AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF TWO TYPES OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMS ON PERCEIVED HETEROSEXUAL COMPETENCE

by

Judith Dent

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the

SCHOOL OF HOME ECONOMICS

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1 9 8 0

STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This thesis has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at The University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this thesis are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the head of the major department of the Dean of the Graduate College when in his judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interests of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author.

SIGNED: Judith Dent

APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

This thesis has been approved on the date shown below:

Carl A. Ridley — 4-27-80

Carl A. Ridley
Professor
Child Development and Family Relations

Date

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to express her deepest gradtitude to Dr. Carl A. Ridley for his continual and invaluable support and guidance, and to Dr. Victor A. Christopherson and Dr. David C. Berliner for their constructive evaluation of the manuscript and for serving on the committee. A special thanks goes to Keith E. Meredith and John Luiten for their help.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS--Continued

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to assess the effects of two types of interpersonal skills training programs, a self-disclosure and empathy program and a general communication and problem-solving program on perceived heterosexual competence. Both experimental groups (24 couples in each group) participated in one of the two eight-week, 24-hour interpersonal skills training programs, while the control group (26 couples) participated in a relationship discussion group over the same time period. The Peterman-Ridley Heterosexual Competency Scale (PRHCS) was administered to the three groups at pretest and posttest. Results indicated that, in perceptions of heterosexual competence, (a) the self-disclosure and empathy group was significantly greater than the relationship discussion group, at posttest, (b) the general communication and problem-solving group was not significantly different from the relationship discussion group, at posttest, and (c) the self-disclosure and empathy group and the general communication and problem-solving group were not significantly different, at posttest.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The desire to have meaningful and lasting heterosexual relationships has become increasingly important to individuals in recent years. The concomitant increase in demand for relationship oriented services indicates that couples are having difficulty in achieving desirable long-term relationships (Olson, 1976). In response to this difficulty, social and behavioral scientists have developed educationally-oriented relationship enhancement techniques in which a substantial body of outcome literature has been accumulated. While the various approaches to relationship enhancement represent different theoretical bases, strategies and techniques for implementing change, the long-term common goal is to increase the essential skills that will enable individuals to develop and maintain satisfying interpersonal relationships. Another commonality of the various intervention programs is the focus on the improvement of communication skills as a primary mechanism for promoting relationship enhancement.

There are two educationally-oriented approaches to relationship enhancement that have been widely investigated for effectiveness in marital relationships, and to a lesser extent, premarital relationships. The general communications approach has evolved from a humanistic theoretical base that emphasizes self-awareness and the acquisition of the empathic and disclosing

elements of effective communication (Ely, Guerney, and Stover, 1973; Guerney, 1977; Miller, Nunnally,and Wackman, 1975).

The foundations of the behavioral-exchange approach to relationship enhancement was formulated from a combination of principles drawn from both social learning and exchange theories. From a behavioral-exchange perspective, the focus is on teaching couples problem-solving, communication skills or a combination of both, through reciprocal positive reinforcement principles and contingency management skills, e.g., negotiation, pinpointing and contracting (Harrell and Guerney, 1976; Jacobson, 1977; Patterson, Hops, and Weiss, 1973, 1975; Ridley, Avery, Harrell, Leslie, and Dent, 1980).

It must be emphasized that though the foci of the humanistic and behavioral-exchange approaches are different, both have the shared purpose of increasing the interpersonal competencies that enable individuals to develop and maintain satisfying relationships. The view that the quality of relationship functioning is determined by the personal and interpersonal competencies of the individuals involved is not a new one. Foote and Cottrell (1955) conceptualized interpersonal competence as skills that are learned and possessed by all in varying degrees, that determine an individual's ability to achieve interpersonal goals. Heterosexual competence is a subcategory of interpersonal competence only because a qualification of opposite sex relationship is specified. The focus of attention is on the skills that an individual has acquired toward developing and

maintaining satisfying heterosexual relationships.

Adding to our knowledge about heterosexual relationship functioning, Foote (1956) pointed out that the continual interpersonal changes of marital couples over time, can result in a future interpersonal "unmatching" if the couple have not developed the interpersonal skills necessary to not only accommodate but initiate relationship change. The author urged family life researchers to pursue a "...scientific and professional understanding of the processes involved (of competency interpersonal relationships) because scientific information can not too quickly become disseminated among at least those portions of the population who are demonstrably ready for it" (Foote, 1965, p. 32). If the viability of heterosexual relationships over time, depends on the heterosexual competence of the individuals involved, as Foote suggested, it is important to differentiate and carefully analyze the effects of specific interpersonal skills on the heterosexual competence of individuals. Systematic investigation of skill training programs designed to increase competency in heterosexual relationships is a necessary concern of social and behavioral science research. As Olson (1970, 1976) indicated, only a small fraction of research is devoted to evaluation of the existing approaches to interpersonal skill training. A critical issue is, what differences, if any, do the various approaches to interpersonal skill training have on heterosexual competency.

It is the purpose of this study to analyze and compare two interpersonal skill training programs, a self-disclosure and empathy training program and a general communication and problem-solving skills training program, on perceived heterosexual competence, relative to a relationship discussion group.

CHAPTER 2

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMS

Over the past decade, interpersonal skills training as a means for enhancing relationships has been investigated from a variety of theoretical perspectives. According to Jacobson (1978a) only two approaches to relationship enhancement can claim a substantial body of scientifically-based outcome literature, the general communication training programs and the behavioral-exchange training programs. The general communications training approach is based in humanistic theory which emphasizes self-esteem and the empathic and disclosing elements of effective communication. The behavioral-exchange approach to communication was formulated through a combination of principles drawn from both social learning and exchange theories. Both approaches to skills training have been widely investigated as to their efficacy in enhancing marital relationships and to a lesser extent, premarital relationships. Therefore, the importance of communication skills in the early stages of relationship development is an issue that is often discussed (e.g., Fitts, 1970; Lewis, 1972) though seldom investigated empirically (Ginsberg and Vogelsong, 1977; Miller, Nunnally, and Wackman, 1975 ; Ridley, et al., 1980).

The general communications and the behavioral-exchange approaches tend to be highly structured and use an educational format in teaching specific communication skills. Though the focus of both approaches to relationship enhancement is on communication training,

differing procedures and techniques have been implemented to produce relationship change. It is the purpose of this chapter to provide a general overview of the goals and procedures and to review the outcome literature of programs which are based in the general communications and the behavioral-exchange approaches to relationship enhancement.

The General Communication Approach

Relationship Enhancement (RE) developed by Bernard Guerney and associates (1964, 1977) is a structured model of the general communications approach to interpersonal skills training. RE has been applied to adult dyadic relationships (Collins, 1977; Ely, Guerney, and Stover, 1973; Ginsberg and Vogelsong, 1977; Rappaport, 1976) as well as other kinds of relationships such as parent-child (Guerney, 1964; Guerney, Guerney, and Andronico, 1966; Stover and Guerney, 1967). This review of RE programs will focus on the application of RE to conjugal relationship enhancement (CRE) and premarital relationshp enhancement (PRIMES - Premarital Relationship Improvement by Maximizing Empathy and Self-Disclosure).

The primary goal of RE programs is, "to teach attitudes and skills that will enable the participants to relate to significant others in ways that will maximize satisfaction of emotional and functional needs" (Guerney, 1977, p. 25). The ultimate goal of RE programs is, "to make the participants capable of continuously resolving inevitable conflicts and problems in their relationships,

and continually enriching the satisfactions they derive from them, independent of help not only from the professional leader, but also from group members" (Guerney, 1977, p. 78).

The general procedure of RE programs is to instruct the participants in the four basic components of effective communication (a) the Expressor Mode (b) the Empathic Responder Mode (c) the Switching Mode and (d) the Facilitator Mode (See Appendix IX for a brief description of each mode). The learning process is facilitated through techniques such as demonstration, modeling, role-playing and group feedback.

Rappaport (1976) evaluated the efficacy of Conjugal Relationship Enahncement (CRE) in a study utilizing a marathon group sessions format: two four-hour and two eight-hour sessions over a two-month period. Thirty-nine married couples were recruited for the study, of which 13 couples dropped out during a two-month waiting period prior to the implementation of the program, leaving 26 couples who began the program. Of these 26 couples, 21 couples completed the program. Subjects served as their own controls in that they were tested twice prior to treatment, at the beginning and again at the end of the two-month waiting period. Subjects were evaluated on two behavioral measures of relationship functioning developed by Bernard Guerney and his associates, and a variety of self-report measures such as the Locke Marital Adjustment Scale (MAS) (Locke and Williamson, 1958) and the Conjugal Life Questionnaire (CLQ) (Ely, Guerney and Stover, 1973). Results of the investigation

indicated that the two-month intensive CRE program significantly improved the marital functioning on both behavioral and self-report assessments, of the couples completing the program. Though this study experienced subject attrition problems and was not ideally controlled, it gives some support to the efficacy of Conjugal Relationship Enhancement.

Collins (1977) compared couples receiving a six-month CRE training program to an untreated control group. Of the 54 couples that were recruited, 45 couples remained to complete the study, 34 couples in the experimental group and 21 couples in the control group. The couples met in three-couple groups led by graduate students experienced in RE training. In addition, each couple was instructed to read and perform exercises from The Individual, Marriage, and The Family (Saxton, 1972). Pretest and posttest assessment of couple communication were measured by the Primary Communication Inventory (PCI) (Guerney, 1977) and the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI) (Bienvenu, 1970). Changes in marital adjustment were measured by the Locke Marital Adjustment Test (MAT) and the Conjugal Life Questionnaire (CLQ). The results indicated that CRE couples improved significantly more than did the control couples in communication as measured by the MCI, though no significant change occurred on the PCI from pretest to posttest. The results of the marital adjustment measures indicated posttest group differences on the MAT with the experiemental

group significantly higher, whereas on the CLQ, no posttest differences were significant. This study gives modest support to the efficacy of the CRE model of relationship enhancement. As no follow-up data has been reported, the question of long-term effects of the training remains unanswered.

Ely, Guerney and Stover (1973) compared couples receiving a ten-week CRE training to a waiting-list control group. The investigators evaluated relationship change by a series of self-report measures and behavior measures. Results indicated that the CRE couples improved significantly over the control couples on the behavioral measures and two of the three self-report measures. In addition, when control couples later received the CRE treatment, they achieved a significant improvement in relationship functioning as measured by the same behavioral and self-report measures. This well-designed study supports the efficacy of CRE, though again, no follow-up data has been reported.

Ginsberg and Vogelsong (1977) reported on the teaching of RE skills to premarital couples through the PRIMES (Premarital Relationship Improvement by Maximizing Empathy and Self-Disclosure) program which was initated by Stephen Schlein (1971). Forty-eight premarital couples were recruited to participate in a three-month RE training program. Twenty-one couples were randomly assigned to the experimental couples and 27 couples to a waiting-list control group. Two couples from the experimental group dropped out after the first few weeks and four more couples were excluded

because of poor attendance, leaving 15 couples in the experimental group. Subjects were evaluated at pretest and again at posttest, on two behavioral measures of communication skill level as well as two self-report measures of communication. Changes in relationship quality were assessed by six self-report measures. The results indicated that couples trained in PRIMES program relative to the control group, exhibited significantly greater gains in their communication skill level behaviorally, though the results on the self-report measures of relationship quality did not demonstrate unequivocal findings. In three of the six self-report measures, significant pretest to posttest gains were found for the experimental group, but not the control group. No follow-up data were reported.

In summary, the outcome research on RE has provided an encouraging amount of support for its efficacy in enhancing relationships. The absence of follow-up data indicates that the maintenance of RE skills is an issue that needs further investigation. Since the ultimate goal of RE is independent functioning of the participants after treatment, the need for follow-up data becomes apparent, so that achievement of this goal can be measured.

The Minnesota Couples Communication Program (MCCP) developed and reported on by Miller, Nunnally and Wackman (1975).is a model of the general communication approach to interpersonal skills training. The MCCP has been conducted with premarital groups as well as marital groups. The general goals of the MCCP are, (a) to increase the self-awareness of each partner; (b) to increase each partner's repertoire of communication skills; (c) to enhance

each partner's perceived options within the relationship for making desirable changes or maintaining a mutually satisfying relationship.

The MCCP is a four-week program in which groups of five to seven couples meet with certified MCCP instructors in three-hour sessions, one session per week for a total of 12 hours of communication training. In the four sessions four frameworks, one per session, are presented to and practiced by the groups. In the order of presentation, the four frameworks are: Session I - The Awareness Wheel, which is designed to help the participant identify the kinds of self-information that one has about oneself and also to teach the skills that are necessary to disclosing self-information appropriately. Session II - The Shared Meaning Process is designed to aid the participants in increasing the accuracy of their communication. The process involves a sending of a message by a participant, after which the receiver restates the message, followed by a confirmation or clarification by the initial sender. Session III - The Communication Styles component focuses on identifying the kinds of communication options that are available to the participants and the likely impact of these communication styles on interaction sequences. Session IV - The I count/I Count You component is a modified version of I'm OK, You're OK formulation of transactional analysis (Harris, 1967).

The MCCP program was initially tested with premarital couples. The 32 couples that volunteered for the study were randomly assigned to an experimental group (17 couples) or to a

waiting-list control group (15 couples). At pretest and again at posttest, audio-taped couple interaction sequences were rated for both accuracy of recall of interaction pattern and the ability to maintain an open style of communication. The MCCP couples improved significantly more than did the control group on both measures of communication skill level. After posttesting, the control couples received MCCP training, but no data were reported. This study supported the short-term efficacy of the MCCP. Since no follow-up data on the MCCP have been reported, the question of maintenance of the program skills remains unresolved.

The Behavioral-Exchange Approach

Almost all of the research on relationship enhancement from the behavioral-exchange perspective has focused on marital relationships (e.g., Harrell and Guerney, 1976; Stuart, 1969); Weiss, Hops and Patterson, 1973) though Ridley et al. has implemented a behavioral-exchange program of relationship enhancement with premarital couples (1980). In addition, the behavioral-exchange model has been applied more often to distressed then non-distressed marital relationships.

From the behavioral-exchange perspective, both positive and negative patterns of interactions between couples tend to be reciprocal (Birchler, Weiss and Vincent, 1975; Patterson and Reid, 1970; Stuart, 1969; Wills, Weiss and Patterson, 1974). Weiss et al. (1973) have argued that marital conflict results from faulty

strategies of behavior change. Couples in conflict either lack or fail to demonstrate the skills necessary to resolve relationship problems (Jacobson, 1977, 1978b). The general goal of operant communication training is to develop conflict management and problem-solving skills. In applying the principle of reciprocity, emphasis is placed upon accelerating mutual positive reinforcement in order to strengthen the desired behaviors of both partners (Liberman, 1970; Stuart, 1976). The general strategy of positive control training is to focus on specific conflict issues. The couple first learns to negotiate behavior change without the use of aversive behaviors, e.g., attacking, nagging or accusing. The couple then learns to pinpoint specific problematic behaviors. Pinpointing permits the couple to state complaints in a form that operationalizes vague, global kinds of complaints. Instruction manuals, feedback, coaching with modeling and behavioral rehearsal facilitate the learning process. Change agreements made by the couple are specific and are usually implemented through the form of a written contract.

Jacobson (1978b) compared the two major forms of contracting, the quid pro quo and the good faith, in order to investigate differences in efficacy for the treatment of marital discord. The quid pro quo contract requires couples to state their agreement in a manner such that the specified behavior changes of one partner are contingent upon, for reinforcement purposes, the specified behavior changes of the other partner. In the good faith contract,

both partners agree to make desired behavior changes, but the specified behavior changes of one partner are not cross-linked to the other partner's agreed upon changes; the changes are independently reinforced. Jacobson reported that both forms of contracting were equally effective conflict management techniques. In addition to evaluating the efficacy of contracting procedures, Jacobson (1977) compared the two behavioral experimental groups, differing only with respect to the types of contracting procedures that were implemented, to a waiting-list control group and a nonspecific treatment group. The nonspecific treatment group received the entire behavioral training, with the exception of contracting procedures. The 32 couples that volunteered for the study were randomly assigned to the four treatment conditions. Treatment couples met by individual couples for eight one-and-a-half-hour sessions with one of three therapists. The results indicated that both experimental groups, from pretest to post-test, improved significantly more than did the waiting-list control group on the two measures of behavioral skill level, the Marital Interaction Coding System (Hops, Wills, Patterson and Weiss, 1971) and the Inventory of Marital Conflicts (Olson and Ryder, 1970), and also two self-report measures of marital adjustment, the Marital Adjustment Scale (MAS) and the Marital Happiness Scale (MHS) (Stuart and Stuart, 1973). Follow-up data, the MAS, taken at one-month, three-month and six-month intervals indicated that results on the MAS had maintained after therapy. This study gives support

to the behavioral treatment approach to marital discord. In addition, the author should be commended for incorporating a follow-up analysis of the self-report measures of marital happiness, though the question of maintenance of behavioral skills remain unanswered.

Patterson, Hops and Weiss (1975) reported on the outcomes of an intervention program developed at the Oregon Research Institute and the University of Oregon (Patterson and Hops, 1972; Patterson, Hops and Weiss, 1973; Weiss et al., 1973). Ten moderately distressed marital couples were taught communication and problem-solving techniques, and contingency contracting procedures. Taped couple problem-solving interactions, at pre-test and again at posttest, were coded by trained raters using the Marital Interaction Coding System (MICS). The instrument measures facilitating and disruptive behaviors of interaction sequences. In addition, self-report data indicated that couples in their home environment increased significantly in facilitative behaviors and decreased significantly in disruptive behaviors after treatment. This study suggests that couples can learn effective problem-solving techniques and apply them to their relationships away from the laboratory setting. Though, the absence of a control group leaves the issue of internal validity unresolved.

Harrell and Guerney (1976) developed and reported on the Behavioral-Exchange Program, which was the first behavioral-exchange model to use an educational group format rather than

individual couple counseling. The primary goal of the program was to teach couples a specific conflict management and negotiation process for resolving relationship problems in a mutually satisfying way. The nine interrelated steps of the negotiation model are: Listening Carefully, Locating a Relationship Issue, Identifying Contributions to the Issue, Identifying Alternative Solutions, Evaluating Alternative Solutions, Making an Exchange, Determining Conditions of the Exchange Contract, and Renegotiation of the Exchange Contract. In addition to learning the problem-solving process, couples were assigned weekly homework assignments and skill practice exercises. The program consists of eight two-hour weekly training sessions held over a two-month period. Thirty married couples volunteered for the study and were randomly assigned to the experimental group (15 couples) or to the control group (15 couples). Each training group included three couples and one counselor-educator. Couples were evaluated at pretest and post-test, on a variety of self-report measures of marital satisfaction and also behavioral measures of conflict management. The behavioral-exchange couples demonstrated significant improvement, as compared to control couples, on the majority of the behavioral measures of conflict management; though improvement on the self-report measures of marital satisfaction was not significant.

This study demonstrates that marital couples can learn a fairly complicated conflict management process. As the couples

were not described as distressed by the authors, the failure to demonstrate significant changes in marital satisfaction could be the result of a ceiling effect. If the couples were satisfied with their marital relationships, the issue of maintenance of this level of satisfaction is a legitimate concern of the preventive approach to relationship discord.

Conclusions

In summary, the two approaches to relationship enhancement reviewed in this chapter, the General Communications and the Behavioral-Exchange programs have been subjected to a substantial amount of empirical testing. Both approaches have accumulated a sizeable body of outcome literature on the short-term efficacy in enhancing relationships. The issues of skills maintenance and maintenance of gains in relationship satisfaction require more investigation through the inclusion of more follow-up inquiry in future research.

It can be speculated that the future success of a relationship is mediated by both skill and the perceived level of interpersonal competence of the individuals involved in that relationship. It seems to be a worthwhile research effort to examine the relationship between interpersonal skill training and perceived interpersonal competence. This relationship should be examined in the context of both short and long range effects of skills training. It is the purpose of this thesis to examine the short range effects

of two types of interpersonal skills training, a self-disclosure and empathy program and a general communication and problem-solving program on perceived competency in heterosexual relationships.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONCEPT OF INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCE

In recent years, social science research has been concerned with the issue of individual differences in the ability to achieve satisfying interpersonal relationships. Although social and behavioral scientists acknowledge that individuals do vary markedly in their aptitude for dealing successfully with others, theoretical approaches to differentiating the essential characteristics of effective vs. ineffective interpersonal functioning have varied considerably. Furthermore, the paucity of empirical research has created a gap between the theoretical endeavors and social application (Olson, 1970 1976). The dual-purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the major theoretical formulations of interpersonal competence and analyze their applicability to interpersonal relationship skills training programs.

The concept of competency in interpersonal relations first appeared in the work of Harry Stack Sullivan (1953) as part of his development of a theory of interpersonal relations. Foote and Cottrell (1955) in Identity and Interpersonal Competence introduced a thesis of interpersonal competence to family life research in order to stimulate professional interest towards the study of the development of competency in individuals and families. They conceptualized

interpersonal competence as the capacity to shape the responses of others. Interpersonal competence was analytically defined by designating six essential components for effective functioning. The components, possessed by all in varying degrees, are: (a) health, (b) intelligence, (c) empathy, (d) autonomy, (e) judgement, and (f) creativity. The order of the list proceeds from the most biologically given to the least given attribute. The ability to shape another's behavior will depend on the degree to which an individual has manifested the above qualities. Although some of these qualities are based on inherited potentialities, the range of individual differences in the capacity to achieve interpersonal goals is the result of differential life experience. As theories are intended to do, Foote and Cottrell's 1955 threatise of interpersonal competence posed more questions than it answered. In what ways does health, intelligence, empathy, autonomy, judgement and creativity interact to produce interpersonal competence? Does one component affect competence more than another? The authors operationalized many of their ideas on interpersonal competence into testable hypotheses, but as yet, their thesis as a whole has received no empirical vertification (Weinstein, 1970), though certain components, such as empathy have been widely and systematically investigated (Ely, 1970; Guerney, 1977; Miller, Nunally and Wackman, 1975).

In contrast to Foote and Cottrell, White (1959), directed his conceptual orientation toward the etiology of competence. He defined competence as an organisms capacity to interact effectively with its environment. According to White, individuals from infancy on, have an innate capacity and a basic need to experience a feeling of efficacy from interacting effectively with the environment. The extent to which individuals produce an intended effect is a measure of competence. White separates the intrinsic motivation for competence from the basic drives of hunger, thirst, sex or any other organic need. The intrinsic motivation for competence operates independent of, though not uninfluenced by extrinsic social rewards and punishment. In order to empirically examine White's conceptualization of competence, researchers must find a way to measure intrinsic motivation for competence and separate this motivation from the influence of social reward and punishment. If intrinsically motivated behavior is accepted as an untested assumption, competence can be increased by increasing the number of opportunities to successfully produce intended effects. Practice then becomes important for producing desired outcomes.

Argyris (1965) extended White's conception of competence beyond the ability to produce an intended effect to include three additional measures. He posits that competence tends to increase (a) as one's awareness of relevant factors (effecting factors) increases, (b) as problems are solved in such a way that they do

not re-occur, (c) with a minimal deterioration of the problem-solving process. Using these additional measures, the development of negotiation skills in individuals should increase their competence in interpersonal relations.

Argyris developed a model for the measurement and description of individual and interpersonal competence. In this model, he categorizes behavior into two levels, individual behavior or normative bheavior. Behavior at either level is measured through the designation of sub-categories of qualities that have a plus or minus value. The qualities have been operationalized and given a numerical value in order to permit a behavioral assessment and an index of competency. Argyris examined the question of reliability and validity of the instrument through a series of exploratory studies conducted with T-groups. The studies indicated an "encouraging" degree of reliability and predictive validity as a basis for describing increases or decreases in interpersonal competence (Argyris, 1964).

In assessing Argyris' measure of individual and interpersonal competence, the criteria that interpersonal problems do not re-occur and that the problem-solving process does not deteriorate , do not take into account that the problem-solving process is mediated by the abilities of every individual involved who most likely will not possess equal negotiation skills. Therefore, Argyris may be measuring the competence of a group as a whole rather than individual competence, if the above criteria is used.

Using Maslow's theory of self-actualization as a foundation, Fitts (1970) proposed the Wheel Model of Interpersonal Competence as a framework for analyzing an individual's drive toward self-actualization. There are two dimensions of interpersonal behavior, the "seeking self" and the "offering self", which are conceptualized as dividing the Wheel into two halves. Using the Interpersonal Wheel as the vehicle, the direction and progress toward self-actualization are determined by the amount of reciprocity between the "seeking self" and the "offering self". Fitts further differentiates the Wheel into seven components, the spokes of the Wheel, which are arranged in sequence, to illustrate the processes through which relationships move as they develop. The seven components are: (a) Involvement (b) Responsibility (c) Freedom (d) Understanding (e) Openness (f) Caring and (g) Acceptance. As there are limits to all relationships, the minimum limit of the relationship is symbolized as the hub, and the maximum limit is the rim of the Wheel. Fitts proposed that the tire for the Interpersonal Wheel should be a consistency of behavior, which provides stability and reliability to relationships. Faith and trust in the self and the other person is the material from which the Wheel is constructed.

Fitts designated communication skills as the central pathway towards interpersonal competence. The four basic communication skills, transmission, reception, facilitation and observer-feedback are specific skills that can be learned and can increase satisfaction

in relationships. Though Fitts' 1970 formulation of interpersonal competence has an abundance of humanistic appeal, empirical validation of the dynamics of the Interpersonal Wheel has not appeared in the literature.

Weinstein (1970) designated specific interconnected concepts with which the interactive processes of competency can be analyzed and they are as follows: (a) Interpersonal task is the response or set of responses that an individual attempts to elicit from another. (b) Interpersonal competence is simply the ability to accomplish interpersonal tasks. (c) Lines of action are the activities of an individual that are directed toward the accomplishment of the interpersonal task. (d) Encounter is any contact for the purpose of interpersonal task accomplishment. (e) Situation is all relevant stimuli present in any encounter. (f) Definition of the situation is the result of all the internal processes through which an individual goes through before selecting a line of action. (g) Projected definition of the situation is the attempts of an individual to influence another's definition of the situation. (h) Working consensus (borrowed from Goffman's 1959 theory of interpersonal dynamics) is a tacit agreement that the participants jointly hold as to whose claims to what issues will be temporarily honored. (i) Situational identity is all the relevant attributes that an individual possesses in reference to the specific interpersonal situation. (j) Identity bargaining is the establishment of

situational identities through lines of action in order to establish a working consensus among the participants of social interaction. When one individual attempts to assign or withhold an identity for another, the process is called altercasting.

The key to becoming interpersonally competent, according to Weinstein, is to develop the skill necessary for establishing and maintaining a desirable identity and successful altercasting. Identity maintaining skill and successful altercasting are dependent upon an individual's (a) ability to accurately role take (empathic ability) and predict the consequences of various lines of action (b) possession of a large and varied repertoire of lines of action and (c) possession of the intrapersonal resources to select and implement tactics most appropriate to the interpersonal task. If Weinstein's view of how competency can be increased is valid, systematic training in role taking and discriminating skills and increasing the behavioral repertoires of skills would be an effective means of increasing interpersonal competence.

Weinstein considered self-perceptions to be one type of intra-personal resource that affects interpersonal competence. A rigid self-concept can inhibit an effective action when an individual is unwilling to use a known line of action because the action does not fit within his identity. Therefore, in Weinstein's view, possession of many lines of action is not enough; one must be willing to use them to be interpersonally effective.

A major contribution of Weinstein's conceptualization is the designation of specific behavioral components to interpersonal competence, such as lines of action and interpersonal task response. These are concepts that can readily be operationalized for a systematic functional analysis of competence. That interpersonal behavior is in part determined by the response of others is an idea that focuses attention on the importance of negotiation skills in the pursuit of interpersonal purposes.

The various conceptualizations reviewed in this chapter focus on different aspects of interpersonal competence, ranging from biologically-based personal attributes (Foote and Cottrell, 1955; White, 1959) to a more environmentally-based interactional and perceptual field (Weinstein, 1970). This is not to say that a nature-nurture controversy is taking place over the topic of interpersonal competence. Most importantly, all approaches view interpersonal competence as a capacity that can be increased through experience. It seems to be a worthwhile research effort to examine the linkages among variables such as personal attributes, interpersonal interactions and perceived abilities as they relate to interpersonal competence, e.g., goal achievement in interpersonal relationships. Another important issue to examine is the linkage between interpersonal interaction on perceived heterosexual competence, a sub-type of interpersonal competence.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

Subjects

Premarital couples were recruited from a southwestern university population through the use of posters and an information table at class registration. In addition, local radio and newspaper announcements were used to recruit premarital couples from the larger community. Based on their schedules, couples were assigned to one of three experimental conditions, a general communication and problem-solving skills training group (24 couples), a self-disclosure and empathy skills training group (24 couples) or to a relationship discussion group (26 couples). Subjects ranged in age from 18 to 26 with a mean age of 20.08. Ten per cent were classified as seniors, 23.5% juniors, 36.7% sophomores, 21.2% freshmen, 3.4% graduate students, and 4.3% non-students. Additional demographic data were collected on all subjects, and a preliminary analysis revealed that there were only minor differences between the experimental groups and control group on any demographic variables (See Appendix I for additional demographic information).

The Dependent Variable

It was hypothesized that as a result of training, both interpersonal skills training groups, relative to the relationship

discussion group would significantly improve in their perceived heterosexual competence, though no significant differences between the two interpersonal skills training groups was hypothesized. Heterosexual competence, the dependent variable, was measured by written responses to the Peterman-Ridley Heterosexual Competency Scale (PRHCS) (Jones, 1973). According to the authors, the purpose of the heterosexual competence scale was "to develop an inventory of items describing the beliefs, attitudes, and experiences of students as they engage in the task of learning heterosexual skills which (would) enable them to form and maintain good dating and marital relationships" (Peterman and Ridley, 1970).

Using a Likert type format, the PRHCS is a scale consisting of a set of 27 questions that asks subjects their perceptions of how they function in relationships with the opposite sex (See Appendix II). The questionnaire was designed to assess the subject's perceptions as to their relative success or failure in initiating and maintaining heterosexual relationships and also their feelings as to how the opposite sex perceived them. Each individual was asked to indicate on a five-point scale, with response categories ranging from (1) Never to (5) Always, the response which most accurately indicates their perceptions. Approximately half of the items in the PRHCS are reverse ordered to reduce an tendency toward a response-set pattern that can develop in some respondents. Scores on the PRHCS were summed in order to obtain a heterosexual competence

score for each individual. The range of possible scores on the PRHCS is from 27-135, with a midpoint of 81. A high score indicates high heterosexual competence; a low score indicates low heterosexual competence.

Jones (1973) analyzed and reported on measures of internal consistency reliability and validity that were applied to the PRHCS. The reliability coefficient of the scale, established by Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (1951), was reported to be .91. The face validity of the instrument was assessed and agreed upon by five experts in the area of interpersonal relations. In summary, the PRHCS has established some internal consistency reliability and face validity as a predictive measure of heterosexual competence.

Procedure

Pretreatment and Posttreatment Assessment - The General Communication and Probem-Solving Group and the Relationship Discussion Group. The PRHCS, along with other self-report measures, was administered to each subject in both the experimental and relationship discussion groups at the beginning and end of the problem-solving skills training program. In addition to the written measures, the couples in both groups completed four 20-minute audiotaped problem-solving conversations, two pretest conversations and two posttest conversations (See Appendix III for a brief description). The stimulus for the first pretest and first posttest conversation was a contrived role-play situation. The second 20-minute pretest

and posttest conversations were based on problems that were current to each couple's relationship. Trained judges, blind to the experimental conditions, independently rated each audio-taped couple interaction for a behavioral assessment of skill level of the subjects (See Appendix IV for the scoring procedure).

Pretreatment and posttreatment Assessment - Self-Disclosure and Empathy Group and the Relationship Discussion Group. The PRHCS, along with other written measures, was administered to each subject in the experimental and relationship discussion groups, at the beginning and end of the self-disclosure and empathy skills training program. In addition to the written measures, the couples in both groups completed two 20-minute audio-taped conversations, one pre-test conversation and one posttest conversation (See Appendix V for the specific instructions that were given to the subjects). During the 20-minute conversation, at both pretest and posttest, each partner had experienced five continual minutes in both the Speaker Mode and the Empathic Responder Mode, in each of the two conversational situations. Trained judges independently rated each audio-taped couple interation for a behavioral assessment of skill level fo the subjects (Appendix VI) (Avery, Ridley, Leslie and Milholland, in press).

Treatment of Relationship Discussion Group. Couples met for eight weeks, three hours a week, for a total of 24 hours. They participated in supervised discusssion groups that were designed to promote a better understanding of relationship functioning, although

they received no specific training in communication or problem-solving skills. Selected readings on topics related to relationship development were assigned to the group. The subjects were encouraged to apply the reading to their relationship (See Appendix VII for an outline of course description).

Treatment of the Problem-Solving and General Communication Group. Couples met for eight weeks, three hours a week, for a total of 24 hours. Each group of three or four couples was led by two group leaders, one male and one female. Graduate students instructed in the general communication and problem-solving skills training served as group leaders. Group leaders had a didactic role of instructing and modeling the interpersonal skills as well as presenting to the couples feedback regarding the participants performance of the skills.

The general communication and problem-solving training, developed by Ridley and Harrell (1976) instructed couples in negotiation skills that entailed the performance of specific and behaviorably measureable problem-solving steps (See Appendix VIII). The skill training consisted of two phases in which couples proceed through affective, cognitive and behavioral processes that are involved in effective interpersonal problem-solving.

Phase I of the training program instructed couples in the general communication skills of listening and speaking. Listening carefully and expressing own feelings, is structured so that while

one person is speaking the other person is listening. An important feature of speaking is that speakers express their own feelings rather than to express something that someone else feels or believes. An important feature of listening is that the participants must listen carefully, then indicate understanding to the speaker through a verbal summarization of the speaker's message. A major purpose of the first phase is to facilitate the development of open and empathic interaction between the couple.

Phase II provides a more specific structure for problem-solving. Steps 1 through 3, exploring the problem area, defining the problem in relationship terms and identifying how each person contributes to the problem, involve an exploration of the more affective domain of the problem situation. Full and mutual disclosure of each partners perspectives during these three steps is emphasized as an essential component of successful problem-solving.

In Steps 4 through 9, the focus of interaction shifts from an affective mode to a more cognitive-behavioral mode of interaction. Step 4, stating a relationship goal, must be stated to indicate what specific behaviors need to increase or decrease. After stating a specific goal, the couple proceed through the remaining problem-solving steps: Step 5, generating alternative solutions, Step 6, evaluating the alternatives, Step 7, selecting the best solution, Step 8, implementing the solution, and

Step 9, evaluating process. At an agreed upon time after the solution has been implemented, if the relationship goal has not been achieved, the couple was instructed to return to Step 5, and renegotiate the problem.

Treatment of the Self-Disclosure and Empathy Group. Couples met for eight weeks, three hours a week, for a total of 24 hours. Each group of three or four couples was led by two group leaders, one male and one female. Graduate students instructed in self-disclosure and empathy skills training served as group leaders. Group leaders had the didactic role of instructing and demonstrating the behavioral modes as well as providing feedback to the couples regarding their performance of the behavioral modes.

The Self-Disclosure and Empathy training programs, developed by Guerney (1977), instructed couples in the four components of effective communication, (a) the Expresser Mode (b) the Empathic Responder Mode (c) the Switching Mode and (d) the Facilitator Mode (See Appendix IX for a brief description of the communication modes). The Expresser Mode requires an honest expression of the subjective feelings and needs of the speaker. It is important that speakers identify their expressions as subjective and not to identify other people as the source of their feelings. The Empathic Responder Mode consists of two parts, receiving and responding. As a receptor, the responder must try to understand the total interpersonal message of the Expresser, without

distortion. In the responding part of the Empathic Response Mode, the responders provide feedback to the speakers in order to check the accuracy of their perceptions of the total interpersonal message of the speakers.

Effective communication requires that one partner must stay in the Expresser Mode and the other partner in the Empathic Responding Mode until feelings on a point are fully disclosed by the Expresser and the Empathic Responder understands the Expresser's feelings. In order to switch the two modes, the couples were instructed in a third communication mode, the Switching Mode. This mode sensitizes individuals to look for cues that signal that a mode switch is desirable.

The fourth communication mode is the Facilitator Mode through which individuals provide feedback to members of the group concerning the performance of the other three communication modes. The Facilitator Mode is structured so that feedback is concerned only with performance of the modes rather than commenting on the ideas and opinions of the couples in interaction.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Preliminary Analysis

A 2 X 3 analysis of variance was performed on the pre-treatment scores of both experimental groups and the control group in order to determine if any initial differences existed by the groups or by sex on the dependent measure, the Peterman-Ridley Heterosexual Competency Scale. The results indicated that there were no significant differences in pretest performances on the PRHCS by treatment group, F (2.443), $p = .091$, by sex, F (2.713), $p = .102$, or treatment by sex interaction, F (.771), $p = .464$ (See Appendix X for means and standard deviations).

Main Analysis

It was hypothesized that both the self-disclosure and empathy training group and the general communication and problem-solving training group, relative to the relationship discussion group would demonstrate significant improvement in their perceived heterosexual competence, though no significant differences between the two interpersonal skill training groups was hypothesized. A two-way analysis of covariance was performed with the pretest as the covariate and the posttest as the dependent variable.

The adjusted posttest group means were as follows: the self-disclosure and empathy group = 100.59, the general communication and problem-solving group = 99.10, and the relationship discussion group = 94.60. The results of the analysis of covariance indicated that there was an effect for treatment, F (4.933), p = .008, no effect for sex, F (.358), p = .551, and no treatment by sex interaction, F (.143), p = .886 (See Table 1).

The Tukey Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) post hoc test of significance was performed in order to determine the differences among the three adjusted posttest group means (See Table 2). The results indicated that, at posttest, (a) the self-disclosure and empathy group was significantly greater than the relationship discussion group in perceived heterosexual competence (mean difference = 5.99), p = .01, (b) the general communication and problem-solving group was not significantly different from the relationship discussion group in perceived heterosexual competence (mean difference = 4.50), p = .057, (c) the self-disclosure and empathy group and the general communication and problem-solving group were not significantly different (mean difference = 1.49), p = NS.

Table 1

Two-Way Analysis of Covariance with Pretest scores as the Covariate

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance of F
Covariate					
Pretest	7474.539	1	747.539	77.620	.001
Main Effects					
Treatment	950.056	2	475.028	4.933	.008
Sex	34.479	1	34.479	.358	.551
Interaction					
Treatment x Sex	27.635	2	13.817	.143	.886
Error	13577.845	141	96.297		
Total	22056.000	147	150.041		

Table 2

Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD)
Post hoc test of differences between means

Comparison Groups	Difference between the Adjusted Means	Significance
The Self-disclosure and Empathy Group and the Relationship Discussion Group	5.99	.010
The General Communication and Problem Solving Group and the Relationship Discussion Group	4.50	.057
The Self-disclosure and Empathy and the General Communication and Problem Solving Group	1.49	NS

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Implications of the Results

The objective of this study was to evaluate the effects of two types of interpersonal skill training, a self-disclosure and empathy training program and a general communication and problem-solving training program, on perceived heterosexual competence. The analysis of the data demonstrated that (a) couples that were trained in self-disclosure and empathy skills significantly improved in their perceived heterosexual competence, relative to the control group, (b) couples trained in general communication and problem-solving skills improved their perceived heterosexual competence to a very nearly significant level, relative to the control group, (c) the self-disclosure and empathy trained couples and the general communication and problem-solving trained couples did not significantly differ from one another in their level of perceived heterosexual competence, at pretest or posttest. The results were very nearly as predicted.

The positive findings of this study strongly supports the idea that competence in heterosexual relationships can be increased through specific interpersonal skill training. In determining possible explanations for why specific interpersonal

skill training would increase perceived heterosexual competence, it is a worthwhile approach to examine possible linkages between each of the two types of training programs and some of the theoretical predictions of how competence can be increased.

The self-disclosure and empathy skill training can be viewed as an operationalization of Weinstein's (1970) proposition that competence in relationships can be increased through increasing (a) the role taking (empathic) abilities, (b) the behavioral repertories, and (c) the intrapersonal resources that enable one to select and implement tactics most appropriate to the interpersonal task. It should be noted that Avery et al. (in press) reported that the couples trained in RE significantly improved in behaviorally demonstrating the self-disclosing and empathic modes of communication, indicating an increase in empathic ability and also an increased repertoire of behaviors. An interpersonal task of the participating couples was to better understand their relationship. Accomplishment of this task is dependent not only upon a desire to do so, but also upon their intrapersonal resources of self-understanding and the ability to empathize. The training program provided a specific structure for improving upon the intrapersonal resources that are essential to the task accomplishment. For instance, a major focus of the training for the Speaker mode was to teach

individuals to separate their own thoughts and feelings about a topic from objective fact and also projected feelings of their partner, thereby increasing the potential of self-understanding. One possible explanation for the significant results that were obtained from the self-disclosure and empathy training is that the program has the specific affect of increasing the skills that Weinstein considered to be essential to increasing interpersonal competence, thereby providing some support to his proposition.

The positive findings that were obtained from the general communication and problem-solving skill training possibly could be linked to the Argyris' (1965) proposition that interpersonal competence can be increased by (a) increasing the awareness of relevant (effecting) factors of the problem situation, (b) re-solving relationship problems so that they do not reoccur, and (c) increasing negotiation skills so that the problem-solving process does not deteriorate. Phase I (General Communication) and Steps One (Exploring the problem area) and Three (Identifying how each person contributes to the problem) of Phase II, provide a specific structure for increasing the awareness of both partners of the relevant factors of the problem situation. The entire problem solving process is structured so that couples mutually learn to resolve relationship problems, with an equal opportunity and responsibility to arrive at a solution that will work for

both partners, thereby decreasing the likelihood of recurrent problems. Ridley et al. (1980) reported that the couples trained in the mutual problem-solving process showed significant improvement in behaviorally demonstrating the problem-solving steps, indicating an increase in negotiation skills. A possible explanation for the positive findings is that an increase in interpersonal negotiation skills will have the effect of an increase in perceived competency in relationships.

The fact that the relationship discussion group did not significantly change from pretest to posttest, yet experienced a slight drop in level of perceived heterosexual competence is interesting to consider. It is possible that when important relationship issues are presented to premarital couples to discuss, without including some form of interpersonal skill training to aid in mediating the inevitable differences of opinion that individuals being to a relationship, issues remain unresolved. The failure to resolve relationship issues may lead to perceptions of less competence in significant relationships.

The findings that both types of interpersonal skill training had an effect on perceived heterosexual competence seems to indicate that a very wide range of interpersonal behaviors affect perceptions of competence. The programs were different in

substance yet did not produce significantly different results; though the gains by the self-disclosure and empathy group were greater than the general communication and problem solving group. Since the investigation did not produce evidence of differential effects for the two types of interpersonal skill training on perceived heterosexual competence, no recommendations can be made of preferences for either type of training for the purpose of enhancing perceptions of heterosexual competence. It is possible that both types of training can result in an increase in perceived competence in heterosexual relationships.

Conclusions

From previous research conducted on the two training programs (Avery et al. (in press) and Ridley et al. 1980), it was demonstrated that the couples in both experimental groups increased their behavioral repertoire of interpersonal skills. This study revealed that the couples in both experimental groups increased in their perceptions of competencey in heterosexual relationships. The combination of the above findings suggests that the skills learned by the couples have a potential for generalizing to their pursuit of heterosexual goals in life situations. The demonstration of change in behaviors and perceptions in an experimental setting is only a first step towards the study of a more important issue, generalizations of the skills

to life situations. The question of generalizability, illusive as it is, needs to be explored in future research. This study used a single class of measurement, perceived heterosexual competence, to investigate the effects of interpersonal skill training on competence. More persuasive evidence of training effects could be obtained through multiple measures of heterosexual competence, which are hypothesized to share theoretically relevant components of heterosexual competence.

Another question that this study did not address was the issue of maintenance of the gains in perceptions of heterosexual competence made by the experimental groups. A follow-up study of these same couples would provide information in regard to the issue of maintenance.

APPENDIX I

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA BY PERCENTAGE

	Self-disclosure Experimental Group	Problem-solving Experimental Group	Relationship Discussion Group
College Major:			
Agriculture	1.8	.6	1.8
Arts & Sci.	9.0	16.5	12.3
Bus. Admin.	9.6	6.6	10.2
Education	4.8	1.2	3.6
Engineering	1.8	1.8	1.8
Home Ec.	4.2	4.8	4.8
Other	.6	.6	.6
Grade Point Average:			
0.00-1.49	.6	.6	1.2
1.50-1.99	1.2	2.4	2.4
2.00-2.49	6.6	4.7	9.6
2.50-2.99	9.6	10.8	9.6
3.00-3.49	10.2	9.5	5.4
3.50-4.00	3.6	3.6	4.8
No GPA	.6	1.8	1.2
Religion:			
Protestant	27.1	24.7	27.2
Catholic	3.6	3.0	4.8
Jewish	.0	1.2	.0
None	.6	.6	1.2
Other	.6	2.4	.6
No response preferred	1.2	.6	.6
Financial Support:			
Savings/job	9.0	10.2	9.0
Family	21.8	21.1	23.5
Loans	.6	.6	.6
Scholarships	.6	.6	1.8
Welfare	.6	.0	.0

	Self-disclosure Experimental Group	Problem-Solving Experimental Group	Relationship Discussion Group
Parental Income:			
4,000-5,999	1.8	.0	.6
6,000-7,999	1.2	.6	.0
8,000-9,999	.6	.0	1.8
10,000-13,999	1.2	1.2	2.5
14,000-19,999	4.3	4.3	7.4
20,000-25,999	6.7	11.0	9.8
26,000-31,999	3.4	3.0	3.4
Over 32,000	13.9	12.7	8.6
TOTAL	33.1	32.8	34.1
Community Size:			
Suburb in Metro area greater than 2,000,000	3.6	2.5	3.0
Suburb in Metro area 500,000-2,000,000	3.0	4.8	4.8
Suburb in Metro area 100,000-500,000	1.2	2.5	.0
City greater than 500,000	4.2	.6	1.2
City 50,000-500,000	9.6	10.2	12.7
Town 10,000-50,000	4.2	3.0	5.4
Town less than 10,00-	6.0	6.7	6.0
Farm, Ranch or open country	.6	2.4	1.8
TOTAL	32.4	32.7	34.9

APPENDIX II

THE PETERMAN-RIDLEY HETEROSEXUAL COMPETENCY SCALE

(Peterman and Ridley, 1976)

Directions: For each item, blacken in the appropriate space on the answer sheet which corresponds with the letter of the response which is most appropriate for you.

A	B	C	D	E
NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALWAYS

1.	I find myself being more at ease with members of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
2.	When I am with a member of the opposite sex, I have trouble finding things to say.	A B C D E
3.	I have trouble expressing negative feelings I may have toward a close friend of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
4.	It seems that the people of the opposite sex I am attracted to are not attracted to me.	A B C D E
5.	I find myself unable to start a new relationship with someone of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
6.	I am able to maintain close relationships with someone of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
7.	I feel capable of entering into a love relationship with someone of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
8.	My relationships with people of the opposite sex tend to be marked by conflict and negative feelings on both sides.	A B C D E

9.	I am comfortable when I tell my close friends of the opposite sex how I feel about them.	A B C D E
10.	Confusion about where I stand on issues like sex and morality give me trouble in my relationships with members of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
11.	It is difficult for me to get close to someone of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
12.	In my relationships with people of the opposite sex, we find we cannot get along with each other.	A B C D E
13.	I have trouble talking about my sexual feelings with someone of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
14.	I like the way I start new relationships with members of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
15.	In my relationships with members of the opposite sex, I find that I am successful in working out conflicts that might come up between myself and my partner.	A B C D E
16.	There seems to be something about the way I act that turns people off of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
17.	I feel comfortable and skillful with the way I have come to manage the physical side of my relationships with members of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
18.	I have trouble expressing positive feelings I may have toward someone of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
19.	I know how members of the opposite sex feel about me.	A B C D E

20.	I worry about whether I can attract someone of the opposite sex to me so that we can try to get a relationship started.	A B C D E
21.	I have trouble initiating conversation with a person of the opposite sex whom I have never talked with before.	A B C D E
22.	I feel nervous or tense when I am with someone of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
23.	When a relationship with a person of the opposite sex, I am able to understand their needs.	A B C D E
24.	I have trouble understanding what my close friends of the opposite sex tell me about how they feel toward me.	A B C D E
25.	I am able to do what must be done to have a close relationship with someone of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
26.	I tend to feel awkward when just starting a new relationship with someone of the opposite sex.	A B C D E
27.	Members of the opposite sex find me interesting to be with.	A B C D E

APPENDIX III

DESCRIPTION OF BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT OF THE GENERAL COMMUNICATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING TRAINING

(Ridley and Harrell, 1976)

DIRECTIONS (Part A): Read and Follow All Steps Carefully Before Beginning

1. Read carefully the situation described on the next page.

2. Assume you are the male or female who is described.

3. Spend up to 20 minutes on the conflict situation. Try to put yourself into the situation as if it is actually occurring between you and your partner, and decide how you and your partner will handle the issue. Use the best skills you can to solve it so it is not likely to recur again. Remember to try to develop a specific solution to the problem. Be sure to avoid saying "that couple" or "they", make it your problem.

4. After talking about the above problem with your partner, each of you should answer the question on page 3. Answer the question independently of your partner and do not share your answer with him or her.

DIRECTIONS (Part B): Read and Follow All Directions Carefully Before Beginning

1. We would like you and your partner to try to solve a disagreement which you both feel is a problem in your relationship. On the forms you filled out last week, you both indicated that_____ _____ was at least a slight problem in your relationship. Spend up to 20 minutes working on this problem. Once again, use your best skills to come up with a solution. Be as specific as you can about the problem and develop a specific solution.

2. After talking about the above problem with your partner, each of you should answer the question on page 4. Answer the question independently of your partner and do not share your answer with him or her.

3. Be sure to write your name on pages 3 and 4. Ignore other two spaces.

MALE

You and your girlfriend have been dating for about a year, but as of yet have no definite plans for marriage. The weekend is coming up. The two of you are sitting down one evening discussing what to do on Saturday night.

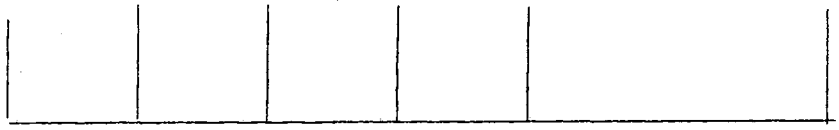
Your high school friends are having a reunion party at your old girlfriend's house. You really enjoy partying with them and usually do once a week. You realize that your girlfriend does not enjoy being around your old girlfriend, and when she is, it causes a strain on your own relationship. But you feel that since you and your old girlfriend are "just friends", it shouldn't matter.

Just as you are about to tell her that you think it is a good idea for you both to go to the party, she suggests that you go to dinner and a show.

NAME:_____ FORM:_____ TEST:_____

PROBLEM SOLVING SOLUTIONS RATING

As a result of this discussion, to what degree do you think this solution would become more or less of a problem? Place a check in one of the spaces below, closest to the statement which expresses your opinion.



It would become more of a problem

No enduring change

It would become less of a problem

APPENDIX IV

GENERAL COMMUNICATION AND
PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS TRAINING
INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCORING BEHAVIORAL DATA

(Ridley and Harrell, 1976)

INTRODUCTION

You will score each tape and each partner for the following behavioral units:

1. Involvement in completing p-s steps. Statements which are identified as included in the definition of each step.
2. General communication style.
   a. "I messages"
   b. summary statements
   c. open questions

Involvement in the p-s steps. Involvement is intended to assess how well couples have learned to p-s steps by determining: a) do they include the steps in their interaction about a problem, and b) how involved they get in each step as indicated by the amount of interaction that can be classified as a part of the definition of the step. Only steps 2 through 8 will be scored.

General communication style. General communication style will be assessed according to the specific skills taught in the p-s sessions. Each time the skill is used it will be counted irrespective of the steps.

Procedures for coding involvement in p-s steps

Each coder will memorize the complete definitions of each step as described in "Mutual P-S Skills: Rationale Summary and Description of 10 Essential Steps" and elaborated in subsequent sessions. After the steps are completely memorized and understood, coders can begin scoring tapes. To determine a person's involvement in a step, your task is to score whether or not each partner makes statements that can be classified as included in the definition of that step. Count the number of statements made by the male and female that address the definition of that step. For each statement that meets definitional requirements make a check on the scoring sheet which corresponds to the step being scored.

Involvement indicators for Step 2: Explore problem area. A couple is given credit for using this step if either partner:

1. makes a statement recognizing the esistence of a problem, for example something that is bothering one or both partners.

Credit will be gievn for these:

- "I think we have a problem with..."
- "We would get along better if..."
- " I do not like it when you..."
- "You are always late"

Credit will not be given for these:

- "We do not have any problems"
- "You are late sometimes, but it is not a problem" (credit would not be given for this statement UNLESS they state at a later time that being late is something they are going to work on)

2. makes a statement describing the nature of the problem -. this could be expressed feeling about the problem, or behaviors that contribute to the problem.

Credit will be given for these:

- "I feel worried when you..."
- "I would like for you to call me more often"
- "When you get drunk I am scared."
- "You do that every time we are together"

Credit will not be given for these:

- "I do not have any feelings about that"
- "It does not make any difference what I think anyway"

3. makes a statement discussing the effects of the problem on self or partner, not the effects on someone else.

Credit will be given for these:

- "I seem to be emotionally removed from you when..."
- "You always get mad when I..."
- "When you do not keep up with your work I get..."

Credit will not be given for these:

- "When you will not come home with me my parents get..."
- "Nothing I do seems to effect you"

Involvement indicators for Step 3: Define problem in relationship terms. A couple is given credit for using this step if either partner makes a "we" type statement concerning a shortcoming of the relationship, or states what they see as the problem and the other agrees. It is important that both partners agree that they can benefit from the solution.

Credit will be given for:

- "It would probably be a good thing if we..."
- "Do you think we would get along better if we..."
- "We can not seem to agree on when to go to church"

Credit will not be given for:

- Person A: "I want you to go to the church with me more often"
  Person B: "Yes, I probably should"
- Person A: "We seem to have a problem of _____"
  Person B: "No that is not really a problem"

Involvement indicators for Step 4: Identify how each person contributes to problem. In order to receive credit for this step each partner must state how he/she contributes to the problem (own some responsibility for the problem). Clues to this are statements that begin with "I say" or "I do".

Credit will be given for:

- "I contribute to the problem by..."
- "Maybe it is because I tell you one thing and do the opposite"
- "When I do not answer you we seem to..."

Credit will not be given for:

- "You never suggest any places to go"
- "I contribute little to this problem"

Involvement indicators for Step 5: State the goal. A couple gets credit for this step if either partner indicates what they want to see happen more often or less often. The statement needs to be specific to indicate more or less of a behavior -- to say or do more. If the goal statement is too general to be implemented do not give credit.

Credit will be given for these:

- "We want to increase the number of times we tell..."
- "We want to criticize each other less often"
- "We want to be more affectionate with each other"

Credit will not be given for these:

- "We want more love in our relationship"
- "We want to be happy"

Involvement indicators for Step 6: Generate alternative solutions. In order to get credit for this step the couple must generate at least two alternatives to acheive the goal. One person can generate two alternatives or each partner can generate one.

Credit will be given for these:

- "You could smoke only two cigarettes a night when we are together"
- "I could tell..."
- "We could go to church more often together"
- "I will call you..." (accepted only if stated tentatively)

Credit will not be given for these:

- "I am going to stop..."
- "If I do ... you have to do..."

Involvement indicators for Step 7: Evaluate alternative solution. In order to credit, either one or both partners must evaluate at least one alternative. Evaluation consists of comments regarding: a) good an/or bad points; b) feasibility, likeability, or appeal; and c) degree to which it accomplishes goal.

Credit will be given for these:

- "That would work out well"
- "Oh yuk"
- "That will not solve our problem"

Credit will not be given for these:

- "I am not convinced about that alternative"
- "I do not know if we can do that or not"

Involvement indicators for Step 8: Select best solution. In order to receive credit for this step at least two specifics (who will do what, when, where and how often) must be stated for each partner. Agreement on the solution must be implicit -- i.e., no overt disagreement; they progress through this step. It is acceptable for one partner to say it for both partners if they agree. The intent of this step is that the couple is clear about what they will be doing to implement the solution.

Credit will be given for these:

- "I will call you once every two days"
- "I would like for you to call me one time every two days (Partner A)
- "OK, I will do that" (Partner B)
- "We will go to church together every other week (Partner A)
- "I agree" (Partner B)

Credit will not be given for these:

- "Alright we both know what we will do"
- "Alright, I will touch you more often"

Procedures for coding general communication style

Before starting to code for the general communication skills ("I messages, summaries, and open questions) make sure you have the definitions memorized. "I messages" and summary statements are defined in Step 1 of the Mutual Problem Solving handout and illustrated

in subsequent class sessions. Open questions are explained and illustrated in the Class 2 handout and repeated in several classes thereafter.

"I messages". The intent in scoring for "I messages" is to determine the frequency with which the couples own (take responsibility for) their feelings and or behavior. As you know, couples sometimes zonk each other with a "you statement" hidden in what appears to be an "I message". Therefore, your task is to count the "I messages" made from the beginning of the tape to the end (both role play and real life) for each partner -- excluding hidden you statements.

Credit will be given for these:

- "I maintain the problem by..."
- "I leave my things on the floor"
- "It hurts"
- "I get angry when you leave things around" (a feeling statement followed by a descriptive "you message" will be counted as an "I message")
- "I like that"

Credit will not be given for these:

- "I feel that you..."
- "I feel that it..."
- "I get angry when you are sloppy" (a feeling statement followed by an evaluative "you statement" will not count)
- "I would like to know more about how you feel"

Summary statements. The intent here is to score for frequency of summary statements, and not for their ability to reflect deep level feelings. As above, you will count the summary statements from beginning to end of the tape. A summary statement constitutes

repeating information stated by one's partner -- adding no new information, need not be complete, of high quality or accurate to be acceptable.

Credit will be given for these:

- "You feel that..."
- "That really hurts you" (a good reflection that labels the feelings but does not necessarily repeat content)

Credit will not be given for these:

- "Are you saying..." (summary statement)

Open questions. The use of open questions will be counted from beginning to end of tape. At this time we are not as concerned with whether the question is direct or indirect. The criteria you should use in evaluating a question is whether it can be answered with yes or no or other specific requested information. If it can, do not then give credit for an open question.

Credit will be given for these:

-"I would like to know more about your feelings"
-"What do you think about that?"
-"I wonder what that does to you?"
-"I am interested in your feelings on this issue"
-"You might tell me how you feel about that"

Credit will not be given for these:

"I wonder if you like that or not"
- "You do not like it when I do that, do you"
- "You do not really want to leave me, do you"

APPENDIX V

COUPLE INTERVIEW FORM
SELF-DISCLOSURE AND EMPATHY SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

(Ridley and Avery, 1976)

Directions: Please read and follow all directions carefully.

In this part of the interview, we would like you to discuss the following topic:

"What would you like to change in your partner"

One person will be the speaker and will talk about what they want to change in their partner, while the other partner will be the listener. The conversation should continue for about 5 minutes, or until the speaker has completed the discussion. At that time you should reverse roles and the listener will now be the speaker and talk about what they would like to change in their partner. The original speaker will now be the listener. As before, the conversation should last about 5 minutes, or until the speaker has completed the discussion.

APPENDIX VI

SELF-DISCLOSURE AND EMPATHY SKILL TRAINING INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCORING BEHAVIORAL DATA

(Guerney, 1977, pp. 364-365; pp. 371-372.)

The Acceptance of Other Scale (AOS)

The Acceptance of Other Scale or AOS (sometimes referred to as the Listener Acceptance Scale or LAS) was developed by Lillian Stover, Bernard Guerney, Jr., Barry Ginsberg, and Stephen Schlein. It is designed to measure the understanding and acceptance conveyed by one person (the responder) in his verbal responses to a communication from another (the other).

The scale gives primary weight to empathy as a form of acceptance, and to those responses that encourage the other to follow his own line of thought. It assesses the responder's sensitivity to the other's phenomenological field; his willingness to stay within the boundaries defined by the other's phenomenological field; and his sensitivity to the feelings, needs, and motivations of the other as these have been expressed both by the other's words and manner. The guiding question in its development was "What would be the best and worst responses that could be made to another's statement by a Rogerian psychotherapist?" It is an eight-point scale wherein the lowest level of responses are argumentative and accusative; the middle range of responses are ordinary social conversation; and the highest level of responses are ones that convey complete empathic acceptance of the other person.

The scale can be used with the response unit defined in two ways: (1) an arbitrary unit of time (we found one minute of conversation reasonable), or (2) a statement of the person being rated which is made between two statments by another. The latter is our preferred method for most applications.

Acceptance of Other Scale Continuum -- Values from 8 to 1.

8. Verbally reflects (states) the deepest feelings expressed by the other. Also, content, if any accurately reflects the main thrust of the other's meaning. A highly empathic response.

7. Recognizing feelings with full attention to mood, but not conveying sensitivity to level of intensity, or not responding fully to the significant feelings. Also, content, if any, is in accord with main thrust of the other's meaning.

6. A paraphasing of content that is in accord with the main thrust of the other's meaning. Acceptant, accurate, but not stating any feeling of the other.

5. The attempt to "stay with" the other is clear, but the response goes astray. The following are examples of ways in which the response may stray away from one that focuses fully on the other's own thoughts and momentum: (a) questioning in an attempt to get an elaboration of the other's thoughts; (b) giving a suggestion about the other's intent that has been implied by the other; or (c) a response that has the effect of infusing ideas different from the other's.

4. Nonaccusative social conversation. Responding to one's own ideas after the fashion of typical social discourse. (A half minute of total verbal silence is scored here. Under certain circumstances, "Yes" or "uhm uhm" and responses of this nature are also scored here -- see guidelines).

3. Directing. Moderately critical in tone, but not abusive. Taking the lead. Giving suggestions. Although statements are not presented as being in direct opposition, the statement has the effect of interjecting thoughts that are in opposition to those expressed by the other. Questioning in order to defend one's own point of view.

2. Open disagreements with content expressed by the other, contrary statements. Statements suggestive of boredom, incredulity, rejection, disgust, disbelief, and so on.

1. Strongly agrumentative. Accusative. Openly rejecting the other person or that person's rights to have the feelings he has expressed. Abusive. Demanding. Angry.

Guidelines for using the Acceptance of Other Scale and reliability and validity information about the scale can be obtained from Relationship Enhancement, Bernard G. Guerney, Jr. (Ed.), San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

The Self-Feeling Awareness Scale (SFAS)

The Self-Feeling Awareness Scale, or SFAS, was developed by Lillian Stover, Bernard Guerney, Jr., Barry Ginsberg, and Stephen Schlein. The person being rated is referred to as the Self or

Speaker. (The scale has also been referred to as the Speaker-Feeling Awareness Scale.) The person being spoken to is referred to as the Listener. If the scale is used in a group context and the speaker addresses more than one person, a separate score is used for each person spoken to directly. The SFAS is designed to measure the speaker's feelings awareness, stated in subjective terms. It was designed with this question in mind: What kinds of statements are most (and least) likely to lead to another to respond in terms of the speaker's phenomenology rather than to some other aspect of his statement? The SFAS is an eight-point scale in which: A high-level statement includes important feelings put in subjective terms; a middle-level statement in ordinary social conversation; and a low-level statement is one that emphasizes the defficiencies of oneself or another without the speaker acknowledging his feelings or the subjective nature of his perceptions.

Self-Feeling Awareness Scale Continuum - Values from 8 to 1.

8. Directly stating as one's own ("owning")deep or long-standing feelings about self or partner what are positive or negative. The feelings are not expressed indirectly; they are designated by name (for example, angry, happy, depressed).

7. Owning feelings about self or partner at a more guarded level or in less emotional terms.

6. Owning thoughts, interests, values of self or the listener. Feelings are not expressed except inferentially.

5. Making comments or statements about self or the listener of an abstract or descriptive nature (not owning them). Simple agreements or disagreements.

4. Making social conversation not about self or the listener. (A half minute of complete silence is also scored here.)

3. Making suggestions in a negative or positive manner to influence behavior of partner. Rejecting ideas put forth by the listener.

2. Giving directions. Making demands. Being mildly accusative. Mildly attacking or praising self or the listener without owning feelings.

1. Strongly attacking, accusing or praising self or the listener without owning feelings.

Guidlelines focusing the Self-Feeling Awareness Scale and reliability and validity information about the scale can be obtained from Relationship Enhancement, Bernard Guerney, Jr. (Ed.), San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

APPENDIX VII

RELATIONSHIP DISCUSSION GROUP COURSE DESCRIPTION:
COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

Text: Saxton, L. The individual, marriage and the family Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1972.

Course Title and Catalogue Description

Courtship and Marriage (3:3:0). Designed to consider the role of interpersonal relationships of dating, courtship and marriage.

Course Objectives

The primary objectives of this course were to:

1. Facilitate awareness and acceptance of new ideas concerning courtship, marriage, and sexuality.
2. Provide exposure to the literature concerning these areas.
3. Facilitate the examination of personal values, attitudes, ideas, expectations, and assumptions.
4. Encourage sharing and expression of feelings to others about the various subjects that will be dealt with.

Course Outline

Week 1 - Getting acquainted

Week 2 - Course expectations

Week 3 - Love in a Paired Relation

Week 4 - Dating and Mate Selection

Week 5 - The Institution of Marriage and Open Marriage

Week 6 - Conflict and Adjustment in Marriage

Week 7 - The Paired Relation in a Mass Society

Week 8 - Human Sexuality: Basic Responses

Week 9 - Nature of the Family

Week 10 - Spring Break

Week 11 - Reproduction: The Biological Basis of the Family

Week 12 - The Family with Small Children

Week 13 - Marriage under Special Circumstances

Week 14 - The Economics of Marriage

Week 15 - Alternatives to Marriage

Evaluations

Three exams will be given that consist of 40 multiple choice questions. Make-up exams will be essay-type - 4 questions on each test - one from each chapter.

APPENDIX VIII

RIDLEY AND HARRELL MUTUAL
PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS

(Ridley and Harrell, 1976)

Ten Essential Steps in Mutual Problem Solving:

1. Listen carefully and express own feelings
2. Explore problem area
3. Locate and define problem in relationship terms
4. Identify how each partner contributes to problem
5. State goal (in terms of more of or less of specific behavior)
6. Generate alternative solutions
7. Evaluate alternative solutions (in terms of goal and personal values)
8. Select best solution
9. Implement solution
10. Evaluate progress

Explanation of Mutual Problem Solving Steps

Step 1. Listen carefully and express own feelings.

This step involves a skillful style of communication which will be used in all of the problem solving steps. You may even find these listening and expressing skills useful in your everyday conversations. This step is structured so that at one time, one person is speaking and one person is listening. The person who is speaking expresses his/her

thoughts and/or feelings on a topic. It is important that the speaker own his/her feelings and not talk about something someone else feels or believes. For example: "I feel pleased when you...." This is in contrast to: "You don't mind putting things off...." While one person speaks, the other person listens very carefully and then lets the speaker know they understood him/her. This is accomplished by the listener summarizing the speaker's message. After the speaker indicates the listener's summary was accurate, the partners reverse roles and one speaks while the other listens and summarizes. Once the summarizing skill is learned, the roles of speaker and listener can change very quickly - even every sentence or so if desired.

Step 2. Explore the problem area.

This step involves a discussion about what is bothering one or both partners. The discussion should be characterized by each person saying how they see the situation and disclosing their feelings about it. Problems which are selected to be discussed and explored should meet these conditions: (a) be relevant, here and now - in other words, something which has some impact on you in the present, not last week, year, etc., or (b) if it is a problem from the past, it should be having some impact on you now. Old problems which have been put to rest should stay there - if they are resting. The important goal in this step is for both partners to explore and express their feelings about the problem area.

Example of Steps 1 and 2:

Person A, Speaker: "I've been bothered lately because we haven't been spending much time together. I wonder why we don't go out and have good times."

Person B, Listener: "You don't like it because we don't do more things togehter."

Person A, Speaker: Nods, to indicate the summary was accurate.

Step 3: Define problem in relationship terms.

After exploring the problem area, it is important to determine if its something that affects both persons and both persons would like to see solved. This is in contrast to an individual complaint or an individual request for change. This also means that one partner may have a greater investment in the outcome than the other partner - "I know this bothers me more than it does you but I sense you might also be happier if we resolved it." In order to be a true relationship problem, both persons must see some benefit in solving it. It takes

special effort for two persons to see that many problems do in fact affect both of them. If the problem affects both persons, it is a relationship problem and requires that both persons work on solving it. The outcome of this step should be that both partners genuinely agree to work together toward the solution.

Example of Step 3:

Person A, Problem: "I'm afraid to tell you how I feel about you and that if I do, we will spend even less time together."

Person B, Problem: "I think if I ask you out more often you will get the wrong idea and I don't want that to happen."

General Relationship Problem: "We don't communicate clearly and then we're confused."

Specific Relationship Problem: "We don't tell each other our honest feelings about each other, and what we want from each other."

Step 4: Identify how each person contributes to the problem.

If We have a problem, it follows that I am probably doing something that helps maintain it. Frequently persons in a relationship are not aware of their own contributions, and even if they are, most find it difficult to admit when problems arise. When a person hears his/her partner own some responsibility for a problem, this seems to signal a willingness to cooperate and the mutual problem solving process usually moves more quickly after this point. It is important in this step, as in the ones which follow, for each partner to be very specific. Identifying how each partner contributes to a problem, helps the pair know what behaviors need to be changed to resolve the problem.

Example of Step 4:

Partner A:"I contribute to this problem by hiding my feelings. When you don't call me or come over, I tell you that's o.k., but I don't really mean it."

Partner B:"I contribute to the problem by telling you I have a lot of studying to do and papers to write, even though I'm not going to work on them."

Step 5: State the goal (in terms of behaviors to increase or decrease).

Once the relationship problem has been identified and each partner has identified what he/she does to help maintain it, the pair then states what their goal is. In other words, they determine what they want to see happen more often or less often. In order to make this process work, the goal must be stated to indicate what behaviors need to increase or decrease. Do not be vague; if you are, you will not know what needs to be changed.

Example of Step 5:

> Relationship Goal: We want to increase the number of times we tell each other honestly what we want and how we feel.

Step 6: Generate alternative solutions.

Once each person has identified how he/she contributes to maintaining the problem and a goal is set, it is time to locate some alternative ways of achieving it. Each partner identifies several specific behaviors he/she might change. It is also important to generate more than just one solution. Be creative, humorous and exploring. Remember, the alternative solutions nned to be specific.

Example of Step 6:

> Partner A:"I could phone you once a week and ask you to do something." "I could tell you how I feel about several situations I have been involved in once a week."
>
> Partner B:"I could initiate a discussion with you at some time when we are together to talk about when I would like to get together again.'
> "I could tell you one feeling I am feeling toward you each time we are together."

Step 7: Evaluate alternative solutions.

Alternative solutions should not be evaluated until each person has finished listing several. Waiting to be evaluated helps each person feel free to make suggestions and increase the changes that more and better solutions will be created. Alternatives should be evaluated using two criteria: (a) will it help achieve the goal and solve the problem?; and (b) is it consistent with my values and resources? In other words, will it help solve the problem, and can I carry it off and live with it?

Example of Step 7:

> In view of the relationship goal set in the beginning example, alternative #1 would not achieve the goal, whereas the other three may do so. Each partner has to ask himself, "How do I feel about doing this alternative and can I do it?"

Step 8. Select best solution.

This follows naturally from the previous one but requires some additional work. It is necessary to determine the specifics -- who will do what, when, where, and how often? At first this seems like busy work to some persons, but there are some very important reasons for agreeing on just how the solution is to be implemented. The main reason for being very specific is to maintain clear communication. If one partner does not understand precisely what his/her partner plans to do, he/she may inaccurately expect a behavior to occur, and when it does not, feel disappointed, and hurt feelings can be avoided by both partners agreeing who will do what and when. A second reason for being specific is so you can evaluate your progress. As a couple you may discover that you do not need to be as specific as this step requires -- e.g., you are very successful in carrying out your solutions. We would like you to prove this to yourselves first through using this step and having success experiences.

Example of Step 8:

> Partner A; "I will initiate a discussion with you once each time we are together, and talk honestly about when I would like to see you again."
>
> Partner B: "I will state my honest feelings toward you once each time we are together."

Step 9: Implement the solution.

A new solution, to a problem should be implemented long enough to convince you that it's working or it's not going to work. How long you try will depend on the opportunity the behaviors have to occur. If they could occur several times per week, two weeks may be a sufficient trial period. If the behaviors are likely to occur infrequently, the trial period should of course be lengthened. In any case, both partner need to agree on the period of time whey will implement their new solution. Both persons must realize that new ways of behaving are not necessarily easy -- changing a relationship for the better requires considerable effort, but the payoff for being successful is very great.

Step 10: Evaluate progress.

At the agreed upon time after the solution has been implemented for several days or weeks, both partners should discuss and evaluate their progress. These questions need to be answered: (1) Did we do what we agreed to do?; (2) If yes, do we think it achieved our goal and do we want to continue with these behaviors?; (3) If no, what went wrong? If the goal was not achieved, the partners should return to step 5.

APPENDIX IX

THE MODES OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

(Ridley and Avery, 1976)

Explanation of the Speaker Mode:

In the Speaker Mode you are in full control of the topic to be discussed. You attempt to discuss the issue with an active awareness that you are seeing it from you own vantage point, and that others, especially your partner, may well perceive it differently. Therefore you try to be careful to state things in terms of your own perceptions rather than stating them as if they represented a reality which should be as apparent to your partner as it is to you. Stating things as being your own individual perception, is especially important whenever you are discussing an issue on which you may disagree. A vast amount of energy is wasted and much friction and heat -- without light -- is created when couples argue about the truth or validity of their particular perceptions. Most often what is important is not the "truth" which cannot really be determined in most situations involving interpersonal discord, but a more complete grasp of how each party sincerely and honestly views the situation in question.

Specifically, your role as Speaker will be:

1. to choose a topic which is important to your relationship. The subject matter may be something positive, or something problematical

about the relationship, or it may concern behaviors which you may wish to decrease in yourself or your partner, or behaviors which you would like to see developed or increased in yourself or in your partner.

2. when you talk about this topic, try to state your view points in a way which acknowledges that they are strictly your own. Try to avoid stating your perceptions as if they were objective fact.

3. above all, do not describe motivations or characteristics of your partner which he might find objectionable. Where your original thoughts are along such lines, try instead to describe the behavior of your partner which you have in mind that gave rise to your thoughts. Then, tell your partner how such behavior leads you to perceive his attitudes or his intentions. Or best of all, try to tell him what feelings you have when those behaviors occur.

4. eventually, also try to describe what behaviors would be more to your own liking, and how those behaviors would make you feel.

Explanation of the Empathic Responder Mode:

The word "empathy" epitomizes what you are trying to do. "Empathy" means essentially putting yourself inside the skin of another person and being able to share with them a complete understanding of the world as the other person sees and feels it. You are empathizing very well, when you correctly perceive a feeling that is implied by what the speaker says and by the way it is said. The very highest level of empathic

understanding is reached when you have put together what the speaker has said and the way which it has been said in a way that goes beyond the words used. You can then state a feeling for your partner which reflects what the speaker's feelings really are about a given situation even more accurately, or more fully than the speaker himself has been able to do in his own statement. You must then communicate this level of understanding, this deeper feeling, to the speaker in a warm and accepting manner of speech. We don't mean by that, that you will have detected something which will come as a surprise to your partner, but rather that you've focused his or her feeling in a clearer way then your partner has been able to do as he struggled to get at his deeper attitudes and feelings.

When you are displaying empathic responsiveness it means automatically that there are many things which you cannot simultaneously do:

1. You cannot be asking your partner questions.
2. You cannot present your own opinion, perception and view point of what your partner is saying.
3. You must not interpret things for the Speaker.
4. You must not make suggestions while you are a listener about how your partner might alter the situation in a favorable way, or solve a problem.

5. Above all, you must avoid making judgements about what your partner has said.

Explanation of the Mode Switching:

You observed when we were demonstrating the Speaker and Empathic Modes earlier, that each of us were able to switch back and forth easily from one mode to the other. This is the third skill that we will be teaching you after you begin to master the two primary modes. We will be teaching you the cues that you should look for within your own mind and feelings to signal to you when the proper time has arrived to seek a change in your communication mode from Speaker to Empathic Responder or vice-versa. We will also teach you the cues you should look for in your partner's speech and behavior that hould serve as a signal to you that a mode switch would be desirable.

Explanation of the Facilitator Mode:

Often in psychologically oriented groups the word "facilitator" is used to designate the person in charge of the group. We do not use this term in that manner. We refer to the people in charge of the program or groups as the "leaders". The term facilitator is reserved specifically for the clients in the program when they are attempting to assist other group members to learn or practice skills. Members are not to

as psychological or behavioral helpers or problem-solvers for others. Instead they are asked to become very active teachers and trainers of those members of the group with whom they are not paired. Unrelated members at first function as auxiliary or assistant teachers. Later as the group members become more and more skilled both in primary skills and in teaching skills, the leader may become less and less active and the primary source of supervision in the skill-practicing and application may come from other group members rather than the leader.

APPENDIX X

PRETEST/POSTTEST
UNADJUSTED MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

	Self-Disclosure and Empathy Training Group		General Communication and Problem-Solving Training Group		Relationship Discussion Group	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Males						
Pretest	99.75	9.43	97.67	11.34	93.04	12.05
Posttest	101.71	9.99	97.79	12.20	90.81	13.37
Females						
Pretest	100.17	6.82	100.04	9.48	98.38	9.92
Posttest	101.88	10.30	101.38	8.90	95.27	14.28
Total						
Pretest	99.96	8.14	98.85	10.41	95.71	11.26
Posttest	101.79	10.04	99.58	10.72	93.04	13.88

REFERENCES

Argyris, C. Explorations in interpersonal competence. Unpublished manuscript, Yale University, 1964.

Argyris, C. Explorations in interpersonal competence - 1. The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 1965, 1, 58-83.

Avery, A.W., Ridley, C.A., Leslie, L., and Milholland, T. Relationship enhancement: A six-month follow-up. American Journal of Family Therapy, in press.

Bienvenu, M.J. Measurement of marital communication. The Family Coordinator, 1970, 19, 26-30.

Birchler, G.R., Weiss, R.L., and Vincent, J.P. Multimethod analysis of social reinforcement exchange between maritally distressed and non-distressed spouse and stranger dyads. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,1975, 31, 349-360.

Collins, J.D. Experimental evaluation of a six-month conjugal therapy and relationship enhancement program. In B.G. Guerney (Ed.) Relationship Enhancement. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

Cronbach, L.J. Coefficient alpha and the internalstructure of tests. Psychometrika, 1951, 297-334.

Ely, A.L., Guerney, B.G., and Stover, L. Efficacy of the training phase of conjugal therapy. Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice, 1973, 10, 201-207.

Fitts, W.H. Interpersonal Competence: The Wheel Model. Research Monograph II The Dede Wallace Center, Nashville, 1970.

Foote, N.N. Matching of husband and wife in phases of development. Transactions of Third World Congress of Sociology, 1956, 4, 24-34.

Foote, N.N., and Cottrell, L.S. Identity and Interpersonal Competence. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955.

Ginsberg, B.G. and Vogelsong, E. Premarital relationship improvement by maximizing empathy and self-disclosure: The PRIMES program. In B.G. Guerney (Ed.), Relationship Enhancement. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

Guerney, B.G., Jr. Filial therapy: Description and rationale. Journal of Consulting Psychology, 1964, 28, 303-310.

Guerney, B., Jr. Psychotherapeutic Agents, New Roles for Non-professionals, Parents, and Teachers. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1969.

Guerney, B.G. Relationship Enhancement. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

Guerney, B.G., Guerney, L., and Andronico, M.P. On educating the disadvantaged parent to motivate children for learning: A filial approach. Community Mental Health Journal, 1966, 3, 66-72.

Harrell, J., and Guerney, B.G. Training married couples in conflict negotiation skills. In D.H.L. Olson (Ed.), Treating Relationships. Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic, 1976.

Harris, T. I'm OK - You're OK. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

Hops, H., Willis, T.A., Patterson, G.R., nad Weiss, R.L. Marital interaction coding system. University of Oregon Research Institute, 1971. Order from ASIS/NAPS, c/o Microfiche Publications, 305 E. 46th Street, New York, New York, 10017.

Jacobson, N.S. Problem solving and contingency contracting in the treatment of marital discord. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 1977, 45, 91-100.

Jacobson, N.S. A review of the research and the effectiveness of marital therapy. In T.J. Paolino and B.S. McCrady (Eds.), Marriage and Marital Therapy: Psychoanalytic Behavioral and Systems Theory Perspectives. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1978a.

Jacobson, N.S. Specific and nonspecific factors in a behavioral approach to marital discord. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 1978b, 46, 442-452.

Jones, L.A. A study assessing the influence of family interaction style on heterosexual competency. Unpublished master's thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1973.

Lewis, R.A. A developmental framework for the analysis of pre-marital dyadic formation. Family Process, 1972, 11, 17-48.

Liberman, R. Behavioral approaches to family and couple therapy. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1970, 40, 106-118.

Locke, H.J. and Williamson, R.C. Marital adjustment: A factor analysis study. American Sociological Review, 1958, 23, 562-569.

Miller, S., Nunnally, E.W., and Wackman, D. Alive and Aware: Improving Communication in Relationships. Minneapolis: Interpersonal Communication Programs, 1975.

Olson, D.H.L. Marital and family therapy: Integrative view and critique. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1970, 32, 501-538.

Olson, D.H.L. Treating relationships; Trends and overview. In D.H.L. Olson (Ed.), Treating Relationships. Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic, 1976.

Olson, D.H.L., and Ryder, R.G. Inventory of marital conflicts (IMC): An experimental interaction procedure. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1970, 32, 443-448.

Patterson, G.R., nad Hops, H. Coersion, a game for two: Intervention and techniques for marital conflict. In R.E. Ulrich and P. Mountjoy (Eds.), The Experimental Analysis of Social Behavior. New York: Appelton-Century-Crofts, 1972.

Patterson, G.R., Hops, H., and Weiss, R.L. A social learning approach to reducing rates of marital conflict. In R. Stuart, R. Liberman, and S. Wilder (Eds.), Advances in Behavior Therapy. New York: Academic Press, 1973.

Patterson, G.R., Hops, H., and Weiss, R.L. Interpersonal skills training for couples in early stages of conflict. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1975, 37, 295-303.

Patterson, G.R., and Reid, J.B. Reciprocity and coersion: Two facets of social systems. In C. Neuringer and J.L. Michael (Eds.), Behavior Modification in Clinical Psychology New York: Appelton-Century-Crofts, 1970.

Peterman, D.J., and Ridley, C.A. The Peterman-Ridley heterosexual competency scale, first draft. Unpublished manuscript, Pennsylvania State University, 1970.

Rappoport, A.F. Conjugal relationship enhancement program. In D.H.L. Olson (Ed.), Treating Relationships. Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic, 1976.

Ridley, C.A., Avery, A.W., Harrell, J., Leslie, L., and Dent, J.A. Training premarital couples in communication and problem-solving skills: A primary prevention program. Unpublished manuscript, University of Arizona, 1980.

Ridley, C.A., and Harrell, J. Mutual problem-solving skills: A training program for premarital couples. Unpublished training manual, Texas Tech University, 1976.

Ridley, C.A., and Avery, A.W. Self-disclosure and empathy skills training. Unpublished training manual, Texas Tech University, 1976.

Saxton, L. The individual, marriage, and the family. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1972.

Stover, L., and Guerney, B.G. Efficacy of training procedures for mothers in filial therapy. Psychotherapy, Research, and Practice, 1967, 4, 110-115.

Stuart, R.B. Operant interpersonal treatment for marital discord. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology,1969, 33, 675-682.

Stuart, R.B. An operant interpersonal program for couples. In D.H.L. Olson (Ed.), Treating Relationships. Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic, 1976.

Stuart, R.B., and Stuart F. Marital pre-counseling inventory. Champaign: Research Press, 1973.

Sullivan, H.S. The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry. New York: Norton, 1953.

Weinstein, E.A. The development of interpersonal competence. In D. Goslin (Ed.), Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1970.

Weiss, R.L., Hops, H., and Patterson, G.R. A framework for conceptualizing marital conflict, a technology for altering it, some data for evaluating it. In L.A. Hammerlynck, L.C. Handy, and E.J. Mash (Eds.), Behavior Change: Methodology, Concepts, and Practice. Champaign: Research Press, 1973.

White, R.W. Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence. Psychological Review, 1959, 66, 297-333.

Wills, T.A., Weiss, R.L., and Patterson, G.R. A behavioral analysis of the determinants of marital satisfaction. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 1974, 42, 802-811.