CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

Family life education (FLE) that takes place in communities is a unique type of education. The business of outreach FLE involves taking family science principles and practices to the general public—individuals, couples, parents, whole families—in varied educational settings outside the traditional classroom. Some outreach family life educators are employed as field agents or as university campus-based specialists within the Cooperative Extension System. Others may work in social work or other human service agency contexts or as media representatives. Those with an entrepreneurial spirit may develop their own FLE business and market their programs nationally. Still others may hold traditional university positions that include some outreach expectations.

To succeed in educating the public about family life requires a somewhat different skill set than teaching students in traditional classroom settings. With these skills, family life educators become more effective ambassadors of family science scholarship to citizens of the world.

This text endeavors to provide a comprehensive response to the following need: There is knowledge and skills that family life educators need to be most helpful and effective in work with their clientele. To arrive at the response, we first generated a content outline that represented our collective experiences totaling nearly three decades as family life Extension Service specialists at several universities. We sent the content outline to other specialists and colleagues and incorporated their ideas. Since this first edition was published in 2005, many FLE scholars, practitioners, and students have used the book in their work and studies and have provided us with ideas to improve upon what we first developed. We have incorporated their ideas into this second edition. The result is what we hope is a practical, how-to reference volume on effective outreach FLE that you will use for years to come.

This first chapter provides a foundational and philosophical discussion of FLE in outreach settings. We begin with a brief discussion of the definition and history of outreach FLE, as well as the role universities and communities have played in the movement. We next turn to a discussion of contemporary developments also making FLE history, including evolution in how knowledge about families is disseminated and the various roles family life educators can play in communities. Finally, we discuss elements pertinent to the development of a working philosophy of outreach FLE. At the end of the chapter, you'll have the opportunity to create a personal philosophy of FLE in outreach settings, integrating the various perspectives presented in the chapter.

● DEFINING FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Much effort has been expended to define FLE, with definitions dating back over 40 years (Arcus, Schvaneveldt, & Moss, 1993b). Overall there has been little consensus reached on a specific definition and greater consensus reached on aims or principles underlying FLE (Arcus et al., 1993b). Moreover, no attempt has been made to distinguish FLE taking place in high school and college settings from FLE taking place outside these environments.

We define *outreach* FLE as any educational activity occurring outside a traditional school classroom setting, usually involving adults, that is designed to strengthen relationships in the home and foster positive individual, couple, and family development. Such education comprises many topics—from marriage education to parenting skills, from stress and anger management to strategies for adapting following divorce—and occurs in many venues. For example, an outreach FLE might hold a 6-week marriage education program in the town's community center for interested couples and place important follow-up readings on the program's website. This kind of FLE is any form of education that has as its goal to "strengthen and enrich individual and family well-being" (Arcus et al., 1993b, p. 21) and falls within any of the 10 content areas of FLE set forth by the National Council on Family Relations (Bredehoft & Cassidy, 1995), save that it assumes a lay audience that may not turn to a traditional classroom for FLE. Such education follows the operational principles set forth by Arcus et al. (1993b, pp. 15–20), which we have adopted and adapted for community settings. Specifically, these principles state that FLE (a) is to be relevant to individuals, couples, and families across the life span; (b) is based on the felt needs of individuals, couples, families, and communities; (c) draws on material from many fields and is multiprofessional in its practice; (d) is offered in many venues, including community workshops, video and print media, publications, the Internet, and many other settings; (e) is educational rather than therapeutic; (f) is respectful of diverse values; and (g) requires qualified family life educators to realize its goals.

By now it should be clear that this is a book about how to do FLE in outreach versus traditional classroom settings. The guiding principles for each are identical, but the practices vary widely. However, we don't want to continue repeating "outreach FLE" or "FLE in outreach settings" every time we speak of FLE. Therefore, anytime we use the term *family life education* (or FLE) from here on out, we are speaking specifically about *outreach* FLE as we have defined it above.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUTREACH FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION •

Many disciplines have contributed to the history of FLE: traditional home economics, family sociology, social work, marriage and family therapy, social psychology, education, and parenting education (Lewis-Rowley, Brasher, Moss, Duncan, & Stiles, 1993), which in turn draws upon child development and medicine. Truly, FLE is multidisciplinary in focus and multiprofessional in practice.

Early Roots

The earliest FLE efforts in the United States can be traced to a collaboration between church and state to ensure that children were raised according to biblical standards. Self-help books emerged around 1800, how-to books became visible in the 1850s, and child and mother study groups developed, a precursor of what has come to be known as the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in the public school system (Lewis-Rowley et al., 1993).

Informal discussions among support groups were perhaps among the first community venues of FLE. For example, as early as 1815, groups of parents met in Portland, Maine, to discuss child-rearing practices (Bridgeman, 1930, cited in Lewis-Rowley et al., 1993). Also, mother study groups, termed *material associations*, were organized in the 1820s to discuss child-rearing approaches (Sunley, 1955, cited in Lewis-Rowley et al., 1993) followed by mother periodicals titled *Mothers Assistant* and *The Mother* magazine believed to be the first known parenting periodicals.

Around the turn of the 20th century, FLE as a field of endeavor emerged in response to what was perceived as the negative impacts of social conditions such as industrialization, urbanization, and changing roles of women. Changing conditions in society were seen as problems or creating problems with the decrease in socialized behavior taught to children. This was theorized to be the cause of the increasing rate of juvenile delinquency, a greater divorce rate, and other current societal ills during that time period. FLE programs were created on the theory that they could help families deal with these new changes in a "complex and changing society," hopefully decreasing or making family-related social problems disappear (Arcus, 1995, p. 336).

The American Land Grant University System

A more formal FLE movement was also taking place in universities and colleges throughout the United States and some of its territories. The land grant university system was created by the Morrill Act, signed into federal law by President Abraham Lincoln on July 2, 1862. This act provided 1.7 million acres of land to the states so that each might have at least one college that promoted "the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life." Some of the "practical education" was to be taken out among the people where they lived and worked. The signing of the Morrill Act became the catalyst for the establishment of academic programs in home economics throughout the United States. Within this context, home economics/human ecology emerged as a dominant theoretical paradigm at the turn of the 20th century (Lerner, 1995). From a human ecological perspective, put forth first by Ellen Swallow Richards, the family was seen as affecting the well-being of the larger society. Thus, as the home environment could be enhanced, so too could the community at large. Leaders in the home and family movement during this time saw scientific knowledge about the family, disseminated to the masses, as an important way of correcting or preventing social ills so pronounced in the family (Lewis-Rowley et al., 1993). The "home oekology"

(Buboltz & Sontag, 1993) perspective brought many disciplines to bear on the problems pronounced in families.

Cooperative Extension

The Morrill Act also set the stage for an educational delivery system that would transmit knowledge about families to the masses, which came to be known as the Cooperative Extension System. This system, created by Congress through the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, provided a major federal thrust in the furtherance of FLE in community settings. So enthused was President Woodrow Wilson about the new system that he called it "one of the most significant and far-reaching measures for the education of adults ever adopted by the government." Its purpose was "to aid in diffusing among the people of the U.S. useful and practical information on subjects related to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage the application of the same." Extension work was to consist of "giving practical demonstrations in . . . home economics to persons not attending or resident in said colleges in the several communities, and imparting to such persons information on said subjects through field demonstrations, publications and otherwise." The underlying philosophy was to "help people help themselves" by "taking the university to the people" (Rasmussen, 1989, p. vii).

Thus, land grant institutions became known as universities *for* the people of the state: The teaching, research, and outreach done there was primarily to benefit the masses in the state (Lerner, 1995). The land grant idea was committed to applying the best science possible to the practical problems of families. Extension home economics agents, later known as family and consumer science agents, were hired to be the conduits through which information about family life could be communicated to the local communities, through the carrying out of community-based FLE programs. Some states hired family living agents, in addition to family and consumer science agents, whose specific charge was to carry out FLE programs. Today there is a county agent in most of the over 3,000 counties of the United States who have at least a partial charge to promote strong family living through extension programs. These agents often carry out their responsibilities in this area in collaboration with other like-minded professionals. FLE programming is carried out through a specific curriculum designed for target audiences, fact sheets, bulletins, pamphlets, videos, newspaper series, online learning modules, and other various means. During the late 1980s, Cooperative Extension in the family area was zero funded by the Reagan administration, later to be restored due to a public outcry of support.

Areas of family life emphasis within Cooperative Extension have evolved over the years to meet the needs of the constituency. Beginning in the 1980s, programs became more focused on interdisciplinary national initiatives than disciplinary programs (Rasmussen, 1989). For example, families underwent radical changes over two decades that culminated in the 1980s, which brought about increased stresses and risks for family disruption and dislocation. Complex issues such as these demanded a comprehensive, interdisciplinary response. During this time, family and economic well-being received increased emphasis among local family life educators affiliated with Extension.

Concern for limited-resource families, defined as families at risk for not meeting basic needs, received increased programmatic emphasis in the early 1990s and continues today. This increased emphasis has led to adopting teaching strategies and practices that are best suited to meet the complex needs of limited-resource families, such as peer support, professional/paraprofessional teaching efforts, one-on-one home visits, and working in small groups (Cooperative Extension System, 1991).

Other recent emphases in the Extension System have included a focus on children, youth, and families who possess greater risks for not meeting basic life needs. The Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) initiative has received federal funding since 1991. Since that time, CYFAR has supported programs in more than 600 communities in all states and territories. Other major family life efforts have been made in the area of parenting education. In 1994, the National Extension Parent Education Model (Smith, Cudaback, Goddard, & Myers-Walls, 1994) was developed. This model made an important contribution to guiding the development of community-based parenting education programs. Web-based FLE to both professionals as well as clientele has also rapidly advanced with the advent of the Children, Youth, and Families Education and Research Network (CYFERNet), making research-based FLE resources available at the click of a mouse. While traditionally, marriage education programs in communities have been offered through the church, more programs are being offered though community adult education and extension programs and other nonreligious settings (Stahmann & Salts, 1993).

Other University-Based Outreach Efforts

In addition to organized efforts within the land grant university system, other outreach activities have been established at universities of recent date that have also contributed to what FLE is today. Perhaps most prominent in this movement has been the explosion of service learning and internship opportunities that, while helping the student, richly benefit the communities that receive the associated services. Service-learning pedagogies, of which internships are a type, enhance traditional modes of learning and actively engage students in their own education through experiential learning in course-relevant contexts. But they also foster lifelong connections between students, their communities, and the world outside the classroom (Crews, 2002). These experiences enable students to contribute to the well-being of families within the context of their service-learning assignments. For example, students in the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University can select from more than 300 family- and youth-serving agencies in surrounding communities and in other parts of the United States and the world. Some examples of these agencies include writing for FLE websites, designing and marketing FLE curricula, and visiting families one-on-one to offer direct services.

Community Movements

In addition to developments within the land grant university system, outreach FLE was also fostered by the contemporary expansion of parenting education volunteer groups and community organizations. Certainly one of the earliest aspects of FLE is actually the growth of parenting education (Brock, Oertwein, & Coufal, 1993). For example, the National Congress of Mothers was founded in 1897, renamed the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations in 1908, was dedicated to promoting the notions of mother love and mother thought (Bridgeman, 1930, cited in Lewis-Rowley et al., 1993). In addition, the Society for the Study of Child Nature had also grown to several chapters and by 1908 was consolidated into the Federation for Child Study. Among other things, this organization performed FLE functions such as distributing information on children, promoting lectures and conferences, and cooperating with other like-minded groups (Bridgeman, 1930, cited in Lewis-Rowley et al., 1993). The federal government began to realize the value of these efforts when, in 1909, the first White House Conference on Child Welfare took place, becoming the first of many for continued governmental support and funding of family parenting programs (Tilsen, 2007).

Expansion of FLE continued into the 1920s with the growth of parenting education. In 1924, the Child Study Association held a conference that invited the participation of 13 smaller organizations. The outgrowth of this conference was the National Council of Parent Education, which had as one of its goals to suggest guidelines and qualifications for the training of parents. By 1924, 75 major organizations were conducting parenting education programs (Brim, 1959, cited in Lewis-Rowley et al., 1993). Parenting education grew with the support of the Spelman Fund, and the Child Study Association of America was born, with the primary purpose of development and supervision of the use of parenting education materials. By 1930, there were some 6,000 members of this association acting as parenting educators (Bridgeman, 1930, cited in Lewis-Rowley et al., 1993). Parenting education declined somewhat during the 1930s as attention was turned to financial survival. We also saw the end of the Spelman Fund and some organizations focused on parenting. Growth picked up again in during the 1940s as a preventive intervention but with largely a mental health perspective (Lewis-Rowley et al., 1993).

Parenting education has come to be both preventive and remedial (Brock et al., 1993). Even some specific parenting programs are more preventive or remedial, depending on the needs of the clientele. In recent decades, parents, churches, courts, and community mental health professionals are turning to parenting education as a remedy. Divorcing couples are being assigned to divorce education to minimize stressful and destructive aspects of divorce on children. Abusive parents are being court-ordered to parenting education classes. More programs are becoming available for teenage parents.

The medical community—namely, physicians—has also been an active contributor to the FLE movement, often offering child development–related advice to scores of patients. Professionals trained as medical doctors with a specialty in pediatrics have written very popular parenting advice books (e.g., Brazelton, 1992). The American Academy of Pediatrics, a highly respected professional group, periodically issues news releases containing recommendations for parents on such things as limiting the amount of television watched by children under age 2 (see http://www.aap.org).

Linked with the movement of FLE, especially that of early childhood intervention through parenting education, is the family support movement, developing essentially since the mid-1970s (Weissbourd, 1994). During the 1970s, a call for more preventive services, rather than customary, crisis mode interventions, led to more family service agencies taking a more active part in FLE. Influenced by a human ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), family support focuses on a strengths-based approach to strengthening and empowering families and communities so that they can foster the optimal development of children, youth, and adult family members (Family Support America, 2003). The family support movement was founded on the following guiding principles (Weissbourd, 1994) that cut across disciplines:

- The most effective approach to families emanates from a perspective of health and well-being.
- The capacity of parents to raise their children effectively is influenced by their own development.
- Child-rearing techniques and values are influenced by cultural and community values and mores.
- Social support networks are essential to family well-being.
- Information about child development enhances parents' capacity to respond appropriately to their children.
- Families that receive support become empowered to advocate on their own behalf.

Family support initiatives strongly rely on the use of collaborations to carry out programs. A number of family support program offerings have emerged throughout the United States. Resource centers for parents in schools and family-strengthening services offered through nonprofit agencies have become part of the family life educational landscape. FLE programs in communities following a family-support model often use home visits and peer educators as major methods of teaching principles and skills.

Reaching Diverse Audiences

For years, observers have acknowledged that FLE receives "underwhelming participation" from the masses (Bowman & Kieren, 1985). But even more alarming is the finding that FLE is not reaching audiences at greatest need (e.g., Sullivan & Bradbury, 1997). There is a movement afoot to help change that. For example, the CYFAR initiative of the Cooperative Extension System mentioned earlier is an example of taking FLE beyond the traditional audience to meet the needs of groups at greatest risk, who are often socioeconomically and racially diverse. Government agencies are also increasing their efforts in this regard. For example, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), an agency of the U.S. federal government, has contracted with family scholars, family life educators, and professional organizations to develop, implement, and evaluate programs for strengthening marriage among audiences that historically have been underserved, such as disadvantaged families (Dion, Devaney, & Hershey, 2003), who are disproportionately Black and

Hispanic. Practical approaches for working with diverse audiences will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8.

Professional Associations and Professionalization of Family Life Education

In 1938, the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) was established as a "multi-disciplinary non-partisan professional organization focused solely on family research, practice and education." One of its key missions is to promote the field of family life education. Thus in 1984, NCFR created guidelines, standards, and criteria for the certification of family life educators. NCFR now administers an internationally recognized credential—the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE). Approximately 100 college and university Family Science degree programs in the United States and Canada use the NCFR Family Life Education curriculum standards as guidelines for their undergraduate and graduate students.

Professionals holding certification are expected to be able to demonstrate competence in 10 substance areas, including the following: Families and Individuals in Societal Contexts; Internal Dynamics of Families; Human Growth and Development Across the Life Span; Human Sexuality; Interpersonal Relationships; Family Resource Management; Parenting Education and Guidance; Family Law and Public Policy; Professional Ethics and Practice; and Family Life Education Methodology (see Appendix B for more details about these 10 content areas and guidelines for practice).

Ordinarily, those desiring CFLE status first complete coursework at one of the approved schools. At completion of coursework in the 10 content areas, graduating students may apply for *Provisional Certification.* After an additional equivalent of 2 years of full-time work experience related to family life education (which can be accumulated over 5 years), professionals may apply for *Full Certification.* In 2007, NCFR did a practice analysis survey and created another avenue to receive CFLE status: the CFLE exam. The CFLE exam can be completed in lieu of completing coursework at an approved university. For details on CFLE and the application process, see www.ncfr.org under "CFLE Certification." The first Certified Family Life Educators were approved in 1985, and currently there are 1,425 practicing Certified Family Life Educators (Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2009, p. 14).

In 1996, NCFR created the Academic Program Review to recognize university and college degree programs that offer coursework necessary to complete the certification courses. In 2002, 235 incomplete family programs in the United States and Canada offered undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs. As of 2008, there are 83 approved schools with 101 complete undergraduate and graduate programs in the United States (Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2009, p. 15).

Web-Based Family Life Education

An overview of the history of FLE is not complete without some discussion of the role of evolving technology in FLE. For example, individuals are increasingly turning to the Internet for all kinds of information, including matters of personal and family well-being. Because the Internet is a powerful medium that has much to offer family life educators (Elliott, 1999; Hughes, 1999; S. N. Morris, Dollahite, & Hawkins, 1999), over the past few years, many family life educators have developed websites (Elliott, 1999). In fact, currently hundreds of FLE websites are available (Elliott, 1999). Some argue that this medium of FLE has revolutionized the manner in which FLE is disseminated to the masses (Smith, 1999). Limited evaluation data suggest that web-based FLE can positively benefit its audiences (Steimle & Duncan, 2004), even rivaling more traditional means of educational delivery in marriage education (Duncan, Steed, & Needham, 2009). But whether it is an adequate substitute for face-to-face FLE is still largely unknown and an important area of needed research.

With the advent of social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and Twitter and recent data suggesting Internet populations are spending an increasing amount of their browsing time at these sites, we expect the role of the Internet in FLE to increase. Much has yet to be learned about reaching the next generation of FLE participants, who are marvelously literate in technology, which, according to some observers, is "literally changing the dynamics of informal social relations, the exchange of information and support within social networks and affecting learners' skills, expectations and development" (Walker & Greenhow, 2008, p. 3).

Using technology in FLE will be discussed in detail in Chapter 12.

EVOLUTION IN THE DISSEMINATION OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE ABOUT FAMILIES

The field of family sciences emerged during the 1920s largely with the belief that problems plaguing the family could be addressed through systematic research. The ideal envisioned the university as the institution that could, through research, address the real-life problems and concerns pertaining to children, youth, and families. Doherty (2001) explains, "[Family science] embraced a vision of making the world better through the work of University-trained professional experts who would generate new knowledge and pass it on to families in the community" (p. 319). What evolved, according to Doherty, was a "trickle-down model of research and practice" (p. 319). According to this model, scientific knowledge for families is generated by university researchers, who then transmit this knowledge to practitioners (e.g., family life educators), who then, in turn, disseminate the information to the masses. The strength of this model, according to Doherty, lies in its ability to address problems scientifically when experiential knowledge about a topic is relatively lacking or when the issue is so hotly debated as to prevent a more objective view of an issue. The weakness of this model is that it ignores the collective wisdom of families and communities garnered through experience, although it is from families that much of what we call research data is generated. In addition, instead of being seen as partners in knowledge generation, this perspective relegates families to the "role of consumers of academic knowledge" (p. 321).

There are other dangers inherent in the traditional model of research generation and dissemination. Historically, researchers have failed to engage and partner with communities in the research process, neglecting to study the issues of greatest interest to them (Lerner, 1995). Without community/family collaboration in the research process, research that becomes available to pass on to communities can become increasingly irrelevant to the needs of real families, causing the vision of scientific information benefiting families to go unrealized. In fact, Richard Lerner (1995) argues that much of the research generated by universities is of little value to communities. Furthermore, this top-down model of knowledge dissemination has been criticized as being inadequate at best, evidenced by the fact that the problems targeted still continue to plague children, youth, families, and communities (Lerner, 1995), even many of the same problems that experts were trying to fix when they first had a vision of a better world, made better with their discoveries.

A new model of taking family scholarship is emerging, critical to effective FLE in community settings. Scholars are now arguing that effective FLE will integrate the best scientific information with the knowledge, lived experience, culture, and expertise of community clientele (Doherty, 2000; Lerner, 1995; Myers-Walls, 2000). To accomplish this requires a community-collaborative approach where there is extensive interface of the worlds of families in communities and institutions where scientific knowledge about these families is generated (Lerner, 1995). Families and professionals become partners in identifying strengths and needs and mobilizing to address identified problem. FLE professionals bring their expertise not to dominate or give pat or complete answers but as "a potential part of a confederation of community members, a partnership that brings to the 'collaborative table' knowledge-based assets" (Lerner, 1995, p. 114). Hence, such FLE professionals would seek to be "on tap" but not "on top" (Doherty, 2001, p. 322), viewing themselves as one of the many sources of knowledge in a community, but being careful not to "stifle families' own wisdom and initiative" (p. 322). The next section expands the discussion of the many roles family life educators in community settings can take in their professional role, including those most consistent with the perspectives above.

VARIED APPROACHES OR "ROLES" IN FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

There are many educational approaches one can take or "roles" one can play as a family life educator. These approaches, reflecting various teaching philosophies and paradigms, are based on one's sense of responsibility for program content and methods, as well as the assumptions one has about education, the educator, the learner, and the content. It is important for family life educators to be knowledgeable about each of these various approaches, their strengths and limitations, and when a certain approach might be recommended over another. While by no means exhaustive, these approaches comprise several prominent options: an expert approach, a facilitator approach, a critical inquirer approach, a collaborator approach, an interventionist approach, and an eclectic approach.

The Expert Approach

An expert approach fits a liberal educational philosophy, which is the oldest and most enduring educational philosophy, with roots tracing back to classical Greek philosophy (Price, 2000). A liberal education philosophy emphasizes the development of intellectual powers through the mastery of a disciplinary area of study. According to Elias and Merriam (1995), "Liberal education produced a person who is literate in the broadest sense—intellectually, morally, spiritually, and aesthetically" (p. 26).

Family life educators operating from an expert approach view themselves as "subject matter authorit[ies] whose function it is to transmit a fixed body of knowledge to the learner" (Price, 2000, p. 3). Family life educators are seen as possessors of important knowledge and skills that others do not have and who rely on them to transmit them. Those who follow an expert approach believe that answers lie with informed experts and that the lives of participants will be improved if they learn the materials and skills, according to their instructions (Myers-Walls, 2000). Thus, materials tend to be highly structured with predetermined curricula and agenda, leading to the acquisition of predetermined knowledge and skills. Most packaged educational programs ostensibly follow this assumption, especially those that are particularly concerned that programs be delivered as written. A family life educator teaching parenting using the expert approach to teaching would follow carefully a designated curriculum and insist on content mastery before moving on to other concepts.

An expert approach makes certain assumptions about learners as well. One tacit assumption is that the audience is relatively uninformed as to the content or that the experiential knowledge they have regarding a topic is of less importance than the specialized knowledge the expert is bringing to them. Lecture is often a common mode of delivery; the learner's task is to soak up, reflect upon, and analyze the information. This traditional form of education is often referred to as the "banking" model of education, where students are viewed as empty cash receptacles needing to be filled with the instructor's exclusively possessed knowledge. The transfer of knowledge often occurs in a static exchange with little discussion. This FLE perspective also fits with Doherty's (2000) notion of trickle-down research and practice discussed earlier.

The Facilitator Approach

Facilitator-oriented family life educators often have no specific agenda. Instead of facilitators deciding how programs are to proceed, participants decide what is important to them and then set the learning agenda. Facilitators acknowledge that participants are already fairly well informed about a topic. The facilitator, while often possessing specialized knowledge, doesn't seek to share that information except as a coequal and as it fits the flow of the group. Instead, the facilitator seeks to help participants gain access to the knowledge they already have within them. Thus, a facilitator approach may best be used when the audience members posses a substantial amount of knowledge and are highly motivated learners. This approach fits the personalistic paradigm (Czaplewski & Jorgensen, 1993) and humanist educational philosophy (Price, 2000), with its emphasis on maximizing the growth of the total person. Humanist adult educational philosophy is based on the assumption that human nature is essentially positive and that each person possesses unlimited potential; therefore, humanist educational goals are bent toward the holistic development of persons toward their fullest potentials. Learning is essentially a personal, self-directed endeavor, and while disciplinary knowledge is important, it is bent toward the ultimate goal of self-actualizing individuals (Elias & Merriam, 1995). Learners know best what their learning needs are. Collaborative learning, experimentation, and discovery are all a part of learning methods used. The learner's background and individual experiences are taken into account. Educators with a humanist philosophy act more as facilitators of individualized learning than as disseminators of fixed knowledge. In fact, the educator is "a colearner in the educational process, and assumes an egalitarian relationship with learners" (Price, 2000, p. 4). A standardized curriculum might not even exist, making evaluation of outcomes more difficult. After welcoming participants to a parenting workshop, family life educators working from this approach would have parents generate the list of topics to explore what would be most beneficial to them.

A related philosophical orientation that fits with a facilitator approach is the progressive philosophy, perhaps the most influential educational philosophy in adult education (Price, 2000). This educational philosophy stresses holistic, lifelong, and life-wide education and an experiential, problem-solving approach to learning as opposed to didactic, passive learning. The experiences of the learner become paramount in determining areas to be learned and problems to be solved. The educator is primarily a facilitator of the learning processes through guiding, organizing, and evaluating learning experiences within which she or he may also be actively involved. Thus, learning is collaborative between the learners and instructors (Price, 2000). Family life educators following this philosophy in a class for married couples might present problem scenarios, then have participants identify possible solutions to the problems or have them try out solutions they generate for a time and report back to the group.

The Critical Inquirer Approach

Educators using a critical inquirer approach use questions to help participants think critically about the issues that are presented. This perspective acknowledges that participants have a responsibility to contribute meaningfully to their society and thus need to critically assess issues about them (Czaplewski & Jorgensen, 1993). This approach is tied to a critical/humanist philosophical orientation, which, like traditional humanistic approaches, promotes self-actualization of the learner. Yet for a critical/humanist, personal fulfillment is achieved through "becoming an autonomous, critical, and socially responsible thinker through an emphasis on rationality" (Tisdell & Taylor, 2000, p. 8). Family life educators might use a critical inquirer approach to help participants evaluate proposed or existing public policies designed to strengthen families.

The Collaborator Approach

Falling somewhere in between expert and facilitator approaches, in terms of responsibility for content and methods (Myers-Walls, 2000), is the collaborator approach. This approach recognizes that both family life educators and participants bring specialized knowledge to the learning experience. The educator brings research-based principles to the learning environment, and the participants bring their own lived experience regarding these principles. The collaborative educator brings a prepared agenda and curriculum, but these materials are fitted around the needs of participants. Participants are encouraged to contribute ideas for the agenda, but the educator maintains some control over the schedule and content of the discussion. After presenting the agenda for a Principles of Parenting program, collaborative family life educators might ask, "Are there any additions you'd like to make to the program, any topics you'd like to see covered that aren't listed?"

The Interventionist Approach

Interventionist-oriented family life educators are change agents; they seek cognitive, attitudinal, and behavior change, even transformation of participants through education. They believe that education for family life goes beyond simply learning for knowing but extends to learning for living (Mace, 1981). Such professionals are not mere knowledge transmitters or discussion facilitators (Guerney & Guerney, 1981). Interventionist approaches can be traced to both behaviorist and radical educational philosophies. For example, a behaviorist philosophy centers on changing behavior though the shaping of the environment to promote the desired behavior. As noted by Elias and Merriam (1995), a behaviorist-oriented educator is a "behavioral engineer who plans in detail the conditions necessary to bring about desired behavior" (p. 88). Such educators extensively use behavioral or learning objectives, model desired behavior, provide behavioral reinforcement for achieving the desired behavior, and use systematic instructional design. Learners are engaged in step-by-step learning of desired behaviors, receiving instructor support and evaluation through the processes. Family life educators working from this perspective with couples might teach and demonstrate Five Steps to Handing Conflict, then have couples practice the skills with the aid of a personal coach, who provides both reinforcement and corrective feedback.

Radical educational philosophies form the basis of educational strategies aimed at bringing about social change and combating social, political, and economic oppression of society. Developers of this approach (Freire, 1971; Mezirow, 1995) saw the traditional liberal forms of education as limiting and paternalistic, because it treats knowledge as a gift of the learned to those who are not. One such approach deduced from the radical philosophical traditions is transformative learning, which promotes increased self-awareness and freedom from constraints, necessary to help create social equity for the oppressed and for real learning to occur (Christopher, Dunnagan, Duncan, & Paul, 2001). In this context, educators are liberators, not facilitators, who help learners become social activists. This kind of learning occurs in three steps (E. Taylor, 1997): (1) Learners engage in critical self-reflection about assumptions and present approaches, (2) learners transform or revise their perspective, and (3) learners actually adopt new ways of behaving, consistent with their renewed perspective. Family life educators working from this philosophy with a group of parents might ask their participants to reflect on the approaches they use to parent their children and reflect on what is effective and ineffective. The family life educators might then discuss a variety of helpful approaches with the group and have parents create parenting plans to try in the coming week.

The Eclectic Approach

Educators coming from an eclectic approach would use elements of all the approaches, depending on the situation. For example, family life educators might wisely use an expert approach to teach others about a topic where little or no experiential knowledge exists or about a topic that is more controversial and needs an expert voice to set the record straight with empirical data (Doherty, 2000). An interventionist approach may be the best approach when working with oppressed and marginalized families who need to realize they have a voice, great opportunities, and unlimited potential.

Which of these approaches do you most readily identify with? Some research shows most family life educators organize and deliver their curricula based a collaborative approach (Myers-Walls, 2000). While thematically, family life educators may use one approach over another, the approach they use may depend somewhat upon the context. For example, the expert approach may be the approach of choice when it becomes necessary to share information about which the audience has limited knowledge or experience or when expert opinion is important to help solve a controversy. However, it would not be a recommended approach for use in a group of experienced, highly motivated parents—a facilitator or collaborator approach would be more successful. A critical enquirer approach is best when you want the audience to think deeply about an issue, even if it is about the quality of their own parenting; a facilitator approach likely would lack the structure and impetus to help accomplish this. When the learning of skills is part of the plan, interventionist approaches are likely the best. All in all, having all these approaches at one's disposal may be the most ideal situation of all, pointing to an eclectic approach. Thus, family life educators need to be sensitive to the best times to use a particular approach.

● DEVELOPING A WORKING PHILOSOPHY FOR OUTREACH FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Having a sense of our role as a family life educator and its philosophical underpinnings provides a basis for creating a working philosophy of outreach FLE. It is important for family life educators to take time and ponder their philosophical basis for teaching (Dail, 1984). They need to actively reflect on and contemplate *why* they do what they do (White & Brockett, 1987). Given the practical focus of FLE, some educators may question the relevance of philosophical rumination (White & Brockett, 1987), perhaps even seeing it as primarily an academic exercise they simply don't have time for. However, when we fail to tie FLE practice to philosophical underpinnings, our efforts may take on a mindless, ungrounded quality.

Everyone has some kind of working philosophy that is tied to his or her personal values, experiences, and lifestyles and reveals itself in our professional actions (White & Brockett, 1987). It's wise from time to time to clarify and write down our ideas so that they are subject to our understanding and critical reflection, at the same time realizing that a personal FLE philosophy is ever changing, always subject to modification through experiences and reflection.

Dail (1984) suggested several additional reasons for developing a personal philosophy: It provides a sense of direction and purpose, helps the educator get in touch with his or her own beliefs and their influence, helps the educator assess educational problems (e.g., provide a foundation for deciding what to teach about effective parenting), helps the educator relate FLE to the needs of the larger society, and provides impetus for the scholarly study of families. "In its essence," says Dail, "a philosophy of family life education provides a deeper meaning to the educator's life" (p. 147).

Dail (1984) provides a framework for the development of a personal philosophy of FLE, which we have adopted and adapted below.

Beliefs About the Family and the Nature and Quality of Family Life

Family life educators need to answer for themselves tough questions that even the savviest of politicians would prefer to avoid. For example, what is family? A single father and two children? Grandmother, mother, and daughter? Mom, Dad, and three children? Coparents with each bringing a child to the relationship? The definition of what a family is and/or should be will have profound effects on how an educator relates to clientele, especially those who may be excluded by their definition. Another consideration is the nature of family life. What assumptions do you make about the nature of family life? Are families a mere social arrangement, or do they have greater significance? How important is "family"? Whether family is seen as *the* fundamental unit of society or as one of the major entities among a cast of many players will affect educational practices with families. A third consideration is the quality of family life. For example, what characteristics comprise an ideal family, contrasted with a low-functioning family? Because of our beliefs about how parents ought to treat their children, we could never support coercive parenting as a functional ideal in a family. Your beliefs about the way families should be may lead you to draw the line on some family behaviors.

We think a working philosophy of FLE must also consider the answer to questions at the heart of the human experience. For instance, what does it mean to be human? Since humans have common existence and relationships in families, is membership in a family a key part of what it means to be human? What assumptions underlie our beliefs about human nature?

Beliefs About the Purpose of Family Life Education

Family life educators must be clear about what they want to accomplish and why (L. H. Powell & Cassidy, 2007), so that appropriate goals and objectives can be created. Preceding goals and objectives are a sense of vision and mission. For example, what value does education about family life have in society? David Mace (1981) envisioned FLE as something that originates from a cloudburst of information that becomes part of the knowledge base of a learner, which then produces personalized insight that leads the learner to experiment with new behaviors in family relationships. When family members coparticipate and mutually reinforce such action, the result is shared growth of members. Thus, does FLE in communities exist to be a catalyst for such a process? Guerney and Guerney (1981) reflected on whether family life educators could be considered "interventionists." That is, do family life educators take some "clearly defined" action "designed to induce some change" (p. 591)? The Guerneys argue that if family life educators believe that their purpose goes beyond mere knowledge transmission to "changing attitudes/values and behavior," they should "class themselves . . . as interventionists and be willing to stand up and be counted as such" (p. 592). This kind of "intervention" is distinguished from the focused, brief intervention strategies and family therapy that constitute the domain of the clinical professional and is outside the scope of FLE (Doherty, 1995). Thus, an important question at the heart of the purpose of FLE for outreach professionals is, "How 'interventionist' should FLE be?"

Beliefs About the Content of Family Life Education

There is no shortage of family-strengthening ideas to teach others. For example, there are literally hundreds of parenting books designed to impart advice to eager readers who want to do the best by their children. Some works are based on sound scholarship, others on clinical impressions, and still others on the simple convictions of the authors. What should be taught in FLE settings? How do you decide what to teach? Of what value is university-based theory and research? Even the best research has limitations in its application to individual/family needs. Much research has been completed with a disproportionate amount of White, middle-class participants. Thus, the data may have systematic bias. Participants in FLE programs also bring with them a rich array of personal experiences. How can the rich learning that is the lived experiences of individuals, families, and communities become part of the content of FLE?

Our personal values may also lead us to choose certain materials to teach certain ideas while ignoring or giving limited exposure to others. For example, if your personal values dictate that teens should avoid having sex outside of marriage and you are called upon to give a 45-minute talk at a high school assembly, your selected material may likely be quite different than it would be if you valued the full, unlimited, but responsible sexual activity of teens.

Beliefs About the Process of Learning for Families and Individuals Within Families

There are many ways to share information about family life in community settings. We can teach in small or large groups; through media channels such as radio, newspapers, magazines, television programs, and videos; through newsletters, publications, the Internet, and leaflets; and through one-on-one meetings in homes or an office. How do individuals and families learn most effectively? From a family systems approach, it can be argued that the best learning for family strengthening will occur as a full family group. New knowledge can be co-learned and reinforced at home. However, when any member of the family is missing, newly learned attitudes and behaviors are at risk of being sabotaged by the missing member. Still, one person behaving positively can influence the others. In addition, individuals and families differ in terms of their primary learning styles and sensory modalities (Powell & Cassidy, 2007), which effective education must account for. What learning processes invoke positive change in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors? How important are learning goals and evaluation in these processes? What assumptions do you hold about learners? Are they lights to be lit or cups to be filled?

CONCLUSION

Family life education in outreach settings has a long history. It is evolving from an expert top-down approach to addressing family problems to a collaborative, strength-based, community-strengthening model that integrates scientific knowledge from family sciences with the values and experiences of families in communities. It is expanding its reach into increasingly diverse audiences using a wider range of technology and refining its professional core. There are many philosophical bases from which we can craft FLE and varied approaches associated with these philosophies. Generally, the best strategies are community-collaborative in nature, but each approach discussed may have a role depending on the circumstances. Crafting a philosophy of FLE has the potential to purposefully guide and direct our efforts. Following are exercises to help guide you in writing your personal philosophy and approach in FLE.

● EXPLORATIONS

1. Follow the guidelines below and design your own working philosophy of family life education. Address the questions in your discussion.

- What are my beliefs about the family and the nature and quality of family life and the human experience?
    - What is a "family"? How important are families? What values do I hold regarding families and the human experience? What does it mean to be human?
- What are my beliefs about the purpose of FLE?
    - What is the nature of FLE? What value does FLE have in communities? Is it to provide insight, skills, and knowledge? Is it to change behavior? How "interventionist" should FLE be?
- What are my beliefs about the content of FLE?
    - Of what value is university-based theory and research to families? Of what value is the lived experience of individuals, families, and communities, and how can it become part of the content of FLE? How do my personal values regarding families and the human experience influence the content I select?
- What are my beliefs about the process of learning for families in outreach settings?
    - How do individuals and families learn most effectively? What teaching strategies have the greatest impact? How important are learning goals and evaluation in these processes? What assumptions do I hold about learners?

2. Describe what you are like as an FLE. Different FLE settings may necessitate different approaches, but most of us will find a place where we are most comfortable and effective. Review the various approaches discussed in the chapter. Which approach best describes you and why?

PART II

DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

CHAPTER 2

DESIGNING COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Beyond philosophically grounding our work as family life educators, it is important that family life educators place their programmatic efforts in a scientifically supported, organizing framework. This chapter presents a prevention perspective and an integrative step-by-step framework for designing, creating, and implementing family life education (FLE) programs, which includes the following broad stages: problem analysis, program design, pilot testing, advance testing, and dissemination. Found within each stage are many subprocesses. For example, during the problem analysis stage, FLE professionals would be engaged in defining the problem or goal, identifying risk and protective factors, assessing accessibility of the target group, and forming a coalition of stakeholders who work together to address the problem.

THE SCIENCE AND PROFESSION OF PREVENTION

As a guiding principle, family life educators focus on preventive education rather than therapeutic remediation (Arcus & Thomas, 1993). The modern prevention movement as related to family strengthening is about 25 to 30 years old (Small & Memmo, 2004). L'Abate (1983) was among the first to articulate the concept of prevention in the family field. L'Abate describes three levels of prevention: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary prevention-oriented family life educators help families develop the knowledge and skills they need to build strong relationships before any problems or issues present themselves, preventing problems before they occur. For example, most FLE websites are primary preventive in focus, as they are geared to transmit information and skills to the audience. Secondary prevention involves working with audiences who have some signs of risk, where intervention would prevent more serious problems from occurring (Small & Memmo, 2004). For example, a program developed to help parents overcome unbridled anger tendencies learned in their families of origin would be operating at this level. Tertiary prevention programs are designed for FLE audiences already experiencing a good deal of distress and for whom educational programs alone would not be adequate. Participants at this level require therapy, and such interventions normally are carried out by clinical professionals or family life educators who also have such training. FLE professionals typically operate at the primary and secondary prevention levels and leave tertiary prevention to family therapy (Doherty, 1995).

The concept of prevention has likewise been found in the fields of public health and the psychological and social sciences. In fact, a new discipline has emerged, termed *prevention science*, whose goal is "to prevent or moderate major human dysfunctions," including those associated with marriage, family, and individual development (Coie et al., 1993, p. 1013).

Prevention science integrates the independent risk-focused paradigm (J. D. Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992) and protective or resiliency factors paradigm (e.g., Werner, 1990). Prevention science when applied to FLE focuses on the understanding of both risk factors and protective factors as a precursor to the development and implementation of FLE programs. Risk factors are variables that increase the vulnerability of individuals, couples, and families to a variety of negative outcomes; protective factors are safeguarding variables that increase an individual's, couple's, or family's resistance to normative, developmental, or unplanned stressors (Bogenschneider, 1996; Rutter, 1987). The presence of risk factors or protective factors is not enough to ensure that a negative or positive outcome will occur but simply makes such outcomes more likely when present. Risk factors increase the odds that negative outcomes will occur; protective factors increase the likelihood that negative states will be thwarted. Protective factors are activated only in the presence of risk factors (Small & Memmo, 2004).

Family science has progressed far enough in its knowledge about marriage and family relationships to be able to detail risk factors and protective factors for the prevention of marital distress, poor child development outcomes, and various psychological disorders. A science of prevention today pertains to marriage and familial disorders as much as it does to the prevention of heart disease and cancer. The most effective FLE programs are those that simultaneously and proactively work to reduce risks while increasing protection.

PREVENTION EDUCATION MODELS IN FLE ●

Since the emergence of prevention science, several models for developing prevention programs have appeared in the FLE scholarly literature. Each model helps us take family life educational program design beyond a "service mission" to a "scientific enterprise" (Dumka, Roosa, Michaels, & Suh, 1995, p. 78). Among the earliest developed was by Hughes (1994). He noted that FLE materials are of varying quality, not always following high development standards. He set about to articulate a straightforward four-step framework for the development of family life education programs that quality programs will incorporate. While some of the elements have a more direct application to program curricula, we agree with Hughes (1994) that most of the items can be applied to any FLE resource. These elements include content, instructional process, implementation process, and evaluation. In the content step, program developers consult appropriate theory and research and make sure that the research fits the audience (context sensitive) and that the ideas reflect best practices. The instructional process focuses on creation of sound teaching plans and presentation of materials in such a way that it is accessible to the audience. The implementation process includes meeting the needs of the target audience and having a marketing plan to reach participants. The evaluation process includes some provision for determining whether an FLE program benefits others, and program materials include evaluation tools that are closely tied to program goals and objectives.

Dumka et al. (1995) constructed a five-stage process for developing prevention programs, consisting of problem analysis, program design, pilot testing, advance testing, and dissemination. Found within each stage are many other subprocesses. For example, during the problem analysis stage (Stage 1), FLE professionals would be engaged in defining the problem or goal, identifying risk and protective factors, and assessing accessibility of the target group. The first two stages address the formulation of an intervention theory, Stages 3 and 4 (implementation) become a test of the theory, and the final stages assess whether the program works and should be widely disseminated (Dumka et al., 1995).

Bogenschneider (1996) began with the epidemiological models of risk and protection from prevention science and placed them within the context of ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986) and developmental contextualism (Lerner, 1991, 1995). The result was an Ecological Risk/Protective Theoretical Model for the design and implementation of youth development programs. At least four premises derive from this perspective: (1) Outcomes are multiply determined, (2) proximal environments have the strongest and most direct influence on outcomes, (3) risk and protective factors occur at different levels of the human ecology (e.g., individual-family-community), and (4) these factors move and change through developmental time. From this basis, Bogenschneider proposes 12 principles for building prevention programs: (1) identify the real issues or problems facing youth; (2) establish well-defined goals that target the risk and protective processes associated with the identified youth issue or problem; (3) be comprehensive in addressing both risk and protective processes in several levels of the human ecology; (4) collaborate with stakeholders in the community or neighborhood; (5) educate coalition members on current theory and research on adolescent development, prevention programming, and community process; (6) tailor the plan to the community, reducing risks that exist locally and building protective processes that do not exist; (7) involve the target audience in program design, planning, and implementation; (8) be sensitive to cultural, ethnic, and other forms of diversity in the neighborhood or community; (9) intervene early and continuously; (10) select developmentally appropriate intervention strategies; (11) anticipate how changes in one part of the system may affect changes in the system or other settings; and (12) evaluate effectiveness by monitoring changes in risk and protective processes.

Small, Cooney, and O'Connor (2009), in their examination of evidence-based programs (EBP), particularly those designed especially for children, youth, and their parents, identified 11 principles of effective prevention programs. They organized these principles into four categories: program design and content, program relevance, program implementation, and program assessment and quality assurance. The program design and content category comprises four principles: Effective programs are (1) theory driven, (2) of sufficient dosage and intensity, (3) comprehensive, and (4) actively engaging. The program relevance category features the next three principles: Effective programs are (5) developmentally appropriate, (6) appropriately timed, and (7) socioculturally relevant. The program implementation stage emphasizes the next two principles: Effective programs are (8) delivered by well-qualified, trained, and supportive staff and (9) focused on fostering good relationships. The program assessment and quality assurance category emphasizes the final two principles: Effective programs (10) are well documented and (11) are committed to evaluation and refinement.

These models have several similarities but also bring some unique perspectives and emphases important in the development of effective prevention programs. All can be used as guiding principles for developing programs but also for assessing the quality of current programs and improving existing programs. Below we integrate these models to form a how-to framework for the design of comprehensive, high-quality FLE programs. Many of these key elements are discussed in greater detail in chapters that follow. This framework has application to a wide variety of FLE resources: workshop series, websites, DVDs, or other educational approaches. We introduce this framework and provide relevant examples of its use.

A COMPREHENSIVE MODEL FOR THE DESIGN OF FAMILY LIFE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Stage 1: Problem Analysis

Identify Problem and Establish Overall Program Goal(s)

It is important to clearly articulate the problem or need one seeks to address through an FLE program. One way to do this is to formulate a brief research-informed problem statement. The statement also provides a built-in rationale for doing the program in the first place. Students in an undergraduate FLE class crafted the following problem statement for their transition to parenthood program. It is titled Making Room for Two When Baby Makes Three:

> Current research shows that nearly half of all divorces occur within the first seven years of marriage. It has also been shown that the arrival of the first baby to a couple tends to increase the likelihood that either

> the husband, wife, or both partners will experience a decline in marital satisfaction. Therefore, it is essential that couples become aware of this problem and make their marriage a priority during the transition to parenthood.

Identification of problems certainly comes from investigating extant scholarship. But as both Bogenschneider (1996) and Small et al. (2009) point out, such problems must be relevant and tied to real issues facing a community. Therefore, concomitant with problem analysis from a research and theory perspective is an analysis of the problem within the specific population we seek to serve, thereby avoiding the potential disconnect noted in Chapter 1. From a human ecological perspective, it is possible that problems identified more broadly may be unique to local community cultures; thus, family life educators will wisely survey individual targeted communities to learn of their specific problems and needs to ensure the sociocultural relevance of their program. Findings from local populations that demonstrate a problem or need may be more likely to motivate community buy-in than more remote research conducted in distant places. Local data collection also is often a more reliable way to determine needs and forestall wasteful spending of prevention dollars. For example, while serving as extension specialists in Alabama, we had the opportunity of conducting a Teen Assessment Project (TAP) survey, modeled after the Wisconsin Teen Assessment Project (Small & Hug, 1991), in various middle and high school locations throughout the state. In one location, school administrators were convinced that they faced a serious drug problem and were preparing to spend lots of district dollars on prevention programs. They invited us to administer the survey. Surprisingly to them, the survey data suggested that there were other risk behaviors going on that were far more serious, even deadly, leading the district to spend dollars on programs to address this higher priority concern.

With a problem defined, an overall program goal statement can be developed that points to the general direction a program will take to address the problem. This statement should also make reference to the target audience. For example, the goal of the aforementioned program was stated as follows: "The goal of Making Room for Two When Baby Makes Three is to enhance marital satisfaction among *expectant and new parents* as they face the birth of their first child." Another example: "The ABC program is designed to help *single parents* identify and build upon their parenting strengths, enhancing their sense of competence as a parent."

Identify Theories, Risk, and Protective Factors and Extract "Teachable" Ideas

The next step is to mine the current scholarly literature for the relevant research and theory addressing the problem and goal. In any outreach setting, from traditional workshops to websites, family life educators must address the following question: What scientific information do people need to know about this topic? In the area of family life, there is an explosion of information, some credible and some incredible, even implausible. Many persons are willing to be called a family "expert" through bringing forth armchair theories and ideas of their own design. In contrast, FLE programs must be grounded in the best current scholarship if they are to enjoy credibility. A strong scholarly base forms the foundation of the content, goals, objectives, and learning activities of FLE materials.

Knowing risk and protective factors associated with the identified problem enables family life educators to target and limit specific processes that lead to negative outcomes and target and increase specific processes leading to positive outcomes. For example, risk and prediction research has identified various negative interaction patterns that place couples at heightened risk for marital disruption, such as criticism, contempt, defensiveness, escalation, stonewalling, and negative interpretations (Gottman, 1994; H. J. Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 2001). Research has also identified processes that enhance the well-being of marriage, such as nurturing friendship and commitment. Both risk and protective factors will range from those more or less modifiable within the context of an FLE program. For instance, parental divorce is a risk factor in marriage that is not modifiable. However, how a parental divorce plays out in a current marriage is possible to change. To be effective, FLE programs will need to focus on modifiable factors and increasing protection from the influence of negative processes that may have been produced by the factors.

Extract the "teachable" ideas and principles from theories and research, those ideas that can be summarized from a wide array of well-conducted studies that are practical, useful, and theoretically and empirically sound. Some examples include the following: "The more authoritative a parent is, the better off their children will be as they grow." "The more married couples accurately read one another's love language, the better the marriage." "Risks for divorce are reduced when couples learn to handle conflict and disagreements effectively."

Teachable ideas such as these are usually embedded within or supportive of broader ideas deduced from theories related to or applied to the family, such as family systems theory, family stress theory, communications theory, exchange theory, family development theory, human ecology theory, or social learning theory. For example, in consulting the scholarly literature for a basis for the transition to parenthood program Making Room for Two When Baby Makes Three, program creators discovered that much of the research was informed by family development theory (e.g., developmental transitions) and family stress theory (e.g., transitions, even pleasant ones, can be experienced as stressful).

Some theoretical perspectives naturally lend themselves characteristics of effective FLE, as noted by Small et al. (2009). For example, a program developed with a human ecology lens is likely to be more comprehensive and socioculturally relevant. A family development theory perspective will naturally attune a family life educator to create programs that are developmentally appropriate and appropriately timed. A program for strengthening single parents might in part be based on targeted ecologically sensitive research that identifies the characteristics of effective single parents.

As an example of using theory and research to build an FLE program, some years ago I (Duncan) developed a Making Families Stronger program. It was based on ecological systems theory, which asserts that families have the first and foremost influence on human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986). Therefore, of all the human systems deserving attention, the family microsystem deserves prime time. The program also drew on family empowerment theory (Cochran & Woolever, 1983), which holds that families have inherent strengths that can be mobilized to help them have the kind of family they want. These ideas provided a theoretical justification for teaching families about how to be stronger. Finally, the program was based on 30 years of family research conducted all over the world concerning what characteristics make families strong and healthy, or protective factors known as family strengths (Krysan, Moore, & Zill, 1990). Some families focus only on problems (their risk factors). Instead, this literature helps families identify strengths and how families could identify and build them.

Family life educators are wise to have a working knowledge of several major theoretical frameworks and how to use them to build their programs. While we won't attempt to provide a theories course in this text, we do think it is important to show several of the theories, key principles behind the theories, and their application in family life education. See Table 2.1 for a listing of common family theories, general principles of the theories, and their application to family life education. We encourage family life educators to consult good family theory books for more in-depth background on theoretical perspectives (for example, see Chibucos & Leite, 2005, for an excellent orientation to key concepts and research examples that show the features of the theory).

TABLE 2.1 Using Family Theories for the Design of Family Life Education Programs

Theory	*Key Principles*	*Application to FLE*
Family systems theory	Family members interact with one another in an interdependent, coherently characteristic way. Family systems have a powerful effect on individual family member behavior. Family systems reflect input received by family members synergistically interacting together. Inputs (such as educational information) have predictable outputs (such as relationship outcomes). A system may embrace change (morphogenesis) or resist it (morphostasis). Family systems are nested within and are influenced by larger social systems (community, culture).	Try to teach all members of a target audience system (couples rather than one partner, both parents rather than one parent, parents and children rather than just parents, and children and parents rather than parents alone) because a change in one member may be sabotaged by other family members. One family member can trigger change in a relationship system. Positive change potential is enhanced at timely transitions (during developmental change).
Social exchange theory	Relationship stability and quality predicted by rewards minus costs in interaction.	Programs attempt to build relationship assets (e.g., enhance positivity in marriage) and reduce relationship liabilities (e.g., reduce negativity in marriage).
Family development theory	Families grow and change over developmental time.	Programs targeted in different ways to persons dependent on their family developmental course (Becoming a Couple; Parenting Teens and Handling Your Midlife Challenges; Getting Ready for Retirement).
Human ecology theory	Development occurs through the interaction of a mosaic of factors; family microsystems influence and are influenced by transactions with other systems (e.g., neighborhood, peer group, school, workplace).	"Silver bullet" programs addressing only one aspect of the ecological system typically are insufficient; must address several areas of the social ecology simultaneously. A balancing work and family program teaching parents balance skills should also teach businesses how to establish family-friendly policies.
Symbolic interaction	Families make meaning and interpret events based on norms, values, expectations, patterns of behavior, and interaction.	Allow opportunities for families to construct their own meanings of events and ideas. Ask questions such as, "What meaning does this have for you?"

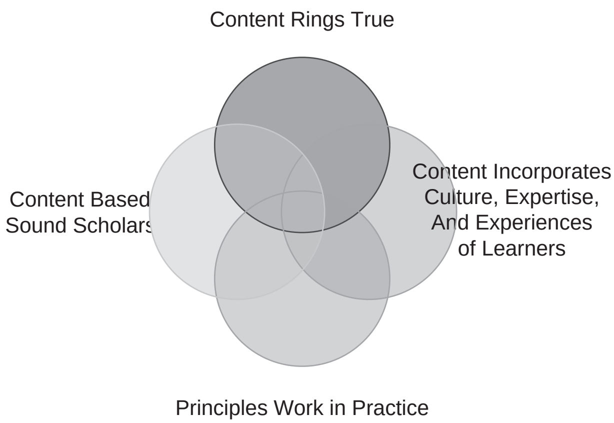

Figure 2.1 Selecting Content for Outreach Family Life Education

In all of this process, it is important to remember that adult audiences usually have already formed their opinions about many topics we address and in many cases have real-life experiences to support them. For instance, parents have experiences being parents, and family life educators who do not take that into account, regardless of how powerful their science-based ideas are, will risk alienating their audiences. We believe family life educators should seek out and find the principles that their clientele need to know the most. While many factors influence our content selection decisions, we believe that the most useful and valid FLE information is found at the intersection of the following four elements: (1) ideas are grounded in sound scholarship; (2) ideas ring true or fit with our values and instincts; (3) ideas fit with and incorporate the knowledge, culture, expertise, and lived experience of the learners; and (4) ideas work in practice (see Figure 2.1).

Do the ideas ring true? As family life educators, we often strive to empower parents to trust their own values and instincts as they parent their children and are challenged to design learning experiences where they can find parenting solutions within the context of their values (DeBord et al., 2002). The same recommendation seems to apply to us as we endeavor to select the best and most useful information to share with our outreach audiences. Family life educators can critically inquire, "Does the information or research recommendation fit with my own values and instincts? Do the ideas ring true?"

Do the ideas fit with and incorporate the knowledge, culture, expertise, and lived experience of the learners? In Chapter 1, we emphasized that most effective family life educators incorporate the best scientific information with the knowledge, lived experience, culture, and expertise of families in communities (Doherty, 2000; Lerner, 1995; Myers-Walls, 2000). In selecting from scholarly materials, family life educators will seek to choose materials as free from bias as possible and general enough in principle that they can be applied in a variety of settings and cultures. Part of this involves care in reviews of literature to ensure that the basis of our material is as representative as possible of the audiences we seek to serve, realizing that all scholarship will have its limitations. However, beyond this, when family life educators are in teaching settings, they will need to find ways to incorporate what participants bring with them into the educational setting.

Do the ideas work in practice? Experiences with principles may have taken us only so far, and there are ideas our FLE audiences may hear from us or from one another that they haven't tried out. We can encourage them to experiment with the ideas they hear. Part of assessing the validity of an idea is to test it out in our own lives. It may be based on many studies, it may ring true, and it may be reinforced by the experiences of many, but will it work for me? Of course, no one strategy works for everyone under all circumstances. But if a tool proves useful in some instances, it can be kept handy to use when needed. We test the idea out in the laboratory of our own experience so we know whether or not it works for us.

Form a Coalition of Stakeholders Who Work Together to Address the Problem

As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 16, most family concerns are too complex and need solutions too comprehensive for any single entity to address alone. Wise family life educators will seek to join forces with other like-minded persons in addressing family concerns. As was discussed in the previous chapter, communities bring with them their own special expertise, with family life educators comprising one player at the collaborative table. "Involving local citizens in planning helps ensure that prevention programs fit the community, promotes local ownership, and engenders commitment to seeing that the program is implemented and maintained" (Bogenschneider, 1996, p. 132). Once a coalition is formed, family life educators can use their expertise to educate coalition members on current theory and research addressing the problem. After a coalition to address youth concerns was formed in a small Montana town, an FLE professional shared with them the risk factors and protective factors associated with youth development and worked with them to design and implement a survey that assessed these factors in several high schools in the area. Findings from the survey provided an empirical basis for targeted youth development programs within the participating schools.

Stage 2: Program Design

Consult the Target Group

As a prelude to or concomitant with other aspects of program design is the task of assessing target audience needs. Many FLE programs fail because they do not spend time thoroughly investigating the needs of target audiences (more about this will be discussed in Chapter 17 in the context of marketing FLE programs). Consulting the target audience is a way of checking out the fit of the research literature with the actual audience for whom an educational product is intended. There are at least three kinds of needs to assess (Arcus et al., 1993b). *Felt* needs are those sought from audiences in response to direct questioning through questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. It is what they say they need. For example, the question, "What concerns do you have about parenting teenagers nowadays?" asked of parents of teens would be a question designed to elicit felt need responses, as well as, "If a program were designed to help you be a better parent for your teenagers, what would it contain?" *Ascribed* needs are those family life educators may observe because of their specialized knowledge. These are the needs family life educators may attribute to the group as a result of a review of the literature. To continue with the example of parents of teens, a large representative study of teens may reveal that they are much less likely to participate in risky sexual behavior when their parents appropriately monitor their activities. From these data, family life educators might decide that parents of teens need to learn how to monitor their teens, such as using the who-what-where-when approach (who are you going to be with, what will you be doing, where will you be going, and when will you be home?). *Future* needs involve the skills and abilities required to accomplish future tasks and perform future roles. The idea of anticipatory socialization suggests that transitions to new roles are easier when we learn as much as we can about a role before we perform that role. Future needs can be tapped by asking such questions as, "What do couples preparing for marriage need to know prior to marriage?"

There are numerous ways to consult the target audience, from conducting interviews, sending mail questionnaires, and using existing data about the audience. To aid in the design of their parenting program for high-risk families, after reviewing the literature, Dumka et al. (1995) conducted focus group interviews with various subgroups of their targeted population. A total of 53 parents divided into six groups participated and were asked open-ended questions that probed their needs as parents, their children's needs, and the resources in the community currently available to meet those needs. Parents requested a program that would provide information regarding drug and alcohol abuse to parents and children and teach parenting skills such as improved communication and disciplining children. There was some variation in reported felt needs among the groups, and these variations were considered accordingly in program design.

The involvement of the target audience is critical not only in program design but also in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program. Wise family life educators will include members of the target audience on their coalition and will seek their input at every stage of the program. When deciding on how best to evaluate the effectiveness of our program to help families on public assistance gain self-sufficiency, a group of family life educators (Duncan, Dunnagan, Christopher, & Paul, 2003) first field tested their evaluation protocol with several low-income, limited-literacy participants and made some adjustments based on their feedback.

Select Change Objectives

Change objectives, also called learning objectives, refer to the knowledge level, attitudes, values, behaviors, skills, and aspirations targeted for change by the program. Fulfillment of these objectives lead to the positive outcomes predicted by the theories and research and desired by the target audience.

Family life educators may be tempted to make a simple list of topics from their literature review of teachable ideas as a means of guiding their instruction. A learner-centered approach changes this focus and invites the educator to specifically identify what learners should get out of the learning experience (Fink, 2003). Thus, change objectives (also called learning objectives) are stated in specific, measurable, learner-centered (e.g., what *participants* will learn, do, feel, not the instructor), action-oriented terms (e.g., what will occur as a result of the program) that include active verbs (e.g., learn, understand, apply, practice, identify, compare and contrast, critique, do).

Thus, as you formulate learning objectives, there are certain questions that are important to ask (adapted from Fink, 2003):

Knowledge. What do you want your learning audience to know (or think about, reflect upon)? For example, what key information (facts, terms, concepts) is important for the learners to understand and remember? What key ideas or perspectives are important for learners to comprehend? One educator wanted his workshop audience to understand the difference between a problem-focused perspective and a family strengths perspective to building a strong family, and he formulated the following specific learning objective: Participants will be able to distinguish between a problem-focused approach and a family strengths perspective to strengthening their family.

Caring. What changes would you like to see in what your learners care about, as expressed in their attitudes, values, and feelings? What attitudes and values do you want them to develop or reconsider? What affective experiences do you want them to have with the material?

One educator wanted to change her audience's attitudes toward housework from one of "mere drudgery" to "an opportunity for family connection." Thus, a primary learning objective became "Participants will view housework as a potential setting for family members to strengthen their relationships with each other."

Application. What behaviors would you like them to change? What important skills do you want them to learn?

Interventionist-oriented family life educators often will be interested in structuring instruction in ways that evoke change in behaviors and development of skills. Family life educators leading parenting workshops may want their parents to learn authoritative approaches to parenting. A learning objective appropriate for this area might be the following: Participants will learn and practice three skills pertinent to authoritative parenting: establishing connection, regulating children's behavior, and promoting autonomy. Perhaps in the same program, family life educators are interested in promoting the use of positive approaches to discipline, including reducing the use of corporal punishment as a strategy. A possible learning objective would be the following: Parents will learn and practice numerous options for dealing with a difficult child behavior that they have faced at home.

Select Outcome Evaluation Instruments

The purpose of evaluation is to assess whether a program is showing progress in meeting change objectives. The instruments selected must allow us to evaluate changes in the risk and protective factors that can be attributed to the program and must be directly tied to program objectives. Some tools that have demonstrated reliability and validity can be selected, provided they fit change objectives. Otherwise, they must be created and pilot tested to ensure their usefulness.

In the Making Families Stronger program, I (Duncan) had the goal of increasing the levels of self-reported family life satisfaction through the processes of identifying and building one's family strengths. The change objective was to "increase family life satisfaction levels among participating families." I selected David Olson's Family Life Satisfaction scale (Olson, Stewart, & Wilson, 1990) as my outcome evaluation tool, which is a reliable and valid measure of family life satisfaction directly tied to the change objective that also incorporated a family strengths approach in the development of the items. Thus, it was the "perfect" tool for my purposes.

Quality FLE programs will include provisions for conducting evaluations, including evaluation instruments tied to program goals and objectives. See Chapter 3 for a full discussion of evaluation.

Select Change Methods and Learning Activities

Change methods will be wisely tied to change objectives. An important question to ask is, "What method would be most effective to accomplish this objective?" For example, a skills-related objective calls for a skill-teaching methodology. Steps include the following: (a) describe the skill, (b) model the skill, (c) practice the skill in a nonstressful setting and situation, (d) receive reinforcement and corrective feedback, and (e) use the skill in a real-life setting, that is, at home (also see Chapter 6). Other types of objectives would draw from other methods. In quality FLE programs, a variety of teaching methods effective with adult learners are used, including buzz groups, role-playing, visuals, video clips, and various forms of discussion (see Chapter 6). These methods would be sensitive to a diversity of learning styles, sensory modalities, developmental needs, and abilities (see Chapter 8). Quality FLE programs are actively engaging, using active learning strategies (Small et al., 2009) that incorporate the knowledge, culture, expertise, and lived experience of the learners (Doherty, 2001). Directions on how to facilitate the learning process would be included, including the amount of time to be spent on each teaching activity. Chapters 4 to 6 provide detailed information on how to design effective instruction leading to meaningful learning experiences for our audiences.

In deciding on the best methods, wise family life educators will also examine existing programs for methods that work with their population, often called "best practices." The process of learning about other programs, methods used, and their effectiveness is critical to identifying these practices. It can also save program development time and energy. Ask yourself, "What can I learn from these programs without having to reinvent the wheel, at the same time incorporating my own imagination/creative energy?"

Decide Program Extensiveness

Dumka et al. (1995) identify three dimensions of program extensiveness. The first of these is the selectiveness of the program. A *universal* *program* is designed for everyone. A parenting program following a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting billed "for all parents" would be such a program. Such a program avoids the risk of inviting only certain parents, and thus parents avoid a labeling stigma. However, it may be too general to make a significant difference among persons needing a targeted program. A *selective* program would be targeted to particular subgroups of participants (e.g., single parents, seniors) or subgroups exhibiting risk factors a program seeks to address (e.g., families receiving public assistance). An *indicated* program would be developed for an audience exhibiting negative outcomes, such as parents court-ordered to participate in parenting programs as an adjunct to counseling. Such audiences may include participants whose needs cannot be effectively met with preventative FLE alone (Dumka et al., 1995). A second aspect of program extensiveness is *breadth*, or the number and range of change objectives. Following an ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986) orientation in relation to prevention programs, Bogenschneider (1996) recommends that change objectives range across several levels of the human ecology. For example, a program designed to help employed parents harmonize work and family would also help employers craft family-friendly workplace policies and promote work-family harmony through media channels. A program focused on only one level will likely be limited in impact, as other systems in the social ecology may act to sabotage newfound insights and strategies. For example, the excitement of learning to harmonize family and work in a community workshop may be drained when the workplace refuses to grant flextime.

A third dimension of program extensiveness is *length*, what Small et al. (2009) refer to as intensity or dosage. While shorter programs may be the desire of a target audience and more appealing from a marketing perspective, longer programs are more effective in producing reliable, longer lasting changes. For example, in marriage education, where the audiences tend to be of lower risk for marital disruption (Carroll & Doherty, 2003), longer programs involving more than 12 contact hours produce somewhat better outcomes than shorter programs (Guerney & Maxson, 1990). Where audiences are of greater risk, the ideal length of contact may be much longer. For programs to have a significant impact on families at risk of child abuse, some argue that programs should be at least 6 to 18 months in length. It has been found that parents who participate for a longer duration (~ 2 years) and who used all services offered (at least 3–5 programs) had better outcomes than those receiving less intense and shorter-term services (Whipple & Wilson, 1996). The National Research Council (1993) reviewed several child abuse prevention programs and found that programs that were short term and low in intensity did not change long-term relationships between parents and children. In an era of social media, dosage and intensity will likely take on different forms than it has in the past (see more discussion on the role of social media in Chapter 12).

Design Recruitment/Retention Strategy

One of the greatest challenges family life educators face is recruitment and retention of audiences. As part of needs assessments surveys, wise family life educators will consult the target audience about the best ways to recruit and retain an audience. Recruitment and marketing, including the creation of a marketing plan, is a focus of Chapter 17. Dumka et al. (1995) followed this strategy during their focus groups and were given several suggestions: (a) include both parents and children in the program so they could talk about what they were learning, (b) help parents develop a support group so they could help each other during and after the program, (c) provide child care and refreshments, and (d) offer the program close to home with no more than one meeting a week.

Tailor Program Content and Delivery

Programs designed after a "one-size-fits-all" model are doomed to failure. Program content and delivery must be tailored to the needs of the audience and the community or made socioculturally relevant (Small et al., 2009). For example, the content and approach should be sensitive to cultural, ethnic, and other forms of diversity (see Chapter 8). This effort is especially critical since much of social science research that undergirds FLE materials is biased toward White, middle-class families. To maximize participation, implementation strategies should be based on target audience felt needs and preferences. For example, a standard curriculum was not acceptable in one community until after the inclusion of recruitment meetings (drummed up by current participants where recruits were invited by current participants), teachers from the same culture, and home visits for those participants facing transportation barriers. In one program for limited-resource families (Duncan et al., 2003), educators kept the material simple and to the point because of the vast differences in participant educational levels. Materials were adjusted to relate to very basic levels of life skills. Written materials were written at a low reading level or were simple enough that they could be easily adapted or interpreted. Family life educators developing curricula to help lower-income families make transitions from welfare dependency to self-support would make sure that the theory, research, and interventions are based on an understanding of the complex needs of limited resource (limited in terms of education and perception of personal resources as well as income) at different levels of their social ecology (at the individual, family, and community levels) (Christopher et al., 2001).

Stage 3: Pilot Testing

Once programs have been developed, they are ready for testing in the field. The goal of pilot testing is to "implement the prototype program with participants and in contexts as similar to the targeted participants and contexts as possible" (Dumka et al., 1995, p. 84). Dumka et al. (1995) recommend doing three kinds of evaluation at this stage: recruitment and retention, process, and formative evaluation.

Recruitment and Retention Evaluation

This is the process of assessing whether your recruitment strategy designed during Stage 2 is working. Since FLE in community settings often suffers from underwhelming participation, and participation is vital for the existence of the program, this piece of evaluation is vital. If the recruitment strategy you used for a parenting program included circulating a flyer to all parents of fourth graders and only 3 of an eligible 100 parents showed up for the program, it would be clear that recruitment strategies need changing. The Dumka et al. (1995) strategy noted above resulted in more than 53% of parents participating in five or more sessions—quite successful for a program such as this.

Process Evaluation

This kind of evaluation provides information about the overall management of the program to assess if the program is functioning as designed. It would include an adjudicated assessment of instruction (e.g., is quality information being taught?), logistics (evaluation of the meeting place, food, and transportation), how evaluation processes are perceived by participants (e.g., do participants find evaluation questions too personal or complex?), level of community support (e.g., media pieces supporting the program), support from stakeholders (e.g., county commissioners giving the program attention), and a host of other elements. Feedback on processes from both staff and clientele is important. We call this kind of evaluation "project quality control."

Formative Evaluation

Quality FLE resources include some provision for determining if the materials benefit others. Formative evaluation assesses participants' direct experience with program material and exposes what modifications may be necessary to improve their learning experience. At a pilot testing stage, it is appropriate for family life educators to administer a brief questionnaire at the end of each session and ask whether the participants learned something new, what were the strengths in the program, and how the program might be improved. Evaluation tools are clearly tied to program goals and objectives. Both process and formative evaluation are part of the "program clarification" tier of evaluation (Jacobs, 1988), which will be fully discussed in Chapter 3.

Program Revision

Process and formative evaluation will likely point to needed changes. Family life educators need to identify and decide what they are going to do differently based on the pilot feedback they receive. Data may suggest needed content, implementation, or evaluation changes. For example, formative evaluation of a website led to changes in the format of the articles and the adding of some user-friendly features (such as the ability to e-mail an article to a friend or family member). In another program, process evaluation revealed that many participants complained about being expected to complete pre- and posttests that were long and tedious. The evaluators decided to provide a nominal financial incentive of $10 per completed questionnaire.

Stage 4: Advanced Testing

Those whose focus is to develop and refine programs toward broad dissemination will want to take advanced steps to establish effectiveness. After integrating changes suggested during pilot testing, a program is ready for more advanced assessment. The goal of advanced testing is to evaluate the ability of a program to make significant changes in targeted risk factors and protective factors. In other words, it asks, "Does the program truly accomplish the stated change objectives?" This is often called summative or outcome evaluation. For a parenting program, this may mean the enhancement of not only reported parenting skills but also translation to better outcomes long term among participating parents' children. To answer these kinds of questions requires assessment sophistication greater than pilot testing.

Advance testing includes the processes of choosing an experimental design, implementing the revised program, analyzing the data, and continuing to refine the program. While some programs collect data that masquerade as impact data (Small, 1990), advance testing of program impact requires an experimental research design. This is because experimental designs most effectively control competing explanations for what may be positive outcomes. Perhaps the most common experimental research design is the pretest, posttest, control group design. If a program is important enough to collect experimental design data, the data deserve more sophisticated treatment as well, to help answer more definitively important questions. For instance, a common FLE question, beyond one of general program impact, is, "For whom is the program most effective?" Analyses such as multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) can help answer that question.

Stage 5: Dissemination

Imagine this: You have developed a program for families with widespread community support. You have field tested it with the families for whom it was intended and have made some adjustments in the program and how you carry it out, as a result of the candid input from program participants and staff. You have taken the revised program, continued to make refinements, and have subjected it to an ultimate test: an evaluation using an experimental design. Findings from your evaluation suggest that the program successfully meets change objectives and is significantly reducing some risk factors among parents (e.g., harsh discipline strategies, lack of social support) and significantly increasing protective factors (e.g., use of affirming, loving messages with youngsters, more shared parenting). Your program is a success, and you feel justifiably proud of the effort you and your coalition have made with families in your community. You are now ready to take your program forward to the masses, to export it and what you have learned to other communities, so that your efforts might strengthen families in those communities as well.

The goal of the dissemination stage is the widespread adoption of the program. Programs beginning in one area expand to other communities and often become institutionalized and part of community culture. Dissemination involves identifying potential users of the program, promoting the program (through publications and other targeted venues; more about promotion and marketing will be discussed in Chapter 17), publishing results of evaluation studies in scholarly journals, and providing technical assistance to those interested in adopting the program.

Table 2.2 summarizes the steps we have discussed.

TABLE 2.2 A Comprehensive Framework for Designing Family Life Prevention Programs

Stage 1: Problem Analysis

Identify Problem/Establish Overall Program Goal

- Program goal should clarify the audience (e.g., The ABC program is designed to help *single parents* identify and build upon their parenting strengths, enhancing their sense of competence as a parent.)

Consult the Scholarly Literature

- Identify current theories/research addressing the problem/goal
    - Risk factors/protective factors, predictors of positive outcomes, etc.
- Extract the "teachable" ideas/principles from theories/research, those that are practical/useful in addressing the problem. Examples:
    - "The more authoritative a parent is, the better off their children will be as they grow."
    - "The more married couples accurately read one another's love language, the better the marriage."
    - "Risks for divorce are reduced when couples learn to handle conflict and disagreements effectively."

Form a Coalition of Stakeholders Who Work Together to Address the Problem

- Educate coalition members on current theory and research addressing the problem

Stage 2: Program Design

Consult Target Group—Assess Their Needs

- Assess needs using focus groups, interviews, questionnaires, existing data, etc.
    - Felt, ascribed (those you discern because of your specialized knowledge), and future needs (e.g., what do couples preparing for marriage need to know?)
- Involve the target audience in program design, planning, and implementation
- Seek their input at every stage

Select Change Objectives

- Knowledge, attitudes, behaviors/skills, and aspirations targeted for change
- Tied to promoting the positive outcomes predicted by the theories and research and desired by the target audience

(*Continued*)

Stated in specific, action-oriented terms (e.g., what will participants be able to do as a result of the program?)

Select Evaluation Tools

Formative and summative

Instruments directly tied to program objectives

Select Change Methods

Tied to objectives—a skills objective needs a skill development method

Review existing programs to find "best practices"

Use adult learner methods focused on active learning—buzz groups, role-playing, discussion groups, skill practice, etc.

Give attention to learning styles, sensory modalities, and developmental needs/abilities

Decide Program Extensiveness

Selectiveness: Universal (y'all come), selective (audience exhibiting risk factors), or indicated (audience exhibiting negative outcomes)

Breadth: Range of change objectives (e.g., comprehensive, in terms of level of human ecology, or more focused on one or two levels)

Length: Shorter or longer? Dosage and intensity

Design Recruitment/Retention Strategy

Ask the target audience what is best way to recruit and retain an audience

Marketing plan

Tailor Program Content and Delivery

Tailored to needs of audience/community; appropriately timed; developmentally appropriate

Sensitive to cultural, ethnic, and other forms of diversity; sociocultural relevance

Implementation strategies, based on target audience needs and focus group findings, to maximize participation

Recruitment meetings

Teachers of same culture

Home visits

Stage 3: Pilot Testing

Implement Program

Recruitment and Retention Evaluation

Is it working? Are people coming and staying or returning?

Process Evaluation

Project quality control

Formative Evaluation

Program Revision

Stage 4: Advanced Testing
Select Experimental Design
Implement Program
Summative Evaluation
Analyze Data
Refine Program

Stage 5: Dissemination
Widespread Adoption of Program

SOURCE: Adapted from Dumka, Roosa, Michaels, and Suh (1995); Bogenschneider (1996); Hughes (1994); and Small, Cooney, and O'Connor (2009).

ASSESSING ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM QUALITY IN EXISTING PROGRAMS

The integrated framework shows us step by step how to develop a comprehensive FLE program. It also tells us what to look for in quality FLE programs and suggests a framework to assess ways an FLE resource could be improved. On the basis of his parsimonious four-step program development model, Hughes (1994) created an assessment tool to use as a means of evaluating the extent to which elements of effectiveness occur in existing programs. While not all of the elements above are evaluated by this tool, many are. You may want to use it to evaluate existing resources and identify areas needing improvement. See Appendix C for the Family Life Education Program Resource Review Form.

CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG, SUSTAINABLE FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

As important as it is to have strong program curricula consisting of a strong theory and research base, clear goals and objectives, methods consistent with objectives, attention to diverse audiences, a guide for implementation, and evaluation tools tied to the objectives, program curricula are only part of successful, sustainable FLE programs. Many elements of quality comprehensive programs transcend specific curricula. Drawing on the published literature and experiences of leading community-based programs, Lee, Mancini, Miles, and Marek (1996) identified eight characteristics of quality community-based programs. These characteristics are important to keep in mind as you seek to build a comprehensive FLE program in a community that will stand the test of time. Some of these characteristics are also reiterations and extensions of important elements found in quality community-based FLE curricula.

1. Successful community programs are community based and carried out in collaboration with many community partners.

Successful programs emerge from the needs of the community rather than from the desires of outsiders. Instead of "one size fits all," these programs are flexibly implemented and adapt to community needs. They embed themselves in the local community, becoming part of a network of supportive services carried out by collaborative professionals and volunteers (Lee et al., 1996). This collaborative approach minimizes turf issues, brings more resources to bear on a community issue, maximizes effectiveness in program planning and implementation, and increases the likelihood a program will stand the test of time (Duncan et al., 2003).

2. Successful community programs are comprehensive in scope, based on an ecological or systems view of individuals, families, and communities.

The best programs operate at many levels (e.g., individual, family, and community) and incorporate not only specific family-based programs but efforts to strengthen the community context as well (Lee et al., 1996). Clientele are viewed as individuals within families within communities, and programs are designed accordingly. Successful, long-lasting prevention results are most often the result of consistent, multilevel, multifaceted efforts. For instance, in addition to parenting skills, a comprehensive "Parenting Teens" program might also provide "peer mentoring" to encourage prosocial teen activity, newsletters for parents and other caring adults who work with teens, and media messages promoting positive parent-teen relationships. Successful efforts at adolescent drug abuse prevention would seek to minimize or eliminate risk factors occurring at the individual level (e.g., low self-efficacy), the family level (e.g., uninvolved parenting), and the peer group level (e.g., peers who use drugs) as well as enhance protective factors at the same levels (individual: religious commitment; family: involved parenting; peer: peers who are non-drug users). Likewise, during program design stages, program developers would include persons in their task forces representing different levels of the social ecology, including parents, youth, school personnel, and other adults who have an interest in the development of youth. Many researchers report that such an approach is critical to the success of prevention programs (Lee et al., 1996).

3. Successful community programs are inclusive of program participants in program planning, delivery, and evaluation.

Successful programs involve participants at every level of program development, from predesign stages to implementation and evaluation. Even if programs are employed in different areas, clientele from those specific communities are involved so that the program is responsive to local needs. In addition, there is what Lee et al. (1996) refer to as an "integrative approach" to program planning. Local leaders are identified and trained, and local participants are fully involved in the planning and decision making regarding a program or its policies, philosophy, or procedures.

4. Successful community programs are preventive in nature through successfully interfacing service and education, as well as recognizing and building on participants' strengths to enhance skills.

Successful programs designed to foster resiliency and limit risks among children, youth, and families accomplish their goals through preventive, empowering means rather than through remediation. Thus, these programs aim to stop problem behaviors before they get started, often as early intervention (Lee et al., 1996). In addition, some of these programs focus on helping clientele identify and build upon strengths they already have.

5. Successful community programs are developmentally appropriate and based on current research.

Successful programs are based on best practice models of effective programming noted in the scholarly literature and on the specific needs of their communities. The research comprises community needs assessments, the existing scholarly literature, and the best strategies for reaching a target audience. Needs assessments may include existing data already available (e.g., state child abuse data) as well as new data collected from the target audience to refine an understanding of the issue for a specific community population, as well as how to best reach them.

Such programs often follow a community-university partnership model, where the community presents the issue in a unified context and university-based researchers provide the expertise of the scientific literature to address the community need.

6. Successful community programs are accessible to participants with a mix of program deliveries based on participant needs.

To be effective, FLE programs must be accessible to their intended audience (Lee et al., 1996). Clientele may face significant barriers that prevent them from attending programs located at community centers or other venues. Increasing accessibility may mean that the program is held in small groups or one-on-one in the homes of clientele. For many clientele, location may be a critical factor as well as its perceived safety, ease of access via public transportation, and free parking nearby.

Other aspects of accessibility are also important. Successful programs consider language needs, literacy rate, and educational level of the participants and then gear the material accordingly (Lee et al., 1996). For example, instructional classes might be offered in small groups or one-on-one, as needed, allowing for more individualized attention and for materials to be more effectively adapted to individual participant needs. Other strategies include keeping material simple and to the point, using a variety of hands-on activities, and conducting support groups in and out of a learning setting. Successful programs also use existing services as a means to achieve their ends, such as community forums, newsletters, conferences, and workshops.

7. Successful community programs are accountable to stakeholders and are able to demonstrate positive outcomes in participants and community environments.

To be sustained, comprehensive community-based programs need to demonstrate some defensible measure of effectiveness. They need to be able to show stakeholders that the results achieved have been worth the investment in time and money. Such programs incorporate an ongoing evaluation of what works, what does not work, and what changes need to be made to improve services to clientele and the community. These data are often both quantitative (e.g., statistics showing improvement in parenting competence attributed to a parenting course) and qualitative in nature (success stories of family budgeting principles in practice) and report data not only from program participants but also from staff, partners/collaborators, and stakeholders.

8. Successful community programs have leaders with vision.

This final characteristic of strong, sustainable programs has more to do with leadership than with program substance. Leaders of these programs are, according to Lee et al. (1996),

> able to think through an organization's mission and establish it clearly and visibly. They serve as models, symbolizing a group's unity and identity. They view themselves as ultimately responsible and therefore surround themselves with strong associates and subordinates who function ably and independently and whose development they encourage. They function in a team relationship. Importantly they demonstrate long range vision, showing an ability to think beyond the day's crises, beyond the quarter. They are able to reach and influence constituents beyond their jurisdictions. They think in terms of renewal, seeking the revisions of process and structure by an ever-changing reality. (pp. 13–14)

These leaders offer strong and committed leadership, keeping the program's vision in front of decision makers over years, being consistent with service at various sites, facilitating partnerships and ongoing community collaboration, bringing key partners together to renew and articulate program visions and strategies, and developing consensus. These eight principles are summarized in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Elements of Strong, Sustainable, Comprehensive Programs

Successful community programs are community based and carried out in collaboration with many community partners.
Successful community programs are comprehensive in scope, based on an ecological or systems view of individuals, families, and communities.
Successful community programs are inclusive of program participants in program planning, delivery, and evaluation.
Successful community programs are preventive in nature through successfully interfacing service and education, as well as recognizing and building on participants' strengths to enhance skills.
Successful community programs are developmentally appropriate and based on current research.
Successful community programs are accessible to participants with a mix of program deliveries based on participant needs.
Successful community programs are accountable to stakeholders and are able to demonstrate positive outcomes in participants and community environments.
Successful community programs have leaders with vision.

SOURCE: Lee, Mancini, Miles, and Marek (1996).

● CONCLUSION

It is important for prevention-oriented family life educators to ground their work in a scientific framework of program design. This chapter has presented a practical how-to framework for the design of comprehensive FLE programs. Family life educators can use these guidelines to help them develop their own resources and assess or improve the quality of existing resources. FLE programs constructed with careful and appropriate attention to these elements of quality design, implementation, and evaluation are likely to serve FLE audiences better than those that do not and certainly improve FLE practice. In addition, when family life educators seek to establish comprehensive community-based programs that transcend curricula, they are wise to model programs that use the eight characteristics of sustainable programs discussed in this chapter.

The following activities can help you translate these ideas into your own program development efforts.

● EXPLORATIONS

1. Identify a problem topic and create a rough outline of your program strategy in Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the framework. Try it out with topics of widespread importance in communities, such as strengthening single parents, preventing adolescent drug use, preparing for remarriage, and managing stress and crisis in families.

2. Do an inventory of existing family life programs. Identify the levels of prevention at which they operate (primary, secondary, and tertiary) and how extensive they are (universal, selective, or indicated).

3. The authors recommend analyzing the problem through exploring related research and theory prior to consulting the target group to assess their needs. What are some advantages and disadvantages of doing this? How can the disadvantages be addressed?

4. Identify an FLE resource (curricula, website, etc.) and, using the review form provided in Appendix C, do a "quality elements" assessment. On the basis of this evaluation, discuss whether you would use the resource and how you would improve it. Use the review form as a checklist for ensuring the quality of your own resources.

5. Locate and investigate comprehensive FLE programs in your community. Evaluate these programs against the eight characteristics of strong, sustainable programs discussed in this chapter. Find out how long the programs have existed. Do the longer lasting ones have more of the characteristics?

CHAPTER 3

PRINCIPLES OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

EVALUATION AS FRIEND AND FOE: STEREOTYPES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Family life educators who enjoy program evaluation are rare birds. Evaluation is generally viewed as a necessary evil. It requires time, provides sobering and often disappointing feedback, is difficult to design, and may seem impossible to analyze. Evaluation arouses deep dread in most family life educators. But it is required by most funders.

There is another way of thinking about evaluation. It can be seen as a process for gathering information to make your program stronger. It can provide vital data about what parts of the program are working well and which need tweaking. It can provide data that justify further funding. It can provide priceless information about how to match program options to program clients. According to this view, evaluation is our friend.

Evaluation is a systematic gathering of information that can be used to inform good decisions. It is much more than pretests and posttests, numbers and charts. In this chapter, you will be introduced to many different ways of getting and using information to strengthen your programs.

● ESTABLISHING THE TARGET: VISION AND GOALS

A respected parenting program funded by the Alabama Children's Trust Fund took part in the field test of a new evaluation instrument. The instrument was designed to measure a broad array of outcomes that are common in parenting programs. It was used with program participants both before the program began and again at the conclusion of the program. The instruments were sent for analyses, and a report was returned to the program site.

When the program director received the report, she called the instrument developers in a panic. "Your report shows that program participants only had significant improvement on 49% of the variables. That is failure by any standard! Are we really that bad?"

There is no simple answer to that question. The fact is that it depends. If the 49% of the variables on which there were significant changes are the variables that are important to the program leaders, then they are a remarkable success. If, in contrast, most of the variables of interest for the program are a part of the 51% in which there was no significant change, then the program leaders have cause for serious reflection. There simply is no way to interpret any outcome without having goals and objectives as a standard.

Even goals and objectives should be embedded in a larger picture of the desired outcome. That larger picture might be called a vision. One of the characteristics of effective program leaders is that they can articulate the big picture of their program efforts (Lee et al., 1996).

● DEVELOPING A VISION

Vision statements are shared expressions of a program staff. The vision describes what they want the program to accomplish by focusing on the end result. A shared vision is essentially the answer to the question, "What do we want to create?"

Vision statements generally have the qualities of being lofty, big picture, and ambitious. They are also dynamic, needing revisiting and renewal periodically. When people share a vision, they are connected by a common aspiration. It can focus the energy and guide the decisions of the organization.

The meaningful vision statements are created by persons who have a stake in the program, such as program staff, partners, and recipients of services. Vision statements focus and express the shared hopes and dreams for the program.

Imagine gathering all the people together who are involved in delivering a program, inviting them to spend a morning around a conference table sharing how they would like the community to be different as a result of their program over time. Do you think the group would quickly converge on a common vision?

Experience suggests otherwise. When people united in a common cause begin to share their vision with each other, there are often a lot of surprises. Each person has a very different vision. While this person may think that the group is doing what they are doing "in order to help people in our community break the cycle of poverty," a colleague involved in the same program may see the central purpose as "arming citizens with a clear sense of purpose." Another person may see the core cause as "strengthening family bonds in our community."

Those visions are not necessarily incompatible. Each person in a work group may be driven by a personal vision that is different from that of anyone else in the group. Such diversity can enrich both collegiality and the quality of work.

The differences in vision can also lead to meaningful discussions about the core purposes that unite the work group. In the course of the discussions, each person is likely to enlarge and enrich his or her vision. As the group converges on core purposes, members will be better able to work in unified support of those purposes. Those core purposes can inform program activity and guide evaluation efforts.

Just a note of caution: Any attempt to come up with a single statement of vision for which all members of the group will express complete support will often be difficult. The discussion may be more important than a totally unified statement. The reasonable goal for this vision discussion is to better understand each other and to identify some common purposes.

One Montana family program for promoting self-sufficiency gathered together the program staff, state and local collaborators, and Extension administrators for a "visioning and strategic planning" meeting. Each invitee was encouraged to develop his or her own vision statement prior to attending the meeting. At the meeting, each person shared his or her statement in small groups and recorded their shared elements. In the large group, elements of the visions were shared. The group worked together to form a statement that represented the shared vision. It read, "Supportive Montana communities that empower families to develop skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary for managing family resources and progressing toward a self-supporting lifestyle."

Another vision statement might say, "Our vision of our community is a place where parents show love and care for their children." Elements of the

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) vision statement (which ACF calls a mission statement) include the following: "Families and individuals empowered to increase their own economic independence and productivity; strong, healthy, supportive communities that have a positive impact on the quality of life and the development of children" (Administration for Children and Families, n.d.).

● GETTING SPECIFIC: PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

With some common vision in hand, the process can move to the next stage of specificity: program goals and objectives. We first discussed program goals and objectives generally in Chapter 2. We extend that discussion here and in the context of creating an evaluation plan.

Goals are one step more specific than vision. They express general purposes for specific programs. For example, a community program may have as its vision a community where parents are closer to their children. A goal in that program might be to teach the concept and use of languages of love to program participants. An objective is the most specific level of intent. For a program such as the one described, the objective might be that every parent who takes part in the program will be able to name three languages of love and identify the one or combination that best helps him or her connect with each child in the family.

Objectives are the place where our thinking must get most clear and specific. It is an unusual person who finds the writing of objectives to be fun. The creation of objectives requires very careful thinking yet allows us to design and assess more effective programs.

Maybe the process is made more unpleasant when we require that objectives fit some preestablished pattern. The objectives only exist to make program delivery and evaluation more in alignment with the program goals and ultimate program vision.

A good objective is clearly tied to the goal, should be specific enough to be measured, and usually describes some action or knowledge that a participant would gain by participation in the program. Some objectives specify an exact level of performance: "Participants will report involvement in daily renewal rituals (yoga, exercise, or meditation) for at least 15 minutes per day at least 4 days per week." Such exactness is important for programs that have both well-developed programs and well-developed measures.

Another dimension to objectives is the time span of effects. The more immediate effects of programs are called outcomes. The long-term effects are called impacts. For example, an outcome objective might be that couples involved in a program commit to set aside time every week for enjoyable activities together. The impact might be that participants report feeling closer to their partners 1 year after the completion of the program.

AN EXAMPLE OF AN EVALUATION FRAMEWORK IN PARENTING EDUCATION

One example of the development of program goals and objectives is in the area of parenting. The Cooperative Extension System has been interested in supporting parenting education for many years. In 1994, four Extension specialists (Smith et al., 1994) worked together to create the National Extension Parent Education Model (NEPEM), which defined six categories of vital parenting behavior. The document also included sample objectives. But there was still a substantial distance between coming up with objectives and having an effective evaluation system.

It was not until 2002 that a group of Extension leaders attempted to develop more detail as part of the Evaluation and Accountability Systems for Extension (EASE). A group of specialists took the six categories from NEPEM and developed both objectives and measures. While a comprehensive evaluation system would provide many objectives related to each critical parenting practice and each objective could have many different evaluation questions, the evaluation questions in this example are suggestive of an evaluation framework in three areas of the national parenting model.

Table 3.1 shows some representative impacts, objectives, and evaluation items. There are dozens of meaningful objectives that might be written in each vital area of parenting. For each objective, many different items could be written to evaluate the accomplishment of the objectives.

Matching the Parts

Some of these objectives and some of the evaluations items will not be suitable for some audiences. That is a vital point. The objectives must match the program mission. The evaluation items must match the objectives. And the objectives must be suitable for the specific audience in reading level and appropriateness of the target behavior.

Of course there is another vital match: The program with all its instructional activities should match the objectives and the evaluation. If a program sets its objectives to build stress techniques but instead teaches car repair and, for evaluation, measures height and weight of participants, the

TABLE 3.1 Examples of Parenting Impacts, Goals, Objectives, and Evaluation Items

Impact: Parents will provide appropriate nurturance and guidance to their children and youth, resulting in positive development and achievement.

Impact A (NEPEM *Care for Self* dimension): Parents will become more effective in caring for self.

Goal A: Parents report they are managing personal and family stress (more) effectively.

Objective A1. Parents will increase their awareness of exercise as a means of dealing with stress.

Sample measurement item:	*Never*			*Always*	
I exercise to lower stress.	1	2	3	4	5

Objective A2. Parents will develop awareness of their need to take time out and to get control of their own feelings.

Sample measurement item:	*Never*			*Always*	
When I get upset with my child, I take a minute to calm down before I deal with him or her.	1	2	3	4	5

Objective A3. Parents will know some stress reduction techniques (i.e., getting organized, changing attitudes or expectations, changing environments or people who you associate with, limiting the number of things on your to-do list, setting priorities, physical exercise, humor).

Sample measurement item:	*Never*			*Always*	
I have some things I do to help me calm down when I feel myself getting angry like going for a walk, listening to music, or calling a friend.	1	2	3	4	5

Objective A4. Parents will know techniques to support themselves and to cope effectively in times of personal difficulty (e.g., calling a friend and letting off steam, positive self-talk, hot bath, take or plan a vacation, call crisis center).

Sample measurement item:	*Never*			*Always*	
I know what to do or whom to call when I feel like I can't take it anymore.	1	2	3	4	5

Impact B (NEPEM *Guide* dimension): Parents use appropriate positive discipline techniques.

Goal B1: Parents apply their knowledge of child development to support their child's developmental progress—framing choices, setting limits, and monitoring their child's activities appropriately.

Objective B1. Parents will increase the use of positive strategies for learning self-control such as allowing their child to make decisions and avoiding force.

Sample measurement item:	*Never*			*Always*	
I let my child make his or her own choices whenever possible.	1	2	3	4	5

Objective B2. Parents will learn characteristics of effective discipline, including being positive, teaching, and giving choices.

Sample measurement item:	*Never*			*Always*	
Even though I must sometimes correct my child's behavior, I show lots of love to him or her.	1	2	3	4	5

Objective B3. Parents will increase their use of praise, encouragement, and other supportive language.

Sample measurement item:	*Strongly Disagree*			*Strongly Agree*	
I try to notice and encourage the good things my child does.	1	2	3	4	5

Objective B4. Parents will decrease scolding, punishment, and harsh, punitive, and controlling parenting behaviors.

Sample measurement item:	*Strongly Disagree*			*Strongly Agree*	
I say far more positive than negative things to my child now than before this class.	1	2	3	4	5

Objective B5. Parents will increase their knowledge of different ways to help their child develop responsibility and use these techniques, such as allowing their child to make decisions, not being overly intrusive, allowing their child to experience the world as a lawful place, and allowing their child to suffer the consequences for his or her actions in order to help the child understand the relationship between actions and consequences.

Sample measurement item:	*Strongly Disagree*			*Strongly Agree*	
I believe that letting my child make many little decisions on his or her own is a good way to teach responsibility and self-control.	1	2	3	4	5

(*Continued*)

TABLE 3.1 (Continued)

Impact C (NEPEM *Nurture* dimension): Parents show affection and nurturance to their child.

Goal C1: Parents listen and attend to their child's feelings and ideas.

Objective C1.1. Parents will know that talking with a child is very important to help the child feel significant as well as to help the child develop language, intellectual, and social skills.

Sample measurement item:	*Strongly Disagree*				*Strongly Agree*
My child learns a lot from something as simple as talking to me.	1	2	3	4	5

Objective C1.2. Parents will know that talking with a child is very important to help the child feel significant as well as to help the child develop language, intellectual, and social skills.

Sample measurement item:	*Never*				*Always*
I take time to just talk pleasantly with my child.	1	2	3	4	5

Objective C1.3. Parents will increase their knowledge and use of the varying techniques for providing encouragement/nurturance through both verbal and nonverbal means.

Sample measurement item:	*Strongly Disagree*				*Strongly Agree*
I have learned new ways to encourage and praise my child in the last few weeks.	1	2	3	4	5

Goal C2: Parents show love and caring for their child.

Objective C2.1. Parents will know that praise should be sincere.

Sample measurement item:	*Never*				*Always*
I tell my child about the good things I see in him or her.	1	2	3	4	5

Objective C2.2. Parents will learn to be sensitive to the ways their child gets the message of parental love, including taking time to do things that their child loves and taking time to understand their child's feelings.

Sample measurement item:	*Never*				*Always*
I try to show love to my child in the way that works best for him or her.	1	2	3	4	5

resulting data will be hard to interpret. They will tell us almost nothing about the effectiveness of the program—unless we decide that weight loss is our real program objective. (The theoretical connection between car repair and weight loss will still require attention.)

The matches might be illustrated as follows:

Vision——Goals——Objectives——Instructional activities——Evaluation measures

When all of these program elements are in alignment, greater gains and more meaningful data are more likely.

DEFINING THE KIND OF INFORMATION NEEDED: THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

There are many reasons to gather evaluation data, including assessment of participant progress, guiding program decisions, refining program processes, specifying effective program elements, establishing the merit of specific viewpoints, or maximizing program effects (see J. L. Herman, Morris, & Fitz-Gibbon, 1987, for more details on each of these purposes). When we merely do evaluation because it is expected or because it is considered good form, it is not likely to have the benefits that may accrue when we carefully preconsider what data we need and how we expect it to be used.

Common questions that can guide evaluation include the following:

1. What are the ways in which participants are prepared to function better in their family life as a result of our program? (attitudes, knowledge, skills)
2. In what ways do the participants actually function better as a result of our program? (behavior)
3. What elements or combination of elements have the greatest impact?
4. What needs related to program objectives remain unaddressed despite program efforts?
5. What evidence do we have that our program satisfies the objectives of our funders?

These questions can lead to the creation of evaluation objectives. Some scholars (Dunnagan, Duncan, & Paul, 2000) recommend simply changing the phrasing of program objectives to make them evaluation objectives. For example, if your program goal is to "help enhance couple satisfaction with marriage," one objective might be the following: *Significantly increase levels of marital satisfaction as a result of the program.* One way to write it as an evaluation objective would be, *"Determine whether participation in the program significantly increases reported couple satisfaction."*

THE FIVE-TIERED APPROACH TO PROGRAM EVALUATION

Meaningful answers to evaluation questions are not found readily. In fact, Francine Jacobs (1988) has argued that many discouraging outcomes in evaluation are not necessarily evidence of inadequate programs; the outcomes may be evidence that we have asked the wrong questions at the wrong time. When we apply comprehensive outcome measures to still-developing programs, we should not be surprised that we have disappointing results. Jacobs suggests that evaluation should grow with the program. In fact, she describes five tiers of evaluation. This model incorporates needs assessment, formative evaluation, and summative evaluation.

In the first level of evaluation, called the preimplementation tier, a community needs assessment is conducted to first establish fit between a community need and a proposed program. While often not thought of as a part of evaluation, it puts all program efforts in the larger context.

There are many sources of data for such a needs assessment. Sociodemographic data may indicate community problems and risks in the program area. Local press coverage can provide an indication of community awareness and concern. Interviews with community leaders (social service agencies, faith communities, business managers, etc.) can provide vital information on both the problems and previous efforts to address them. In some cases, it may be helpful to conduct a community survey. For example, some communities have surveyed both youth and parents about youth challenges (Olson, Goddard, Solheim, & Sandt, 2004) to better target youth-serving interventions.

The second level of evaluation, the accountability tier, involves "the systematic collection of client-specific and service-utilization data" (Jacobs, 1988, p. 54), answering the question, "Who is getting what services?" Data include not only the number of people served but their characteristics. As a result, it may be possible to determine the extent to which the program's target audience is being served with the intended intervention. This level may not seem like serious evaluation in the traditional sense. Yet such data are essential for understanding the progress of the organization toward its goals. For a beginning program, this may be some of the most helpful feedback that can be obtained.

A vital part of all evaluation is the gathering of "use" information from program personnel. Effective evaluation includes asking instructors and participants about the pattern of service delivery and client participation. It is possible, for example, that program objectives are not being met simply because the program is offered at the wrong time of day or in the wrong location. This is not information that will readily emerge from a paper-and-pencil test given to those who do attend the program.

Some (Thomas, Schvaneveldt, & Young, 1993) have argued that Jacobs (1988) may emphasize the ways that programs affect participants and neglect the ways in which program participants affect the program. Programs are certainly affected by the participants, including in ways that may have an enduring impact on programs and delivery. It can be useful to gather data about the ways that the program has adjusted to accommodate participants.

On the third level, the program clarification tier, program staff and participants provide feedback on how to improve program content and delivery. This level includes close scrutiny of program goals and objectives. The essential question is, "How can we do a better job serving our clients?" (Jacobs, 1988, p. 57). Both staff and participant feedback are essential to answering this question.

Client satisfaction data are valuable on this level. It is often helpful to gather data not only from active program participants but also from those who registered but dropped out of active participation. Such interviews may yield important clues for greater effectiveness. For example, sensitive inquiry may determine that the current, middle-class, college-educated teacher is not the right person to deliver this program for limited-resource, young, Hispanic mothers. There may be language and cultural barriers that need to be addressed.

Evaluation at Levels 2 and 3 is formative in nature. We want to see who is participating in a program and how they are experiencing it. Formative evaluation data are very important to help guide your efforts toward better service to clientele. As pointed out by Small (1990), "Good formative evaluation can provide the type of information that will lead to program improvement and ultimately greater program impact if and when an outcome evaluation is conducted" (p. 133).

At Level 4, the progress-toward-objectives tier, more mature programs (ostensibly that have had favorable formative reviews) give careful attention to outcomes, including the questions, "Which participants achieved which of these proximate objectives? Are there differential program effects based on participants' ages, races, or opinions?" (Jacobs, 1988, p. 59). Thus, Level 4 represents a distinct shift from formative evaluation to summative evaluation. This intensity of evaluation is suitable for programs that "are longer lived, more experienced, and relatively secure financially" (Jacobs, 1988, p. 59). While these are the activities that most people think of as standard evaluation activities, such intensive evaluation requires greater program maturity than most programs have.

Level 4 evaluations will often require the help of professional evaluators or others with specialized knowledge of evaluation. Measures may include items such as those listed above in the discussion of EASE. Careful measurement and statistical analysis can provide evidence that program clients are making progress toward stated program objectives.

Jacobs (1988) makes the point that, while standard measures may be an important part of the evaluation, customized measures that tap the unique character of the program are essential.

The final level, the program impact tier, is the most rigorous. It often entails random assignment of participants to treatment and delayed treatment groups, longitudinal data collection, and complex analyses. In evaluation-intensive funded projects, as much as 30% to 40% of the total budget may be allocated to evaluation activities. Such investment of resources can support careful, exacting analyses with persuasive conclusions. Table 3.2 summarizes the Jacobs (1988) model.

TABLE 3.2 Summary of Jacobs's (1988) Five-Tiered Model of Evaluation

Tier/Level	*Purpose*	*Tasks*
Tier 1 Preimplementation	Establish fit between community need and program	1. Conduct a community needs assessment 2. Revise program plans and focus based on needs assessment data
Tier 2 Accountability	Determine who is getting the program and if it is reaching the intended audience	1. Accurately determine the number and characteristics of people served, such as through examining sociodemographic data from program surveys
Tier 3 Program Clarification	Gather feedback from program staff and participants on how to improve program content and delivery	1. Collect client satisfaction data 2. Collect staff data on program fidelity, fit of processes with goals and objectives, needed adjustments

Tier 4 Progress Toward Objectives	Document program effectiveness and short-term outcomes	1. Collect outcome data using reliable measures tied to goals and objectives 2. Do data analysis that shows the extent to which outcomes are being achieved, at the short term
Tier 5 Program Impact	Document program effectiveness and long-term outcomes Recommend model programs for widespread dissemination	1. Collect sophisticated data analysis to show effectiveness that uses random assignment, longitudinal data collection, and complex analyses

It is clear that this is not the right level of evaluation for a young, still developing program. It is no more reasonable to ask a toddler to wear adult shoes than it is to ask a developing program to do effective, comprehensive outcome evaluation. McCall and Green (2004) argue that, in our rush for such rigorous testing, we may have undervalued other methods of evaluating programs.

One of the commonest problems in the evaluation of family life education (FLE) may be placing evaluation burdens on programs that are not prepared to support them. Evaluation should be matched to the program. It is also wise to educate funders and other stakeholders to expect the kind of evaluation that is appropriate for the maturity of the program.

Most programs fail to get enough information from program staff. Careful scrutiny of the delivery process may include not only staff discussions but also observations of teaching or service delivery by fellow staff members.

THE LOGIC MODEL APPROACH TO EVALUATION ●

Jacobs's (1988) five-tiered model of evaluation sensitizes program developers to the need to match evaluation efforts to the maturity of the program. It encourages program evaluators to gather and use different kinds of data. It also provides a philosophical context for the enterprise of evaluation. It does not provide a step-by-step process for evaluation.

One popular method for conceptualizing program and evaluation efforts is the development of a logic model. Logic models were first developed by Edward Suchman (1968) and have become increasingly popular.

Logic models commonly begin with a description of the situation and priorities. The situation can result from an effective needs assessment. Priorities are related to the vision of the program. This section of the logic model may also include a list of stakeholders and a summary of research or best practices related to the identified problem.

The next step in the model is to specify inputs. What are the human, financial, material, and knowledge resources that can be applied to the problem?

Next are outputs that are divided into activities and participants. What are the processes that will be used to effect change? Will the program use newsletters, group meetings, conferences, home visitation, or some other process? Related to participants, who will take part, what agencies will be involved, who are the customers of services?

Next are the outcomes or impacts divided into short term, medium term, and long term. Clearly, the short-term results are easiest to measure. What are the changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations (Rockwell & Bennett, 2004)? Medium-term results such as changes in behavior or social policy are generally more difficult to measure. Long-term impacts include changes in communities such as lowered divorce rates or teen pregnancy. They are clearly the most difficult to impact and to measure. Since there are many factors outside those affected by the program, it is especially difficult to establish that a specific program had a societal impact. Such forces are labeled external factors in some logic models.

Undergirding the other elements of the logic model are assumptions. Many programs struggle under a load of unchecked assumptions. For example, the assumption that raising self-esteem will remedy a wide range of social problems has wide appeal and popular support. Unfortunately, it has not been supported by research (Kohn, 1994; Mecca, Smelser, & Vasconcellos, 1989).

Logic models are one way of organizing the various elements of a program. They provide a framework for organizing thinking and planning evaluation. See Table 3.3 as an example of how one project used a logic model to map out its evaluation process for one objective. For an effective and more detailed introduction to logic models, consult the University of Wisconsin website at http://www.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse/#.

TABLE 3.3 Logic Model for ACP/Centro Hispano Capacity Building Project

Community Outreach Infrastructure Plan

Input	*Activities*	*Output*	*Short-Term Outcome (Learning)*	*Medium-Term Outcome (Action)*	*Long-Term Outcome (Capacity)*
Contract a facilitator and planning team made up of representatives from key collaborative partners to research, design and put into practice an outreach infrastructure plan to mobilize community resources	Transform ad hoc steering committee to permanent planning team	Sustained committee membership who oversee project	Planning team understands its responsibilities	Team meets regularly to carry out its mobilization agenda	Strong leadership and consistent movement toward goals; project has public visibility
	Hold a series of team meetings to hammer out infrastructure for community outreach	Sustainable infrastructure model and organizational chart created	Collaborative partners clearly understand their roles, responsibilities, and relationship to the initiative and to one another	Collaborative partners carry out their roles and responsibilities	Sustainable infrastructure that supports healthy marriage is in place in the Hispanic community
	Review action plan for healthy marriage with the permanent planning team	Action plan for the healthy marriage initiative reviewed, revised, and refocused	Action plan is used to track progress of the initiative at planning team meetings	Achievement of yearly action plan goals	Achievement of multiyear action plan goals and objectives

Objective: To create an outreach infrastructure that will increase the capacity of our collaborative network to promote stable and healthy marriages and families in the local Hispanic community.

INNOVATIONS IN EVALUATION ●

Transformative Learning

Sometimes we think of professional evaluation as paper-and-pencil tests used to get quantitative measures of progress. But there are many other ways to get very useful information. One way is to invite program participants to meet with an interviewer (someone besides the educator or program delivery person) sometime after the completion of the program. Details of how this evaluation might be done are given in an article by Joy First and Wendy Way (1995). The interviewer can sit with those individuals who are willing to visit and ask questions such as the following:

- About how many times last week did you talk about the class, or anything you had discussed at the class, with friends or relatives?
- Do you talk to friends or relatives about any changes in your parenting as a result of the class? Can you tell me a story about those changes like you might tell a friend or relative?
- What are the most important things you feel you learned by going to the class? Can you remember any feelings you had when you were at the class?
- Has attending the class made parenting any easier? Has it made it more difficult? How?
- Can you tell me about any experiences that show how the class has affected your life—either parenting or in other ways?
- What is your best experience from the class? What is your worst experience?

(For First & Way's [1995] full list of interview questions, see p. 109 of their article.)

Such information gathered by a sensitive interviewer can provide very valuable information about the strengths of the program and ways to improve it. Themes can be tallied and presented in reports to stakeholders. Such information should also be reviewed by program staff in order to get fuller feedback than just quantitative data.

Results Mapping

Success stories have the ability to add flesh to evaluation bones. But success stories have been suspect for many reasons. They are not systematic and may capture more about the author's enthusiasm than the program's effects.

Barry Kibel (1999, n.d.) has developed a process of results mapping as a creative blend of quantitative and qualitative methods of evaluation. Results mapping is not held hostage to the limiting assumption of quantitative methods that a standard treatment has a significant effect on all recipients. This process allows portraits of different kinds of benefits from similar or customized services of an agency.

In results mapping, the storyteller explains "how the program first got involved with the client, what actions it subsequently initiated to promote client health and growth, and how the client responded to these actions" (Kibel, n.d., p. 12). The coding system even provides a results ladder with seven levels, from providing general information to attaining mastery level.

The following is an example of a story used in results mapping:

> Frances is a 78-year-old [who, after surgery] received warm lunches through the meals-on-wheels program operated by our senior center. This was her first contact in Cincinnati with adults her own age. The volunteer who delivered the meals encouraged her to visit the center after she got well. She arrived one day, stayed a few hours, then left. A week later she was back, and remained most of the day. She has been a regular ever since. For the past two months, she has been volunteering in the kitchen helping to prepare the meals we deliver. (Kibel, n.d., p. 9)

Posttest First Methods

The gold standard of evaluation has traditionally included a pretest and posttest. There are times when a posttest without a pretest may be the preferred way to evaluate. For example, parents under the supervision of a social service agency or mandated by a judge to participate in classes may not be willing to complete a pretest with candor. They may be suspicious of program personnel and the objectives of data collection.

There may also be problems with participants' interpretation of pretest items. Consider the case of a parenting class where improved empathic listening is a major objective. If we ask parents how well they are doing at empathic listening before they start the program, they may think they are doing very well. But as the program progresses and the parents learn more about what empathic listening involves, they may realize that they have much more to learn. They may give themselves a lower score on the posttest than the pretest even though they may actually be doing better. The lower score represents not diminished skill but heightened expectation. Participants' definition of empathic listening was changed by the program.

This phenomenon, called response shift bias, has been the subject of concern for many scholars (Cronbach & Furby, 1970; Doueck & Bondanza, 1990; Golembiewski, Billingsley, & Yeager, 1976; Howard & Daily, 1979; Howard, Ralph, et al., 1979; Howard, Schmeck, & Bray, 1979; E. A. R. Robinson, 1994;

Sprangers, 1989; Terborg, Howard, & Maxwell, 1980). While the most advanced evaluation requires sophisticated designs, the present point is that there are good reasons that a person may choose some design besides the traditional pretest and posttest.

Response shift bias should be less of a problem when parents are merely asked to describe their behavior. For example, if we ask how much time a parent spent with a child in a play activity requested by the child, the answer should be less vulnerable to definition bias than questions that ask the participants to evaluate their subjective performance. When the program participants' definition of a behavior is changed by the program, it may be wise to ask participants after the program how well they are doing at that behavior. After each such question, the participants could be asked how well they were doing on the same behavior at the beginning of the program. Alternatively, they could be asked to tell whether they are now doing worse, about the same, or better on that behavior. You can see how this approach avoids the problems associated with a changing definition of the behavior.

The following is a simple example of posttest and a retrospective pretest:

How well do you accept influence from your partner?

____ Very poorly
____ Poorly
____ Well
____ Very well

Before you began this program, how well did you accept influence from your partner?

____ Very poorly
____ Poorly
____ Well
____ Very well

The following is a simple example of posttest and change:
How good are you at listening to your child's feelings?

____ Very poor
____ Poor
____ Good
____ Very good

Compared to when you started this program, how good are you at listening to your child's feelings?

____ Much worse
____ Worse
____ About the same
____ Better
____ Much better

USING EVALUATION DATA ●

Not only should evaluation be designed with its end use in mind, but also careful attention should be exercised to the amount, depth, and style of presentation based on its purpose. A presentation to a lunch meeting of the general membership of a civic club that has helped fund a program will probably be quite different from the written report submitted to a governmental agency. In the former case, the appropriate presentation may include a slide show describing the objectives and activities of the program, providing a success story or two, and a very few statistics, together with an invitation for continued support. In the latter case, a complete tabulation of data may be appropriate. Even though gains may not have been shown in some areas, the narrative may justify the finding with the statement that those were secondary or even incidental objectives. The case could be made for continued or expanded funding to better address those objectives.

If you or someone in your office has a reasonable sophistication in statistics, your report might be prepared by your staff. If the organization does not have such expertise in house, you might supplement the expertise you do have with consultants who have successful experience or with print resources (see L. L. Morris, Fitz-Gibbon, & Freeman, 1987).

CONCLUSION ●

There are many ways to evaluate. Complex and ambitious evaluations may not be the best method for gathering the information you need. As you apply your good sense and your knowledge of your program and the participants, you can design the evaluation program that meets your information needs and will be effective at communicating with important stakeholders.

● EXPLORATIONS

1. Visit a community program that delivers FLE. Ask about program objectives. Examine evaluation instruments that are used. Examine any reports on the program. Decide which tier of evaluation (Jacobs, 1988) is appropriate for the program's development and the level on which the program is trying to operate. Consider what information should be collected to facilitate the program objectives.

2. Create a flowchart of evaluation processes or logic model you would recommend to guide a community FLE program you would like to initiate.

3. On your own or with partners, design an evaluation plan for your program. Include the following:

Program vision (e.g., A marriage program might have as a vision the following: *Couples who love and care for each other*)

Program goal (e.g., A parenting program might have as a goal the following: *Enhance parent effectiveness with their children*)

Program objectives (e.g., A marriage program might have as an objective the following: *Significantly increase levels of marital satisfaction as a result of the program*)

Program objectives framed as evaluation questions or evaluation objectives (A parenting program evaluator may wish to know, "What is the effect of this program on parenting confidence?" Or, stated as an evaluation objective, "*Determine whether participation in the program significantly increases reported parenting confidence*.")

Sample evaluation items/measures (e.g., If you are measuring changes in marital satisfaction as a result of the program, what kind of tool would you need? If you are assessing client satisfaction with a parenting program, what would you ask?)

Discussion of the program design (e.g., Will you do a pretest-posttest or posttest-then-pretest? At what level or tier of evaluation will you operate that is appropriate for the age and stage of your program?)

Discussion of what data you will collect and how you will collect them (e.g., Will you collect quantitative and qualitative data? Will you collect formative or summative evaluation data? Will you collect them by survey or interview? In person or otherwise? Who will collect it?)

Include the formative and summative evaluation tools you plan to use, or samples of items from the tools. *Make sure the tools are directly tied to program goals and objectives*.

4. Conduct an evaluation of an FLE program using a formative evaluation tool with quantitative (like the items in Table 3.1) and qualitative items (open-ended items like the First and Way [1995] examples). Summarize the data and practice sharing the findings in different audience formats—more popularized to more scholarly.

PART III

IMPLEMENTING FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

CHAPTER 4

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

If you were assigned to provide training or to prepare a publication on the subject of nurturing the developing child, how would you organize or structure your presentation? Are there rules or guides for making it effective?

Many of us would begin with a definition of *nurture*. We might then summarize what is known on the subject of nurturing children, including effective nurturing practices. If we are effective teachers, we will probably include stories to make our instruction more interesting and pertinent. And we will invite listeners or readers to apply the principles to their own situations. But is there something more than intuition and raw experience to guide this process?

The answer is yes. There is a substantial and growing science of instructional design. In fact, there is far more science behind instructional design than average family life educators need to know. So while family life educators do not need to become entirely focused on instructional design, they can be far more effective if they are familiar with many of the core principles.

This chapter is dedicated to discussing and applying two bodies of work by M. David Merrill, professor of instructional technology at Utah State University. His theory or framework is the centerpiece of this chapter because it is widely used in the instructional design industry, has been substantiated by research, and provides practical recommendations to those who are preparing instruction.

● COMPONENT DISPLAY THEORY

David Merrill (1983, 1994) has developed a system of instructional design that is called component display theory (CDT). There are parts of CDT that are beyond the purview of this chapter and most family life educators. However, Merrill's discussion of primary presentation forms can provide a very useful guide in the development of short presentations, extended training, and publications—any form of family life education (FLE).

If you are a person who understands tables readily, Table 4.1 will summarize the key elements of CDT in a simple form. If you do not readily comprehend the table, the text below should make the ideas clear without the table.

Let's use Merrill's (1983, 1994) CDT theory to guide the development of a lesson or publication on the topic named above: nurturing the developing child. A common way to begin would be to share a principle with the learners. Merrill calls this an expository generality (EG), which simply means that the teacher tells (called "expository" mode) some general idea, principle, concept, truth, or process (a generality). So the generality might be "Children are most likely to grow into compassionate, productive adults when they are cared for by people who are sensitive to their needs, are committed to them, and build close relationships with them."

TABLE 4.1 The Component Display Theory

		Kind of Content	
The Primary Presentation Forms of Component Display Theory		Generality (G), rule, definition, principle, or procedure	Instance (eg), a specific example of an event, process, or principle
Mode of Delivery or Presentation	Expository (E): present, tell, or show	1. EG: Tell a rule or principle	2. Eg: Give an example or story that supports the principle
	Inquisitory (I): question, ask, or learner practice	3. IG: Invite learners to express the rule in their own way	4. Ieg: Ask learners to think of their own experiences that illustrate the principle

SOURCE: Adapted from Merrill (1994, p. 121).

This simple statement undergirds the most important process in parenting (Peterson & Hann, 1999). Nothing matters as much as nurturing. A clear, direct, simple expression of this principle (EG) is a good way to start the teaching—though not the only way.

For those who are familiar with scholarship on the subject, the clear statement of principle is rich with meaning. For the typical learners, the meaning of the statement and its applications to their lives may not be clear. The typical learner will need far more instruction than a mere statement of principle.

Using Stories That Teach the Principle

To help learners understand just what the principle means, the teacher may next choose to provide examples (Eeg or expository instances) that illustrate the major points. If, for instance, we wanted to illustrate the importance of sensitive caregiving in the development of children, we might tell a story about a caregiver who responds to infant distress with support, soothing, and patience and the beneficial effects of such care. For the sake of clarity, we might also tell a contrasting story of care that is brittle, angry, and impatient and the negative consequences of such care.

To provide parents with an application of the principle, we might tell about a little boy named Riley who had colic. His parents didn't have much experience with babies or with colic. At first they wondered if they had a bad child. They wondered if they should just ignore the boy's crying in order to break the habit. But they had been told that infants sometimes get colic and need soothing. So Mom and Dad took turns rocking, singing, and patting Riley when he had colic. They helped and supported each other. When they were both worn out, they might lay Riley down in his crib for a few minutes. But even in this stressful situation, both parents made real efforts to be sensitive to Riley. Within a few weeks, the colic began to fade. While it had been a difficult time for the family, Riley had developed a sense that his parents would respond sensitively to his distress. What a great foundation for trust!

Teaching is made more interesting and effective by the use of appropriate stories. They can help learners see how an abstract principle applies to real life. They can also help learners remember the general principle. We learn through stories.

The colic story is especially appropriate for parents of infants who are likely to have children with similar problems. Multiple stories with diverse situations might be helpful. For example, Ellyn Satter has written a book

(1999) and developed a video (1995/1997) that illustrate sensitive feeding of children. In the video, she shows a parent whose sole objective appears to be to get the bottle of baby food inside the baby as quickly as possible. The parent does not talk with the child or wait for the child's signs of interest in food. The parent just shovels the food into the child. In fact, it seemed clear that the child ran out of interest in the food long before the food ran out. The parent continued to shovel the food into an increasingly unhappy child. That is a good example of nonsensitivity.

In contrast, Satter (1995/1997) also shows parents who are sensitive to the child. They engage the child in playful conversation. They offer the food so the child can see it. They allow the child time to process the food. They notice when the child loses interest in the food. Her principle related to sensitive feeding is that "nutrition has a way of falling into place when people are the priority rather than the rules that govern them." In a workshop teaching situation, Satter's video might be used or stories from her book might be shared. If you are preparing a publication on this subject, you might tell your own stories (or the stories of parents you know) or seek permission to reprint Satter's stories.

If your audience includes parents of school-age children, the stories would naturally revolve around the challenges and opportunities they will face with their children. For example, they might involve sensitivity to the children's challenges at school, their disappointments, rivalries, or difficulties in getting chores done. Even in such situations, the same general principle presides: When parents are sensitive to their children and their needs, the children are more likely to grow into socially competent people.

Each of the subparts of a principle can be taught in the same way. The principle as stated above has at least three major subparts dealing with the importance of sensitivity, commitment, and close relationship. Stories can be shared to illustrate each part of the general principle. As you can imagine, there might also be additional subprinciples taught along the way. For example, in teaching about the importance of close relationships, the teacher may teach about the characteristics of effective listening or about taking time with children. Each lesson may have one central principle and a network of supporting principles.

As you select stories to illustrate principles, it makes sense that you would use stories that your clientele can relate to. You are not likely to share stories of parents dealing with teens' careless driving if you are teaching parents of young children. In some cases, you may have a very diverse audience, including parents of a broad age range of children and very diverse life situations. It makes sense to offer a range of stories, but it also leads to another mode of learning, the mode that Merrill (1983, 1994) calls the inquisitory mode, suggesting that the teacher is inviting participation by the learners.

Helping Learners Take the Principles Home

Let's start with inquisitory generalities (IG). This step could involve asking participants to recall or repeat the rule or principle about nurturing young children. It should go beyond parroting back the original statement and invite learners to express the principle in their own words and way. Answers may be very diverse. One participant may express the principle as "Ya gotta love 'em." Is that expression of the principle acceptable? The answer is, "It depends." We might ask the participant, "Will those words help you remember to act in the ways we have talked about?" If the answer is affirmative, then that expression of the principle is satisfactory. If not, the participant might suggest how to modify his or her statement to capture the full meaning of the original principle.

The objective is not to push participants toward our words but toward actions congruent with the principle. That is why we ask, "Will those words help you remember to act in the ways we have talked about?"

Each person may have a different way of expressing the principle. "I gotta notice my kid." "I must stop being in a hurry." "I need to take time for my children." While those words may each express something very different from the original principle, each may capture that part of the principle that the participant is ready to live. The object of all instructional activity is to move participants toward actions congruent with principles.

Once the participants have their own handle on expressing the principle, effective application can be advanced by encouraging them to think of situations from their own experience where they can see the principle at work. Since we are asking the learners for their stories, Merrill (1983, 1994) calls this inquisitory instances (Ieg). Participants may tell their own stories related to the principle. An able teacher will help learners see the principle (EG) at work in their stories.

Some of the participants' stories may not seem to illustrate the principle very well. We can invite them to make the connection clear: "Do you see the principle of nurturing young children in that story?" Or if the story simply does not illustrate the principle at hand very well, a sensitive teacher might respond, "That story beautifully illustrates another principle of parenting that we will discuss later in this series. Do you have any stories that illustrate the power of love to help children grow and develop?"

Finding Instructional Balance

One way of thinking about Merrill's (1983, 1994) CDT is as a reminder to balance. Related to mode of delivery, the theory reminds us to balance the leader talk with participant talk. Certainly each participant has something valuable to contribute. The leader should bring expert knowledge as well as facilitation skills. The learners bring their own discoveries, creativity, expertise, and wealth of experience. When they work well together, great discoveries can be made.

Balance between leader and participant does not necessarily mean equal time. Instead, it suggests that each be involved in ways that advance learning. In the early stages of a class, the leader may need to take more initiative. As participants become more comfortable, they may contribute more and more to the class.

Related to the kind of content, Merrill's (1983, 1994) theory reminds us to balance generalities with instances. We have all been bored by lectures that described laws and principles but never touched down in human experience. Perhaps we have also heard presentations that were filled with stories but failed to clearly identify any general principles. When there is a healthy balance of the two, learning is facilitated.

Instruction Outside a Classroom

Much of the foregoing discussion presumes that the instruction will be delivered in face-to-face instruction. It is also useful to use CDT in organizing print materials. While a print teaching process does not allow for full-fledged interaction, many effective parenting publications provide questions that invite participant thought and reaction. Many such publications provide a place for participants to write their reactions. They may also invite participants to discuss the ideas with other family members, respected peers, or potential mentors.

When learning is done in an electronic mode, responses can be programmed into the computer software. Or, in the case of online learning, there may be interaction between the students and between students and teaching assistants.

In Chapter 5, we will explore additional ways to support and encourage learner participation. The focus of this chapter is designing instruction that is likely to help learners understand and apply principles for better family life.

Mixing the Elements of Instruction

The foregoing discussion may seem to suggest a lockstep march through a process. The reality of effective teaching is much more random and exciting. A teacher may choose to mix the instructional elements to fit the learners and the subject. For example, a teacher may choose to begin with one or more stories (Eegs) before making a statement of the principle (EG). Beginning with interesting stories may be an effective way of engaging learners' interest.

A lesson may also begin with an inquisitory generality. For example, you might invite learners to respond to the question, "What do you think is the most important thing parents can do to help their children turn out well?" If the teacher or leader dismisses answers that are not the one he or she has in mind, participants are likely to be turned off. However, a skillful teacher can respond to every answer positively: "What an important principle!" "You have probably seen that make a real difference!" Each can be written on the board or flipchart.

In the course of the discussion, someone is likely to nominate the principle that is the subject of the session, to which the teacher can respond, "That is very important. And it happens to be the one that I would like us to talk about today." An inquisitory generality may be a good way to begin if you want to get participants thinking about the general lessons they have learned.

A lesson might also begin with an inquisitory instance. We might ask, "Would you tell me stories from your parenting experience that taught you important lessons of parenting?" After listening to several stories, the leader might comment, "Thank you for sharing your stories. One of the themes I see in many of them is the importance of nurturing children." Beginning with their stories may allow the learners to see from the beginning that the general principle (EG) is tied to their lives.

Each approach has advantages and disadvantages. It requires a skillful teacher to begin in the inquisitory mode. It may also require more time to get to the central point. Yet this approach may be useful for some audiences and some subjects.

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF INSTRUCTION ●

On the basis of decades of experience in instructional design, David Merrill (2001) has created his own nominations for the first principles of instruction. He has compared his recommendations with those that come from prominent instructional models and found the common themes across most of the models. In the balance of this chapter, we will consider how these principles might be applied to the challenges faced by family life educators.

Instruction Addresses Real Problems

Merrill's (2001) first principle states that "learning is facilitated when the learner is engaged in solving a real-world problem" (p. 461). In this arena, school learning is disadvantaged. Most problems that are presented in school classrooms are artificial. (Think of those story problems in algebra or analyses of poems done in literature classes.) Family life educators have a big advantage in this arena. Family life is filled with real-world problems. Family problems tend to be real and personal. In fact, it is characteristic of family life that our relationships are close and continuing—just the right combination to present real-world problems.

Consider ways of applying this first principle to FLE. Imagine that you are teaching a class about the importance of commitment in couple relationships. You might set the stage by sharing a story from your own life or from a print source that illustrates the challenges of commitment.

For example, you might share a story from John Glenn's (1999) autobiography. He tells that his wife was bashful in part because of a problem with stuttering. He was often in the public eye. There were times when he had to choose to be involved in his profession the way people expected him to be or to be sensitive to his wife's preferences. He chose to honor his commitment to his wife.

You can invite participants to consider times when they were discouraged with their partner relationship, when they felt like giving up. Rather than have them share stories that could be painful for their partners, you could invite them to list some of the difficulties couples face that could challenge their commitment to each other. Such a discussion is likely to make the issue very real for all participants; it would be the rare participant who would not think of his or her own challenges with commitment.

Each person could be invited to identify a specific situation in which he or she found it difficult to show commitment—and make either a mental or written note. Then class members could be invited to share ideas for sustaining commitment. As the group suggests ideas, each person is invited to make note of those ideas that could be useful in his or her relationship.

Of course, group discussion is not the only path to learning. The work of Lev Vgotsky (see Rogoff, 1990) underscores the importance of learning from experts. In many arenas of activity, skill is learned through apprenticeships. Family life educators can invite people to interview those who have succeeded at the processes under study. A young couple might interview a seasoned couple, asking them about ways they have shown commitment to each other. Younger couples can also be invited to be quiet observers of couples who have learned to work well together.

Family life educators may also be involved with problem solving in after-class discussions or in home visits. For example, on a periodic home visit, a parent may ask the visitor what to do about a lazy daughter. The wise educator will not spout some canned wisdom but will model problem solving with her carefully chosen questions. "Tell me more about what your daughter is like." "In what situations is she lazy?" "Are there situations where she is not lazy?" "What have you tried to help her do better?" "Have any of those efforts paid off?" "Can you see any special reasons why she might not do well in the areas where she has seemed lazy?"

All of these questions are intended to help the parent move beyond frustrated judgment of a child to productive problem solving. They set the stage for the most important question: "Can you think of anything you can do to help your daughter function better [i.e., be less lazy]?" The parent might not have ready answers. A helpful educator might suggest some possibilities: "Do you think she fails to do certain chores because she hates those particular tasks? Or because she doesn't like to be rushed? Or because she doesn't know how?" Effective family life educators facilitate their participants' real-world problem solving.

Of course, it is generally unwise to start education with the most emotion-invoking and long-lasting problems. Merrill (2000) recommends that learners deal with "a progression of carefully sequenced problems" (p. 5). That is one reason that it is advantageous to start family life education preventively. When a parenting or partner relationship has been toxic for years, it is difficult to turn the tide.

Activating Existing Knowledge

Merrill's (2001) second principle is that learning is facilitated when existing knowledge is activated as a foundation for new knowledge. For example, if we were interested in teaching a group of parents to tune in to their children's languages of love, we might begin by inviting them to think about times in their childhoods when their family members tried to show them love. We would encourage them to think about efforts that were more or less effective. While all of the efforts to communicate love might be sincere, some were probably effective and others may have been counterproductive. We might discuss what made the difference.

Participants would probably recognize that some efforts were well tuned to our preferences and some were not. If a family member who knows I am on a diet still buys me a candy bar as a gift, I might not be appreciative. By recognizing the importance of attunement to the other person—awareness of that person's needs or preferences—we can become more effective at showing love.

To take this idea one step closer to the parents' task of showing love to their children, we might ask the parents to think about efforts they had made to show love to their children that had been more or less effective. By analyzing their efforts to show love to their children, they might determine their children's preferences or languages of love.

While the discussion of previous experience does not create new knowledge, it does bring existing knowledge to a more conscious level and organizes it into a form that can guide intentional action.

In some cases, it may be useful to create a new experience for learners as a foundation for the new learning. For example, family members in a weekly class might be asked to wear some special mental glasses that allowed them to notice only the good things that their partner or children do. Imagine that the glasses entirely block out annoyances and disappointments. Notice the good, record it, and return to the next session to discuss what they noticed and experienced.

It is possible that such an assignment would set the stage for teaching class members about the processes by which humans judge the motives of others and about the power of the mind to interpret and filter experience. It could provide personal experience relevant to the lesson to be taught.

The Power of Demonstration

Merrill's (2001) third principle states that learning is facilitated when new knowledge is demonstrated to the learner. It is not uncommon for people in classes to be taught a new principle, presented with a dilemma, and asked to tell how to respond. The task may seem easy to those who are familiar with the principle and have tried to apply it for years. But the jump from current experience to new performance can be daunting for many learners.

For example, it is common in both parenting and couple relationship trainings to teach people about empathic responding. We teach people to attend to the emotional experience of their child or partner and try to express in words what that person may be feeling. It may seem easy enough—but decades of experience can work against ready application of the principle.

Imagine that we have taught parents about empathic listening in parenting. To give them a chance to practice, we ask them to imagine that one of their children has come home from school with slumped shoulders and confessed to getting in trouble at school. In fact, the teacher yelled at your child and called him names. At this point, you invite parents in your class to tell what they would say if they were responding empathically to the upset child. We suspect that the natural parental tendency to play like a cross-examining investigator will swamp the valuable lessons parents may have learned in a parenting class. Habit regularly trumps new learning.

Especially as participants learn new and difficult skills, it might be useful to invite them to tell what they would normally say under such circumstances. "Under normal circumstances, what might a parent say in response to a child who has come home and reported trouble at school?" Parents can report their automatic response. For example, one parent might respond, "I would find out what my son did to get into trouble!" Your response as an educator can open the way for the new learning: "That is a very normal reaction. Let's think about how it would work. How do you think your son would feel if you quizzed him about what he did to get himself in trouble? Would it effectively convey your compassion and understanding? Would it prepare him to try better behavior?" The answer should be obvious to any parent who is not defensive.

As the ineffectiveness of our automatic reactions becomes clear, the way is open for the educator to invite new thinking: "What might a parent do that would show more compassion?" In response to any answer, you can direct the person to the effect on the child. This process demonstrates just how difficult new skills can be while pointing the parents to the ultimate test of their actions: How do the actions affect the child?

As a family life educator, you can also suggest parent responses while inviting the parents to test them by the same standard. "How would your child feel if you said, 'Oh, son! You must have felt humiliated to be chewed out in front of your classmates!'" Truly empathic listening is so contrary to humans' automatic and egocentric responses that it takes lots of practice. But "learning is facilitated when new knowledge is demonstrated to the learner" (Merrill, 2000, p. 2). Many demonstrations over many sessions may be necessary for effective learning.

Applying New Knowledge

Merrill's (2001) fourth principle states that "learning is facilitated when the learner is required to use his or her new knowledge to solve problems" (p. 463). There are no written tests that qualify a person as a good family member. The application of knowledge is the end goal of FLE.

Between sessions of FLE, it is common to make assignments to participants. For example, after teaching about the importance of thinking positively about one's partner, each participant might be encouraged to think of a quality or behavior that is most appreciated in the partner. Once the quality is identified, each participant can be encouraged to think of a way to prompt remembering that quality in the hours and days ahead. Some might choose to tie a string around a finger or carry a keepsake in a shirt pocket. Participants are encouraged to use the prompt to remember the quality regularly, especially in times of stress. Each is asked to make a mental or written note of successes and struggles that might be shared with the class in the next meeting of the group (whether face to face or online).

Merrill (2001) observes that "appropriate practice is the single most neglected aspect of effective instruction" (p. 464). The new behavior needs to be practiced. Gottman (1994) refers to extensive practice as overlearning. He recommends that partners overlearn their new skills so that they have a fighting chance when they face a challenge and are tempted by habit to fall into unproductive if overritualized patterns.

Practice can happen in both instructional and real-world settings. Family life educators can facilitate such field learning by providing learners a standard by which to judge their performance. For example, an educator might teach participants in a parenting class to judge any responses to parenting problems by a two-part test: (1) Is the solution likely to improve the behavior? (2) Does the solution show respect for the child? When the parents have a standard for judging their new solutions, they are more likely to turn to new behavior than fall back on old habits.

Turning again to Merrill (2000): "Most learners learn from the errors they make, especially when they are shown how to recognize the error, how to recover from the error, and how to avoid the error in the future" (p. 8). Many of us have spent decades trying to get better at practicing what we preach. We can provide relevant practice to help our participants apply knowledge to their lives across time.

New Knowledge Integrated Into the Learner's World

Merrill's (2000) fifth and final point is that "learning is facilitated when new knowledge is integrated into the learner's world" (p. 2). Learners may benefit from making specific and practical plans for integrating their new knowledge into their family lives. They can engage in periodic discussions with co-learners or support groups. They can keep a journal of their performance.

They may also benefit from teaching their newfound knowledge to others. There is nothing quite like teaching to force us to understand a principle and how it works. Your participants might be invited to give a mini-lesson to the class, to teach a group at work or in their faith community.

Merrill (2000) observes that there is no satisfaction quite like moving from student to teacher or mentor. "The real motivation for learners is learning. When learners are able to demonstrate improvement in skill, they are motivated to perform even better" (p. 8). The combination of integrating the skills into everyday life and sharing them with others cements the lessons.

CONCLUSION ●

When instruction—whether oral or written—is designed according to established principles of instructional design, the message is more likely to be effective. In addition, the instruction is more likely to be enjoyable for both the educator and the participant.

EXPLORATIONS ●

1. Review the lesson that you created using the component display theory above for its consonance with Merrill's first principles of instruction. Enlarge or refine your lesson as necessary. Identify the way you will facilitate learning in each of the ways described in Merrill's five principles by placing a numeral 1 through 5 next to the part of your lesson plan that facilitates learning in that way.

2. Now that you are familiar with all four elements of Merrill's CDT, take a speech, lesson plan, or outline—any deliberate instruction—and identify the four elements: EG, Eeg, IG, and Ieg. Evaluate whether adding more of one or another of the elements would have made the presentation more effective for the purpose it was delivered.

3. Develop a lesson plan or pamphlet to teach a principle with which you are familiar. In fact, it would be useful to select a subject that you have taught before or are likely to teach in the future. Create the instruction using (and labeling) all four elements of Merrill's CDT. Describe your audience and justify your combination of elements based on the needs of your target audience and your instructional objectives. Share your work with a classmate for feedback. If you have created a lesson plan, seek an opportunity to use the plan to teach a group and invite a classmate or colleague to give you feedback.

CHAPTER 5

ENGAGING AN AUDIENCE

There is much that could be written about processes for engaging an audience; it is as much art as science. There will be four broad themes in this chapter. The first deals with the art of teaching—and special considerations with the adult learner. Next is a short section about personality theories; if we hope to change people with our teaching, we can benefit from insights into human nature. The third section of this chapter reviews some of what is known about "joining" or relationship building as a precondition to effective helping. In addition, Ginott's method of applying these principles is reviewed. Finally, the chapter concludes with some practical applications of the principles to teaching and print efforts.

THE ART OF TEACHING

Reflect on your best learning experiences—classes, workshops, or lectures. Do you learn best when a teacher relentlessly pounds facts into you? Have you gained the most when you felt cowed and intimidated by a dismissive teacher? Do you prefer to be a silent, unengaged observer?

One of my (Goddard's) favorite teachers in high school was Ray Gilbert. He taught trigonometry—not a subject that is automatically riveting. He was a tall, gangly man who typically began each class period by sitting on his desk and chatting with us. He might talk about a ball game or a snowstorm or some world happening that affected us all. He seemed to genuinely enjoy us, which was a rare experience for high school students.

Mr. Gilbert was excited about trigonometry. He described the ways we could use trig to track the path of, for example, a potato shot from a potato gun. He talked and laughed easily. The experience I remember most clearly from his class was a day when several of us had written problems from our homework assignment on the board. Each of us in turn discussed the steps in our solution. When it was my turn, I began to trace through the steps but was only midway through the problem when I realized that I had misunderstood the problem and done it all wrong. A blush began at the top of my head and was rapidly working its way through my soul as I stammered my way to the end of the problem. I felt humiliated.

Mr. Gilbert stood up at the back of the classroom, took a deep breath, and said, "Wow. In all my years of teaching, I have never seen that problem done that way." I felt relieved. I might not get credit for accurate trig, but I had gotten credit for creativity.

A Formula for Engaging an Audience

A person can scan the leading guides for family life educators and parenting educators (e.g., Arcus et al., 1993b; Bornstein, 2002; Fine, 1980, 1989; Fine & Lee, 2000) and fail to find any practical formula for teaching. There are skills approaches (Campbell & Palm, 2004) but no guiding principles.

If this author were to provide a simple formula for effective teaching, it would include three elements: relevance, respect, and participation. Mr. Gilbert certainly honored that formula. He got us involved in solving problems, he respected us—even when we made mistakes—and he tried to make trig relevant.

Family life education (FLE) may likewise benefit from considerations of relevance, respect, and participation. FLE enjoys the inherent advantage of being relevant for everyone; everyone is tied to a family in some way.

Respect is also a vital element. It would be painfully ironic to try to teach respect in families using methods employing scorn and contempt. We must model the respect that we invite participants to take to their family relationships.

Participation is fundamental to FLE. Family life is more than book learning; it is a personally engaging enterprise that is best learned in participatory ways.

This formulation for engaging lay audiences can take many forms. Some years ago, I (Goddard) was invited to talk to a group of parents about teens and sexuality. I showed up at the appointed time and place with facts, figures, and discussion questions. As I entered the classroom, I found that there were about 20 teens and no adults. I asked the program organizers about the sudden change of audience. "We had these teens from a residential facility show up and thought that they would benefit from a presentation by you about the role of sexuality."

I felt a great urge to panic. Nothing I had prepared for the parents fitted this new audience. My mind raced while I unloaded my books and papers. When I could delay no longer, I introduced myself and went to the board and drew one horizontal line from one end of the board to the opposite end—about 12 feet long. I told the teens that I wanted their opinions about the meaning of sexual behavior. At one end of the continuum I put the word *Never*. "Some people believe that sex is never good. It is best to avoid it your whole lifetime."

I walked to the opposite end of the board and wrote the word *Always*. "Some people believe that sex is always good with another consenting person. Anytime you can get it, take it."

Putting a mark near the middle of the line, I said, "Some people believe that sex is good in some kinds of committed relationships. In other words, sex is good if you are in love or married."

I invited the teens to tell what they thought was the ideal role for sex. Was it always bad? Was it always good? Was it good only under certain circumstances? Of course, I did not encourage them to describe their own sexual behavior, only their beliefs about the appropriate role of sex.

A lively discussion ensued. Students challenged and questioned each other. Many were clearly reflecting on their own position for the first time. In the course of the discussion, one boy who had endorsed an almost predatory view moved to a more conservative and considerate position. Others developed greater clarity about their beliefs.

Of course, I do not believe that we settled all issues in that 1-hour discussion. And such a discussion should not be held without appropriate safeguards such as careful guidance by an experienced teacher. However, the effectiveness of the session at clarifying student views was the result of the teens' lively participation. A lecture probably could not have elicited the reflection and insight that came from the hour-long discussion.

Engaging the Adult Learner With Family Life Education

FLE can happen in settings as diverse as an eighth-grade health class, a church-sponsored marriage retreat, a community fathering class, or a prison mothering class. Traditionally, much of FLE has been done with adults. Hopefully, many more young people will be involved in FLE in the future.

Since the people who are married or parenting are most likely to be adults, and since those who have traditionally enrolled for FLE have often been adults, it is important to be aware of unique considerations for adult learners.

Knowles (1998) summarizes some of the classic observations about adult learners. "In conventional education the student is required to adjust himself [or herself] to an established curriculum; in adult education the curriculum is built around the student's needs and interests. The resource of highest value in adult education is the learner's experience. Experience is the adult learner's living textbook" (p. 39). Knowles also observes that "adults have a deep need to be self-directing" (p. 40). "Adult learners are precisely those whose intellectual aspirations are least likely to be aroused by the rigid, uncompromising requirements of authoritative, conventionalized institutions of learning" (p. 38).

Some might be tempted to suggest that participants in FLE merely gather and share ideas—an open sharefest. There are times when that may be effective. Yet active participation does not preclude leadership. While a group leader or educator may have more knowledge of research than any of the class members, participants "as a group have more solutions than we do" (Curran, 1989, p. 20). The ideal learning environment will bring the knowledge and facilitation skills of the educator together with the experience and problem-solving capacity of the participants. A specific method that provides such a learning environment will be described later in this chapter.

● WHAT CHANGES PEOPLE? CHALLENGING IDEAS FROM PERSONALITY THEORIES

There are no simple answers to the question of what changes people. The complexity is due to both the complexity of people themselves and the diversity of views on the subject. Different psychological schools of thought would offer very different recommendations for changing human behavior on the basis of their assumptions about human nature and motivation.

For the purposes of this discussion, the work of Salvatore Maddi is helpful. He has divided the many theories of personality into three broad categories. The first group of theories is called conflict theories. One of the most prominent conflict theorists was Sigmund Freud, for whom the core tendency in humans is "to maximize instinctual gratification while minimizing punishment and guilt" (Maddi, 1989, p. 627). This puts humans in conflict with society, which must manage individuals' drives if the common good is to be maintained.

While there are many other versions of conflict theories in addition to Freud's, an educator who subscribed to a conflict model of human behavior would frame the task in terms of the inherent conflict between family members' interests or between an individual family member and the family as a whole. Complicating the educator's job, many conflict theorists believe that psychological defenses would make it impossible for participants and family members to access their true feelings and motivations.

The task of family life educators who subscribed to conflict models of human behavior would be to teach family members to gratify their own needs while respecting the needs of others. "The best that [families] can do is aim for cooperation and order so as to maximize gratifications for all" (Maddi, 1989, p. 51). The way to engage learners in a class would be to offer ways of reducing tension while minimizing their guilt and punishment.

In contrast to conflict models, consistency models posit that all humans want to reduce the tension or difference between expectation and reality. The best-known conflict model is probably the cognitive dissonance model, which asserts that humans want to minimize the large discrepancies between expectation and occurrence while maximizing small discrepancies between them. Said differently, people like small surprises, but they do not like to be shocked. The activation version of consistency theories suggests that humans seek to maintain a level of activation to which they are accustomed. When people are underactivated, they seek more stimulation. When they are overactivated, they seek to reduce stimulation.

Consistency models might be applied to FLE in a couple of ways. Interest can be stimulated by presenting situations that challenge their traditional ways of thinking. For example, parents in a parenting class might be provided with information that challenges their familiar thinking: "If it is true that children generally do what seems right to them, how do we explain the way children sometimes hurt their siblings?" By presenting two "truths" that are at odds with each other, we can often stimulate our participants to think in more complex ways.

Consistency models can also consider the level of stimulation that is optimal for each learner in a class. While the optimal level will vary from learner to learner, important clues can be gained by observing the class. Are they understimulated or overstimulated? During the course of a session, having a variety of activities is probably optimal. Consistency models sensitize us to the fact that learners will learn best when they are neither bored nor overstimulated. The old adage may be true that it is the educator's job to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comforted.

Maddi's (1989) third way of understanding human behavior is the fulfillment model. Rather than seeing the world as two great forces at odds with each other, fulfillment models focus on one great force, the realization of one's abilities or the striving toward ideals. Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow are prominent names associated with this view.

Fulfillment models have implications for engaging and teaching family life audiences. Maslow suggested that we do not move to higher levels of functioning when lower needs are gnawing at us. Assuring class members of safety, belongingness, and our esteem for them might make it easier for them to participate. In those cases where they carry burdens and worries from home to class, it may be useful to help them process them. "It looks like you're worried about things at home."

The other practical application of the fulfillment model to engaging the audience is to paint a picture of personal possibilities for participants. What Maddi (1989) has said about therapy might also be applied to FLE:

> In [FLE], it is very helpful—for [participant] and [educator] alike—to believe in a view of the [person] as unlimited in what it can become. It is helpful because you are already dealing with a [participant] who [may be discouraged] and has lost conviction about becoming anyone worthwhile. In such a situation, it is necessary to hold out a view of life that is extreme enough in its opposition to the client's view to be able to serve as the needed corrective. (p. 102)

Comparing the Personality Theories

We are tempted to ask which of the personality theories best describes human reality. Maddi (1989) finds "considerable empirical support for both versions of the fulfillment model and the activation version of the consistency model" (p. 532). Yet savvy family life educators know that there are valuable lessons to be learned from each of the views.

For example, the conflict models remind us that there is often a conflict within families and within classes. We can help participants meet their needs while respecting the needs of the group. The consistency models encourage us to be mindful of the activation levels of class members. The fulfillment models offer an optimistic portrait of personal development that can give us and our participants renewed hope.

All family life educators will form a unique combination of models to form a personal philosophy. Many family life educators subscribe to fulfillment models because of their positive portrayal of humans as having inherent strengths and unlimited potential for growth. Such educators are likely to see themselves as collaborators or facilitators, as described in Chapter 1.

Participants in FLE settings likewise may resonate with this philosophy that credits them with much that is good. So, as Myers-Walls (2000) has suggested, there is merit in assessing learners' models of human functioning and matching them to the curriculum and teaching style that best fits them.

RELATIONSHIPS AS THE BASIS FOR HELPING ●

Prelude to Effective Education

In FLE, it is common to focus on the content to the neglect of process. The relationship between the educator and the learner may be more important than the content of the lesson. As DeBord et al. (2002) observed, "Instructors will be more likely to provide appropriate content and learning experiences if they have developed a relationship with participants, can identify their strengths and challenges, and can modify the program to fit the specific needs of the audience" (p. 32).

This should not be surprising. In family relationships, nothing matters as much as the quality of the relationship. As Smith, Perou, and Lesesne (2002) observe about parent-child relationships, "What is essential for a child's well-being [is] stable loving relationships with parents who provide nurturing, reciprocal interactions" (p. 406).

It is also the quality of the relationship that seems to be the biggest factor in helping relationships, whether educational or therapeutic. FLE is clearly distinct from therapy but employs some of the methods that are successful in therapy. In a study of solution-focused therapies, Miller, Duncan, and Hubble (1997) found that relationship matters more than technique:

> While therapists tended to attribute therapeutic success to the use of solution-focused techniques (e.g., specialized interviewing techniques, miracle questions), the clients consistently reported a strong therapeutic relationship as the critical factor in treatment outcome (e.g., therapist acceptance, non-possessive warmth, positive regard, affirmation, and self-disclosure). (p. 85)

Brammer and MacDonald (1999) report that "all authorities in the helping process agree that the quality of the relationship is important to effective helping" (p. 49). In the absence of a positive, affirming relationship, growth is less likely. In therapy, this relationship is established through the process of joining. Minuchin and Fishman (1981) observed that

> joining a family is more an attitude than a technique, and it is the umbrella under which all therapeutic transactions occur. Joining is letting the family know that the therapist understands them and is working with and for them. Only under this protection can the family have the security to explore alternatives, try the unusual, and change. Joining is the glue that holds the therapeutic system together. (pp. 31–32)

Hanna and Brown (2004) suggest that "the personal rapport or empathy that therapists develop with those they are trying to help remains the single most proven variable determining the effectiveness of psychotherapy" (p. 89). Jacobson and Christensen (1996) similarly make the case for viewing clients compassionately in integrated couple therapy (ICT):

> The skilled ICT therapist has to develop the ability to find compassion and sympathy in each person's story, no matter how unsympathetic and contemptible one partner may appear. Our position is that the vast majority of people act badly in relationships because they are suffering. (p. 99)

To the extent that participants in FLE settings examine personal feelings and assumptions as part of a change and growth process, the same principles can be expected to apply. In fact, a vital process for connecting may be identifying and appreciating family strengths.

Below are Hanna and Brown's (2004, p. 95) six processes for joining together with commentary on their application to FLE.

1. "Emphasize positive statements reported by family members."

   We are all encouraged and energized when people notice and appreciate the good in us and our families: "I am impressed with your resilience."

2. "Encourage family members to share their story about themselves."

   It may be especially useful to notice ways that the family has adapted or coped with problems: "It seems that your family has great determination when difficulties arise."

3. "Note family interactions that reflect strength and competency."

   Each story tells something about the difficulties families face but also about the resources they use to meet them: "I like the way you involve your family in solving problems."

4. "Emphasize those times that family members enjoy together."

   Explore the positive experiences that family members describe; help them put a frame about the best in their family life: "It sounds as if your family enjoys laughter together."

5. "Reframe problems or negative statements in a more positive way."

   Help family members find a positive interpretation for their experiences: "Your worry was a sign that you really care about your children."

6. "Emphasize what families do well."

   Invite them to talk about their successes: "Please tell us more about how you overcame that challenge."

The Boundary Between Therapy and Family Life Education

While FLE may draw on some of the techniques and findings of therapy, it is not the same as therapy. In fact, ethical issues require educators to carefully establish a boundary between their educational efforts and the methods of therapy. Bill Doherty (1995) has described the dilemma in this way:

> In order to accomplish its purpose, parent and family education must have more personal depth than other forms of education, but too much depth or intensity risks harming participants, or at least scaring them away. Participants must be able to tell their stories, express their feelings and values, and be encouraged to try out new behaviors. However, if they recount in detail their most traumatic memories, ventilate their most painful and unresolved feelings, or take major behavioral risks, the experience can be damaging. (p. 353)

Doherty (1995) describes five levels of his family involvement model, from least involvement to greatest:

Level 1: Minimal emphasis on family might include a parent-teacher conference in which the school conveyed policies or information.

Level 2: Information and advice is the level at which the educator undertakes training of the recipients.

Level 3: Feelings and support add to the information of Level 2, the processing of feelings. This is not the intense processing of personal and painful experience. This is the level on which much FLE takes place.

Level 4: Brief, focused intervention "represents the upper boundary of parent and family education practiced by a minority of professionals who choose to work with special populations of parents and seek special training in family assessment and basic family interventions" (p. 355).

Level 5: Family therapy is beyond the scope of FLE.

While warning family life educators against moving into Level 5 interventions, he observes that "a strictly content oriented training program [for family life educators] cannot adequately prepare professionals for affective work with families" (p. 356). Family life educators need to know how to facilitate the processing of personal family experience with their participants.

A Specific Method for Capitalizing on Emotion in Family Life Education

Haim Ginott, famous for his classic book *Between Parent and Child* (1965), spent years working with children in play therapy and with their parents in therapy. Over the years, he came to the conclusion that most parents need education rather than therapy; they are not mentally ill—they are merely uninformed (Goddard & Ginott, 2002).

Ginott conducted parenting groups in New York City for many years and developed a process for working with parents that combines the principles of trust building with emotional education. While Ginott's work focused on parenting education, the same principles apply in delivering couples' education or other kinds of FLE. Ginott's approach helps parenting educators model the behaviors they are encouraging parents to practice with their children.

Ginott's method, described by his student and colleague Arthur Orgel (1980), suggested that there are four steps in the process of supporting parents. Ginott's method has particular merit because it is based on his top-rated (Norcross et al., 2003) parenting books (Ginott, 1965, 1969; Ginott, Ginott, & Goddard, 2003) and because of his experience as a family life educator (Goddard, 1999).

1. *Recitation is the first stage of FLE.* In this stage, parents (partners or other participants) are encouraged to talk about their challenging