Interpersonal Communication: The Shift Toward a Student-Centered Perspective in the Basic Speech Course

Gavin Whitsett
Western Kentucky University

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Gavin Crawford

1975
INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION:
THE SHIFT TOWARD A STUDENT-CENTERED PERSPECTIVE
IN THE BASIC SPEECH COURSE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Speech and Theatre
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of the Requirements for the Degree
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by
Gavin Crawford Whitsett
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INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION:
THE SHIFT TOWARD A STUDENT-CENTERED PERSPECTIVE
IN THE BASIC SPEECH COURSE

Recommended 7/29/75
(Date)

Director of Thesis
Joseph C. Stein

Approved  July 31, 1975
(Date)

Dean of the Graduate College
Edwin I. Bunting
There is little question that studies in speech communication represent an important dimension of students' educational experience. Adequate communication skill is essential to an individual's social and psychological welfare, to the establishment and maintenance of human relationships and consequently to human growth. For most students, the basic speech course is the only formal oral communication training they will ever have; and in order to remain current with the latest in man's understanding of speech behavior and human interaction, the basic speech course is changing.

The purpose of this paper is to describe both the conceptual and methodological changes in the basic course and to test a unique communication training program which is congruent with the rhetoric of schooling and relevant to the needs of students. Consistent with this purpose, chapter one involves a discussion of the purpose of education and a suggestion that, in light of recent findings in educational psychology, higher education may be moving away from traditional practices. Chapter two affirms the importance of
communication studies to human affairs; the transition in the basic speech course is documented and paralleled to the current movement in higher education; and finally, evidence is submitted to support the proposition that empathy is appropriate subject matter of education for self-actualization. In chapter three, hypotheses regarding student-centered, interpersonal communication training are advanced, and the procedures used to test these hypotheses in an experimental basic speech course are outlined. Chapter four reports the results of the present research and provides a discussion and conclusions based upon those results.

For their part in the presentation of this material, the author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Thomas Madron and Carolyn Marks at Institutional Research; Joseph Cangemi of the Psychology department; Phil Constans of Educational Foundations and Curriculum; Richard Greer of Counselor Education; and Randall Capps, Regis O'Connor, and Joseph Stearns of the Department of Speech and Theatre--all at Western Kentucky University. This work is dedicated to Sharon, Joe, and Mom.
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The shift in the orientation of the basic speech course—from public speaking to interpersonal communication—was reviewed and paralleled to the current movement toward student-centered education. Course evaluations made by students in an experimental interpersonal basic course were compared to the evaluations made by public speaking students. It was found that students in the interpersonal class ranked their class significantly higher in indices related to self-actualization, in relevance of subject matter, and in facilitative teacher attitudes. In addition, students from both the interpersonal and public speaking orientations were compared on the basis of a pre-post test of empathic understanding; the interpersonal students showed significant gains in empathic understanding while the students from the public speaking sections did not. It was concluded that the interpersonal orientation may be more relevant to the needs of contemporary students than the traditional public speaking approach.
CHAPTER ONE

THE CONTEMPORARY VIEW OF EDUCATION

The Human Purpose of School

Most educational theorists, whatever their philosophical disposition, agree that education should result in human growth. The philosophies of Socrates, Aristotle, Rousseau, and Hegel center on the notions of personal growth and the actualization of potential. The classical Realist philosopher Broudy considers education to be the major factor in the realization of an individual's potential.

1 Indeed, the word education stems from the Latin educare which means to nourish, to cause to grow. Etymological scholars point to Quintillian's use of the word, educare, in his Institutes of Oratory, the classic Latin work on education. As used in the present study, growth refers to the expansion of one's psychological, emotional, social, and intellectual potentialities. It means the enhancement of life, the enlargement of experience, and the further realization of one's capacities. A synonym used herein is self-realization, or the process of self-actualization.


and Butler, an Idealist, sees self-realization as the ultimate aim of education. Dewey, a Pragmatist, takes the position that personal growth is the only worthy end and that education must be humanized to subserve this human need; the Existentialist Rogers writes that education should promote personal development and that the goal of learning is the fully-functioning person.

From this single point of agreement, however, the educational policies of these thinkers diverge sharply, and it is in the area of methodology and practice we find modern education divided. While the traditional view--Idealism, Realism, and Neo-Thomism--holds that the prime responsibility of the school is to initiate the young into the accumulated knowledge of the past, the contemporary outlook--espoused by the Pragmatists and Existentialists--is that schools should focus on the present and prepare stu-

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dents to create beyond the past in order to cope with a changing world. Although most schools include both perspectives in their statements of objectives, it is obvious that the traditional theory is still the most widely practiced in American schools; the contemporary view, referred to by Borton as the "human purpose of school," is prominent on only the theoretical level.

This discrepancy—between practice and theory, between emphasis on knowledge and emphasis on the student—is the target of much educational research and crit-

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8 Van Cleve Morris, Philosophy and the American School (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), pp. 13, 14, 337, 363-64; Sam Keen calls the contemporary view of education "the personalistic (as opposed to the mere humanistic) dimension of education" (To A Dancing God [New York: Harper & Row, 1970], pp. 41-42).

9 Morris, p. 352; Terry Borton, the former co-director of the Affective Education Research Project, observes:

"There are two sections to almost every school's statement of objectives—one for real, and one for show. The first, the real one, talks about academic excellence, subject mastery, and getting a job. The other discusses the human purpose of school—values, feelings, personal growth, the full and happy life. It is included because everyone knows it is important, and that it ought to be central to the life of every school. But it is only for show. Everyone knows how little schools have done about it" (quoted in Diane Divoky, How Old Will You Be In 1984? [New York: Avon Books, 1969], p. 331).

10 Borton, quoted in Divoky, p. 331.

11 Morris, p. 355.
Contemporary, student-centered theorists point to that fact that the complex social challenges of our time are unique and that change is the dominant characteristic of our generation; schooling which emphasizes knowledge of the past is not relevant to the needs of students today. If education is to be truly growth-promoting, they say, then relevance must be the key feature of its curriculum.

Researchers find that schools' concentration on tradition frequently overshadows the real needs of students. Nelson N. Foote and Leonard S. Cottrell write that schools tend to emphasize institutional ends "to the relative neglect of self-realization in day-to-day family living" (Identity and Interpersonal Competence [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955], pp. 36-37, 54); Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner declare that the traditional curriculum is unrealistic and stymies students' growth by preventing inquiry into the most critical problems of the world outside of school. Teaching as a Subversive Activity (New York: Delacorte Press, 1969), p. 47; Phillip Werdell cites substantial research indicating that most schools underestimate the importance of students' personal development. "Futurism and the Reform of Higher Education," in Learning for Tomorrow: The Role of the Future in Education, ed. Alvin Toffler (New York: Random House, 1974), pp. 272-312.

In the present study, relevance means directly related to the matter at hand.

William Glasser charges that schools are failing to meet the real needs of students because of an educational philosophy of nonrelevance to life outside of school. Schools Without Failure (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. xiii-xiv, 48-49; John Holt, a major spokesman for the reform movement in American education, argues that the prime function of school is to promote students' growth and that, in order to do so, schools must provide students the freedom to learn what they really need and want to know. Freedom and Beyond (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 9-13, 59-124.
The Student-Centered Approach

The student-centered approach, in contrast to the traditional, academic approach, is more directly concerned with the self-actualization of the learner/person\textsuperscript{15} and seeks to facilitate students' growth by providing them the skills and concepts most relevant to the world outside of school.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15}In this study, the student-centered approach—more Existential than Pragmatic—is education aimed at developing autonomous, self-sufficient, and inner-directed human beings who enjoy a high degree of self-actualization. The term refers to a personal teacher/student encounter characterized by genuineness, empathy, positive regard, and trust. A synonym is helping teacher/student relationship. The student-centered approach is a product of contemporary educational philosophy. Sidney M. Jourard writes that in education "fit for human beings," as opposed to traditional schooling, the focus is not on cognitive knowledge so much as on the individual person and on the discovery of one's limits to experience, to act, and to relate to other human beings. The Transparent Self, 2nd ed. (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1971), pp. 110-18; Abraham Maslow suggests that the human goal of education is ultimately the self-actualization of the student and that education for actualization will foster the "process person, the creative person, the improvising person, the self-trusting, courageous person, the autonomous person" (The Farther Reaches of Human Nature [New York: The Viking Press, 1971], pp. 100, 168-69); and Arthur W. Combs and Donald Syngg propose that the "adequate self," or developed personality, is the goal of education. Individual Behavior: A Perceptual Approach to Behavior, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 377.

\textsuperscript{16}For a further discussion of teachers' responsibility to provide relevant coursework, see Gerald M. Phillips, David E. Butt, and Nancy J. Metzger, Communication in Education: A Rhetoric of Schooling and Learning (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1974), p. 15; and Postman and Weingartner, pp. 207-18.
Relevance, which has emerged as an essential component of student-centered education, has at the same time become the object of extensive psychological research.

Postman and Weingartner write,

There is no way to help a learner to be disciplined, active, and thoroughly engaged unless he perceives a problem to be a problem or whatever-to-be-learned as worth learning, and unless he plays an active role in determining the solution process. 17

Syngg summarizes the research of Combs and Syngg, Festinger, Piaget, and Taba and concludes that the evidence supports this theory of learning (i.e., Cognitive Field Theory). 18

Combs and Syngg agree that education must deal with personal meaning and that unless information is perceived by students as relevant, it will not be properly learned. In fact, "material forced upon students without consideration of their present needs and immediate goals tends to acquire a meaning which makes it less useful in the satisfaction of need than if it had never been studied."19 Recent research by Mumpower indicates that students' emotional involvement

17 Ibid., p. 52.


19 Combs and Syngg, p. 371.
with subject matter is an important factor in the learning process and that college undergraduates and graduates learn more lastingly material which has an emotional appeal than information of purely intellectual interest.\textsuperscript{20}

In addition to the relevance of the subject matter, researchers advise that the interpersonal relationship between the teacher and learner also may be a decisive factor in students' growth. Carkhuff lists substantial support for the proposition that the teacher/student relationship may be "for better or for worse" (i.e., may have constructive or deleterious consequences).\textsuperscript{21} Rogers, who has extensively studied the growth potential of the learning situation, refers to the teacher/student encounter as a "helping relationship"--that is, "a relationship in which at least one of the parties has the intent of promoting the growth, development, maturity, improved functioning, improved coping with life of the other."\textsuperscript{22} Rogers and Carkhuff and Truax


claim that the attitudinal qualities of the facilitative teacher/student relationship are the same found in other helping relationships (e.g., parent/child, husband/wife, counselor/client). Both Rogers and the Carkhuff-Truax team summarize numerous studies to confirm their findings that these qualities are genuineness, empathic understanding, and positive regard (i.e., warmth, caring, respect, and trust). These essential attitudinal conditions on the part of a teacher have been shown to be most facilitative to students' growth.


24 See notes 22 and 23 above. For additional summaries of research supporting this contention, see David N. Aspy and Barbara Hutson, "Promotion of Student Success," The Journal of Educational Research 66 (October 1972): 57-60; Carkhuff, Human Relations, 2:8-9; Rogers, Freedom to Learn, pp. 103-8, 157-68; and Carl Rogers and Barry Stevens, Person to Person: The Problem of Being Human (Lafayette, California: Real People Press, 1967), pp. 58-60, 89-104, 270-73. In the present study, facilitation refers to the activity of promoting constructive change or movement; improvement; enhancement. Synonyms used herein are helping and growth promotion.
In sum, there is a growing mass of empirical data to show that contemporary, student-centered schooling--characterized by relevance and facilitative teacher/student relationships--promotes human growth. Although the traditional philosophy still dominates in actual classroom practice, the present near crisis state of America's university system has emphasized the need for educators to re-examine the purposes and methodology of higher education; a review of recent journals of higher education reveals that this is being done. A great deal of scholarly writing attests the search for curricula which are more relevant to today's student.

At the same time, educators are developing their

25Ernest Spaights, "The Dysfunctional University," College Student Journal 7 (May 1973) : 30-34.

responsibility for human growth; teachers are increasingly being urged to consider themselves "as persons who facilitate growth." Cangemi, in a recent survey of university students, faculty, and administrators, found significant "agreement that the purpose of higher education is to help those associated with it move toward self-actualization." In the next chapter, additional evidence of education's--specifically Speech Education's--shift toward more relevant and growth-promoting curricula will be presented.


28 Joseph P. Cangemi, "Perceptions of Students, Faculty, and Administrators Regarding Self-Actualization as the Purpose of Higher Education" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1974), p. 76. In the present study, as in Cangemi's dissertation, self-actualization is defined as the fruition of one's latent or existing resources and potentialities, the development of one's true self. It refers to the highest form of psychological, emotional, social, and intellectual growth. Other synonyms are fully human, fully functioning, self-fulfillment, and the development of one's fullest capacities.
CHAPTER TWO

SPEECH EDUCATION

Communication and Human Affairs

The idea that man's fate and destiny are determined by his relations with others can be found in the ancients' intuitive understanding of human existence; as early as 460 B.C. Hippocrates described the significance of man's human interaction.¹ In later times, massive evidence has accumulated to demonstrate that our communications with others is the largest single determinant of what happens to us in life. Carkhuff and Truax;² Backman, Secord, and Peirce;³ Ullman and Krasner;⁴ and many other psychologists,

⁴Leonard P. Ullman and Leonard Krasner, A Psychological Approach to Abnormal Behavior (Englewood Cliffs,
psychiatrists, sociologists, and communicologists have offered research findings to support this assertion.

Heider suggests that communication with others is the most significant agent of causality in human development. Mead believes that the self originates and develops in communication. Horney reports that interpersonal communication plays a major role in the development of personality. Sullivan defines personality as our patterns of relating to others; and Ruesch posits that constructs such as culture, society, and personality are simply reflections of different aspects of interpersonal communications. 5

Numerous spokesmen for contemporary educational philosophy have recommended interpersonal communication training as appropriate subject matter for today's schools. Foote and Cottrell advocate an emphasis on specific "social skills" which students can use to foster their interper-


sonal relations. Postman and Weingartner write that the human organism cannot thrive without other people and that communication studies should be included in schools' curriculum. Schatz warns that if we are to resolve the problems that face modern man, we must begin to learn "skills of cohesiveness" in order to be able to really communicate with one another.

Studies by several behaviorists—including Archer and Kagan; Hinick and Brennecke; and D'Augelli, Deyes, Guerney, Hershenberg, and Sborofsky—suggest that interpersonal skills training and self-actualization are positively related; while research by Johnson, Laing, and Laing and Esterson indicates that disturbed and ineffective patterns of communicating may be a contributing factor to

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6 Foote and Cottrell, pp. 36-37, 54.

7 Postman and Weingartner, p. 47.


mental instability.  

"It is possible," as Capps and O'Connor assert, "that a course in communication may prove to be one of the most valuable courses a student may take in college." Indeed, no other area of study has greater potential for relevancy to an individual's growth and future life. Toffler describes the kind of education which will be most significant in preparing students for the future and writes, "All students should be grounded in certain common skills needed for human communication and social integration." If schooling is to retain an impact on the most crucial human affairs, Toffler may be right.

Changes in the Basic Speech Course

Concomitant with the current rise of interest in contemporary, student-centered education, educators within the Speech discipline are becoming more sensitive to their responsibility to aid students' preparation for the world


outside of school. In light of recent research findings which highlight the importance of the relational function of communication to human growth and in response to the popular demand for greater academic relevancy, Speech Education is changing; emphasis formerly upon Rhetoric—the study of the means of persuasion—is increasingly being shared by Communication—the study of the process of human relationships. A transition in the basic speech course, the common denominator of college level Speech Education, reflects this change.

At five year intervals, representatives of the Speech Association of America have conducted nation-wide studies to determine the nature and trends of the basic speech course at U.S. colleges and universities. In a survey published five years ago in 1970, Gibson, Gruner, Brooks, and Petrie found that public speaking (sometimes listed as Fundamentals) was the main emphasis of most basic courses—over three-fourths of the basic courses carried the title of Public Speaking or Fundamentals. Likewise, the textbooks most frequently used in the basic course emphasized public speaking. The investigators wrote,

In spite of the increased concern for "communication" and "communication theory" apparent in our journals and in the scholarly papers presented at our conventions,

13Now the Speech Communication Association.
the basic course in the vast majority of the reporting schools continues to take a public speaking or fundamentals approach to public speaking, to emphasize the construction and delivery of informative and persuasive speeches, and to devote a large percentage of classroom time to the presentation and oral critique of four to six speeches by each student.14

In November of 1970, ten months after this survey appeared in publication, Theodore Nelson, the chairman of the Speech department at St. Olaf College, wrote that he was beginning to have doubts about the relevance of the public speaking/fundamentals approach to the needs of students in his basic speech course. Subsequently he shifted the emphasis to training in interpersonal communication— including self-awareness and the development of empathy—and found that these factors "contributed to more meaningful and effective relationships" for his students.15

Four months later Mandel and Applbaum published an examination of student preferences regarding the orientation of the basic speech course. They found that when students are offered a choice of different basic speech curricula, their selections reveal a significant preference for


an orientation to "everyday communications." Courses described as "public speaking" received the least selection.\textsuperscript{16}

In January of 1972, Ilardo commented on students' emerging preference for interpersonal communication and wrote that public speaking was losing favor because it did not emphasize preparation for life experiences which students saw as typical. To explain the shift towards interpersonal communication, Ilardo examined and differentiated the purposes of the two primary basic speech orientations. While public speaking is an activity aimed at persuasion, manipulation, and control,\textsuperscript{17} interpersonal communication training emphasizes improved dyadic communication, the establishment of more meaningful and satisfying interpersonal relations, and the fulfillment of individual potential.\textsuperscript{18} In Ilardo's words:

\begin{quote}
Teachers of interpersonal communication are engaged in a sort of therapy which has arisen in response to the
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{18}Ilardo cites Kim Giffin and Bobby R. Patton, \textit{Fundamentals of Interpersonal Communication} (New York: Har-
needs resulting from the fact that we are living in an age of anxiety. Public speaking fails to satisfy the needs of the average person because it is based, in large measure, on some of the very values which are in transition presently. The notion of "control over others through the spoken word" implies that such control is desirable or at least not undesirable. . . . Interpersonal communication makes value judgements that are reflective of the very values in human life which seem to be emerging in our age of transition. The emphasis on understanding rather than control, sensitivity rather than influence, interaction rather than one-way communication reveals that interpersonal communication is based on values very different from those on which rests public speaking.\textsuperscript{19}

In September of 1972, Mehrley and Backes called for a revolution in the basic course. They wrote that the communication model upon which the typical public speaking course is based is out-dated and irrelevant to contemporary America. Their article referred to a host of experimental studies which show little evidence that public speaking relates to or improves students' interpersonal communications.\textsuperscript{20} In the Fall issue of \textit{Today's Speech}, Gow reported

\begin{flushright}
\hspace*{3.5cm}19\textsuperscript{Joseph A. Ilardo, "Why Interpersonal Communication," The Speech Teacher 21 (January 1972):3-4.}

\end{flushright}
that the speech curriculum is moving away from public speaking in response to students' demands that courses be more relevant to their particular needs and values. Gow suggested that public speaking be subordinated to communication and that students be given more responsibility for deciding what they will study in Speech.21

The 1973 issues of the major Speech journals were relatively void of articles related to the public speaking/communication controversy; educators seemed to have taken a wait-and-see attitude towards the shift in the basic course. With the early 1974 publication of Communication in Education, however, the revolution was kindled anew. Authors Phillips, Butt, and Metzger reported that on the basis of their interviews with over 6,000 teachers and students, "instruction in public speaking does not seem to relate to the kinds of speech experiences most people have."22 They wrote that the focus of Speech Education needs to be on the communication skills that are most relevant to the present and future needs of students--"skills such as talking to

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21John E. Gow, "'Public Speaking' or 'Communication': Comprehensive Change in the Speech Curriculum," Today's Speech 20 (Fall 1972):21-24. Gow also writes, "There will continue to be a need for courses which seek primarily to instruct students in how to give a speech, but this need should be subordinated" (p. 21).

22Phillips, Butt, and Metzger, p. 7.
parents, children, spouses, friends, peers, work associates, subordinates, superiors."\(^{23}\)

The September 1974 edition of *The Speech Teacher* resumed coverage of the changing basic course with two important articles. Lohr wrote that teachers are expected to prepare students for contemporary life styles and that educators must discover which communication skills are most essential to the work-a-day world and then devise methods of training students in those skills. Lohr surveyed university alumni to determine the comparative frequencies of different types of oral communication. Respondents reported that of the fourteen communication activities listed on the questionnaire, dyadic communications were the three most frequently engaged in. The four activities cited as least engaged in were group process communications (e.g., public speaking and group discussion). In comparative rankings for importance, respondents again favored dyadic activities over informative and persuasive group communication. Lohr recommended that the basic course concentrate on interpersonal skills.\(^{24}\)

The same issue also contained the latest of the

\(^{23}\)Ibid., pp. 9-10.

nation-wide studies of the basic course. Investigators sought to uncover the predominant changes in the orientation of the basic course as compared to the orientation reported in 1970. Answers to the question, "What is the basic approach or philosophy of the course," revealed that the percentage of schools emphasizing public speaking dropped from 54.5 percent to 21.3 percent; fundamentals dropped from 21.3 percent to 12.8 percent. Researchers Gibson, Kline, and Gruner found that the communication approach rose over 500 percent, from 4.5 percent to 24.5 percent.25

Other writers have confirmed Ilardo's January 1972 analysis of the transition from the traditional one-way communication model to an interpersonal perspective on communication. In the traditional view, communication means "the idea of something's being transferred from one thing, or person, to another;"26 the desired effect is influence over another's behavior.27 The spate of new basic speech text-


books oriented to the interpersonal approach regard communication as a reciprocal transaction, a process of relationship, aimed at "emotional and personal communion" between persons.\(^{28}\) Jandt, in the Winter 1974 issue of *Today's Speech*, wrote that speech educators are becoming more aware of the importance of interpersonal communication to students' personality development and are beginning to accept and teach the transactional model.\(^{29}\)


Empathy and Education for Self-Actualization

At the April 1975 convention of the Southern Speech Communication Association, Carolyn Delle declared that the goal of the basic speech course should be to facilitate students' self-actualization. The objectives of the course should include:

to help the student gain a more positive and realistic self-concept; to become more accepting of himself and others; to become more sensitive to himself and others through a greater understanding of verbal and non-verbal cues; to learn to cooperate more effectively with others; to cope with conflict more constructively; to perceive more accurately.30

Dance and Larson add that the course's goal, self-actualization, can best be achieved through the practice of everyday communication skills.31

As noted earlier, many other educators believe that communication training, in order to be most facilitative to personal growth, should focus on everyday, dyadic skills. Maslow submits that education for self-actualization should emphasize the development of empathic ability.32 Brown and Keller write that empathy is a basic ingredient of communi-


31 Dance and Larson, pp. vi, vii, 182.

cation and that the goal of the interpersonal course is students' growth through improvement in interpersonal skills such as empathic listening; "empathy is the central skill in growth." Referring to their recently published basic text, they write: "this book is designed to increase the perspective achieved by the empathic response." Miller and Steinberg claim that empathic understanding is crucial to the development of interpersonal relations; they devote more than a chapter of their text to "strategies for improving empathic skills."

Other social scientists agree that the ability to empathize is essential to growth-promoting human relations. Mead suggests that empathy, the capacity to take the role of others and to adopt alternate perspectives vis-a-vis oneself, is the essence of social intelligence. Hayakawa calls empathy the "basic conversation traffic rule;" Phillip, Butt, and Metzger write that empathy is the very

33 Brown and Keller, p. 23.
34 Ibid.
35 Miller and Steinberg, pp. 167-94, 197-229.
36 Mead, p. 142.
38 Phillips, Butt, and Metzger, pp. 9-10.
groundwork of successful communication.

Foote and Cottrell declare that empathy "is the basic response capacity on which the processes of socialization, development of a self, communication, and integration rest." 39 Grief and Hogan summarize research which indicates that social interaction is significantly facilitated by the disposition and ability of the participants to empathize. 40

Scholars who have studied helping human relations present an enormous amount of evidence to show that the empathic response is among the most facilitative communication skills. Carkhuff writes that empathy is "the most critical variable, the one from which all other dimensions flow in the helping process." 41 Rogers agrees that of the communication skills which do facilitate growth, empathic understanding is among the most important. 42 Carkhuff, Carkhuff and Truax, Rogers, and Saltmarsh all offer exten-

39 Foote and Cottrell, p. 71.


sive reviews of research in empathic responsiveness.\textsuperscript{43}

Their findings suggest that the empathic response is an essential part of growth-promoting interpersonal communications; there is a significant positive relationship between personal growth and human relations characterized by a high degree of empathic understanding.\textsuperscript{44}


\textsuperscript{44}Rogers, "The Characteristics of the Helping Relationship," p. 11.
CHAPTER THREE

AN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING PROGRAM

Hypotheses

Authors of most interpersonal texts make it clear that their approach to the basic course is definitely student-centered—that is, personal and directed toward the self-actualization of the individual reader. In reference to the orientation of the basic course, the terms interpersonal and student-centered often may be used interchangeably.\(^1\) It will be noted later (p. 46) that the communication model taught by a teacher may be similar to the model used by the teacher in his interactions with students.

The literature reviewed in the previous chapters suggests several research questions to the instructor of a student-centered, interpersonal communication course. First, does an interpersonal orientation meet the criterion of contemporary education for self-actualization; is an

\(^1\)For example, see Clark, Bock, and Cornett, pp. 1-6; Brown and Keller, pp. ix-xv; Dance and Larson, p. vii; Keltner, pp. 2-5; Powell, pp. 4-168 passim; and Ed Rintye, Centering a Lopsided Egg: Reflections on Communication Balance (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1975), p. xi.
interpersonal orientation perceived by students as relevant and growth-promoting? Second, do students perceive noticeable attitudinal differences between traditional and student-centered instructors? And finally, systematic experiential instruction in empathic understanding has rarely, if ever, been attempted in the basic speech course; can training effect a significant increase in students' ability to give empathic responses? These questions are formulated in the following testable hypotheses:

H₁. Compared to control group students, students in the treatment group will rate their class significantly higher in indices related to self-actualization

H₂. Compared to control group students, students in the treatment group will rate the subject matter of their class significantly higher on an index of relevance to life

H₃. Compared to control group students, students in the treatment group will rate their instructor significantly higher in indices of genuineness, empathic understanding, positive regard (i.e., warmth, caring, and respect), and trust

H₄. Compared to control group students, students in the treatment group will evidence significantly greater increases in pre-to-post tests of empathic understanding
Description of Instruments

Twelve major requisites to the process of self-actualization have been compiled by Cangemi and included in an instrument which can be used to measure the degree to which an educational program provides the emphasis relevant to human growth. Cangemi's indices have been validated by judges, each distinguished in the field of educational psychology.²

In this study, these criteria of self-actualization have been adapted for use in a questionnaire (see questions 1 through 12, appendix 1) designed to measure the comparative facilitative value of both the interpersonal (treatment group) and public speaking (control group) orientations. Question 13 on the questionnaire relates to the perceived relevancy of the subject matter to the students' "real life;" questions 14 through 17 measure the extent to which, in students' opinions, the instructor provided the core conditions of the helping relationship—genuineness, empathic understanding, positive regard, and trust. Questions num-

²Cangemi, pp. 9, 10, 73-74; 91-92; and from interviews with Dr. Cangemi, it was learned that the judges were Martray and Laird of Western Kentucky University and Englander of Indiana University. Interview with Cangemi, Psychology department, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky, 3 March 1975 and 26 March 1975.
bered 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 have obvious face validity.³

Scale 1, a scale for measuring empathic understanding in interpersonal processes, of Carkhuff's "Scales for Assessment of Interpersonal Functioning"⁴ was used to test H₄. The scale is used to rate the degree to which a listener's responses reflect the feeling and content expressed in standardized "stimulus expressions" (see Focus Statements, appendix 2).⁵ Carkhuff's rating scales are summarized from low (level 1) to high (level 5) levels of empathic understanding:

³Some traditionalists argue that students have not yet experienced "real life" and thus are incapable of deciding what subject matter is relevant to human existence. To those who believe that professors are better at identifying and solving relevant problems than students, Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner respond:

"Who were the first to see that our colleges were in trouble, and who made the first attempts to do something about it? Whose idea was it to have Black Study programs and interdisciplinary approaches? Whose idea was it to debureaucratize the colleges? Whose idea was it to demilitarize American universities? Whose idea was it to offer substantial opposition to the war in Vietnam? Whose idea was it to call attention to environmental pollution? Whose idea was it to organize and defeat the institutionalized oppression of black people? Whose idea was it to initiate a movement to oppose oppression of women? . . . It was not our professors!" (The Soft Revolution New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1970, p. 21).

⁴Carkhuff, Human Relations, 1:174-75.

⁵Ibid., pp. 93-99.
Level 1. The response of the listener either does not attend or detracts significantly from the verbal expression of the speaker in that the listener communicates significantly less of the speaker's feelings than the speaker has communicated himself.

Level 2. While the listener responds to the expressed feelings of the speaker, he does so in such a way as to subtract noticeable affect from the communications of the speaker.

Level 3. The listener's response is essentially interchangeable with the speaker's statement in that they express essentially the same affect and meaning.

Level 4. The response of the listener adds noticeably to the expressions of the speaker in such a way as to express feelings a level deeper than the speaker was able to express himself.

Level 5. The listener's responses add significantly to the feeling and meaning of the expressions of the speaker in such a way as to accurately express the deepest feelings of the speaker.

The scale has been validated in extensive research summar-
An experienced reader recorded twelve short monologues; six were randomly selected for the pre-test and the remaining six were used in the post-test. The recorded passages were designed to mix different feelings with different subject areas; thus, affective expressions of (1) depression-distress, (2) anger-hostility, and (3) elation-excitement cut across these subject areas: (1) social-interpersonal, (2) educational-vocational, and (3) sexual-marital. Students in both groups listened to the recordings and were asked to respond in writing to the expressions they heard. Their responses were then independently assessed by three trained Raters to determine the level of empathic understanding shown. The Raters were graduate students in Counselor Education, trained in discrimination of empathic understanding. This method of rating empathic understanding has been shown to be the most valid method of quantitative empathic assessment.  


7 Carkhuff, Human Relations, 1:93-112.
Research Design

In order to test the first three hypotheses, one section of a basic speech course was selected from the multiple offerings of a university Speech department. Six other sections of the basic course were selected as a control group representing the traditional public speaking/fundamentals orientation of the department. While the control sections (n=88) similarly emphasized group discussion and the construction, delivery, and critique of public speeches, the treatment section (n=23) concentrated on interpersonal communication training.

At the end of the semester, students in both groups were asked to respond anonymously to the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) described earlier. Responses were recorded on a Likert-type scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) through "Disagree" (2), "Neither Agree Nor Disagree" (3), "Agree" (4), and "Strongly Agree" (5); in addition, students were asked to indicate by placing a plus (+) or a minus (−) on the top of the questionnaire whether they did (+) or did not (−) think the questions were important and relevant to the purpose of education.

The questionnaires were then divided according to treatment (T) or control (C) group, and the respective responses were recorded on data cards and analyzed with the
Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 5.02) computer programs. 8 Whereas the data seems to be no more than ordinal scaling, other researchers have used parametric statistics with similar data; 9 therefore, both parametric and non-parametric statistics were employed in this analysis. The author of the present study does not believe that Likert-type scales truly approximate interval level data; while t values are listed in the results, this study relies more on the Chi Square indications of significant (p<.05) difference between T and C.

Accordingly, three statistical procedures were utilized. First, the mean scores of both groups for each item on the questionnaire were established, and a t-Test was run between each set of means. Next, Chi Square was applied on each item; in order to minimize zero cell frequencies, responses indicating "Strongly Disagree" (1) and "Disagree"—


9 Casimer John Kowalski, "Comparison of Persisting and Non-Persisting Students at Indiana University" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, May 1975); moreover, Sidney Siegel writes, "Because behavioral scientists rarely achieve the sort of measurement which permits the meaningful use of parametric tests, nonparametric statistical tests deserve an increasingly prominent role in research in the behavioral sciences" (Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956], p. 31).
(2) were collapsed, and a 2X4 Chi Square table was employed. To obtain the most conservative estimate of the differences between the groups, the tables were further collapsed--into categories of "Agree" (responses 5 and 4) or "Other" (responses 3, 2, and 1)--and a 2X2 Corrected (Yates) Chi Square was run.

In order to test $H_4$, only two other sections of the basic course were used as a control group ($n=19$). The control sections were traditionally oriented classes and received no systematic training in empathic understanding. Both T and C received a pre-test of empathic understanding at the beginning of the semester and a post-test at the semester's end. In this instance, students coded their responses so that the pre and post-tests could be matched. All the responses were evaluated and assigned a number (between 1 and 5) by the Raters; $t$ ratios were obtained within each group (from pre to post-test) and between groups (on pre and post-tests). Again the .05 level of confidence was used as the standard of significant difference.

In addition, the Table of Random Numbers$^{10}$ was used to randomly select ten subjects; by chance, five were selected from each group. The six post-test ratings

assigned by each Rater to each subject were averaged and then analyzed to determine interjudge reliability. Ebel's Intraclass Correlation Formula \(^{11}\) was used to establish the reliability of the average ratings.

**Treatment**

Carl Rogers suggests that trust may be the distinguishing feature of student-centered education: "If we trust the capacity of the human individual for developing his own potential, then we can permit him the opportunity to choose his own way in his learning."\(^{12}\) The operational objectives of the present program were (1) to provide classroom experiences which are perceived by students as useful and realistic, as relevant to their present needs and goals, and (2) to trust students' decisions on which experiences are worth pursuing. The class was aimed at fostering students' self-actualization by providing an experiential program of human relations training, specifically in certain interpersonal communication skills.

In the treatment group, students were given three weeks of discussion, exercises, and self-testing designed to increase their self-awareness and assessment of their

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\(^{12}\)Rogers and Stevens, p. 59.
communication strengths and weaknesses. Reading assignments during this period included "insights on self-awareness, personal growth, and interpersonal communication."\(^{13}\) It was important that students have this time to consider their own interpersonal situations, to become aware of the relationship between school activities and their lives outside of school, and to become comfortable with increased personal responsibility in the classroom.

In the third week, students were asked to answer, in brainstorming session, two questions: "What's worth knowing?" and on the basis of their answers, "What skills can a class in the fundamentals of speech offer to help you tackle these worthwhile concerns?"

Students decided that "How can I relate better to others?" was a worth-knowing question and that these skills would help in their inquiry:

1. to give and receive constructive criticism
2. to listen empathetically to others
3. to disclose trustingly to others
4. to be trustworthy
5. to accept the personal views of others

Of the classroom experiences (relevant to their goals) that the instructor felt competent to provide, they chose:

1. Questions—"Inquiry Method"\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\)Powell, inside cover.

\(^{14}\)Postman and Weingartner, pp. 25-81.
2. Role playing, projection games
3. Fantasy and imagination games
4. **Reality Games**\(^ {15}\) (see appendix 3)
5. Empathic listening training\(^ {16}\) (see appendix 2)
6. Self-awareness exercises—autobiography, value clarification, goal setting, and self-disclosure questionnaire

The majority of class time was devoted to experiential training divided between **Reality Games** and empathic understanding training.

**Reality Games**

The Reality Games are structured interpersonal encounters—both group and dyadic—with clearly defined roles and objectives (for example, see Positive Focus Game, appendix 3). The specific content of the discussions is highly personalized; students are encouraged to bring their real concerns to the experience. Here, in a fusion of knowledge, feelings, skill, and action, students have an opportunity to assess their own and others' levels of interpersonal functioning and to improve specific communication skills in active application of theory to practice.

\(^{15}\) Saville Sax and Sandra Hollander, **Reality Games** (New York: Macmillan Co., 1972).

\(^{16}\) Carkhuff, **Human Relations**, 1:93-214.
Empathic Understanding Training

Passon and Olsen, and Truax and Carkhuff\(^\text{17}\) point out that empathic understanding is different from empathy because in the former one must have the ability not only to sense another's feelings but also to communicate that understanding. First, the class was perceptually prepared by role playing and projection exercises in which the students imagined themselves in a fictitious character's position;\(^\text{18}\) later the class was asked to report on the feelings of the people they played in the imagined situations.

Dalton, Sunblad, and Hylbert\(^\text{19}\) found that education based on social learning (i.e., modeling and experiential learning) was significantly more effective in teaching empathic responses than were non-participation educational techniques. Therefore, the class was shown models of actual


\(^{18}\)Stanley E. Sherman advises that "imagining oneself in the other's position does seem to lead more clearly to empathy than just watching him or imagining how he feels" (Empathy and Birth Order: Some Experimental Explorations [Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1971], p. 39).

empathic behavior and encouraged to practice high levels of empathic response in the Reality Games.

Carkhuff notes that discrimination—the ability to differentiate between high and low levels of empathic response (see Levels of Empathic Response, appendix 2)—is prerequisite to mastering empathic technique.\(^{20}\) Exercises such as those provided in appendix 2 were designed to increase students' ability to discriminate by requiring them to identify High, Middle, and Low levels among the Listener Responses to the Focus Statements.

Other Activities

Transactional analysis is a rational approach to understanding intra and interpersonal communication. It is based on the assumption that any individual can learn to know himself, trust himself, think for himself, and express his own feelings. Berne says an important goal of transactional analysis is "to establish the most open and authentic communication possible between the affective and intellectual components of the personality."\(^{21}\)

James and Jongeward present exercises and experiments constructed to help students open the lines of comm-

\(^{20}\)Carkhuff, Human Relations, 1:113-33.

munication between themselves and others. Congruent with the Speech discipline's acceptance of the transactional communication model, the interpersonal group investigated and analyzed their "Life Scripts," "Ego States," "Role Identity," "Game Playing," and "Adult Ethics."  


CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

Self-Actualization, Relevance, and Teachers' Attitudes

More than 88 percent of the students from both groups agreed that the items on the questionnaire are important and relevant to the purpose of education. Consequently the validity of the questionnaire is further insured.

The results, found in table 1, are presented from three statistical perspectives. The individual question numbers are listed in the first column; the second column gives T and C group mean scores and a t value for each question. Chi Square indications of significant differences between T and C appear in the third column. In the fourth column, the percentage of students indicating agreement with each question—that is, the cumulative percentage of "Agree" (4) and "Strongly Agree" (5) responses in each group for each item—appear, and a Corrected (Yates) Chi Square is provided.

The third column figures show that there is a significant difference between T and C on nine of the twelve
### TABLE 1
RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qn.</th>
<th>Group Means</th>
<th>t Value (df=109)</th>
<th>2X4 Chi Square (df=3)</th>
<th>Percent Agree.</th>
<th>2X2 Chi Square (df=1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T  C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T  C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.7 3.6</td>
<td>8.32***</td>
<td>44.07***</td>
<td>100 64</td>
<td>10.05***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.1 3.7</td>
<td>2.02*</td>
<td>10.04*</td>
<td>70  65</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6 3.8</td>
<td>4.54***</td>
<td>25.16***</td>
<td>96  76</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5 3.6</td>
<td>4.69***</td>
<td>30.24***</td>
<td>91  64</td>
<td>5.33*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.4 3.0</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>39  23</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.6 3.5</td>
<td>5.87***</td>
<td>39.53***</td>
<td>96  56</td>
<td>10.96***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.6 3.7</td>
<td>6.22***</td>
<td>31.38***</td>
<td>100 74</td>
<td>6.07**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.7 3.6</td>
<td>8.45***</td>
<td>41.66***</td>
<td>100 60</td>
<td>11.58***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.5 3.7</td>
<td>4.44***</td>
<td>23.88***</td>
<td>91  63</td>
<td>5.74*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.1 3.8</td>
<td>2.15*</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>87  71</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.2 3.6</td>
<td>3.58***</td>
<td>16.83***</td>
<td>78  55</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.6 3.6</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>61  55</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.5 3.3</td>
<td>6.41***</td>
<td>57.20***</td>
<td>91  44</td>
<td>14.37***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.9 4.0</td>
<td>7.29***</td>
<td>26.20***</td>
<td>100 82</td>
<td>3.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.0 4.0</td>
<td>7.89***</td>
<td>23.78***</td>
<td>100 76</td>
<td>5.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.9 3.8</td>
<td>10.07***</td>
<td>44.06***</td>
<td>100 69</td>
<td>7.73**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.8 3.8</td>
<td>7.97***</td>
<td>29.55***</td>
<td>100 68</td>
<td>8.17**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.001
indices of self-actualization. Question number 13 shows the largest $x^2$; and all four of the teacher related questions (questions 14, 15, 16, and 17) reveal a significant difference between the answers of the groups.

On the self-actualization scale (questions 1 through 12), numbers 1, 6, and 8 represent the greatest differences. The mean scores for each of these questions show that the T group's responses average more than one point higher than the C group's. Question 1 yielded the highest $x^2$ on this scale, and there is a 36 percent margin between the T group and C group students who agreed that their class helped them "grow and develop as a human being." Questions 6 and 8 refer to interpersonal relations, and the "percentage agreeing" figures reveal that 40 percent more students in the interpersonal group felt that their class helped them "develop a sense of trust" and "develop a greater capacity for deeper relationships with others."

These particular findings are consistent with the themes of Brown and Keller, Dance and Larson, Deile, and Foote and Cottrell, quoted earlier in this paper. Education in speech communication should promote students' growth and self-actualization, and in this study the overwhelming majority of the students in the T group believed that their classroom experiences did help them grow as human beings.
In addition, these results support Ilaroo's observation that students feel that interpersonal communication training is more facilitative to their interpersonal relations than public speaking.

Questions 2, 3, 7, 9, and 11 show that the T group more strongly agreed that their section of the basic course helped them "develop independence," "become more spontaneous and expressive," "broaden my interests," "become a more well-rounded person," "become psychologically more healthy," and "develop better judgement and wisdom." In contrast to the highly significant differences on most of the other questions are numbers 5, 10, and 12. The majority of students in both groups did not agree that their sections of the basic course helped them "develop intelligent career plans;" on the questions regarding self-worth (10) and academic mastery (12) the groups again responded similarly.

Question 13 is of special interest and may provide the most dramatic illustration of the difference between the interpersonal and public speaking/fundamentals approaches. Responses to this question yielded the largest $x^2$ and the largest mean score difference between the groups. While only 44 percent of the C group agreed that "the subject matter was realistic and useful," 91 percent of the T group so agreed. Clearly, the experiences of the interpersonal com-
munication class were perceived as more relevant to life than were the experiences of students in the traditionally oriented classes.

Questions 14 through 17 evaluate the groups' perceptions of their respective teachers' attitudes. All of the questions reveal a significant difference between T and C; the mean scores of the last three are at least one point higher in the T group. These attitudinal dimensions, the core conditions of the student-centered helping relationship, may represent the heart of the controversy between the models espoused by the public speaking and interpersonal orientations. To reiterate Ilardo's words, "the emphasis on understanding rather than control, sensitivity rather than influence, interaction rather than one-way communication reveals that interpersonal communication is based on values very different from those on which rests public speaking."¹ The indications are that the communication model taught by the teacher is similar to the model used by the teacher in his interaction with students.

Empathic Understanding

Carkhuff indicates that the average levels of functioning for beginning trainees in communication training

¹Ilardo, p. 4.
programs is between 1.2 and 1.7. The pre-test scores in table 2 are consistent with this assertion. Both groups began on approximately equal levels of empathic understanding; only the T group made significant advances over the semester. The C group seemed to make no improvement in empathic functioning.

**TABLE 2**

**COMPARISON OF MEAN LEVELS OF EMPATHIC UNDERSTANDING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Test</th>
<th>Post-Test</th>
<th>t Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treatment Group</strong></td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>16.89***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(df=22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Group</strong></td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(df=18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>t Value (df=40)</strong></td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>16.09***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Ebel's Intraclass Correlation Formula yields a reliability estimate of .97 for the average ratings.

***p<.001

While it may be assumed that training accounts for the difference between the groups' post-test scores, Carkhuff notes that the key to students' improvement is the instructor's level of empathic understanding. If the

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Carkhuff, Human Relations, 1:154-55.
instructor communicates at a high level of empathic functioning, then trainees might be expected to gain significantly; if the instructor communicates at low levels—equal to or only slightly above the trainees—then no change may be expected. 3 Although no assessments of the various group instructors' levels of empathic functioning are available, it can be seen in table 1 that question number 15—related to the empathic understanding of the teacher—received unanimous "Strongly Agree" (5) responses from students in the interpersonal class. Continuing the speculation begun above, we might say that the communication model learned by students is similar to the model used by the teacher in his interactions with the students.

Conclusions

The basic speech course has undergone great changes in the last five years—a visceral as well as theoretical transition. These changes represent both an increasing sensitivity to the deepest socio-psychological function of communication—that of communion rather than manipulation—and an awareness that if higher education is to survive in the 80s, it must begin to serve students', in addition to institutional, ends. The indications are that the inter-

3 Ibid., p. 262.
personal approach is both congruent with the purpose of education and relevant to the needs of students.

The interpersonal communication program offered in this paper has been shown to be perceived by students as growth-promoting and relevant to their lives outside of the classroom. Comments written by class members and voluntarily submitted at the semester's end focus on students' sentiments that "you taught me something I can use." The results of a university-wide "Student Course Evaluation" show that, when compared with all other university classes, the "overall value" of this course was ranked at the 98th percentile. A conclusion supported by this paper is that if students are allowed to learn that which, to them, is worth knowing, they will value the experience and feel that they have grown from their participation in it.

Versions of Carkhuff's empathic communication training have been used in many different contexts and for many different purposes. Except for the present project, however, there seem to be no signs that this experiential instruction is currently being included in Speech Education's curriculum. Perhaps the positive results of this program will encourage other speech teachers to consider

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4 Western Kentucky University, "Student Course Evaluation," Bowling Green, Kentucky, 31 May 1975.
using empathic understanding training.

The communication model used by the teacher also has received attention in this paper; a teacher's interpersonal functioning influences his students' learning and growth. It should be noted in Table 1 that on questions 14 and 15--"This teacher was genuine and real with me. . . . was empathic and understanding"--the great majority of the students in the control sections agreed that their teachers were genuine, "talked straight," and were understanding. These attitudes are an important part of the facilitative communications in a helping relationship. Treatment group responses were also high so (1) we can definitely conclude that the instructors in at least nine sections of this department's basic course present, by example, a facilitative communication model, and (2) we can wishfully surmise that all speech teachers, whatever their curriculum orientation, enjoy a frank and mutually helpful relationship with their students.

It was observed earlier in this paper that the traditional educational philosophies still dominate most classrooms' practices. The author has shown, however, that public speaking has lost its centrality in the basic course and that many Speech departments have moved toward more contemporary foci. It has not been the intent of the present
study to discredit the tenability of public speaking but rather to confirm those departments that have included the interpersonal approach in their curricula. The author has attempted to affirm that the Speech discipline's flexibility and responsiveness to human need, as indicated by the changing basic course, is evidence of its willingness and ability to remain a viable, relevant force in students' educational experiences.
APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

THIS CLASS HAS EFFECTIVELY HELPED ME:

(1) . . . grow and develop as a human being
     (to become more fully human; to develop my fullest
capacities; to uncover and develop my uniqueness).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STRONGLY AGREE</td>
<td>AGREE</td>
<td>NEITHER</td>
<td>DISAGREE</td>
<td>STRONGLY DISAGREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGREE</td>
<td>NEITHER</td>
<td>DISAGREE</td>
<td>NOR DISAGREE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) . . . develop independence
     (to stand on my own two feet; become self-sufficient;
to rely on my own capacities and make my own decisions
even in the face of controversy or popular opinion).

<table>
<thead>
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<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
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</table>

(3) . . . become more spontaneous and expressive
     (to be more natural, simple, and free; to be more
flexible).

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<tr>
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<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
(4) . . . to broaden my interests
(to become interested in more things and to develop
more intense curiosity; to become more inquisitive).

(5) . . . develop intelligent career plans
(to develop a vocational mission in life; to develop
my vocational potential).

(6) . . . develop a sense of trust
(to be less afraid of getting close to another human
being).

(7) . . . become a more well-rounded person
(to get my own head together well enough so that I
can really listen to others).

(8) . . . develop a greater capacity for deeper relation-
ships with others
(to form relationships with more people; to be more
free in my praise of others and recognition of their
talents).

(9) . . . become psychologically more healthy
(to be more real, more genuine with others; to be more
positive in my regard of others; to be more under-
standing of others' feelings).
(10) . . . expand my sense of self-worth
(become more confident in my abilities; to be more respectful of myself; to emphasize my strengths instead of my weaknesses).

5 4 3 2 1

(11) . . . develop better judgement and wisdom
(to see others as they really are; to "see through" things so as to improve my understanding).

5 4 3 2 1

(12) . . . expand my intellectual and feeling capacity through the study of a specific subject area.

5 4 3 2 1

(13) . . . cope with life
(the subject matter was realistic and useful; the class helped me prepare for real life).

5 4 3 2 1

THIS TEACHER WAS:

(14) . . . genuine and real with me. He/She was honest with me, talked straight and leveled with me.

5 4 3 2 1

(15) . . . empathic and understanding. He/She seemed to know how it felt to be on "this side of the desk."

5 4 3 2 1
(16) . . . accepting of my feelings and opinions. He/She treated me with warmth, caring, and respect.

5 4 3 2 1

(17) . . . trusting of me. He/She expressed confidence in my ability to make my own decisions.

5 4 3 2 1
APPENDIX 2

EMPATHIC DISCRIMINATION TRAINING

Helpee expressions

(1) I feel so crummy--I don't have any friends. Nobody likes me. All the other kids have lunch together and play together. They always leave me out--as if they don't even care if I'm around. Sometimes when I'm alone and all the other kids are together, I feel like crying. Why doesn't anyone like me? I try to be nice but nothing seems to work. I guess there's nothing I can do.

(2) It makes me so mad! Everybody is always telling me what to do and what not to do. When I'm at home, my parents tell me what's best for me. At school it's the teacher. Even my friends bother me. Everybody pushes me around. Sometimes I feel like just punching them all in the nose! They had better leave me alone and let me do things the way I want to!

(3) I'm so excited and everything is going so great! I ran for president of my class and I won. I guess the other kids really like me. And today my teacher said I was one of the best students she had ever had; she really makes me feel warm inside. And next week, during Spring vacation, I'm going to have a great time with my family. It's unbelievable. Some people make me feel so good.

(4) I don't know what to do. I really try hard in school, but nothing seems to sink in. I guess I'm not very smart. Nobody seems to care that I try. What really hurts is when I see my parents bragging to others about how smart my brother is; they never even mention me--they change the subject when I'm mentioned. Oh, I wish I could do better, but I can't. Sometimes I even get mad at myself because I can't do any better.
Levels of empathic response

LOW. Reflects almost no awareness of Helpee's feelings, ignores feelings, changes subject, or gives advice.

MIDDLE. The expressions of the Helper are essentially interchangeable with the Helpee's expression. Helper reflects the feelings and content of the Helpee's expression but misses the feelings below the surface, the "meaning behind the words."

HIGH. Reflects as awareness not only of the surface feelings, but also the deeper feelings "behind the words."

Helper responses

(1) __ a. Maybe you just have to accept things as they are.
    __ b. What you should do is this: pick new friends.
    __ c. You have tried making friends and nothing works.
        And now you feel alone.
    __ d. No matter what you do, nothing works. You even expect that it will be the same with me.

(2) __ a. You get so angry when people don't let you do things you want to do. You just aren't going to let them push you around any more. And I'd better not start telling you what to do either.
    __ b. Everyone pushes you around so much that you feel like letting them have it.
    __ c. Don't get so mad. I think there is a time to take orders.
    __ d. Everybody gets pushed around sometime.

(3) __ a. Did you say that everything is going great? What do you mean? People make you feel good--is that what you mean? Make sure you work hard to deserve it.
    __ b. You're getting along so well with people that you can't believe it.
    __ c. You feel so good inside when there are people you can be close to--you know there is something good in you and in them. I can feel it right now with you.
    __ d. This probably won't last long.
(4)  a. You have tried so hard and nothing seems to work; nobody seems to care.
      b. You feel sad because your efforts haven't paid off and people are ashamed of you. And now you think there is something ugly about you, and you're afraid that I might start feeling that way too.
      c. Have you done anything to make your parents proud of you? I think people should suffer when they deserve it.
      d. You probably need to work a little harder. Give your parents a reason to think you're not so dumb.
APPENDIX 3

THE POSITIVE FOCUS GAME

This game is designed to solve some basic communication problems by providing a means for exploration of one's thoughts and feelings in depth and with a group of from two to four people. Playing this game well involves a number of complicated skills:

(1) One must learn how to create a safe and accepting atmosphere both by becoming more aware of one's positive feelings towards others and by learning how to communicate them honestly and warmly.

(2) One must learn how to suspend one's own needs and beliefs temporarily and to give one's full attention and interest to another person.

(3) One must learn to use this self suspension to concentrate on others so as to be sensitive to their feelings and ideas and thus to encourage them to communicate freely, openly, and honestly.

(4) It is not sufficient to give warm supportive space to others; one must also take space for oneself. This
means one must learn how to become aware of one's own inner feelings, needs, and thoughts and learn how to communicate them directly, openly, and honestly.

The above skills can be learned by the use of two simple rules: (1) the rule of focus, and (2) the rule of positive feedback.

The Rule of Focus

The rule of focus determines who shall speak and what will be talked about. One of the reasons that conversations often get nowhere is that there is no decision as to who should be talking or what they should be talking about. The result may be confusion. A raising of voices and a breakdown in communication will often occur. This sometimes becomes destructive—each person trying to get the floor by cutting his competitors down so that they will fear him. Sometimes it ends with no one talking about anything that is important or with one person becoming the center.

Only on rare occasions do we have a solution in which everyone gets a turn to talk about what he is interested in with the full attention of the group. The rule of focus helps reduce the conflict in conversation and increase the satisfaction that all participants derive by making this ideal the norm.

One person has the focus at a time. This person
talks about what he wants to talk about or gives his feeling on an agreed upon topic. The others make him feel safe and comfortable in talking by listening attentively, by asking questions that help him continue, and by clarifying and mirroring some of the things he says. While sometimes expressing a common feeling to give reassurance to the focus, other members do not try to steal the focus and become the center of attention themselves. After a person has completed his focus, it passes to another member of the group until everyone has had a turn.

The Rule of Positive Feedback

The rule of positive feedback is designed to make it safe for a person to talk openly and to feel good about his experience. When a person has opened up, he needs to know, not guess, how he has come across. Silence can often leave room for doubt and fear to grow, turning a positive experience into a negative one. Tell the focus how you felt. Stress the positive. Be sure that you are honest and constructive.

Procedure

1. In this game you can talk about anything you wish. Some suggested topics:
   a. Write down two or three things that others can do to make you feel good about yourself.
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b. Think of your ideal self. What are some of the things which might help you or hinder you in achieving the ideal (make some notes).

c. Think of something that is important to you. It could be something that you are proud of, something that you anticipate doing, or some problem you have (make some notes).

2. One person volunteers to be focus. The focus talks about anything he wishes to talk about. He may use the notes he made as an aid in getting started. As the focus, be honest, open, and direct (see notes for focus at end).

3. One person volunteers to be the facilitator (see rules for facilitator at end).

4. The other group members draw out the focus person. In drawing out, ask about feelings, needs, and thoughts. Clarify assumptions. Be sensitive to cues in tone of voice and posture. Check out your understanding of what the focus said by paraphrasing. For example, "Did I hear you say . . . ?" or "If I understand you right, you said . . . ?" or "Do you mean . . . ?"

5. After drawing out, each person takes a turn giving positive feedback. The most powerful positive feedback consists of a feeling of being understood and accepted.
Show your understanding of the focus, his feelings, his needs and goals, his thinking, and his point of view as you see it.

6. When positive feedback has been given by everyone to the focus, critique the process. Talk about how you felt as the focus or when listening to the focus. It is important that feelings which were held back be brought up now; try to understand your own and others' feelings.

7. Move on to the next focus. If there is a problem in getting volunteers, go clockwise. The old focus becomes the new facilitator at this point.

Rules for the Facilitator

It has been found that the use of a facilitator helps the focus game from degenerating to a simple conversation. Here are the rules for the facilitator:

1. The facilitator helps to enforce the rules of the game. If a group member starts to take the focus away, he may gently remind him who is focus.

2. The facilitator may participate in the drawing-out process. He may encourage others to take part in the drawing-out, as well as set limits on a group member who monopolizes the questioning.

3. If the game is being played with some time limits, he may remind the group of them in a sensitive way.
4. He will enforce the rule of positive feedback. This includes seeing to it that feedback is in fact given, and it means making sure that feedback is not destructive.

5. He will facilitate the critiquing process of the round with emphasis on getting to the feelings that the play members held back during the focus process.

6. He will make sure that the facilitator role is passed to the focus person of the prior round.

Suggestions for the Focus

Often when we talk about something, we merely reel off old ideas, old feelings, or old perceptions. When we do this there is a kind of mechanical deadness to our talk. People change and our old ideas and perceptions may no longer fit us. If we are truthful, we would like to escape from the prison of our old selves and to talk about what we are really feeling and thinking right now. Here are some suggestions that may help:

1. Talk about what you are really feeling right now concerning the subject or topic under discussion.

2. When you say something, listen to what you say, and if it doesn't fit how you feel right now, then change it.

3. Talk about how you really think and what you really believe right now. If what you think or believe contradicts your old thoughts and beliefs, change the old way
of thinking.

4. Consider and face up to the questions and observations of the facilitator and other group members. If you ever don't want to answer a question, say "I pass."
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