blocks, they come to see that collective needs patterns may give general direction but that the vital directional clues are obtained from the individual needs patterns of each child. It would be a fallacious policy to design treatment for needs satisfaction for every individual on the basis of group averages or even group trends.

Experimental groups of third, fourth, and fifth grade children in the Des Moines Study showed significant gains in reading and arithmetic performance, mental maturity, general school effectiveness, and social acceptability. Comparable groups in which there was no conscious effort to meet needs showed no consistent trend in terms of increases from lower to higher levels of accomplishment. The most significant change in the needs patterns of experimental groups was an increase in the need for a world outlook. This was consistently higher in all experimental groups.

While the findings from such studies are not conclusive, their validity may be established as teachers and supervisors combine their efforts to design processes for needs fulfillment in many situations under varying conditions. The evidence thus far obtained supports the hypothesis that cause and effect operate in learning and non-learning, and that learning can be improved and enriched as teachers function in the classroom in terms of those relationships.

A Laboratory for Studying Behavior

MILDRED WEIGLEY WOOD

One mark of the emotionally and socially mature individual is his ability to evaluate objectively his own behavior and that of his associates. Mildred Weigley Wood, supervisor, Home Economics Education at Phoenix Union High School, Arizona, describes learning opportunities through which high school students can achieve an understanding of human behavior that makes for improved living with themselves and others.

OBSERVATION of young children by high school students serves more than one purpose. Its generally accepted goal is to help high school students understand children in order to better guide those children with whom they come in contact. In itself this is a worthwhile purpose. There is, however, an additional goal reached that is less generally recognized—that of enabling the high school student to gain some understanding of human behavior.

Talking about human behavior is one thing. Seeing it in real situations as a
basis for discussion is quite another. Observation of children offers something real for students to do. Much evidence has accumulated to prove that students learn best under these circumstances.

**Sources for Observation**

"Who will help with health inspection?" "John, will you tell the story the first day?" "Which two will greet the parents as they bring the children?" These and many similar questions are propounded by a high school student-director of a play school in a large city high school. The play school differs from the general conception of a nursery school in that it is of shorter duration, both as to hours of day and extent of time in weeks.

When a play school within the school is not feasible—or even if one is available—other resources for observation are easily identifiable. Helping in a kindergarten, watching children in a neighboring school at play, observing younger children in the family offer real situations for the high school observer. Each has its advantages and disadvantages and must be used with these in mind.

The play school has the advantage of accessibility, impersonal observation (hard to maintain with younger brothers and sisters), opportunity for boys as well as girls ("baby sitting" while not exclusively a girl's job is predominantly one), and a chance for the whole class to observe under teacher guidance what is happening.

**Learning that Has Reality**

- "What can we do to keep Barney out of mischief tomorrow?"
- "I think what will cure Jimmy of snatching is a good hard spanking."
- "Joe gets all the attention and his sister Lois none."
- "I don't think you should let them pass their own tomato juice—they're too young. Susan spilled some."
- "They go from one thing to another. How are they going to learn to concentrate?"

These are samples of the innumerable questions which boys and girls raise after one observation of play school. What learnings come out of these observations and discussions?

Every child is different, yet there are many characteristics in common. To observe Kenny and Lanny, two-year-old twins, using the slide so differently; one eating much, the other eating little; one selecting a train to play with, the other a telephone—serves to drive home the difference in children. On the other hand, Jenny and Benny show characteristics in common for two-year-olds such as preferring solitary play; seldom playing cooperatively; cannot share—"It's mine first"; so they accomplish this by holding and hoarding.

Understanding that everyone is different, whether it be the two-year-old, the high school student, or the husband and wife, is fundamental to understanding human behavior.

Children vary in their talents and interests. Jean, aged three, produces with paper and crayons results in color and line which show special talents; while Sammy, the same age, with elaborate preparation and talk, produces unintelligible scrawls. But Sammy will
organize a train out of a row of chairs with a child designated for every part from the bell to the observation platform. He initiates much activity. He is a leader. Jean’s and Sammy’s interests and talents differ.

Since young people are often anxious that everyone be cut out of their pattern, feel unhappy because they cannot achieve in the same way as their classmates, or are critical of those who cannot excel in the same way as they; it is important that they recognize that people can be equally fine though different, and that accepting this viewpoint means that differences in people can be enjoyed.

**Attitudes of adults affect children.** Mary and Peter, seniors in high school, are greeting the parents and children as they come in. A mother is bringing her two-and-a-half-year-old for the first time. Mary and Peter witness a long, drawn-out farewell between mother and child which is terminated only when Peter firmly takes the youngster, Sally, into the play room while Mary explains that the child will soon be interested in what is going on. Another mother arrives with June, a two-year-old, and with a quick goodbye kiss and a “Have a good time—I’ll be back to get you for lunch” is off, leaving a slightly tearful June who, nevertheless, quickly feels secure in the new situation. But Sally takes longer to feel at home.

A father comes for Johnny and, as he takes his happy son away, re-
marks, "He has his mother and me down. I hope he didn't make too much trouble for you." Mary and Peter hear Johnny say to his father with a bit of pride—and a lack of truth—"I did make them trouble, Daddy." The next day Johnny was living up to the reputation his father was establishing for him!

"My mother says she wanted a girl with curly hair but I've got straight hair," said four-year-old Martha as she fingered the pigtails that stuck straight out from either side of her head. Here was an interesting point for the class to discuss with the teacher the next day. Martha must be loved and accepted for what she is—a little girl with straight hair.

Thus, high school students soon learn that the attitudes of the parents have much to do with the kind of a youngster the child is. They see how serious it is not to "loosen the apron strings"; how unfortunate it may be to talk about a child in his presence; how we must take people where we find them and go from there. For the Marys and Peters to recognize how attitudes of parents toward children affect what children do is another step forward in understanding human behavior.

**Basic needs of children must be met.** Watching a group of eighteen children ranging in age from two to five years reveals to their observers some of the basic needs of children. From these learnings it is not difficult for high school students to understand why young children behave as they do. For example, young Gordon climbs to the top of the slide and yells with arms waving, "See me, I'm bigger than anybody here." Throughout the morning Gordon plays for attention. He must have recognition, but we would prefer his seeking it more legitimately. A game in which Gordon played well the part of the Old Grey Cat chasing the kittens gave an opportunity for recognition. As more of these opportunities were utilized and little attention given to Gordon's recognition-gaining stunts, the students noticed the latter declining.

Little Lois wants very much to go
down the slide, yet is fearful in her inexperience. A helping hand, then walking beside her, and finally letting her try it alone brings the independence that is one way of gaining security.

Tommy comes up to the teacher and says, "You haven't said 'Good Morning' to me yet." We're glad that Tommy told us what he needed rather than resorting to unsocial behavior because of his failure to get response. He was helping himself meet the emotional need for recognition.

Each day the play school offers illustrations of how children reveal their emotional needs. We see evidences, as well, of a desire for new experiences, for being like others, and for belonging. Opportunity to show ways of meeting these needs is present, also. Seeing children's needs "in action" makes a very real contribution to understanding human behavior.

Understanding Ourselves Is Easier

A student said, "Every time I start to blame someone else for something that was my fault I remember the time red-haired, freckle-faced Jimmy kicked the slide from which he fell, and the teacher told him the slide had done nothing wrong, that he hadn't looked where he was going. That sure impressed me!"

It is an easy transition for high school students to go from what behavior to expect of the two-, three-, and four-year-old to what they should expect of themselves. We hear them say, "You're acting like a two-year-old," to the boy who doesn't want to join a committee (prefers solitary play); or "You're playing to the gallery, you must be needing some new experiences."

"How do grown-ups act who are mature?" is an inevitable question arising from those who have watched small children exhibit varying degrees of maturity. Interest on the part of secondary school students is high, for the whole question of growth and development has had a realistic approach.

Opportunities at Hand

Some understanding of human behavior is not beyond the ability of high school youth. It has frequently failed of achievement because there have not been sufficient laboratories for learning provided. No alert teacher of biology would want to discuss plant life with no plants at hand. Nor would a teacher of chemistry expect to discuss reactions of chemicals without showing those very chemicals in reaction. In like manner we can go only as far in improving human relationships as we can increase the understanding of human behavior by observing real people in life situations.