what you learn from doing this and how it affects your relationships with other family members.				
61. Explain why parents place limitations on some teenage activities.				
62. Summarize some of the causes of teen-parent problems and ways of promoting "good", positive teen-parent relationships.				
63. List different family crisis situations that could happen and explain the nature of each. (As, death, divorce, desertion, aging, poverty, etc.)				

	Essential	Necessary	Permissible	Unimportant
<p>64. The Family Life Cycle is divided into the following eight stages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) establishment of a marriage 2) child bearing years 3) preschool children (oldest child 2 1/2-6 yrs.) 4) school children (oldest child 6-13 yrs.) 5) teenagers (oldest child 13-20 yrs.) 6) launching (children leave home) 7) middle years (no children at home) 8) aging (retirement) <p>Speculate on the possible problems and new responsibilities that could show up at each of the above stages.</p>				
<p>FOR STUDENTS TO BE ABLE TO <u>RELATE THE FAMILY TO THE COMMUNITY</u>, THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO:</p>				
65. Explain what the family does for the community it lives in and what the community does for the family.				
66. List the community agencies that help families restore harmony by offering family counseling and marriage counseling.				
67. State the purposes of marriage counseling.				
68. Identify some social agencies which have assumed some traditional family responsibilities.				
69. Identify sources of stress in society that affect families. (As, unemployment, war, inflation, etc.)				
70. Explain how the process of democracy, when learned and practiced in the home, can be applied to the world outside the home.				

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please answer the following about yourself:

1. What is your age? _____.
2. Which sex? male _____ female _____.
3. How many years of formal education have you completed?
Less than 8th grade _____ 8th _____ 9th _____ 10th _____
11th _____ 12th _____ 13th _____ 14th _____ 15th _____
16th _____ More than 16th _____.
4. Are you -
Unemployed _____
Employed part time (less than 20 hours/week) _____
Employed full time _____
Student _____

Thank you, so much!

Chi-Square Contingency Tables

The following chi-square contingency tables are for those items where the null hypothesis of independence was rejected. The horizontal columns' categories of 1, 2, 3, and 4, correspond to "Essential," "Necessary," "Permissible," and "Unimportant," respectively. Expected values have been rounded to the nearest whole number and placed below and to the right of the actual responses in the contingency tables, for comparison purposes.

Competency Statements:

#1-Age*

	1	2	3	4	Total
19 or less	8	2	1	0	11
	3	6	2	0	11
20-24	19	25	5	0	49
	14	25	8	2	49
25-29	12	41	12	4	69
	20	35	11	3	69
30 or more	4	7	6	1	18
	5	9	3	1	18
	43	75	24	5	147
	42	75	24	6	147

Chi-square value = 24.2129 at 9 degrees of freedom

#11-Age

	1	2	3	4	Total
19 or less	4	4	3	0	11
	2	4	4	1	11
20-24	9	24	15	1	49
	8	18	18	5	49
25-29	11	22	26	10	69
	11	25	26	7	69
30 or more	0	4	11	3	18
	3	6	8	1	18
	24	54	55	14	147
	24	53	56	14	147

Chi-square value = 19.5422 at 9 degrees of freedom

*The number refers to the competency statement as found in Appendix A, and age is the criterion tested in this case.

#13-Age	1	2	3	4	Total
19 or less	6	3	2	0	11
	5	4	1	1	11
20-24	28	15	5	1	49
	20	19	6	4	49
Age 25-29	21	28	9	11	69
	28	26	9	6	69
30 or more	4	10	3	1	18
	7	7	2	2	18
	59	56	19	13	147
	60	56	18	13	147

Chi-square value = 18.1680 at 9 degrees of freedom

#25-Age	1	2	3	4	Total
19 or less	3	4	3	1	11
	2	4	4	1	11
20-24	14	20	14	1	49
	11	16	17	5	49
Age 25-29	11	14	33	11	69
	16	22	24	7	69
30 or more	5	9	2	1	17
	4	5	6	2	17
	33	47	52	14	146
	33	47	51	15	146

Chi-square value - 21.6465 at 9 degrees of freedom

#36-Age	1	2	3	4	Total
19 or less	2	7	2	0	11
	4	5	2	0	11
20-24	22	24	3	0	49
	17	21	10	1	49
25-29	20	26	22	1	69
	24	30	14	1	69
30 or more	7	6	4	1	18
	6	8	4	0	18
	51	63	31	2	147
	51	64	30	2	147

Chi-square value = 17.6447 at 9 degrees of freedom

#40-Age	1	2	3	4	Total
19 or less	5	2	3	1	11
	5	4	2	0	11
20-24	31	13	3	0	47
	23	16	7	1	47
25-29	25	29	14	1	69
	34	24	10	1	69
30 or more	11	6	1	0	18
	9	6	3	0	18
	72	50	21	2	145
	71	50	22	2	145

Chi-square value = 19.7731 at 9 degrees of freedom

# 56-Age	1	2	3	4	Total
19 or less	3	8	0	0	11
	7	3	1	0	11
20-24	33	11	5	0	49
	29	13	6	1	49
25-29	40	14	12	3	69
	40	20	8	1	69
30 or more	10	7	1	0	18
	11	5	2	0	18
	86	40	18	3	147
	87	41	17	2	147

Chi-square value = 20.4743 at 9 degrees of freedom

#3-Sex	1	2	3	4	Total
Male	25	16	13	2	56
	28	19	7	2	56
Female	49	35	4	3	91
	46	31	11	3	91
	74	51	17	5	147
	74	50	18	5	147

Chi-square value 12.1843 at 3 degrees of freedom

#11-Sex		1	2	3	4	Total
Sex	Male	9	22	15	10	56
	Female	15	32	40	4	91
		24	54	55	14	147
		24	54	55	14	147

Chi-square value = 9.4917 at 3 degrees of freedom

#31-Sex		1	2	3	4	Total
Sex	Male	17	18	19	2	56
	Female	43	33	11	3	90
		60	51	30	5	146
		61	51	29	5	146

Chi-square value = 10.6728 at 3 degrees of freedom

#45-Sex		1	2	3	4	Total
Sex	Male	17	17	15	6	55
	Female	44	28	17	2	91
		61	45	32	8	146
		61	45	32	8	146

Chi-square value = 8.3986 at 3 degrees of freedom

#1-Education	1	2	3	4	Total
less than 12	6	0	2	0	8
Education	3	4	1	0	8
12	18	15	4	2	39
	12	20	6	1	39
13-15	12	20	6	1	39
	12	20	6	1	39
16	0	16	4	1	21
	6	10	4	1	21
16+	7	24	8	1	40
	12	20	7	1	40
	43	75	24	5	147
	45	74	24	4	147

Chi-square value = 28.7224 at 12 degrees of freedom

#11-Education	1	2	3	4	Total
less than 12	4	1	3	0	8
Education	1	3	3	1	8
12	10	16	11	2	39
	6	14	15	4	39
13-15	4	16	15	4	39
	6	14	15	4	39
16	0	13	7	1	21
	3	8	8	2	21
16+	6	8	19	7	40
	7	14	15	4	40
	24	54	55	14	147
	23	53	56	15	147

Chi-square value = 27.1451 at 12 degrees of freedom

# 24-Education	1	2	3	4	Total
less than 12	4	2	1	1	8
Education	2	3	2	1	8
12	11	18	8	2	39
	7	16	11	5	39
13-15	5	13	15	6	39
	7	16	11	5	39
16	1	12	8	0	21
	4	9	6	2	21
16+	7	15	10	8	40
	8	16	11	5	40
	28	60	42	17	147
	28	60	41	18	147

Chi-square value = 22.1869 at 12 degrees of freedom

#28-Education	1	2	3	4	Total
less than 12	2	5	1	0	8
Education	3	4	1	0	8
12	18	16	4	1	39
	14	17	6	2	39
13-15	13	24	2	0	39
	14	17	6	2	39
16	5	12	4	0	21
	8	9	3	1	21
16+	15	9	10	6	40
	14	18	6	2	40
	53	66	21	7	147
	53	65	22	7	147

Chi-square value = 29.3459 at 12 degrees of freedom

#29-Education	1	2	3	4	Total
less than 12	5	3	0	0	8
Education	5	2	1	0	8
12	28	11	0	0	39
	24	10	4	1	39
13-15	26	10	3	0	39
	24	10	4	1	39
16	10	5	6	0	21
	13	6	2	0	21
16+	20	11	6	2	39
	24	10	4	1	39
	89	40	15	2	146
	90	38	15	3	146

Chi-square value = 21.0377 at 12 degrees of freedom

#40-Education	1	2	3	4	Total
less than 12	5	0	1	1	7
Education	3	2	1	1	7
12	24	10	4	0	38
	19	13	6	0	38
13-15	21	14	4	0	39
	19	13	6	1	39
16	6	11	4	0	21
	11	7	3	0	21
16+	16	15	8	1	40
	20	14	6	0	40
	72	50	21	2	145
	72	49	22	2	145

Chi-square value = 22.2649 at 12 degrees of freedom

#48-Education	1	2	3	4	Total
less than 12	4	2	0	2	8
Education	4	3	1	0	8
12	21	15	3	0	39
	16	16	6	1	39
13-15	17	16	6	0	39
	16	16	6	1	39
16	5	11	5	0	21
	9	8	3	1	21
16+	13	15	9	3	40
	17	16	6	1	40
	60	59	23	5	147
	62	59	22	4	147

Chi-square value = 26.6129 at 12 degrees of freedom

#59-Education	1	2	3	4	Total
less than 12	6	2	0	0	8
Education	3	4	1	0	8
12	20	17	2	0	39
	14	20	4	1	39
13-15	12	24	3	0	39
	14	20	4	1	39
16	6	11	4	0	21
	7	11	2	1	21
16+	7	23	7	3	40
	14	21	4	1	40
	51	77	16	3	147
	52	76	15	4	147

Chi-square value = 26.5349 at 12 degrees of freedom

#60-Education	1	2	3	4	Total
less than 12	4	3	1	0	8
Education	1	3	3	1	8
12	8	20	10	1	39
	6	16	13	4	39
13-15	4	15	14	6	39
	6	16	13	4	39
16	3	5	13	0	21
	3	9	7	2	21
16+	3	17	13	7	40
	6	16	14	4	40
	22	60	51	14	147
	22	60	50	15	147

Chi-square value = 27.5086 at 12 degrees of freedom

Family Life Topics:

#5-Marriage	1	2	3	4	Total
Male	23	11	19	3	56
	26	15	13	2	56
Sex					
Female	46	28	14	3	91
	43	24	20	4	91
	69	39	33	6	147
	69	39	33	6	147

Chi-square value = 7.9520 at 3 degrees of freedom

#6-Parenthood	1	2	3	4	Total
less than 12	2	4	2	0	8
	3	3	2	0	8
Education					
12	26	9	4	0	39
	16	13	8	2	39
13-15	7	18	10	4	39
	16	13	8	2	39
16	10	7	3	1	21
	9	7	4	1	21
16+	16	12	11	1	40
	17	14	8	1	40
	61	50	30	6	147
	61	50	30	6	147

Chi-square value = 25.5336 at 12 degrees of freedom