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ABSTRACT

The paper evaluates the use of group dynamics training for Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) aides in Ohio and assesses low income homemakers' adoption of group participation. The treatment group of aides was given week-long experimental group dynamics training which was coupled with nutrition and money management subject matter. A second group participated in two, day-long group dynamics training sessions, and a third group had no training in group dynamics except for a brief introduction. The aides studied were the total population of EFNEP aides in three Ohio Extension areas. Aides in the first two groups registered an increase in positive attitude toward group teaching over time. The second and third groups registered an increase in knowledge of group dynamics methods over time whereas the first group remained stationary. Regarding adoption of group methodology, the treatment group significantly attained the training objectives. The data indicate, however, that other factors besides training can influence aide adoption of group methodology. The data also show a substantial proportion of low income EFNEP homemakers desire some kind of group activity, especially rural women, metropolitan black women, and women with few years of schooling. (JR)

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EVALUATION OF THE USE OF GROUP DYNAMICS TRAINING  
IN THE EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

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# EVALUATION OF THE USE OF GROUP DYNAMICS TRAINING IN THE EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Two of the strengths of indigenous paraprofessionals lie in knowing and communicating with new audiences. These strengths are the basis for their recruitment but do not provide them with all the skills needed to do their jobs. It is often the responsibility of an agency to provide appropriate in-service and on the job training to expand paraprofessionals' existing capacities and to help them develop new abilities.

The primary objective of this paper is to report an evaluation of the use of group dynamics training in assisting a group of paraprofessionals to be more willing and able to organize, maintain and teach groups of homemakers. A second objective is to assess low income homemakers' adoption of group participation.

## Statement of the Problem

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) was inaugurated in late 1968 by the Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. Indigenous aides were employed and trained to teach nutrition and nutrition-related subject matter to hard to reach low-income homemakers. The use of aides was seen as a communication method and a less expensive way to increase outreach than would have been possible using professionals.

In the early years of the program EFNEP aides contacted and taught most of the hard to reach homemakers on a one-to-one basis. After the homemakers had been taught personally for a period of time and felt accepted by the aides, they were to be moved into study groups. However, many EFNEP homemakers did not have enough successful group experience to encourage them to take part in group learning. Many of the aides themselves did not have the skills to organize, maintain and teach homemaker groups.

There were approximately 200 EFNEP aides in 48 counties in Ohio in 1973. These aides worked with individual low-income homemakers, homemaker groups and youth groups. While many had successfully moved homemakers into study groups of various sizes, other aides were unable or unwilling to do so. It was found that 77 percent of the 1,299 Ohio homemakers sampled in 1973 were being taught on a one-to-one basis, and 23 percent had some contact in groups (McCormick, 1973).

Although teaching in groups was not new to many of the nutrition aides, specific policy directing homemaker movement into group learning situations was of recent origin. Since spring, 1973, the Ohio Extension Service had encouraged nutrition aides to move homemakers into groups as soon as possible, at the latest by the eighteenth month after enrolling (McCormick, 1973). There is a tendency for learning to level off within the first eighteen months after entering the EFNEP program, and the effectiveness of a homemaker's continuing on a one-to-one basis after that time has been questioned. There is also a managerial advantage in small group teaching. When an aide can reach groups of long-term homemakers with a lesson, the cost per homemaker decreases and time is freed to recruit new homemakers to the program.

EFNEP aides in Ohio have been prepared to assume group teaching in several ways. County agents and supervising aides have trained some aides in group teaching techniques. Two-day, three-day, and one week-long group dynamics training sessions were given by the state staff development leader. Many aides, however, received little formal preparation for teaching homemaker groups.

One type of group dynamics training occurs in intense, sustained periods through experiencing and observing group process. In recognition of the need to determine effective group training methods a proposal was written to conduct and evaluate such week-long experimental group training in one Ohio Extension area. The proposal was funded by Special Projects monies from the Federal Extension Service. As a result of this proposal two experimental sessions were held in the fall of 1973 and an extensive evaluation made of aide response to the training.

### Theoretical Orientation

Three related theories were used as an orientation for the evaluation. These were adoption-diffusion theory, communication theory and educational theory. Adoption-diffusion theory was used to explain the transmission of new ideas to individuals who then adopt the practices taught. Communication theory was used to explain the transmission of ideas from one person to another. Educational theory was used to describe methods used to teach others in order to produce behavioral changes.

The Cooperative Extension Service was conceptualized as an agency whose goal is to present to specified target audiences research-based information with respect to practices. Using this information members of

Extension audiences choose whether or not to adopt the practices. An innovation may be defined as any practice which is "perceived as new by the individual or group for whom it was intended" (Klonglan et. al., 1966). The adoption of group teaching methods was considered to be an innovation to Expanded Food and Nutrition Program aides, and the adoption of group learning experiences an innovation to EFNEP homemakers.

The adoption process is the mental process through which an individual passes from first hearing about an innovation to its final adoption. Conceptually, the adoption model is divided into five stages:

- (1) Awareness stage. At this stage the individual is initially exposed to the innovation. The individual knows of the innovation but lacks complete information about it.
- (2) Information stage. The individual becomes interested in the innovation and seeks more information about it. The individual is interested in getting both general and more specific information about the intrinsic qualities of the innovation and relating this information to his past experiences and knowledge.
- (3) Evaluation stage. The individual is concerned with applying the innovation to his own situation at this stage. The related advantages and disadvantages of the innovation to other alternatives are considered. The individual makes a mental application of the innovation to his present and future situation and makes the decision either to try it or not.
- (4) Trial stage. At this stage the individual is motivated to use the innovation on a small scale in order to determine its utility in his own situation.
- (5) Adoption stage. The individual adopts and decides to continue the full use of the innovation. At this stage and point in time the individual is satisfied that the course of action being pursued is best for him.

The communication of innovations is vital to their adoption. In the evaluation, communication was considered in the sense of transmitting

ideas to a specific audience. Ideas about group formation and maintenance were transmitted from Extension specialists to EFNEP aides. In turn, ideas about group participation were transmitted from EFNEP aides to homemakers.

Analysis of the transmission of ideas is made easier by use of the Berlo communication model (Berlo, 1960). In this model a sender (S) transmits a message (M) through a channel (C) to a receiver (R) or SMCR. The SMCR model is the basis for a two-step flow communication model which is also useful.

A two-step flow occurs when a message is relayed through a third person as it passes from sender to receiver (Westley and MacLean, 1965). In the evaluation the message consisted of the concepts taught. The concepts traveled via a channel from an Extension specialist to a nutrition aide, and via a channel from the nutrition aide to a homemaker. The channel used in both instances was teaching methodology.

Using the two-step flow, the nutrition aide served as a gatekeeper between the Extension specialist, or original sender, and the homemaker. The aide decided what to do with the message sent by the specialist. She could modify the concepts because she considered both the information taught and other information already in her possession. As the aide in turn became a sender and relayed the message to the homemaker, the homemaker evaluated the message and accepted or rejected the information, again considering both the new and ongoing information. Some of the factors each receiver may consider are credibility of the sender and personal reasons for or against adoption.

The aide as gatekeeper was the key to the success of the two-step message flow. A gatekeeper can insure that the original sender's message, when relayed to the ultimate receiver, is as close as possible to what the original sender actually communicated. Thus, to ensure that practice adoption resulted from her teaching the aide needed to send information which fostered adoption of group participation.

Acceptance of a sender's message by a receiver is the goal of communication. The goal of the adoption diffusion process is the adoption of a specific practice. If the receiver accepts the meaning of a message which asks for adoptive action, but fails to act, the goal of communication is reached, but adoption is not achieved. When an aide organized and taught EFNEP homemaker groups, or when a homemaker attended group meetings, she adopted a practice. When messages were received and accepted, but the aide decided not to organize and teach group meetings, or the homemaker decided not to attend, communication occurred, but not adoption.

The message in the SMCR model has two major aspects: content and treatment. The content in the experimental training sessions consisted of the subject matter used and was selected from group dynamics, nutrition and nutrition-related money management concepts. These concepts were presented at a comprehension level suitable for the aides and covered timely subject matter.

Treatment of the communication message was explicated in the evaluation to the manner in which subject matter was presented. All the concepts were taught using group formation, maintenance and teaching methods.



Group dynamics concepts were pointed out as examples occurred. In this way nutrition and nutrition-related concepts were integrated with group dynamics concepts and examples. Nutrition and money management subject matter was demonstrated in ways in which the aides could use it in group teaching of homemakers and was presented in a planned format.

Two training sessions were held. Fourteen aides attended the first session, and 17 aides, the second. The training consisted of five, four-hour days, from 9:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Both sessions contained the same subject matter, but were scheduled somewhat differently because of other teaching responsibilities of a specialist involved.

The content included: "Tune in on Money", "Be Wise with Your Protein Buys", "Calorie Countdown", "Making Useful and Inexpensive Visuals" and "Working with Groups". Methods used included a hollow square room arrangement of tables and chairs, group discussion, simulations, role playing, process observation, group food preparation, group problem-solving, visual illustrations, and printed materials.

Integration of these subject matter concepts was an experimental teaching methodology for use with the EFNEP aides in Ohio. Their perceptions of the effectiveness of the group training was an influential factor for both aides and homemakers in the adoption of group teaching and learning practices.

Empirical findings which support the effectiveness of any methods for teaching low-income people are scarce. It has been found that formal group participation varies by social class. In general, those

who are not moving up in the class system, who do not have residential stability, who have low educational levels and low socioeconomic status would be expected to participate in few formal groups. As a result, the one-to-one method of teaching has been used to reach EFNEP homemakers, and their willingness to participate in group learning has been questioned.

Observations made at the National Education Association Training Laboratories suggest that:

Each learner brings to the learning situation his skills, or lack of skills, in group membership. If he lacks the ability to work effectively with others in a group situation, it is difficult for him to enter into the human transaction of learning (Warren, 1966: 13).

As the number of members in a group increases, the number of interpersonal relationships that must be maintained is increased. Interaction with others may present a problem to unskilled group members and to inexperienced teachers of groups.

On the other hand, Cuber points out that grouping is a necessity for most people. Through their learned socialization people have acquired wants which can be satisfied only by group participation (Cuber, 1963: 313). Each of us was born into groups. From groups we learn many of the meanings we apply to our lives. Group learning is vital to all people, no matter what their socioeconomic level.

Many educators suggest that small group teaching may provide one of the best methods for learning. One advantage of small groups is that verbal communication among members of a small group can control attention, reduce anxiety and provide participation for every learner.

In small groups the communication structure helps determine how much learning is taking place, and the responsibility for learning rests with the learner.

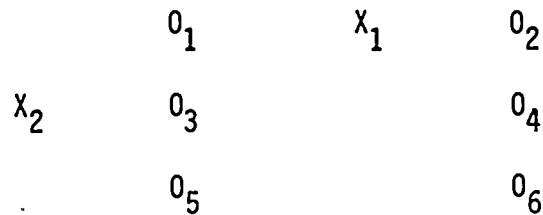
Educational theory has little basis for prescribing one teaching method over another for use in reaching low-income homemakers. Because they do not form a homogenous audience, emphasis on one method for teaching low-income women is questionable. The findings from this evaluation should help to determine circumstances under which the use of group methods is feasible for low-income paraprofessionals and their clients.

### Methodology

A modification of the pre-test, post-test, control group design was used to help determine the extent to which specific training components as well as the training itself were related to training effectiveness. The requirements of administering and delivering the program forced modification of the classic experimental design.

The group of EFNEP aides which was treated was given week-long experimental group dynamics training which was coupled with nutrition and money management subject matter. A second aide group had participated in two, day-long group dynamics training sessions nine months previously. A third group had no training in group dynamics except a brief introduction to the bulletin, "Working with Groups". The second and third groups of aides were used as comparison groups to indicate the effects of the week-long integrated subject matter treatment on the trained aides.

The treatment aide group was given a pre-test in November, 1973, at the time of the training. The comparison aide groups were pre-tested in December, 1973. All aides were post-tested six months later in May. Two instruments were developed for completion by the aides. The first instrument established a bench mark against which aide adoption of group organization, maintenance and teaching techniques was measured. The second instrument measured aide adoption of group methods. The research design may be diagrammed:



The aides studied were the total population of EFNEP aides in three Ohio Extension areas. The areas were purposively selected. The treatment area was selected because the area supervisor was willing to allow each aide to invest one week in group dynamics training. The comparison areas were chosen for the group dynamics training dissimilarities noted above and demographic similarities to the treatment area. The treatment area was divided demographically into an industrial section containing two metropolitan counties of over 100,000 population and adjoining less urban counties. Each of the comparison areas had one major metropolitan county with adjacent less urban counties.

At the time of the training and first measurement there were 27 aides in the treatment area, 20 in comparison area I, and 23 in comparison area II (70). Six months later 66 aides remained who were

eligible for the second measurement. The median age of the aides was 47, and their median education was 12 years of school. Approximately two-thirds were married, and their median family income was \$8,000. Although there were demographic differences between aides in the three areas, the differences were not statistically significant.

A random sample of program homemakers was drawn to investigate the effects of the training as they passed from aide to homemaker. One-eighth of all the homemakers who had been with the program six months or longer were drawn from each aides' "List of Families". The eligible group of homemakers consisted of 203 names.

An instrument was developed which measured homemaker adoption of group learning experiences and factors associated with their adoption of group behavior. Trained interviewers having the personal qualities to establish rapport with low-income homemakers completed the homemaker interviews in the women's homes. A total of 164 homemakers was interviewed: 66 from the treatment area, 65 from comparison area I, and 33 from comparison area II.

Thirty-nine of the homemakers in the sample could not be reached. Because data had been collected from the aides about each homemaker drawn, it was possible to determine differences between homemakers who were interviewed and those who were not. The homemakers not interviewed were not significantly different in age, race, annual family income or metropolitan county type. A significant difference was found in marital status, and a greater proportion of those not interviewed were married. This fact could contribute to some distortion of the findings because

married EFNEP homemakers may be different from those who were not married at the time of the study.

A background demographic comparison of the homemakers who were interviewed indicates that they were similar by area in marital status and annual family income. Three-fifths were married at the time of the study, and their median incomes ranged from \$251 to \$333 per month.

The homemakers were significantly different by area in age, education, and race. The median age given by the homemakers was 39, though there was a significantly smaller proportion of homemakers over 40 in comparison area II. The median years of school completed by the homemakers was 11, but educational levels were significantly higher in the comparison areas. Half the homemakers in the treatment area were white, while two-thirds of the homemakers in comparison area I were black and two-thirds in comparison area II were white. These data indicate that aides in different areas worked with homemakers having both similar and uniquely different characteristics. Such different target populations are a relevant factor in assessing training outcomes.

#### Training Outcomes

The major question answered by the evaluation was, "Will week-long EFNEP aide training which integrates group dynamics and subject matter content and is directed toward EFNEP homemakers be followed by increased homemaker group organization, maintenance and teaching?" Several factors were of primary importance in determining the answer to this question. Two factors which were considered to be associated with the training and with the aides' increasing their use of group techniques were:

1) the aides' attitudes toward teaching homemakers one at a time and in groups, and 2) the aides' measured knowledge of group dynamics.

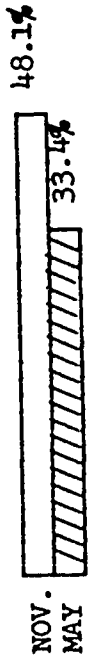
### Attitudes

Attitudes toward group teaching were asked of the aides in both the pre-test and the post-test. A smaller proportion of the treatment area aides wanted to teach homemakers one at a time in May than in November (Chart 1). In May the desire to teach one at a time increased in comparison area I and was unchanged in comparison area II. Several aides had no preference for either groups or homemakers and responded favorably to both.

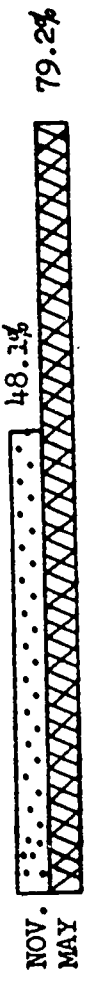
In the fall the aides in the treatment area and comparison area I were less likely to want to teach EFNEP homemakers in groups than the aides in comparison area II. One interpretation of these data is that training in group dynamics gives aides a view of problems they will encounter with groups as well as techniques for their solution. Training thus results in an aide wariness which untrained aides may not feel. The untrained aide may have an initial enthusiasm which drops off over time.

A larger proportion of aides in the treatment area and in comparison area I agreed that they wanted to teach homemakers in groups in May than in the fall. Aides in comparison area II had less desire to teach groups in May. These data have interesting implications since aides in the treatment area and in comparison area I had received group dynamics training. Training in the comparison area had occurred nine months before that in the treatment area. It is possible that the trained

Teaching One At A Time



Teaching In Groups

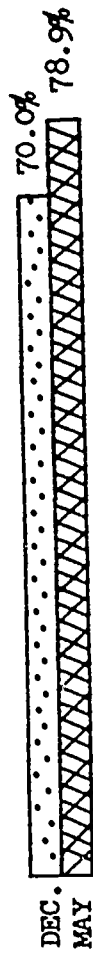


Comparison Area I

Teaching One At A Time



Teaching In Groups



Comparison Area II

Teaching One At A Time



Teaching In Groups

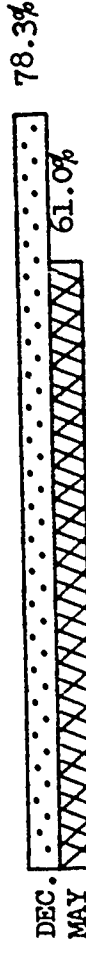


CHART 1. AIDE AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS: "I want to teach homemakers one at a time".  
 "I want to teach homemakers in groups".



aide has information which increases her success in group situations and results in a more favorable attitude over time.

### Knowledge

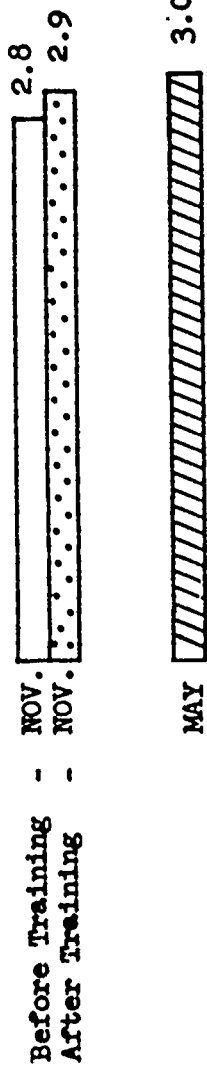
Knowledge of group dynamics was also considered to be related to adoption of group methodology. Aides in the treatment area were asked questions covering knowledge of five selected group dynamics concepts at the start of the training. These same questions were asked of all the aides in the pre-test and post-test.

The mean number of correct responses made by the aides in the treatment area was 2.9, and no aide in that area answered all five questions correctly (Chart 2). There was little change over time. These data may indicate that integrating group dynamics concepts with other more familiar subject matter resulted in the aides giving more attention to concepts which built on an established base, and group dynamics subject matter may have been too new or too abstract. It is also possible that the paper and pencil test did not measure their knowledge.

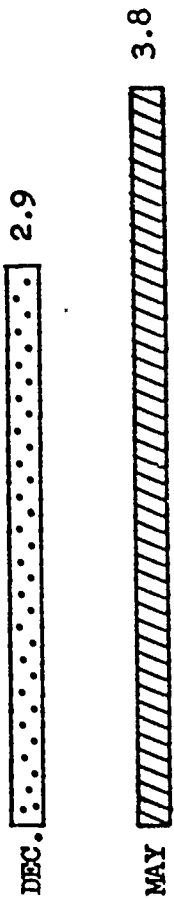
Aides in comparison area I scored significantly higher on the second test over group dynamics concepts than they did on the first. The mean number of questions answered correctly on the pre-test was 2.9 and on the post-test was 3.8.

One explanation of their higher scores may lie in the reinforcement aides in the metropolitan county received from approval given by several agencies to the bulletin, "Working With Groups". The aides were asked for copies for agency use, and this may have stimulated them to value and

Treatment Area



Comparison Area I



Comparison Area II

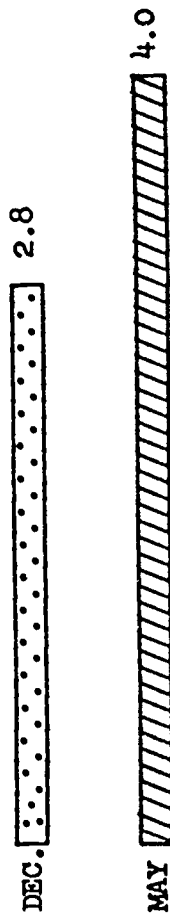


CHART 2. MEAN NUMBER OF CORRECT RESPONSES GIVEN BY AIDES TO GROUP DYNAMICS QUESTIONS:

- Even people who have trouble getting along together will often work together to do something they think is very important.
- Members in a group care about what other group members think about how they act.
- Learning something is the most important reason people join groups.
- Task roles help the group stick together.
- Many conflicts between people in a group are related to behavior learned in other groups.

study the bulletin which contained answers to the questions asked. Another explanation is that the test itself may have encouraged the aides to learn more about group dynamics, or helped them put labels on concepts they already had.

In comparison area II the aides also scored significantly higher on the group dynamics concepts at the time of the second measurement. The mean number of questions answered correctly in the pre-test was 2.8 and in the post-test was 4.0. The supervising aide in the metropolitan county in this area told the researcher that the aides in her county had become interested in the concepts, looked them up, and discussed them. The desire to gather and share information, and the reinforcement of this behavior may help to account for higher scores in this area.

The absence of learning gains in the treatment area and their presence in the comparison area suggest that aide characteristics and reinforcement of learning may contribute as much to scoring well on tests as a specific training program. In the treatment area the agents may have considered the state-initiated training to be sufficient. They may also have believed they did not have the group process training skills to reinforce training. On the other hand, in the two control areas differing types of reinforcement appear to have occurred with an increase in scores over time.

#### Adoption of Group Methodology by the Aides

The aides' use of group methods was measured in both the pre-test and the post-test. At the time of the pre-test the aides in the treatment

area and comparison area II averaged 2.8 groups while aides in comparison area I averaged 4.5 groups (Chart 3). When the numbers of new groups started between November and May were averaged, comparison area I maintained the largest number of groups per aide. The treatment area was second, and comparison area II was third.

The number of members per group was largest for comparison area I and smallest for the treatment area at both measurements. At the time of the pre-test the average yearly meeting frequency per group was about the same in all areas. This had changed by the time of the post-test, and the meeting frequency was highest for comparison area I. The data shown on chart 3 indicate that meetings of new groups in the treatment area became less frequent and the groups smaller in size; those in comparison area II retained the same frequency but were smaller; and those in comparison area I became more frequent and smaller.

The changes in group characteristics over the period were associated with a change in group type. At the time of the pre-test, treatment area groups were more than half youth groups, while the proportion of homemaker groups in the control areas ranged from three-fifths to two-thirds (Chart 4). New groups formed in the treatment area between November and May were more than two-thirds homemaker groups. These groups were smaller and met less frequently than the youth groups had.

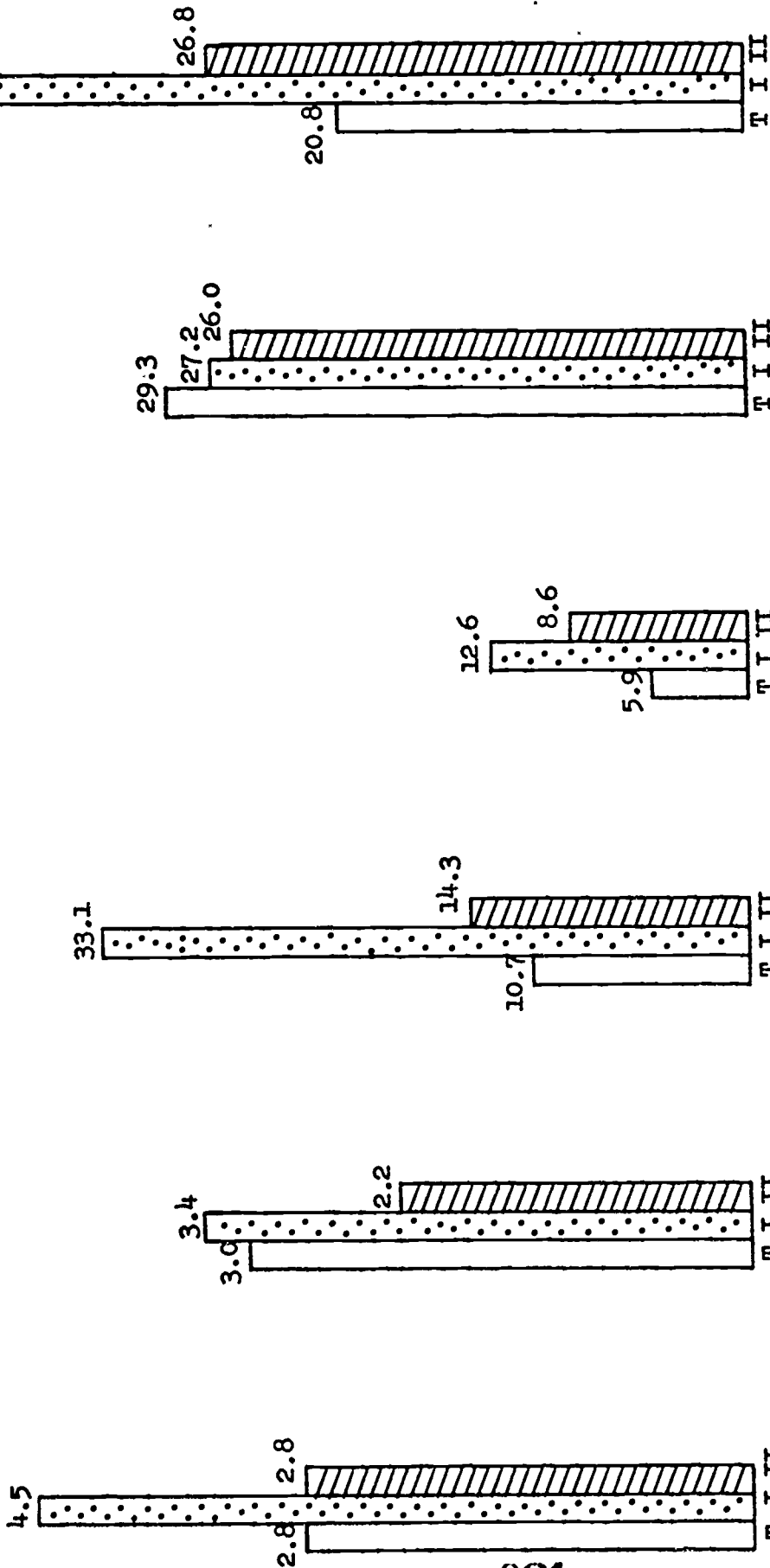
The aides in the two comparison areas formed a larger proportion of youth groups between November and May than the proportion of youth groups they reported in November. The youth groups in comparison area I met

Number of Groups:      Nov.      May

Treatment              75              71

Comparison I            90              64

Comparison II          64              50



Average Yearly Meeting Frequency Per Group

Average Number of Members Per Group

Average Number of Groups Per Aide

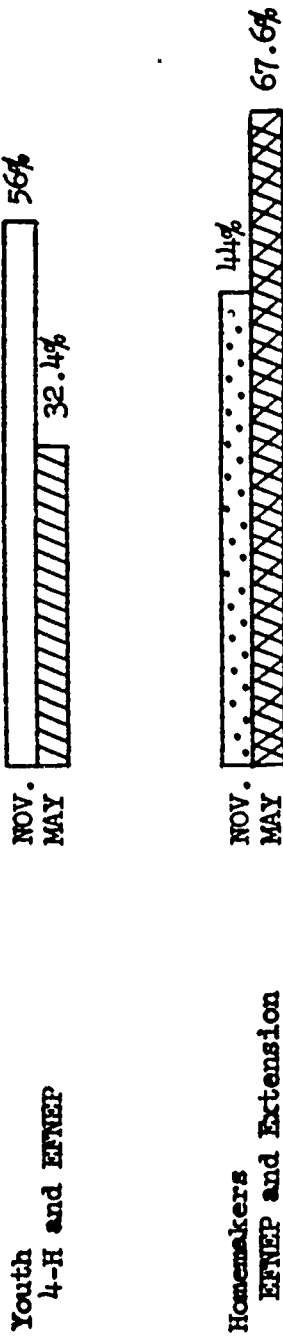
(benchmark)              (new)

November              May              November              May              November              May

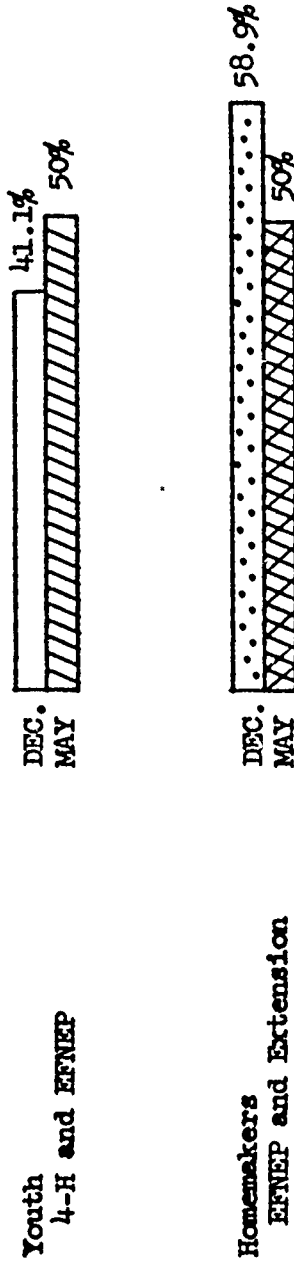
CHART 3. EFNEP GROUPS DATA      NOVEMBER, 1973; NEW EFNEP GROUPS DATA      MAY, 1974

Group Type

Treatment Area



Comparison Area I



Comparison Area II

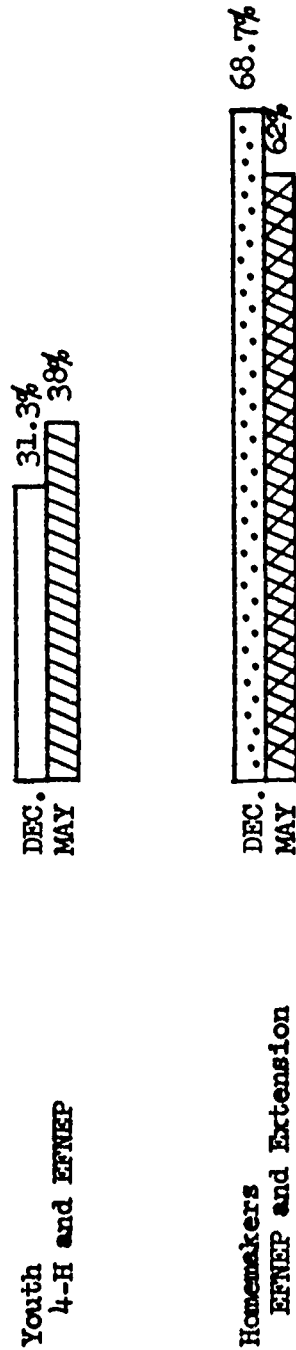


CHART 4. TYPES OF EFNEP GROUPS: NOVEMBER, 1973 AND ME IN MAY, 1974

more frequently than the large homemaker groups noted in the pre-test and had smaller numbers of members.

These findings indicate a significant change for the treatment area aides. Since the week-long training in the treatment area had emphasized content and group methods for homemakers, successful attainment of the training objective was evident.

#### Factors Associated with Aide Adoption of Group Methodology

Regression analysis was used to select the best models to predict aide creation of new EFNEP groups between November, 1973, and May, 1974. The independent variables used were measures of aide characteristics and included: attitude toward group teaching, group dynamics test scores, attitude toward change, self acceptance, length of employment, miles traveled per homemaker visit, number of EFNEP groups reported in November-December, area, frequency of meeting attendance prior to becoming an aide, prior group leadership roles, age, marital status, race and educational level. The variables which were explanatory and appeared in the models are underlined.

More new groups were formed by aides who had played leadership roles in prior groups and whose attitudes toward group teaching were positive. The aides in comparison area II formed fewer new groups. These factors explained 18 percent of new group formation between November and May.

Aides who held a higher frequency of meetings of new EFNEP groups had a variety of characteristics. These were: a high frequency of EFNEP group meetings in November, fewer miles traveled per homemaker visit,

a higher number of prior group leadership roles, Negro race, Spanish American race, unmarried status at the time of the study, low prior religious meeting attendance, and a positive attitude toward group teaching. Thirty-seven percent of the frequency of meetings of new EFNEP groups in May was explained by these factors.

Larger groups of EFNEP homemakers were organized and maintained by aides who had a history of attending educational and community groups and who had played leadership roles in prior groups. Negro aides had larger groups than Spanish American or white aides. These data may also be interpreted to mean that there were larger groups in the cities because the Negro aides worked mainly in the cities. Group sizes were largest in comparison area I. Together these factors explained, 37 percent of the frequency of meetings of new EFNEP groups in May.

The data indicate that prior group experience, attitude toward teaching groups, distance traveled, race and marital status are influential in aide adoption of group methodology. Knowledge as measured by the five group dynamics questions was not found to be predictive of group organization and maintenance.

#### Homemaker Adoption of Group Methodology

Both the homemakers' total participation in groups and their adoption of EFNEP group learning experiences were measured. Data about all types of group involvement was considered useful in understanding their EFNEP group behaviors.



Two-thirds of the homemakers attended one or more groups, and two-fifths attended one or more meetings a week. The groups most frequently attended were religious groups, such as church and choir, and educational groups, such as PTA and Head Start Sewing Classes (Chart 5).

A larger proportion of homemakers in comparison area I than in the other areas desired no groups and attended none (Chart 6). The homemakers in comparison area II attended the largest number of meetings, and homemakers in the treatment area more often belonged to EFNEP groups or to EFNEP groups only. Approximately 80 percent of the homemakers stated a group size preference. More than half of these women wanted groups larger than 6 or any size group.

The data show a substantial proportion of low-income EFNEP homemakers who have or desire some kind of group activity. These homemakers provide an audience with potential for Extension group learning activities. In each area studied, and to the largest extent in the treatment area, homemakers were found who belonged only to EFNEP groups. Perhaps an explanation for the small amount of organized group participation found among low-income people is caused as much by a lack of groups providing meaningful activity and in which they are accepted as by their unwillingness or inability to relate. As Extension provides useful information in an acceptant group climate, low-income homemakers served will continue to develop group behaviors.

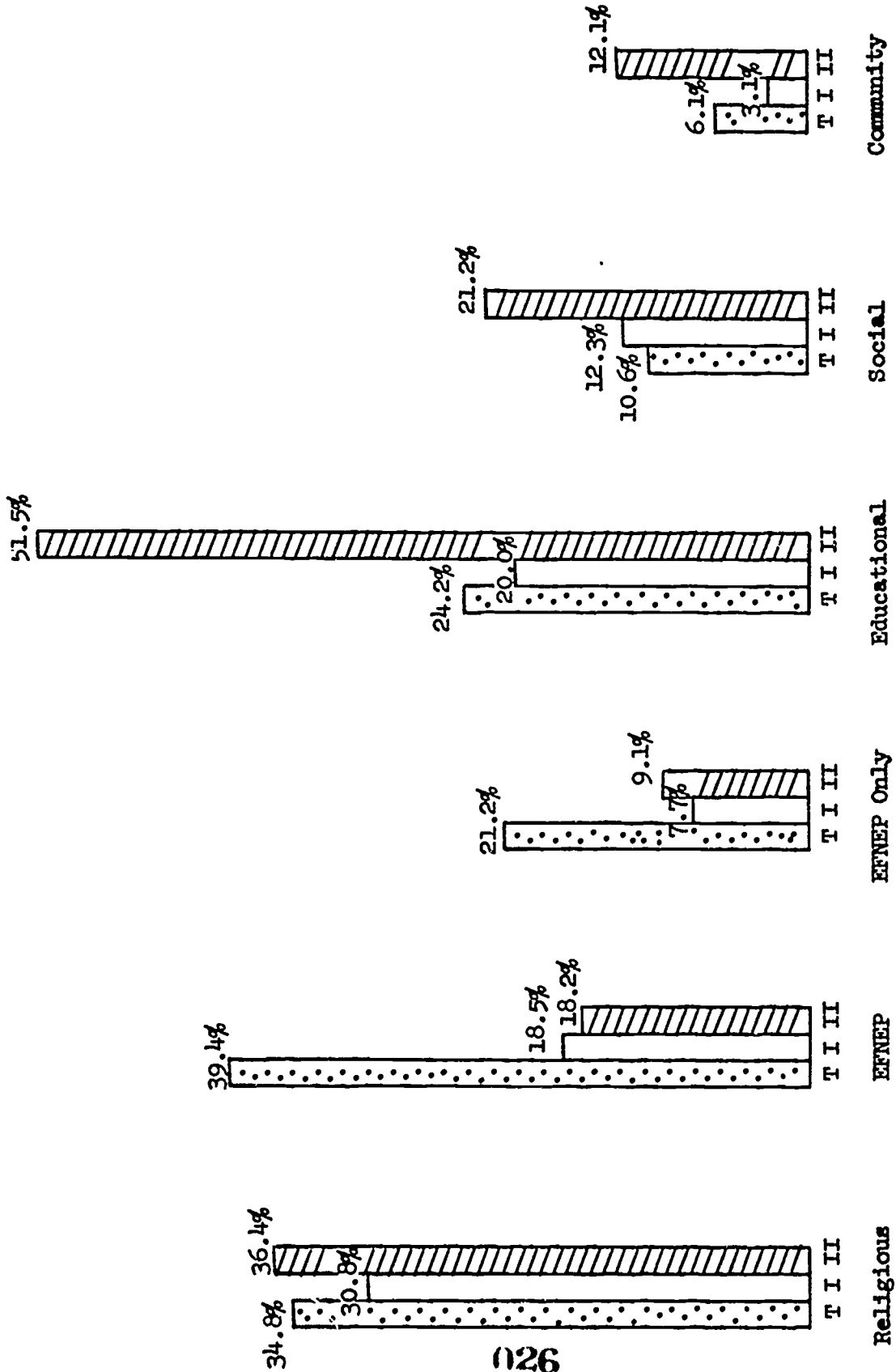


CHART 5. TYPE OF GROUPS ATTENDED BY HOMEMAKERS IN MAY

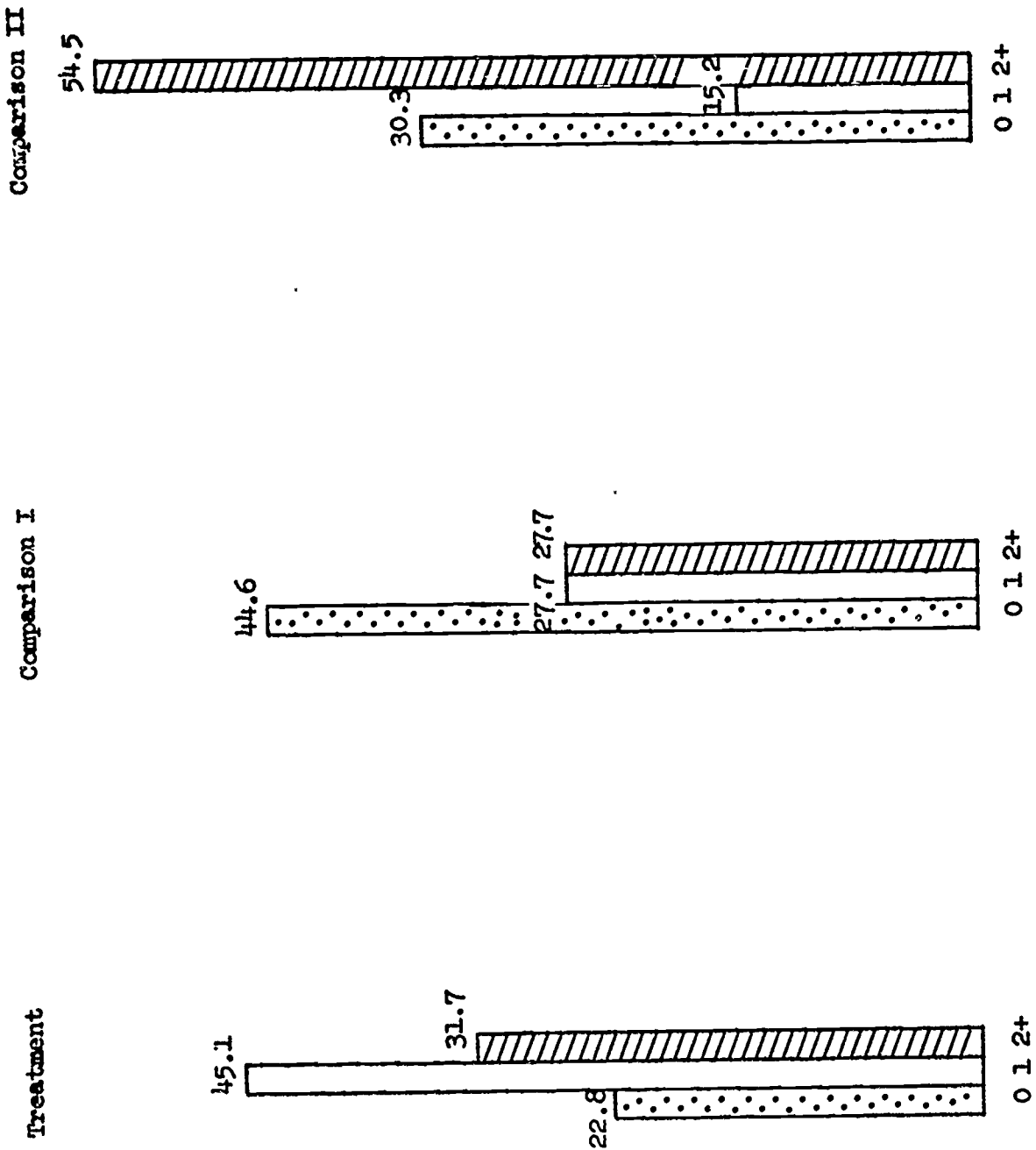


CHART 6. NUMBER OF GROUPS ATTENDED BY HOMEMAKERS IN MAY

### Factors Associated with Homemaker Group Participation

Regression analysis was used to select the best model to predict the frequency of EFNEP homemaker group meeting attendance. The independent variables used were measures of homemaker characteristics and included: attitude toward group learning, attitude toward change, self acceptance, desire to remain in one place, happiness, area, length of time in the program, newspaper reading, visits to friends, age, marital status, income, race, employment, urban-rural residence, time lived in present home, and education. The explanatory variables which appeared in the model are underlined. These factors together explained 35 percent of homemaker group meeting frequency.

The EFNEP homemaker studied who frequently attended group meetings was acceptant of herself and others and desired group participation. She was flexible, visited friends, and had lived for a period of time in her home. She thought it was a good idea to live in one place and was likely to live either in a rural area or to be a metropolitan resident of the Negro race. She was likely to have either graduated from the 12th grade or to have attended a grade from 5th through 8th.

These findings indicate that women having socio-economic characteristics different from those usually suggested attend groups. Since the women studied were low-income, it is evident that some low-income women will attend groups frequently. Rural women, metropolitan Negro women and women with few grades in school were found among those attending frequent group meetings. Personal qualities as well as socio-economic characteristics

appear to have a great deal to do with group behavior. The personal qualities related to group behavior which were suggested by this study are self acceptance, flexibility, friendliness, and a desire for stability.

### Conclusions

This evaluation suggests that difficulties in organizing, maintaining and teaching groups of low-income women in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program can be lessened. Aides can be trained to teach low-income women in groups. Low-income women will participate in group learning experiences led by EFNEP aides.

Suggestions for accomplishing these goals also result from the evaluation. It is recommended that:

- Aides be given systematic training in group organization, maintenance and teaching methods integrated with nutrition and nutrition-related subject matter to increase EFNEP homemaker groups.
- Group dynamics training be systematically reinforced.
- Aides be recruited who have a history of prior group attendance and leadership roles and who have positive attitudes toward group teaching.
- Aides in both rural and metropolitan areas be encouraged to identify and teach in groups those homemakers most likely to accept group learning methods.

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